

had separated from the kingdom of Leon; and, though the power of the counts of Castile was divided, yet Alphonso had reason to apprehend that their power might concentrate ultimately in one person, and become extremely troublesome to the paramount sovereign.

Arragon had hitherto been governed by its counts, who were dependent on the kingdom of Leon. At length the Arragonians finding themselves particularly exposed to the depredations of the Moors, and that all their applications to their sovereign for protection were ineffectual, determined to have a king of their own, and accordingly elected Inigo Count of Bigorre to this important trust. It was this election that gave rise to the famous code of the Fore de Sobrarbe,* somewhat similar to our Magna Charta. This code, though once common to the people of Navarre, jointly with the people of Arragon, has since become the exclusive law of this latter, by whom it has been always regarded as a kind of fundamental law. It contained two principal and very material clauses. That the king should not decide either upon war or peace, or any other subjects of similar importance, without the consent of the Ricombres, or council of twelve of the principal people: and that these Ricombres, on the other hand, should be sworn to watch over

* Note (D).

his person, and assist him faithfully with such counsels as were most expedient for the government and defence of his kingdom. Other articles borrowed from the French and Lombards have been since added to this code; the whole of which composes that bill of rights, to which the Arragonese have always so pertinaciously adhered, and which has been frequently found so inconvenient to the pursuits of their sovereigns.

The separation of Navarre and Arragon could not be seen with indifference by the king of Leon, and his jealousy was much heightened by some recent acquisitions, which these powers had separately made from the infidels. Alphonso saw that every thing was to be apprehended from the vicinity of two kingdoms so little inferior in magnitude to his own. To guard therefore his kingdom against the effects of their rising ambition, he had associated Ramire to him in his government, and afterwards, by his will, nominated him to the succession. Upon the death of Alphonso the rights of this successor were at first contested by several competitors, and the crown of Leon hung for some time in suspense. Fortune, however, at length decided in favour of Ramire, and he found himself firmly established on the throne with no other enemy to contend with but Abdelzamin the sovereign of Cordova. The Moor having demanded as usual the tribute of the hundred virgins, his demand produced a war, and a severe battle was fought near Logrono, which lasted two days, in which

both sides laid claim to the victory: the Moors, however, retreated.

The tide, after this battle, seemed to turn in favour of the Christians, all the north of Spain becoming inimical to the Moors, and their possessions in the south being harrassed by reiterated irruptions from the Normans. Against these different enemies Abdelzamin defended himself with equal courage and ability.

But while he was thus necessarily occupied with war, he was not inattentive to the less dazzling, but far more beneficial, glories of peace. He embellished his capital with a new mosque, and caused a most superb aqueduct to be constructed, by which water was distributed by leaden pipes into all parts of the city. He attracted artists, poets and philosophers to his court, associated with them familiarly, and was himself a model of the very excellencies he thus encouraged. His great mind was rivetted to the arts and to the sciences. It was under his auspices that the celebrated school of music was founded, which produced afterwards the many élèves*, that constituted the delight of Asia; by which he caused Spain, like a grateful stream, to pay back a tribute in kind, to the source to which she was indebted for the repletion

* Note (E).

of her springs. Under his fostering encouragement, Cordova became the cradle, not only of the arts, but of the pleasures, their twin sisters; and Musulman ferocity was melted down and refined by a happy mixture or amalgamation of gallantry and politeness. Of this we have a pleasant exemplification in the conduct of Abdelzamin himself!

The favourite slave of the Caliph, having had a slight difference with her royal lover, withdrew in anger from his presence; making at the same time a vow, that she would see the door of her apartment walled up, before it should be opened to him again. The chief eunuch, who overheard this vow, and was frightened at it, as if he had heard so much blasphemy; hastened to his master, and prostrating himself in his presence, declared tremblingly what he had heard. Abdelzamin listened to the recital in perfect good humour; then, smiling, commanded the doorway to be immediately closed with pieces of silver; declaring at the same time, that this barrier should never be removed, till the favourite herself should think proper to remove it for her own pleasure. What more effectual or more refined mode of conciliation could gallantry have devised? The wall vanished, as if by enchantment, the very evening after it was constructed. The wrath of the favourite was appeased; and it is scarcely necessary to add, the royal gallant enjoyed, as he justly merited, the happy fruits of his polite and seasonable ingenuity.

Abdelzamin at his death left eighty-six children, forty-five sons and forty-one daughters. He was succeeded by his eldest son Mohammed. His reign, as well as the reigns of his successors Almouzin and Abdallah, exhibit for a space of sixty years only a succession of calamities, of intestine tumults and divisions, of civil wars, and of revolts of different cities, excited by their respective governors, with a view to their own aggrandizement. The kings of Leon, profiting by these scenes of confusion, extended their dominions considerably; while the Normans on the other hand committed fresh depredations in Andalousia. Toledo, often punished, yet always in rebellion, had erected her own sovereign, and her example was followed by Saragossa. By these joint and reiterated shocks, the authority of the Cordovian monarchs seemed tottering to its fall; when, happily for the Moors, on a sudden the whole face of the political atmosphere was changed; and Abdelzamin the third ascended the throne, to calm the jarring elements, and give augmented splendour to the apparently expiring Caliphate.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

CORDOVA, UNDER ABDELZAMIN THE THIRD.

ABDELZAMIN on his accession to the throne assumed the title of Prince of the True Believers. He was brave, active and enterprising, and a rigid observer of justice, by which qualities he endeared himself to all orders of his Musulman subjects. His reign commenced in glory. He quickly brought back to their allegiance such of his revolted subjects as his predecessors had long contended against in vain, and restored order and tranquillity through the different provinces of his empire.

But he was engaged in long and bloody wars with the kings of Leon and Navarre, in which he was powerfully assisted by the Moors of Africa, and which he conducted in general with great success. Yet notwithstanding his general successes, he was obliged in the course of these wars, to abandon Madrid, a city at that time of little account, to the king of Leon. This

sacrifice, however, does not seem to have detracted from his glory, as under cover of the divisions which he artfully fermented among the Spanish princes, he carried his arms above twelve times into the very centre of their states.

But notwithstanding the wars in which he was incessantly engaged, and the consequent intrigues he was obliged to practise to support these wars; notwithstanding the expences attendant on the numerous fleets and armies he maintained, and the sums he annually expended to secure the assistance of the African Moors, the court of Abdelzamin displayed a degree of magnificence, which we could scarcely credit if the fact was not well attested by historians. Of this I shall give some examples.

The Greek emperor, Constantine the ninth, wishing to oppose to the Abassidæan Caliphs of Bagdat, an enemy capable of contending with them, sent an embassy to solicit the alliance of Abdelzamin. This compliment from a Christian sovereign, was so highly flattering to the Caliph, that he determined to honour the embassy with a reception in the highest style of Asiatic pomp. Accordingly, many of the principal lords of his court were dispatched to Jaën to attend and welcome the ambassadors, who were to be escorted from thence by a large body of cavalry which had been splendidly accoutred for the occasion. On their arrival at Cordova, they found

all the avenues to the palace lined by an infantry still more splendid. The passages to the court were covered with the choicest Persian and Egyptian carpeting, and the walls hung with gold stuffs of the richest and most curious fabrication. The ambassador at his audience was presented by the Hadji or chief officer of the court, and received by the Caliph seated on a splendid throne, with all the principal persons of his court around him, and all his riches disposed to the greatest advantage. A display of wealth and magnificence with which the ambassadors were exceedingly dazzled, and at which they could not avoid testifying both delight and admiration.

The letter from the Greek emperor was on a beautiful blue parchment, inclosed in a gold box, which the ambassadors prostrated themselves to present. When this ceremony was ended, and the treaty signed, they were sumptuously entertained during their stay in the capital, and, at the conclusion, sent back loaded with the richest presents, under an escort even more splendid and numerous than the one which had received them at their landing; which had orders to attend them to the walls of Constantinople.

Abdelzamin who was thus powerful, thus courted and revered, was himself the slave of beauty; the willing captive of the lovely Zehra, or flower and ornament of the world, on whom he doated during his whole life. In honour of his

lovely mistress he founded a city about two miles from Cordova, to which he gave her name, and which, if we may believe report, must have been indeed a most magnificent offering at the shrine of his idol. This city, now no more, was situated at the foot of a lofty mountain from which issued several beautiful springs of the purest water. These springs were conducted through the streets with the nicest art, so as to answer the purposes both of use and ornament, forming in some of the public places large transparent reservoirs, or spouting up in others in a variety of beautiful fountains. The houses were in a style of taste and magnificence perfectly corresponding with the intentions of the royal founder. They were surmounted with flat roofs, on which were gardens beautifully laid out, which abounded with orange and other choice fruit trees, as well as an infinite variety of shrubs and odorous flowers. The principal gates* of the city were all decorated with statues of the beautiful slave. Such was the splendid oblation of Moorish gallantry at the shrine of beauty!

But even this splendid oblation, so far out of the common order of things, so much in the style of Oriental fable and fiction, was far eclipsed by the palace of the favourite. In consequence of his alliance with the Greek emperor, Abdéza-

* Note (F).

min had obtained the assistance of his ablest architects, and, in addition to this signal mark of favor and distinction, the sovereign of Constantinople had further presented him with forty columns of beautiful granite. The palace contained besides twelve hundred other columns of Spanish or Italian marble. The walls of the saloons were decorated with gold, and many imitations of animals, in that metal, were disposed in basons of beautiful alabaster, into which they constantly discharged streams of the purest water. Historians farther assure us, that the cielings of the pavilion, in which the favourite passed the night with Abdelzamin, were covered with gold and silver inlayed with precious gems, and that a fountain of quicksilver was kept playing through the whole night into a bason of alabaster.

These details we must own are not easy to be credited, since they certainly savour of the translation of some Arabian tale, and seem to have a closer affinity with Eastern invention than with historical truth. Such monuments of wealth and magnificence, of pageantry and splendour, do not certainly come within the scope of modern observation, and the generality of mankind regulating its faith by this standard, will hardly be brought to credit this description. But are not the accounts of the modern sovereigns of Asia, which we find in authors of unquestionable veracity, to the full as astonishing? If the pyramids of Egypt had been destroyed by earthquakes,

would the travellers who have given their dimensions, have been thought entitled to greater credit? The details here given are, in fact, not only vouched for by the Arabian writers, and related by Cardan, who has admitted them with great caution; but they are further confirmed by Mr. Swinburne, a gentleman of great observation and discernment, and one who may be reckoned any thing rather than an over-credulous traveller.

Writers of very good authority, represent the sums expended upon the city of Zehra to have amounted annually to three hundred thousand golden dinars. The work took upwards of twenty years for its completion; and therefore estimating the dinar at only eight shillings and four pence of our money, which I believe is too little, the annual expenditure must have been about one hundred and twenty five thousand pounds sterling; a sum which the nations of modern Europe, almost always engaged in wars, would expend in less than half a day! So much easier do we make it to destroy than to build up; or, to allude to Themistocles's expression, "so much easier is it to sound the fife, than to make a small city a great one!"

To the above expences of Abdelzamin, we must add the maintenance of his seraglio, in which the number of wives, concubines and eunuchs, exceeded six thousand. The officers

of the household, and the palaces set apart for their use, were all in a proportionate style of costliness and splendor. The body guard alone consisted of twelve thousand cavalry. If, in addition to these drains, we recollect, that Abdelzamin was incessantly at war; that he was, as we have already remarked, obliged to subsidize large bodies of stipendiary forces from Africa, and to fortify the various parts of his dominions that were exposed to invasion, it is scarcely conceivable, how means could be devised, adequate to the supply of such accumulating enormous expenditures.

But the revenues of this Caliph were immense, and he was perhaps the richest potentate at that time in the world. He possessed Portugal and Andalousia, the kingdoms of Granada, Murcia and Valencia, and the principal and best parts of New Castile. He owned all the valuable and beautiful districts in Spain, and the different provinces of his empire were not only well peopled, but the Moors, by whom they were peopled chiefly, had brought agriculture to the highest possible perfection. We are assured that there were more than twelve thousand villages and towns on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and that a traveller could scarcely journey in any direction without encountering perpetually either towns, villages or hamlets. Within the dominions of the Caliph were reckoned eighty principal cities, three hundred of an inferior class, and an infinite number of smaller towns. Cordova contained within its walls

two hundred thousand houses, and nine hundred public baths! How reversed, alas, the picture since the expulsion of the Moors! It has been reversed from a very obvious cause. The generous Moor, where he vanquished, did not persecute. The Spaniard, in his turn conqueror, not only persecuted, but destroyed.

The revenues of the Caliphs were estimated, in ordinary, at twelve millions forty five thousand golden dinars ; in addition to which many taxes were laid upon the products of the earth ; a source of wealth which, among a people famed for industry and agricultural excellence, must certainly have proved extravagantly productive, however objectionable it might have been on the score of policy.

The mines of gold and silver with which Spain at all times abounded, of which no adequate estimate can be formed, were further sources of inexhaustible wealth ; while commerce, through her various windings and ramifications, through her many imperceptible alimentary channels, conspired jointly to enrich both the sovereign and his people. Silks, cochineal, iron, wool, even at that time in singular estimation, ambergris, yellow amber, load-stones, talc, antimony, marquisites, rock chrysal, oils, sugar, ginger, saffron, coral fished for on the coast of Andalousia, pearls on that of Catalonia, and, finally, rubies, two mines of which had been discovered, one at

Malaga, the other at Beija; all these were so many sources of amplitude to the revenues of the Cordovian Caliphs. These productions were sent sometimes in a wrought, sometimes in an unwrought state to Egypt and the East; the emperors of Constantinople, always the faithful allies of the Cordovian Caliphs, favouring these various branches of commerce, which the Moors, by their immense command of coast, and their neighbourhood to Africa, Italy and France, were able to nourish and pamper at pleasure*.

But, in addition to these advantages, the arts, the children of commerce, contended to throw augmented splendour on the brilliant reign of Abdelzamin. His magnificent entertainments, the gardens he planned, the palaces he constructed, alike attracted artists from all countries, and while they rendered Cordova the predominant school of industry, converted it also into an asylum for the sciences.

It was in this reign that those celebrated seminaries of astronomy, geometry, chemistry and medicine were perfected, which, in less than half a century after, produced an Averroes and an Abenzoni! Such was the fame of the Arabian professors in philosophy and medicine, that, when Alphonso the Great, king of Leon, wished to select an able preceptor for his

* Note (G).

son, he was induced, notwithstanding difference of religion, and the known hereditary antipathy of Catholics to Muslims, to invite two Moorish preceptors to this important charge. And further, when Sancho the Great, one of the successors of this Alphonso, was afflicted with a dropsy, which his own physicians pronounced incurable, he came without the smallest hesitation or mistrust to Cordova, and committed himself to the skill of the Caliph's physician. The faith of Sancho did not pass unrewarded. He was completely cured, and this singular trait reflects equal honour on the generosity of the Caliph, the noble and confident liberality of the Christian monarch, and the professional knowledge and dexterity of the learned Arabian.

Thus was Cordova exalted during the reign of Abdelzamin. A reign certainly of unqualified glory. Alas! "the paths of glory lead but to the grave." Perhaps we cannot have a better standard for appreciating the nature and value of all sublunary pursuits, than what is to be found in the following letter, discovered among the manuscripts of the Caliph after his death, and written, apparently, only a few days antecedent to that awful event.

" Fifty years are elapsed since I ascended the throne of my
" ancestors. During this whole term, I had pleasure, wealth
" and honours so unqualifiedly at my command, that Heaven

“ seemed to have lavished upon me all its choicest blessings.
“ I now find myself on the verge of the grave, and endeavour-
“ ing at this awful moment to recollect how many days of this
“ long reign I can call happy ones, I find the whole number
“ taken together does not exceed fourteen. Profit, O my son,
“ by this lesson, and, if it is thy fate to reign as long as I have
“ done, and experience the same good fortune, be mindful to
“ turn thy time to better account, so that at the end thou
“ mayest derive comfort from reflection, and be able to boast
“ of more than fourteen happy days*.”

* Note (H).

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

REIGN OF HAKHAM.—DECLINE OF CORDOVA.—END OF
THE EMPIRE OF THE CALIPHS OF THE WEST.

ABDELZAMIN was succeeded by his son Abbou Abbas al Hakham, whose coronation was celebrated with great pomp and magnificence at the city of Zehra. To this city the brothers and kinsmen of the new Caliph, the chiefs of the Scythian guards (a formidable band of warriors formed by his predecessor) the vizirs, the chief Hadje and all the other great officers resorted to take the oaths of allegiance. After the ceremony of the coronation, the body of the late Caliph was interred with great pomp in the tomb of his ancestors at Cordova.

Hakham, though less warlike than his father, was not inferior to him either in courage or talents, and enjoyed far greater tranquillity. If the spirit of rebellion was not completely laid, it had at least been weakened, and kept under

by the exploits and vigilance of Abdelzamin : and the Christian sovereigns were too much occupied at this time by their own divisions, to give any considerable molestation to the Moors. The truce with Castile and Leon was broken only once during the reign of Hakham, and even then every thing terminated to his glory and advantage.

This good Caliph seems to have been wholly intent on two objects, the happiness of his people, and the advancement of the sciences. He gave the greatest encouragement to men of learning, by whose advice and assistance he formed a valuable library of the choicest books. His laws, though few and simple, were enforced with strictness and impartiality. Among the Moors, as far as we can judge, the civil and religious code were one and the same; their jurisprudence being confined to an application of the principles laid down in the Alcoran; which principles, though the Caliph as head of the church was competent to explain and enforce, he himself did not dare to violate.

On the first day of every week he gave audience to his subjects, listening to their grievances, examining accused persons, and sentencing delinquents to their just punishment. He nominated all the governors of the different provinces and cities; and these governors commanded the military, superintended the collection of the revenues, presided over the

police, and were amenable for all outrages in their respective districts.

The duties of notaries were discharged by persons conversant in the laws, whose employment it was to give a juridical form to all transfers of property. When a process was ready, it was submitted to certain magistrates or judges called Cadis, whose authority was alike revered by the sovereign and his people. These processes were never long. No expence was incurred by them, no chicanery in the conducting of them practised or tolerated. Advocates and proctors, or sanctioned pleaders, were unknown. The parties pleaded for themselves, and judgment was given on the instant.

Nor was the criminal jurisprudence more complicated than the civil, being regulated by the Alcoran, and consisting of requitals and compensations rather than any species of corporal punishments. The rich could compound even for blood, provided they obtained the consent of the kindred of the deceased. But this consent was so indispensable a condition, that if the son of the Caliph was convicted of a murder, even the authority of his father could not remit the punishment, unless the kindred of the deceased were brought to acquiescè.

It would perhaps have been impossible for a code thus

simple to suffice for all the purposes of civil society, if the laws had not been strengthened by two very powerful props ; by the supreme unlimited authority of parents over their children, and husbands over their wives. With respect to parents, the Arabs or Moors observed in every family that submissive, unqualified obedience to their chief, which was in strict conformity with the ancient patriarchal customs. Every father of a family, within his own walls, possessed, in a certain degree, the authority of a Caliph. He decided all disputes between his wives and children, and from his decisions there lay no appeal. He could inflict severe punishments even for trivial transgressions, and, in some cases, even death. An old man was every where the object of respect and veneration, the young always accosting him with modesty and reverence, and receiving his admonitions with the profoundest attention. His appearance quelled all tumults and disorders instantly, his white beard being every where regarded as a kind of symbol of magistracy.

This power of manners, paramount over all laws, prevailed for a considerable time at Cordova, and the following anecdote will shew that it was not at all impaired by the sage Hakham.

A poor woman of Zehra owned a small field contiguous to the Caliph's gardens, upon which this prince wished to erect a

pavilion. The intendant of the gardens was accordingly directed to propose the purchase of the field from the owner; to this proposal, she on her part refused to accede, having, as she said, an insurmountable objection to disposing of any part of the inheritance of her ancestors. Courtiers rarely like to report unpalatable tidings to their masters, and we cannot therefore wonder that the woman's refusal was carefully concealed. But, though the intendant thought fit to conceal it, he determined to take a summary way of severing the knot which he could not fairly untie. He possessed himself forcibly of the land, and erected the projected pavilion.

The humble owner being thus cruelly oppressed, betook herself in despair to the Cadi Bekir at Cordova, requesting his advice and interposition. The Cadi, not quite so much a courtier as the intendant, not quite so zealous as to commit flagrant injustice for his master's pleasure, was of opinion, that the Prince of the Believers had no better right than the meanest of his subjects to seize upon the property of another by force; and he therefore recurred to an expedient to recall the mind of the Caliph to a principle, which the best of men may sometimes inadvertently transgress.

A very few days after this complaint had been made, the Caliph was indulging himself in his favourite pavilion, when he saw the Cadi approach mounted on an ass, with an empty

sack in his hand. Hakham, much astonished, demanded the cause of this singular phenomenon: "Commander of the Faithful!" says Bekir, "I come to request permission to fill this sack with some part of that earth you are now treading under your feet." The Prince was too much struck with the singularity of the request not to wish to know how so strange a scene would end. He therefore gave his consent, and the judge gravely proceeded to fill the sack. This was no sooner done, than Bekir, leaving it on its end, humbly requested that the Prince would complete the bounty by enabling him to fix his burthen on the ass. With this requisition the Caliph also endeavoured to comply; but finding the sack so heavy that he was scarcely able to move it, he smiled and let go his hold, complaining at the same time of the enormous weight, and the incompetency of his strength to perform the task required.

This declaration was no sooner made, than Bekir, with commanding gravity, exclaimed, "Prince of the Believers! the sack which you find so weighty contains but a very small portion indeed of the land which you have forcibly taken from one of your subjects. If you find this portion, inconsiderable as it is, so heavy and intolerable, what will the field itself be found, when you present yourself, as you must do hereafter, in the presence of an infallible Judge, loaded with the whole weight of your trespass?"

The Caliph could not withstand this ingenious and just reproof. He sprung towards the judge, embraced and thanked him for this noble pledge of his integrity, and acknowledging his transgression openly, ordered not only the field to be restored to the injured proprietor, but the pavilion also with all its rich contents. How few judges so bravely honest as Bekir! How few despots so considerate and just as Hakham! The despot capable of acting thus nobly was only second to the judge who taught him thus to act.

We always part reluctantly with princes who are thus alive to the calls of justice; thus capable of feeling the wrongs they inflict. Hakham* reigned only fourteen years, and he had the misfortune to be succeeded by a son who was a child when he began to reign, and continued such ever after. He had, however, an able and honest minister in Mahomet Almanzor, who, by his office of chief Hadji, had the principal management of his affairs, and acquitted himself with great wisdom and firmness, both during and after the minority of his master.

Mahomet, to the talents of a great general, united all the qualities of a consummate statesman, and may be said to have reigned in the name of his master during twenty six

*Note (I).

years without subjecting himself to any other imputation than that of bearing an implacable hatred to the Christians. He carried his arms more than fifty-two times into Castile and the Asturias; sacked the cities of Barcelona and Leon, and penetrated as far as Compostella, the celebrated church of which city he destroyed, and enriched Cordova with its spoils. In short, he kept the energies of his countrymen in constant exertion, causing the authority of the weak Caliph to be respected through all Spain, while he himself slumbered amidst his concubines and his pleasures.

This was the last ray of glory that glittered on the dynasty of the Omniades. But this ray was sufficiently splendid to excite the jealousy of the kings of Castile, Leon and Navarre. These three monarchs confederated against Hakham, and a long and desperate battle being fought near Medina, the Moors were vanquished, and so discomfited that they fled in different directions, and were easily cut off. Almanzor, their gallant general, who, from twenty years of uninterrupted success, began to think himself invincible, was so affected by this unexpected overthrow, that he died of grief and vexation, and with this great man perished the fortunes of the Moors in this district of Spain.

The place of Almanzor was ill supplied by his son, who was destined to hold his father's office without inheriting any of

his talents. At length a relation of the Caliph possessed himself of his person, and having placed him in close confinement circulated a rumor of his death, without daring to accomplish what he wished to have believed. This rumour no sooner reached Africa than another Ommiadean prince of that country passed with an army into Spain, with the design, as he gave out, of avenging the death of his kinsman; and the court of Castile, politically uniting with this prince, a civil war was kindled at Cordova, which quickly spread through all Spain; under cover of which the Christians recovered all the cities of which they had been recently dispossessed by Almanzor.

Amidst these distractions the impotent Hakham, the puppet of all the factions, was again introduced to play his part upon the stage. This, however, his natural timidity soon compelled him to renounce; and, upon his abdication, a crowd of claimants sprung up who were all proclaimed in turn, and in turn taken off by assassination or poison. At length one Al Mundir, a distant branch of the Ommiadean family, put in his claim, contrary to the remonstrances of his friends, who did not fail to represent to him the dangers he was about to encounter. "If," said the infatuated fool, "I can only reign one day, I will not complain, though it should be my fate to die on the morrow." Even at this distance of time, and with the little interest we claim in the concerns of the

Moors, it is gratifying to know, that the wishes of the vain ideot were never realized !

Of the various pretenders who started up, whose claims were alike ephemeral and fatal, Jahmed ben Mohammed was the last. In the person of this prince ended the empire of the Caliphs of the West, which had existed in the dynasty of the Ommiades for the space of three centuries ; and with the princes of this house perished the strength and glory of Cordova. The governors of the different cities, heretofore subject to this state, became so many self-constituted petty sovereigns, and Cordova ceased to be the capital of a great kingdom. She preserved indeed her religious pre-eminence, for which she was indebted to her celebrated mosque ; but the inhabitants, weakened by their own dissentions, and subjected to several petty tyrants, were deprived of all principles of resuscitation, and no longer capable of opposing any competent barrier against this reflux in the tide of their fortunes. Consequently the next book can treat of little more than their progressive dissolution.

APPENDIX

TO THE

SECOND BOOK.

NOTE (A), *Mirvan the Second, &c.*

THIS prince was nicknamed Alkemar, or the Ass; a term which, in the East, implies nothing dishonourable: the qualities of this patient and indefatigable animal being there highly esteemed. It is from this Caliph that Ariosto took his affecting episode of Isabella of Galicia.

Mirvan, when in Egypt, was smitten with the charms of a Christian nun, whom he attempted to ravish. The young lady had strength enough to resist his first assaults, but knowing that no resistance could long avail against such a lover, she determined upon a desperate expedient to save her honor. She promised, provided he desisted at that time from his criminal pursuit, to present him with an ointment which would render him invulnerable; to convince him of which fact, she offered to have the first proof of its efficacy made upon herself. To this the Caliph, who had no suspicion of the stratagem, consented, and the virtuous nun, having rubbed

her neck with the ointment, desired him to strike at it with his sabre, with which he complied, and cut off her head.

NOTE (B). *Haroun Al Raschild, &c.*

Haroun Al Raschild, which means Haroun the Just, acquired great glory in the East, for which, as well as his flattering surname, he was beholden to his protection and encouragement of men of letters. His victories and his love of the sciences, prove that Haroun was no ordinary man, and he would perhaps have been entitled to as just panegyric as most princes who have reigned, if he had not sullied the lustre of his exploits by his cruelty to the Barmecydes.

Frail mortal! with presumptuous pride
And fortune's treach'rous gifts elate,
Behold the fall of Barmecyde
And tremble at thy prosperous fate.

So says, I think, Voltaire.

The noble family of the Barmecydes, descended from the ancient kings of Persia, had not only rendered most signal services to the Caliphs, but justly merited the esteem and veneration of all orders in the empire. Of these Giafar Barmecyde, the prime vizier of Haroun, was particularly entitled to pre-eminence. This Giafar, who was one of the most virtuous of Musulmen, as well as the best writer of his age, had conceived an affection for the beautiful Abassa, the Caliph's sister, which the princess on her part required.

Haroun, who cherished, to give it no harsher epithet, a tender friendship for his sister, was much tormented at the discovery of this mutual passion. He consented, however, to the union of the lovers; but, by a caprice perfectly characteristic of eastern despotism, bound the amorous vizier by a solemn oath never to enjoy the rights of marriage with his wife. The unfortunate Barmecyde was too well aware of the consequences of a refusal to oppose this cruel requisition, and he accordingly took the oath required. But what oaths, or contracts, can ever be long proof against the joint assaults of love, beauty and solicitation? Abassa, who, though a principal party in the contract, had not been sworn, could not so easily forego her rights, so easily bring herself to consider the marriage contract, as a contract purely platonic. She, therefore, explained herself to her husband in some elegant lines, which she dropt purposely in his way; in which, without departing from the delicacy of her sex, she hinted his duties, and her expectations, in such terms as effectually overcame all his firmness and philosophy. In short, he got access to his wife, and forgot his vow.

About nine months after this interview, the princess was privately delivered of a son, which was sent to Meccha to be nursed, and the secret was so well kept that many years elapsed before the Caliph was apprized of the very pardonable perjury of his minister. At length the fatal secret was revealed by the treachery of one of Giafar's slaves, as the Caliph passed through the city in which the unfortunate infant had been secreted. The atrocious Haroun (one could scarce credit the fact, if it was not well attested through all the East) cast his

sister into a well, ordered the head of his faithful servant to be struck off, and to complete the climax of his criminality, passed sentence of death indiscriminately upon all the Barmecydes.

Jabiad the father of Giafar, a most venerable old man, justly respected through the empire for his virtues, met his fate with the greatest fortitude, taking care however to transmit the following note to the tyrant, a few moments before his execution. "The accused passes off first; the accuser and judge must quickly follow. Both must appear hereafter before that tribunal whose decrees are infallible, and whose justice no one can elude."

Even these cruelties, atrocious as they were, did not appease the wrath of the implacable Haroun, who carried his resentment beyond the grave, so far as to forbid the very name of Barmecyde to be pronounced. But the tyrant did not find all his people disposed to participate in his ignoble and unmanly revenge. A Musulman of the name of Mundir, in particular, dared to brave the unworthy order, so far even as to pronounce a public eulogium on the forbidden name. For this offence he was arraigned before the Caliph, and threatened with instant death. "You can, I admit," says Mundir, "in this way, but this way only, make me silent. But can my death, or silence, erase your late injured and virtuous subjects from the remembrance of the Empire? Even the very wrecks of the works they raised, which you have cruelly destroyed, will prove so many tongues to proclaim their virtues and your injustice."

Haroun was so much struck by this honest and brave reproof, that, to the astonishment, and perhaps disappointment, of his surrounding sycophantic attendants ; he ordered a gold cup of very considerable value to be presented to his reprover ; and the resolute Mundir, on receiving the present, could not help exclaiming " even this is another blessing from the " Barmecydes."

NOTE (C). *King of Leon, &c.*

LEON, the first Christian kingdom founded in Spain, after the invasion of the Moors, is bounded on the north by the Asturias, on the west by Galicia and Portugal, on the south by Estremadura and Castile, and on the east by Castile. It is one hundred and twenty-five miles in length, by about one hundred broad. It is intersected almost evenly by the Douro.

NOTE (D), *Fore de Sobrarbe, &c.*

SOBRARBE, signifies, upon the tree. The term, says Mezerai, is taken from the following incident. Garcias Ximenes, who signalized himself greatly by his military exploits, being about to give battle to the Moors, directed the mass to be celebrated antecedently. While the army was thus devoutly occupied, the King observed the figure of a crown in the heavens, having at its side an oak which seemed to support a red cross. From

this prodigy he assumed the oak, cross, and crown for his arms, and called the spot from which he had seen them Sobrarbe.

The laws called *Fore de Sobrarbe*, were enacted at this place: and pertained at first to Arragon and Navarre jointly. These laws limited the power of the sovereign by introducing as a counterpoise the office of *Ricos Hombres* or Chief Judge. It was conformably to these laws, that the states of Arragon always made the following declaration to the sovereign at his coronation: "Nosque volemós tant como quanto vos, y que podemos nasque vos. Os hazemos nuestro Rei com tal que gardeis nuestros fueros: sino no." "We are of as much consequence as you. We accept you for our King on condition that you regard the laws and our just rights. Otherwise not."

The origin of the kingdom of Navarre, is said to have been as follows: On a retired spot in this kingdom called the *Peignée d' Oruël*, there once stood a little cell or chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which was long inhabited by a devout hermit, to whom the neighbouring gentry daily paid their respects from principles of devotion. This hermit is supposed to have died, soon after the period when the Moors had nearly overrun Spain, and at his funeral three or four hundred of the neighbouring gentry assembled to pay him the last solemn honors.

When the ceremony was ended, the conversation chanced

to turn upon the deplorable condition of the country, and the dangers with which Christianity was threatened by enemies, whose manifest design it was to plant their new doctrines in all the places they reduced. While they were warmly occupied by this subject, one of the company was so struck with the place on which they then stood, that he could not help remarking how very tenable it was, and how well calculated for defence. The thought was no sooner suggested, than the whole company determined unanimously to carry it into effect, and to make one struggle in defence of their persecuted faith. And they accordingly chose a leader, who then assumed the title of Count of Navarre.

NOTE (E). *The many Elèves, &c.*

The school for music founded by Ali Zeziah at Cordova, produced the celebrated Moussali, whom the Orientalists regarded as their greatest musician. Moorish music did not, like ours, consist in a combination of many different instruments, but chiefly in soft and tender airs, in which the singers were accompanied by the lute. Some times they had several voices and several lutes. This music sufficed for a people passionately fond of poetry, who, while they listened to the tunes, were anxious at the same time to comprehend the meaning and merit of the composition.

Moussali, the pupil of the Cordovian school, was in high

estimation with the Caliph Haroun Al Raschild. It is said that Haroun, having quarrelled with his favourite mistress, sunk into a melancholy which endangered his life. To rouse him from this lethargy, the faithful, but afterwards ill-requited Giafar, entreated the poet Abbas ben Anuff to compose some verses on the subject ; with which he complied immediately. When these verses were sung to the Caliph, he was so charmed with the thoughts and the accompaniments of the musician, that he started up, and threw himself in raptures at the feet of his mistress to entreat an exchange of forgiveness.

Maria, so the favourite was called, ordered twenty golden drachmas to be divided between the poet and musician, in acknowledgment of this service, and the enraptured Caliph presented them with forty more.

NOTE (F). *Over all the principal gates, &c.*

MAHOMET forbad the use of images in any way whatever, but this precept was never much regarded. The Couis of the Eastern Caliphs bore the head and name of the reigning monarch on one side, and some passages from the Alcoran on the other. In the palaces of Bagdat, Cordova and Grenada, they had not only sculptures in gold and marble, but many statues and representations of various animals.

NOTE (G). *At pleasure, &c.*

WE have a further proof of the opulence of Cordova in the presents which Abdelzamin received from Abimelech ben Cheld, on being advanced to the office of prime minister. It is taken from Ebn Kaledan, an Arabian historian.

Four hundred pounds weight of virgin gold, four hundred thousand sequins in ingots of silver, four hundred pounds weight of aloes, five hundred ounces of ambergris, fifty pieces of gold and silver stuff, ten skins of the Korassin marten, one hundred marten skins of an inferior quality, forty eight housings of gold tissue of Bagdat. Four thousand pounds of silk, thirty Persian carpets, eight hundred sets of horse armour, one thousand bucklers, one hundred thousand arrows, fifteen Arabian horses for the use of the Caliph, one hundred for his officers, twenty mules with sumptuous saddles and trailing housings complete, twenty boy and forty most beautiful girl slaves.

NOTE (H). *Fourteen happy days! &c.*

DID Charles the Fifth say much more for himself when he resigned the sovereignty of the Low Countries to his son? After a reign of thirty six years, the only account he could give of himself was, "that he had visited Germany nine times, Spain six, Italy seven, France four, the Low Countries ten, and that he had visited England and Africa twice,

“ and traversed the seas eleven times.” How much more gloriously could he have boasted that he left his states free and flourishing, and that every subject “ could command a fowl in “ his pot?”

NOTE (I). *Hakham reigned, &c.*

I MUST here notice the tragical incident of the seven children of Lara, as they are called, which happened in this reign; not only because it has employed the pens of the Spanish writers, having been the subject of many of their romances; but because it serves as an index to the pedigree of one of the most illustrious families in Spain.

The seven children of Lara were seven brothers, sons of Gonsalvo Gustos, a near kinsman of the first counts of Castile and the lords of Salos de Lara. This Gonsalvo had a brother-in-law, named Ruy Velasquez, whose wife Donna Lambra having conceived a rooted hatred to one of the brothers, meditated vengeance upon all, and contrived to effect her horrible purpose by the instrumentality of her own husband. At her instigation, Velasquez began his villainy, by sending his brother Gonsalvo on some pretended affair of importance to the Caliph of Cordova, giving him at the same time a letter to the Caliph by which he recommended him to be put to death, as one who had ever harboured an implacable hatred to the Moors.

Fortunately for Gonsalvo, Hakham was too just to be

swayed by such a charge. But policy pointed out that some precautions against his new guest might be necessary. Instead therefore of conforming to the purport of the letter, he confined himself simply to the securing the person of his supposed enemy.

While this was passing at Cordova, the treacherous Velasquez, under the pretence of warring against the Moors, seduced his seven nephews into an ambuscade, in which, being surrounded by assassins planted there for the purpose, they were all basely murdered, after having defended themselves stoutly, and exhibited prodigies of valour to the last. Nor did the villainy of the unnatural uncle end here; for he placed the heads of his seven victims in a golden dish which was covered with a napkin, and had them thus presented to the view of their unhappy father.

It is needless to describe the feelings of the wretched Gonzalvo when this sad spectacle was placed before him. The barbarity of the act tended, however, to undeceive the Caliph; and he instantly released his prisoner that he might seek his revenge.

Velasquez, however, was too far removed above his brother to be easily reached by him. Besides, age, and afflictions, which always bring on age prematurely, had too much impaired the powers of the injured father for such an undertaking. No alternative, therefore, apparently remained but to devote the remnant of his life to sorrow and the bitterest reflections. In seclusion with his wife he brooded over his griefs, pining

away in lamentations, and calling incessantly upon Heaven for a speedy termination of his life and sufferings. But the Divine Justice, which never sleeps, was raising up an avenger on whose aid he had little calculated!

While Gonsalvo resided at Cordova he was received by the Caliph's sister as her favoured lover; and the princess, after his departure, had been delivered of a son, the fruit of their union, to whom she gave the name of Mundaria Gonsalvo. This son, who was born a hero, at the age of fifteen was made acquainted with the name of his father and the villainy of his uncle, against whom he meditated from that time the most signal vengeance. Within a few years after, he challenged and killed the ruffian murderer of his brothers, and having cut off his head, presented himself with it at Gonsalvo's feet, and demanded to be made a Christian and acknowledged as his son. The wife of Gonsalvo, who was still living, was so affected by his gallantry, that she backed the solicitation, being proud to be called the mother of the brave bastard, and Mundaria was instantly recognized and baptized. It is from this hero that the Manriques of Lara, one of the first Spanish families, deduce their descent!

BOOK THE THIRD.



**FROM THE COMMENCEMENT
OF THE ELEVENTH TO THE MIDDLE OF THE
FOURTEENTH CENTURY.**



CHAPTER THE FIRST.

CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN PRINCES IN SPAIN.—OF ALMAMON THE MOOR.

IT is from this period we date not only the total decline of Cordova, but the consequent declension of the Musulman ascendancy in Spain. The crown of this once celebrated kingdom was become, what crowns really are, a kind of ephemeral bawble, which glittered gaudily for a season on the brow of its unhappy possessor, and then was to be contended for anew, perhaps, by some less worthy claimant. Transient, however, and fatal as the acquisition always proved, competitors for the dangerous and brittle trinket were never wanting. Scarcely was one sovereign dispatched or removed, when various candidates rushed forward to supply the vacuum, all contending with equal eagerness to fill a throne, whose steps were still reeking with the blood of the last unhappy possessor.

It was impossible that the capital of a great kingdom could be exposed to such shocks, and the changes they must neces-