

“ Or like Ibn Zeydún,⁴⁵ the author of another celebrated ode, the like of which
 “ has never been written in point of tenderness and melody, and of which the
 “ following verses form a part :

‘ We passed the night alone, with no other companion but friendship and
 ‘ union ; and while happiness and slumber fled from the eyelids of our
 ‘ detractors,

‘ The shadows of night retained us in the secret bonds of pleasure, until
 ‘ the tongue of morning began to herald our names.’⁴⁶

“ Where are your poets like Ibn Wahbún, who uttered extempore, and in the
 “ presence of Al-mu’atamed Ibn ’Abbád, that well-known composition which
 “ begins thus—

‘ Am I not taught that death is the end of man’s peregrination, and the
 ‘ tomb is the habitation and comfort of the weak ?

‘ And that the perils of death and perdition are the best token for the
 ‘ brave that the reward after them is abundant ?’⁴⁷

“ Where is there a poet like the poet of Andalus, Ibnu Darráj,⁴⁸ whom Ath-
 “ th’álebi⁴⁹ pronounced to be the Motennabí of Andalus, and who used to praise
 “ kings in so eloquent a strain that I take my oath if a prince of the Bení
 “ Hamdán had heard him, he would undoubtedly have dismissed all the poets of
 “ his court ?

“ Name to me one of your poets who has described the colour which a
 “ draught of pure wine imparts to the cheeks of the drinker, in verses similar to
 “ these, which are the composition of the Sheríf At-talík.

‘ The wine has coloured his cheeks, like a rising sun shining upon his
 ‘ face ; the west is his mouth, the east is the lively cup-bearer’s hand.

‘ When the sun had set behind his mouth, it left upon his cheeks a rosy
 ‘ twilight.’⁵⁰

“ Canst thou point out to us a poet, who, in the act of reciting some verses in
 “ public, seeing the audience show signs of astonishment and disapprobation at
 “ hearing him compare a smiling mouth to the camomile flower, the cheeks to
 “ anemones, and the flowers of a garden to stars, uttered extempore the following
 “ verses in excuse, as an exculpation for having used such comparisons ?

“ The first, comparing the lips to a camomile flower, are as follows :

‘ Morning has gone round like a cup-bearer with the vase of light in her
 ‘ hand, and from her copious pouring day has been produced.

‘ The gardens offer us their anemones, whose fragrance pervades the air,
 ‘ like the perfume of the sweetest amber.

‘ Tell us, we asked, where is the camomile flower ? We were answered,

' I left it behind, I destine it for the lips of him who shall taste the cup.

' The drinker then tried to deny her words; and from their mutual smiles dawn was produced.' ⁵¹

" The following is his apology for comparing the flowers to stars :—

' Dew is making the round of these gardens, and morning has exercised her power on the flying shadows of night.

' The jars of scented wine are only waiting for the arrival of a cup, to put us in possession of their inviting contents.

' When the stars in our globe vanish before our eyes, it is not in the West that they hide their luminous orbs; indeed they come to deposit them in the midst of these parterres.' ⁵²

" This is his excuse for using anemones in comparison with cheeks—

' The gardens shine with anemones, and the light fresh gales are perfumed with their scent.

' When I visited them the clouds had just been beating the flowers, and making them as deeply tinged as the best wine.

' What is their crime? said I, and I was told in answer they stole from the cheeks of the fair their beauty.' ⁵³

" But it is high time that I should lay down the reins of poetry which I have held so long in my hand, and that I should proceed to the description of the magnificent cities, well populated districts, fertile fields, impregnable castles, copious rivers, luxuriant valleys, well cultivated plains, and inaccessible mountains, in all of which this country is as superior to thine as day is to night, as the lion is to the ant, as the hawk to the sparrow, as the spirited horse to the broken-down ass. I shall begin with Cordova, the court of the Khalifs of the West.

" Cordova was in former times the seat of the Andalusian empire, the repository of science, the minaret of piety and devotion; the abode of magnificence, superiority, and elegance. It was the dwelling-place of the first conquerors, and of their followers, and became afterwards the court of the Sultáns of the house of Merwán. Among its numerous advantages, that of having been the domicile of the famous traditionists, Yahya Ibn Yahya ⁵⁴ and 'Abdu-l-málik Ibn Habíb, ⁵⁵ both of whom held traditions from the mouth of Málik Ibn Ans, is not the least important.

" They say that when Ibnu Sáreh, ⁵⁶ the poet, entered Cordova, he extemporized the following verse :

' God be praised, I am in Cordova, the abode of science, the throne of the Sultáns!'

“ Cordova may be properly called the military camp of Andalus, since it was
“ at one time the common meeting-place of those splendid armies which, with
“ the help of God, defeated at every encounter the worshippers of the crucified.
“ It is said of Al-mansúr Ibn Abí 'A'mir, that when his authority had been
“ firmly established both in Andalus and in Africa, and his armies and treasures
“ had been considerably increased, he held a general review of his troops previous
“ to an incursion which he meditated into the enemy's territory (which was carried
“ into effect, and the country subdued). The number of troops which, from the
“ various provinces of the empire, assembled on the outskirts of Cordova on this
“ memorable occasion is generally stated at 600,000 foot, and 200,000 horse.⁵⁷
“ It is true that since that time the glory and power of Cordova has been
“ considerably reduced, but its precincts still swarm with valiant soldiers who
“ are continually coming to blows with the infidel, and whose hands are never
“ at rest, and many a captain might be named into whose heart fear never
“ entered, and whose name is well known in the distant Christian kingdoms,
“ where the memory of his deeds will live for ever.

“ I have heard also of its famous mosque, which was lighted with bronze lamps
“ made out of Christian bells; and of the great addition made to it by Al-mansúr,
“ which was entirely built with the materials of demolished churches brought
“ to Cordova on the heads of Christian captives.

“ I have heard it said that the cities of Cordova, Az-zahrá and Az-záhirah,
“ together covered at one time a piece of ground measuring ten miles in length,
“ which distance might be traversed at night by the light of lamps, placed close
“ one to another.⁵⁸ I have heard also of its magnificent bridge, and of the
“ innumerable mills which the river puts in motion, and which are estimated at
“ no less than five thousand. I have heard of its *canbániyah*⁵⁹ (meadow), and
“ of the great fertility with which God Almighty has endowed the earth of its
“ districts, and the abundance and good quality of grain and other agricultural
“ productions which it yields every year.

“ Every one who has been in Cordova must have heard of the mountains called
“ *Jebalu-l-warad* (the mountains of the rose), owing to the innumerable rose trees
“ that grow on them. Indeed their numbers are so surprising, that although a
“ *roba* (five-and-twenty pounds weight)⁶⁰ of rose leaves will at times fetch at
“ Cordova four dirhems, or perhaps more, which makes it a great source of
“ revenue to proprietors, yet no one prevents the people from plucking them on
“ his grounds.

“ The Guadalquivir at Cordova is by no means so fine a stream as it is at
“ Seville, yet its waters are sweeter, and there is not so much danger of being

“drowned; its banks are besides more pleasant, being covered with orchards, plantations, and pastures, which enliven the eyes of the spectators, and have the most brilliant effect.” The preceding has been copied literally from Ash-shakandí.

The character of the Cordovans is thus described by Ibnu Sa'íd. “They are very fond of power, and haughty, but at the same time modest; riches and science among them are hereditary, and they exhibit as much zeal in the gaining of the former as in the acquirement of the latter. They are generous, brave, and kind to their equals or inferiors; but they are the worst people on earth to obey, and the most difficult to be governed: indeed their disobedience to their kings and rulers has become almost proverbial. In proof thereof I shall quote here the words attributed to Sídí Abú Yahya,⁶¹ brother of the Sultán Ya'kúb Al-mansúr. He had been governor of Cordova for some time, and when on his return to Africa he was asked to give his opinion on the people of Cordova, he is said to have answered,—‘They are like the camel, which fails not to complain whether thou diminishest or increasest its load, so that there is no knowing what they like, to give it them, nor what they dislike, to avoid it. It seems as if God Almighty had created them to be continually engaged in war, or in the midst of civil dissensions: indeed in this respect they are worse than the people of Irák. They say that I have been removed because I treated them with too much severity, and yet they solicit me to return to them, but my answer is,—the scalded cat dreads the fire.’”⁶²

Cordova was the city, of all the earth, where the greatest number of books was to be found. Abú-l-fadhl At-tífáshí⁶³ relates the following anecdote:—“I was once before Al-mansúr Ya'kúb when a dispute arose between the faquih Abú-l-walíd Ibn Roshd and the Káid Abú Bekr Ibn Zohr, and the former said, in praise of Cordova, ‘I know not what thou sayest, but what I know is that when a learned man dies at Seville, and his heirs wish to sell his library, they generally send it to Cordova to be disposed of, and when on the contrary a musician dies at Cordova, and his instruments are to be sold, the custom is to send them to Seville.’”

But of the cultivation of science in Andalus, and especially in Cordova, as well as the description of its great mosque, the famous bridge, the royal seat of Medínatu-z-zahrá, and so forth, it is our intention to treat in a separate chapter of this work (if God Almighty permit us). The cities formerly belonging to the jurisdiction of Cordova were Ezija,⁶⁴ Bolcún,⁶⁵ Ronda, Cabra, Gháfek,⁶⁶ Al-modovar,⁶⁷ Estepa, Baena, Lucena, Alcozer.⁶⁸

Granada.

Another of the great cities of Andalus is Gharnáttah (Granada), which some authors are of opinion ought to be written with a *hamza*, A'gharnáttah,⁶⁹ a word

which means a pomegranate in the language of the Christians. If that city could reckon no other honour but that of having been the birth-place of the Wizír Lisánu-d-dín Ibnu-l-khattíb, that alone would be sufficient.

The following verses of an Andalusian poet will show the great estimation in which this city was held by them.

“Granada has not its like in the world; neither Cairo, Baghdád, nor Damascus, can compete with it.

“We can only give an idea of its great value by comparing it to a beautiful bride, of whose dower those countries should form part.”⁷⁰

Lisánu-d-dín, in one of his poetical compositions, where he introduces some verses in praise of Granada, has the following:

“What has Cairo to boast of with her Nile, since Granada has one thousand Niles within its Shenil.”

But in order to understand this it is necessary that the reader should know that the numerical value of the letter *shin* (which is the first in the word Shenil) is among the western Arabs one thousand, so that when we say *Shenil*⁷¹ it is as if we said one thousand Niles.

Shenil is not the only river that passes by Granada; according to Ibnu Málík Ar-ro'ayní there is another considerable stream called Daroh (Darro), and numberless brooks;⁷² several bridges for the use of the inhabitants are erected over them.

When the traveller Ibnu Battúttah⁷³ arrived in Andalus on his return from his long travels, he visited Granada, which he describes in the following terms. “Granada is the capital of Andalus and the husband of its cities, its environs are a delightful garden, covering a space of forty miles, and have not their equal in the world. It is intersected by the well-known river Shenil and other considerable streams, and surrounded on every side by orchards, gardens, groves, palaces, and vineyards. One of the most pleasant spots in its neighbourhood is that known by the name of *'Aynu-l-adamar* (the fountain of tears),⁷⁴ which is a spring of cold and limpid water placed in the midst of groves and gardens.”

All authors agree in designating Granada by the name of Shám (that is, Damascus), although they differ as to the way in which it acquired that name; some pretending that the district of Elvira, of which Granada was formerly a dependency, was called so from the Arabs of Damascus having settled in it at the time of the conquest; while others refer its origin to the striking similitude which that city bears to the capital of Syria, in the numberless brooks that wind through its meadows, and the infinite number of trees with which its territory is covered. The author of the *Minháju-l-fakar*⁷⁵ (open way to reflection) concurs

in the latter opinion, but the former is the most common; besides, the opinions of these authors may be easily reconciled, for Ibnu Málik Ar-ro'ayní says that the people of Damascus were sent thither on account of the similitude the country around Elvira bore to the place of their birth, and thus both the above-mentioned circumstances might be pointed out as having led to the origin of its name.

Elvira was an ancient city close to the site now occupied by Granada; this is sufficiently demonstrated by the words of Ibnu-l-khattib, Ibnu Jazzí-l-kelbí,⁷⁶ Ibnu Sa'id, and almost every author who has written on the subject, and who all unanimously agree in saying that Elvira existed before Granada, and that when As-sanhájí⁷⁷ founded the latter city, built its *cassába*, and surrounded it with walls, the inhabitants of Elvira removed to Granada. Bádis,⁷⁸ son of As-sanhájí, went on building and increasing his new capital until it reached the degree of splendour and magnificence to which it was brought by the Sultáns of the Merinite dynasty, in whose time Granada became the meeting-place of the Moslems, the resort of their troops and armies, and the strong bulwark of Andalus; for when the Franks subdued the greater part of Andalus the inhabitants of the conquered cities and districts all flocked to it as a place of security and protection.

At some distance from Granada to the south-east are the mountains called *Sholayr*,⁷⁹ whose crests are covered with snow all the year round: the snow, adds Ar-ro'ayní, congeals so hard that it becomes as impenetrable as the rock itself. These mountains are nevertheless inhabited by a race of stout and hardy people, and the soil produces the most exquisite fruits, and many exotic plants of India, although none of its drugs. According to some authors the number of towns and villages over which Granada extended its jurisdiction was two hundred and seventy.

We shall terminate our account of Granada with the words of Ash-shakandí in his *risáleh* (epistle). "Granada," he says, "is the Damascus of Andalus, it is the delight of the eyes and the place of contemplation of the soul. It has a *cassába* with high walls and strong buildings, and a river which intersects its markets, streets, and houses, supplies with water its baths and mills inside and outside of the walls, and winds through the gardens and orchards of its meadow. God has besides ornamented Granada by making it a sort of watch-tower⁸⁰ in the midst of its extensive plain, where the melted gold of its rivers flows betwixt the emeralds of its trees, where the sweet gales of its *Nejd*⁸¹ (or mountainous district) cool and perfume the air. Indeed, what with its luxuriant gardens and its majestic cypress trees, the prospect is so fine that both the heart and the eyes are suspended in a kind of silent admiration, and the soul is wrapped up in the contemplation of its manifold beauties. The soil is so fertile that every thing which is required for man's comfort or delight grows in it. It is not

“ wanting in illustrious individuals of all kinds ; great ulemas, distinguished poets, accomplished soldiers, men fit in every respect to serve as models, are born in it ; and had it received no other favour from God than that of his having made it the birth-place of so many poetesses as adorned its soil, such as Nazhún,⁸² Al-ka-la’iyeh,⁸³ Zeynab, daughter of Zeyád,⁸⁴ Hafsah Ar-rakúniyeh, daughter of Al-hejjáj,⁸⁵ and many others, this indeed would be sufficient to honour it ; for all these women, and many more whose names have not reached us, may for their wit and literary compositions be placed among the greatest poets of the time. Or if not, can any thing more ingenious or witty be imagined than the answer Hafsah gave to the Wizír and Poet Abu Ja’far,⁸⁶ son of the Káid Abú Merwán Ibn Sa’íd, when, after separating at Maumal, where they had met and passed the night, he asked her to describe in verse the garden, the brooks, the cypresses, the sweet-smelling gale, and all the beauties of that enchanting spot.

‘ God has given us a placid and beautiful night ; we have seen the cypresses of Maumal

‘ Inclining their heads before the mountain breeze, the sweet-perfumed gales that smell of gillyflower,

‘ The dove singing her love on the branches of the *dauh*, and the sweet basil inclining its boughs to the limpid brook.’

“ A few days after their separation Abú Merwán addressed to her some verses on the same subject, knowing that she would answer him ; when she wrote to him these three verses, which are really invaluable.

‘ By thy life (thou sayest) that the garden has been rejoiced with our arrival ; I say, on the contrary, that it has only shown us hatred and ill-will.

‘ The brook has not murmured with pleasure at our approach ; the dove sung only to the object of her love.

‘ Heaven did not diminish the number of its stars, that we might observe it more freely.’”

Among the districts appertaining to Granada, the following deserve more particular mention. 1st. That of Loshah (Loxa), whence the Wizír Lisánu-d-dín draws his origin, and which extends a considerable distance through the country, comprising many towns, villages, and castles. The capital Loxa⁸⁷ stands on a charming spot on the banks of the river of Granada (the Shenil), and in the midst of groves, and brooks of limpid water. The distance from Loxa to Granada is one day’s march. 2nd. Beghah, commonly called Beighah, and the patronymic formed from which is Beyghy. The capital of this district is the town of Beghah (Vega), whose environs abound in wheat and fruits, and are watered by many springs

which irrigate and fertilize the neighbouring fields. Its territory produces also excellent saffron. 3rd. That of Wádi-ash (Guadix), which others call *Wádiu-l-eshit*,⁸⁸ and the capital of which is the city of that name, (Guadix,) a very fine city surrounded by orchards and brooks. The inhabitants are endowed with the gift of poetry, and great love for the sciences; the poet Abú-l-hasán Ibn Nasr,⁸⁹ describing this city, gives the following verses in praise of its river.

“ O Wádiu-l-eshit! my soul falls into ecstasies whenever I think of the
“ favours the Almighty has lavished upon thee.

“ By God, thy shade at noon, when the rays of the sun are the hottest, is so
“ fresh that those who walk on thy banks cannot stop to converse together.

“ The sun itself, seeking a remedy to its own ardour, directs its course
“ through thy shadowy bed.

“ Thy current smiles through the prismatic bubbles of the waters like the
“ skin of a variegated snake.

“ The trees that hang over thy soft inclined banks are so many steps to
“ descend to thy bed, while their boughs covered with blossom, and devoured
“ by burning thirst, are perpetually drinking of thy waters.”⁹⁰

But this enchanting river is not the only gift which God has lavished upon that privileged land. The district of Guadix is besides famous for its pure and wholesome air, its sweet waters, the delicacy of its fruits and vegetables, the richness of its mines, and the great profusion of medicinal plants that grow in its soil.⁹¹ It extends its jurisdiction over many towns and castles; among the latter is Hisn-Jaliánah,⁹² a fortress which is almost as large as a city, and whence the celebrated apples called *Al-jaliáni* take their name. Hisn-Jaliánah is twelve miles distant from Guadix. Another of the peculiarities of this district is that it contains one of the two chesnut trees that are famous all over Andalus for their size, and are described by several authors, and among others by Ibnu Jazzí-l-kehbí, the editor of the Travels of Ibnu Battúttah,⁹³ whose words are as follow:—“ Among the wonders of “ Andalus, one is the two chesnut trees, in the trunk of which a weaver may sit “ weaving; this is a known fact.” One of these prodigious trees is to be seen on a mountain in the neighbourhood of Guadix, the other is in the *Al-busherah*⁹⁴ (Alpuxarra) of Granada.

Al-munékab⁹⁵ (Almuñécar) is a sea-port belonging also to the government of Granada. It was there that 'Abdu-r-rahmán Ad-dákhel first landed when he came from Africa to conquer Andalus.

Toledo.

Another of the great cities belonging to the central division was Toleytalah, (Toledo),⁹⁶ which at the beginning of the 6th century of the Hijra became the capital of a kingdom founded by the Bení Dhí-l-nún,⁹⁷ one of the petty dynasties

which sprung out of the ruins of the Cordovan Khalifate. Kaysar (Cæsar), who is said to have founded Toledo, called it in his language *Zaleytah*,⁹⁸ which means in Arabic "thou art content;" but in the course of time the name was corrupted by the Arabs, who changed it into Toleytalah (Toledo).

During the reign of Bení Umeyyah all the territories subject to Toledo were designated under the generic name of *Al-thagheru-l-adání*, or lower frontier, to distinguish it from Saragossa and its districts, which were called *Al-thagheru-l-a'álí*, or upper frontier. Toledo was further known under the name of *Medínatu-l-molúk*, the city of the kings, owing to its having been the court of seventy-two kings of various infidel dynasties. We have said elsewhere that the Goths made it their capital; it is also supposed to have been for some time the residence of Suleymán, son of Dáúd, (on whom be peace!) as well as of Jesus, son of Mariam, and Dhú-l-karneyn (Alexander). It was there that Tárik, son of Zeyád, found the table of Suleymán, which formed part of the treasures which Ishbán, king of the Romans, and founder of Ishbílah, (as we have said elsewhere,) brought from the sack of Jerusalem. The table was made out of one solid emerald, and when presented by Músa to the Khalif Al-walíd was valued at one hundred thousand gold dinárs. It is generally believed now to be at Rome, but God only knows. This inestimable jewel was not the only treasure which Tárik found at Toledo; there were among other things one hundred and seventy royal diadems, set with pearls, rubies, and other precious stones; a spacious temple all filled with gold and silver vases, which temple is further said to have been of such dimensions as to have afforded, when its riches were removed, sufficient room for the Arab cavaliers to exercise in throwing the spear and other military sports. This latter circumstance indeed would seem almost incredible, had it not been related by trustworthy people and eye-witnesses. But God is all-knowing.

Toledo is built on the banks of the river Tajoh (Tagus), over which there once stood a magnificent bridge, consisting of only one arch, supported by large stone piers on both sides of the river. It measured three hundred *bá'as* in length, and eighty in width; but when the Amír Mohammed besieged and took Toledo he ordered the bridge to be destroyed.

The Amír 'Abbás Ibn Firnás has alluded to the taking of Toledo and the destruction of its bridge in the following verses:

"When morning came Toledo appeared deserted, and (like a bird) in the
"claws of a falcon.

"Its houses uninhabited, its streets without people, the whole city as
"empty and as silent as a tomb.

"The wrath of heaven has fallen heavily upon it; even the bridge through

“ which the inhabitants held communication with the infidels has not been
“ spared.”⁹⁹

All authors who have described Toledo say that it has pleasant orchards, a beautiful river, gardens, groves, fine fruits of every kind and description ; that its jurisdiction embraces extensive districts, good arable lands, rich meadows and pastures, fine cities, and strong castles : one of the peculiarities of the place being that wheat will keep under ground for a great number of years without decaying, and is transmitted in inheritance from father to son as any other article of property. The saffron, of which large quantities are yearly exported in caravans, is of itself a source of wealth to the inhabitants, as well as the tincture made with it, and which dyes of a beautiful butter colour.

The two following verses of an Andalusian poet on Toledo deserve to be transcribed here.

“ Toledo surpasses in beauty the most extravagant descriptions. She is
“ indeed the city of pleasures and delight.

“ God has lavished upon her all sorts of ornaments ; he has given her her
“ walls for a turban, her river for a girdle, and the branches of trees for
“ stars.”¹⁰⁰

The cities depending upon Toledo are Wádi-l-hajarah (Guadalaxara), Kal'atu Rabáh¹⁰¹ (Calatrava), and others ; but we shall not say at present any more about Toledo, and will return to it in the course of our narrative when we relate some of the events that took place within its walls.

The city of Malakah (Malaga) is another of the great capitals comprised in this division ; we shall describe it in the words of Ash-shakandí, the author to whom frequent allusion has been already made in the course of this work. “ Malaga,” he says, “ unites land and sea prospects, thus partaking of the advantages and
“ productions of both ; its environs are so covered with vines and orchards as to
“ make it almost impossible for the traveller to discover a piece of ground which
“ is not cultivated. Its towers, which I have seen, are like the stars in the sky—
“ as numerous, and shining as bright. It is intersected by a river which comes
“ to visit it in two seasons of the year—in winter and in the spring, when, rolling
“ its precipitous waters through deep ravines and down lofty hills, it empties
“ them into the sea within the very precincts of the city. But what ranks Malaga
“ far above any other country in the world is its figs called *Ar-rayl*, from *Rayah*,¹⁰²
“ which was the ancient name of the city ; I was told that they may be procured
“ in Baghdád, where they are considered as the greatest delicacy, and as to the
“ quantity annually exported by sea both in Moslem and Christian vessels, it is
“ so enormous that I shall not venture upon a computation, for fear of falling short

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“ of the real number. During my residence in that city I once travelled along
 “ the sea coast from Sohayl to Tish,¹⁰³ a distance of three days' march, and I
 “ declare I saw nothing else on the road but fig trees, whose branches, loaded
 “ with fruit, almost touched the ground, so that the little urchins of the villages
 “ plucked them without the least trouble, besides the great numbers that were
 “ scattered on the ground. Those of Tish are reckoned to be the best; it was
 “ of one of these figs that a Berber said, when he was asked how he liked it,
 “ ‘ thou askest me how I like it, and it has all melted down my throat,’ and, by
 “ Allah, the Berber was right, for I never tasted better figs in my life, and
 “ besides they are a blessing which God has refused to his country (Africa).

“ Another of the peculiarities of Malaga is the fabric of allowed and forbidden
 “ liquors, that called ‘ Malaga wine ’ having become proverbial. An anecdote
 “ is told of a Khalif, who, being on his death-bed, and on the point of breathing
 “ his last, was induced (as is the general custom) to ask the favours of God
 “ before departing from this life. They say that the Khalif, raising his hand,
 “ exclaimed, ‘ O Lord! among the many delightful things which thy paradise
 “ contains I ask thee for Malaga wine and Seville oil.’

“ Malaga is also famous for its manufactures of silks of all colours and patterns,
 “ some of which are so rich that a suit made out of them will cost many
 “ thousands; such are the brocades with beautiful drawings, and the names of
 “ Khalifs, Amírs, and other wealthy people, woven into them.¹⁰⁴

“ All the coast of Malaga may be compared to a port, so full is it at all times
 “ of vessels belonging either to the Moslems or to the Christians.”

Thus far Ash-shakandí; what follows is borrowed from other writers.

Malaga figs are famous all over the world for their sweetness and flavour; they are exported as far as India, China, and other remote countries, and are universally acknowledged to be superior to any growing in other lands. The poet Abú-l-hejáj Yúsef, son of the Sheikh Al-balawí,¹⁰⁵ quoted by Ibnu Sa'íd and other writers, says, speaking of them—

“ Malaga indeed bestows life with its figs; but it also causes death by
 “ them.

“ During my illness my physician forbade me to eat them; how little does
 “ he care for my life!”

Another poet, the Imám and preacher Abú 'Abdi-l-wahháb, from Malaga, has said,

“ Hems has no figs equal to those of Malaga, but its oils deserve particular
 “ mention.”¹⁰⁶

Hems is here intended for Seville, a city which was called so owing to a party of Syrians from Hems (Emesa) having settled in it soon after the conquest.

The compiler of the travels of Ibnu Battúttah, who quotes the preceding verses, attributes the first to the preacher Abú Mohammed 'Abdu-l-wahháb, a native of Malaga; the second he gives as the composition of the Kádí Abú 'Abdillah Ibn 'Abdi-l-málik, but God only knows.

The said Ibnu Battúttah, or rather the editor of his travels, describes this city in the following terms: "Malaga," he says, "is one of the principal cities of Andalus; it has an excellent territory, and abounds in fruits of all sorts; I saw once eight *ratl*¹⁰⁷ of grapes sold in its market for one small dirhem; the celebrated pomegranate named *Al-mursí*, and another kind called *Al-yacóti* (the ruby-coloured), grow on its soil; figs and almonds form a considerable staple of trade, and are exported in great quantities to distant countries in the East and West, as also its golden pottery, which is quite wonderful. It has a large mosque, *jámi*, very much renowned for its sanctity, with a very fine open court, all planted with beautiful orange trees."

To the west of Malaga lies an extensive district which comprises many towns and villages, and is known by the name of Sohayl,¹⁰⁸ owing to a certain mountain there, which is said to be the only spot in Andalus from whence the star Sohayl (Canopus) is visible. To the east, on the sea shore, is the city of Belesh¹⁰⁹ (Velez), which very much resembles Malaga in the abundance and good quality of its fruits; farther on, on the coast, is Nerjah (Nerja),¹¹⁰ which Ibnu Sa'id describes as a very large town, almost resembling a city in size, surrounded by orchards and gardens, and with a river so pleasant that it tempts the traveller to halt on its banks. Another fine town depending upon Malaga is that of Al-hamah¹¹¹ (Alhama), where there are springs of hot water close to the banks of the river. But let us pass to the description of Almeria.

Almeria.

Al-meriyah (Almeria) is situate at the bottom of a deep valley formed by two mountains, on one of which stands the famous castle of Kheyrán, so well known by its strength. This castle was built during the Khalifate of 'Abdu-r-rahmán An-nássir, but was afterwards considerably improved and enlarged by Kheyrán¹¹² the Slavonian, a freedman of Al-mansúr Ibn Abí 'A'mir, who, having usurped the royal power, appointed his friends and adherents to the government of the principal cities, and gave to this Kheyrán that of Almeria, where, during the civil war which followed the death of Al-mansúr, he declared himself independent. The castle was named after him. On the other mountain is built one of the suburbs, which, together with the city, is enclosed within very strong walls. Almeria, on the whole, is a very strong place, for besides its fortifications, and the high towers that surround it on every side, the city is as it were enclosed within a natural barrier formed by immense primitive rocks, as sharp and naked as if they had been passed through a sieve.

All authors agree in saying that the inhabitants of Almeria were at one time the wealthiest people in all Andalus, and those who carried on the most extensive trade, owing to which the population is said to have been very considerable, and the number of public baths and inns to have amounted to no less than one thousand, without counting those of its western suburb, called *Rabadhu-l-haus* (the suburb of the cistern), which was also amply provided with inns, markets, public baths, and manufactures of all kinds.

The river, which is the same as at Berja,¹¹³ also contributes no little to the ornament of the city and its environs, for out of the one hundred and twenty miles which make up the length of its course, the last forty, before reaching the sea, are through orchards, gardens, and groves, where the singing birds delight with their harmony the ears of the traveller.

We find in a certain author that one of the gates of Almeria was called *Bábu-l-okáb* (the gate of the eagle), owing to a figure of this bird which stood on the top of it from times of old, and was beautiful to behold. This, however, was not the only ancient relic to be found in the city, for it abounded in old remains of buildings, and all along the coast might be seen wonderful palaces and other stupendous structures of the ancient kings of the country.

There was in Almeria a dock-yard¹¹⁴ where very fine vessels were built; the coast was safe and well frequented. But what made Almeria superior to any other city in the world was its various manufactures of silks and other articles of dress, such as the *dibáj*,¹¹⁵ which is a sort of silken cloth surpassing in quality and durability any thing else manufactured in other countries; the *tiráz*,¹¹⁶ that costly stuff on which the names of Sultáns, Princes, and other wealthy individuals are inscribed, and of which no less than eight hundred looms existed at one time—of more inferior silks, such as the *holol*,¹¹⁷ and brocades, there were one thousand looms; the same number were continually employed in weaving the stuffs called *iskalátón*.¹¹⁸ There were also one thousand for weaving robes called *Al-jorjání* (Georgian), and another thousand for those called *Isbaháni* (from Isfahán), and a similar number for the *'Atáblí*.¹¹⁹ The manufacture of damask for curtains and turbans for the women, of gay and dazzling colours, employed a number of hands equal to that of those engaged in the manufacture of the above-mentioned articles. Almeria was also famous for the fabrication of all sorts of vases and utensils, whether of iron, copper, or glass.

All fruits growing on its soil partake of a sweetness and flavour rarely to be met with in other countries; to describe them all would be a hopeless task; the reader who wishes to acquire more information on the subject may consult an excellent history of this city composed by Abú Ja'far Ibn Khatímah,¹²⁰ with this title,

“ Advantages of Almeria over other cities in Andalus.” It is a very thick volume, of which we possess a copy, but it is in Africa with the rest of our library; we trust in God, who has the power of collecting what is scattered and joining what is separated, that he will restore us to the possession of our books and chattels.

But we cannot leave the description of this city without copying the words of Ash-shakandí, for although by following this method we may now and then be guilty of repetition, yet it is evident that our information is considerably increased by comparing the accounts of different writers. “ Almeria,” says Ash-shakandí, “ is an opulent and magnificent city, whose fame has spread far and wide. God has endowed its inhabitants with various gifts, such as a temperate climate, and abundance of fruits; they are handsome, well made, good natured, very hospitable, very much attached to their friends, and are above all things very refined in their manners, and very elegant in their dress. Its coast is the finest in all the Mediterranean, as well as the safest and the most frequented.

“ In Almeria are found agates of different shades, which the nobles and other wealthy people of Morocco put in their *barárid*,¹²¹ as also the polished marbles called *Al-malúki* (Royal). Its river, called *Wádi Bejénah*,¹²² is one of the pleasantest streams in the world, both its banks being planted with orchards, gardens, and trees, so that it looks like a half-smiling mouth in the midst of two rosy cheeks covered with whiskers; and certainly the poet was right who, describing the territory washed by this river, said,

‘ It is a land where if thou walk the stones are pearls, the dust is musk, and the gardens paradises.’¹²³

“ Almeria was at one time under the sway of the famous Káid Ibn Maymún,¹²⁴ who made himself so conspicuous by the great naval victories he gained over the Christians, and who, scouring the seas in all directions, stopped the navigation of the infidels, ruined their trade, made an incursion into Romaniah (Italy), attacked its ports, and filled the hearts of the inhabitants with terror and consternation. Such was the terror of his name that, quoting the words of a poet,

‘ If the enemy was awake, he dreaded him,—if asleep, his sharp-edged sword played upon his throat.’¹²⁵

“ Almeria was the greatest mart in Andalus; Christians of all nations came to its port to buy and sell, and they had factories¹²⁶ established in it. From thence the Christian merchants who came to its port travelled to other parts and markets (in the interior of the country), where they loaded their vessels

“ with such goods as they wanted, owing to which, and to its being a very
 “ opulent and large city, filled with passengers and merchants, the produce of
 “ the tithe imposed upon the goods and paid by the Christian merchants
 “ amounted to very considerable sums, and exceeded that collected in any
 “ other sea-port.

“ Costly silken robes of the brightest colours are manufactured in Almeria.”
 Thus far Ash-shakandí.

Some of the districts surrounding Almeria deserve mention. One of them is that of Berjah (Berja), where lead is to be found in great abundance. Its capital, Berja, is situate on a very pretty river called Wádi-'Adhra¹²⁷ (the river of Adra), whose banks are covered with trees and flowers. A poet has said very happily,

“ When one comes to Berja on the road to Almeria there is no remedy
 “ but to stop there and desist from the journey,

“ For indeed its houses and gardens are so many paradises, while the roads
 “ leading to them are so many hells.”¹²⁸

Hisn-Shinsh¹²⁹ is a fine town distant one day's march from Almeria. Its territory abounds in mulberry trees, by means of which a prodigious quantity of silk-worms are reared. The river of Tabernash (Tabernas) passes close to this town.

“ Jayyén”¹³⁰ (Jaen), says Ash-shakandí in his *risáleh*, “ is the citadel of Andalus ; Jaen.
 “ for no city can be compared with it for abundance of grain, number of valiant
 “ soldiers, nor for the strength and solidity of its fortifications. Indeed during
 “ the last civil war and its disastrous campaigns the infidels had more than one
 “ opportunity of showing their inability to compete with the Moslems, since as
 “ many times as they appeared before the walls of that city they were severely
 “ repulsed, obliged to raise the siege, and to fly further than the Pleiades,¹³¹ and
 “ to make themselves as scarce in the surrounding districts as the eggs of the
 “ pelican are among the rocks.”¹³²

“ Jaen is not destitute of ulemas and poets. It is the birth-place of many
 “ illustrious individuals in all professions, and the sciences are cultivated in it
 “ with as great an ardour and enthusiasm as in any part of Andalus. It is generally
 “ known by the name of *Jayyénu-l-harír*¹³³ (Jaen of the silk), owing to the extensive
 “ cultivation of mulberry trees for the rearing of silk worms within Jaen and in
 “ the environs.

“ It may also be said in praise of Jaen that it extends its jurisdiction over
 “ districts like that of Ubedha (Ubeda), where the vines are in such abundance
 “ that their fruit cannot be sold on account of its excessive plenty, and like
 “ that of Bayésah (Baeza), which is famous for its saffron which is exported in
 “ great quantities by land and water.

“ The first-mentioned district (Ubeda) offers another very striking peculiarity, viz., that its inhabitants are all very fond of music and dancing ; so that thou wilt find among them dancing girls who are famous for their beauty and admirable shape, and who dance with great elegance and taste. They are also very expert in playing with swords, and cups, in drawing horoscopes, untying knots, and finding out hidden things.”¹³⁴



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

CHAPTER III.

Western district—Seville—Xerez—Gibraltar—Tarifa—Beja—Badajos—Merida—Lisbon—Silves.

ISHBILIAH (Seville) was one of the finest cities of Andalus. We have stated elsewhere (following the words of Ibn An-naththám) that it was founded by Ishbán, king of the Romans. However, the building of this city is by others attributed to another king of the Romans whose name was Julius, and who was the first to take the title or appellation of Kaysar (Cæsar). Which of the two was its real founder we are unable to determine. They say that when Cæsar came to Andalus, and saw the spot which is now occupied by Seville, he was very much struck with the beauty, extent, and apparent fertility of the country all around him; that he was also very much pleased with the luxuriance and fine vegetation of the mountainous district (now) called Asharaf (Axarafe), and therefore determined upon building a city in that spot. Having chosen a convenient situation on the banks of the *Wádi-l-'adhem* (Guadalquivir),¹ he began the building of his city, which he surrounded with strong stone walls, and in the centre of which he erected two citadels of wonderful structure, which he named *Al-akháwin* (the two sisters).² Kaysar, moreover, fixed his residence in his new city, which became thus the capital of his kingdom, and was known ever after by the name of *Juliah-Romíyah*,³ which its founder gave to it, being a compound of his own name (Julius) and that of his native country (Romah).

Seville, as we have already remarked, became also the capital of Andalus during the Gothic domination, for the kings of this race used to divide their court between four principal cities, viz. Seville, Cordova, Carmona, and Toledo; and to reside in one of these four cities, according to the different seasons of the year.

One of the authors who has described Seville expresses himself in the following terms:—"Seville is built on the banks of the Guadalquivir, also known by the name of *Wádi Kortubah* (the river of Cordova). A very handsome bridge of boats, fastened together by means of iron chains, serves as a communication for

“ the people living on the two banks of the river.⁴ The city itself is fine and well built ; the squares are large, and the market-places commodious and abundantly provided with every necessary, as also with articles of trade of the most expensive kind, which afford great gain to the merchants. The people of Seville are said to be wealthy ; their principal traffic consists in their oils, which they ship to distant parts of the East and West. The olive tree grows very luxuriantly in all the districts dependent on the city, but above all, in that called Axarafe,⁵ which is an extensive tract of land measuring about forty miles in length, and nearly as much in width, formed of gentle hills of a reddish earth, and where there are forests of olive and fig trees planted so thickly as to afford the passengers who travel through them a complete shelter in the hottest summer day. The Axarafe contains besides a very large population scattered in farm houses, or living in towns and villages, which have also their market-places, their baths,—fine buildings, and other conveniences and comforts only to be met with in cities of the first order.”

The author of the *Minháju-l-fakar* (open way to reflection) says that Seville was one of the handsomest cities in the world, and its inhabitants famous for their indolent habits, and their love of pleasure, which in them was almost proverbial. They led a most luxurious and dissipated life, which, the author observes, “ was chiefly owing to the delightful river that flows through their territory, and which has not its equal in the world. It is navigable for large vessels, and is always filled with pleasure-boats kept by the inhabitants, and by fishing or trading vessels : in the opinion of some it surpasses in beauty the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Nile. Its banks are covered with fruit trees, forming a sort of canopy over the river, so that one may sail in it sheltered from the rays of the sun, and listening to the charming melody of the singing birds. The journey along its banks is equally pleasant, and one may travel the distance of ten parasangs (thirty miles) through clusters of buildings and farm houses, high towers and strong castles, forming a continued city. The tide is perceptible in the river of Seville at a distance of seventy-two miles from the sea. It also abounds in fish, of which the daily consumption is almost incredible. The amount of taxes paid by the city of Seville only, during the Khalifate of Al-hakem Ibn Hishám, is stated at one hundred and thirty-five thousand dinárs.”

Seville and its territory was also known by the name of Hems (Emesa), as we have said elsewhere ; for when the lands of Andalus were divided among the Arab settlers it fell to the lot of the people of Emesa in Syria, whose banner immediately follows that of the people of Damascus in the processions at Medina.

Various are the works of art and splendid buildings described by the authors

who have written about Seville ; but the most amazing of all is unquestionably the tower attached to the great mosque, which was built during the reign of Ya'kúb Al-mansúr. As a piece of architecture it is unparalleled in the world. Ibnu Sa'id mentions also several spots in the vicinity of Seville to which the inhabitants used to resort for the sake of recreation and indulgence ; one was *Tarayana* (Triana),⁶ one of the suburbs attached to the city, the other *Kabtal*,⁷ an island on the Guadalquivir.

Another of the peculiarities of Seville is that figs and oil will keep for a considerable length of time without being spoilt ; the sugar cane grows in its territory ; and the worm called *kermes*,⁸ which dyes of a colour superior to the lac of India, is also found in great abundance on the oak trees. But, indeed, were we to enumerate all the excellences of its soil, we should protract this work to an interminable length. However, as Seville is one of the cities described by Ash-shakandí in his *risáleh*, and this with his usual accuracy and eloquence, we shall here quote his words :—“ Seville,” says that learned and most accomplished writer, “ is to be
 “ praised for many things : mildness of temperature, purity of air, fine buildings,
 “ good streets, picturesque environs, and abundance of provisions and commodities
 “ of all sorts. This latter requisite indeed gave rise to that saying, so common
 “ among the people of Andalus—‘ If thou seekest for birds’ milk, by Allah thou
 “ shalt find it in Seville.’ Nor can I pass in silence its beautiful river, the
 “ Guadalquivir, in which the ebb is felt at a distance of seventy-two miles, and
 “ which the poet Ibnu Saffár describes in that very ingenious distich—

‘ The breeze falls playfully on the river, and, lifting up the skirts of its robe,
 ‘ agitates the surface of its waters ; the stream, resisting the outrage, hastens
 ‘ down to revenge it.

‘ The ring-dove laughs on its banks from the excess of his love, and the
 ‘ whole scene is covered with the veil of tranquillity and peace.’⁹

“ But this is neither the time nor the place to explain the phenomenon of
 “ the tide. Both banks of the Guadalquivir are covered with pleasure-gardens,
 “ orchards, vines, and yew trees,¹⁰ in such profusion that I doubt whether there is
 “ any river in the world to compete with it in this respect ; and let this not be
 “ taken as an exaggeration, for I once questioned a very intelligent man, who had
 “ travelled through Egypt, about the Nile, and he told me that that famous river
 “ had neither the verdure, nor the orchards, gardens and pleasure-grounds, which
 “ the Guadalquivir has on its banks. I also asked a traveller who had resided in
 “ Baghdád, and he gave me a similar answer about the Tigris : in fact, the
 “ Guadalquivir can only be compared to a paradise, for not only are the districts
 “ watered by it the most delightful regions that can be imagined, but the inhabitants

“ on both its banks are the merriest people on earth, always singing, playing on
 “ various instruments, and drinking wine, which among them is not considered
 “ forbidden, as long as it is used with moderation, and does not cause intoxication,
 “ which leads to perversity and vice. It is true that there have been at times in
 “ Seville governors and Sultáns, who, being firmly attached to religion, and the
 “ strict observance of its ordinances, have done every thing in their power to check
 “ the evil; but all their attempts have been vain, and they have never succeeded
 “ in eradicating it entirely. The Sevillians are generally believed to be the most
 “ frivolous of men, and the most witty and jocose; they are very much inclined to
 “ jesting, but sometimes their satirical propensity leads them to break out into the
 “ grossest injuries and calumny; this is indeed so inveterate an evil among them
 “ that it has become like a gnawing worm, and has contaminated all the classes of
 “ society; and the corruption has gone so far that whoever follows not their
 “ example, and indulges not in all these excesses,—whoever is not a calumniator
 “ and a slanderer of his neighbours, is sure to be hated by them most cordially.

“ Respecting the Asharaf (Axarafe) of Seville much has been said by various
 “ authors; it is thus described by a poet, in a composition which he addressed to
 “ the Sultán Al-mu'atamed Ibn 'Abbád,—

‘ Seville is a young bride; her husband is 'Abbád;

‘ Her diadem Asharaf; her necklace the river.’¹¹

“ This district has already been described by me: I shall only add here that it
 “ surpasses in beauty and fertility every other spot on the face of the earth; that
 “ the oil of its olives is exported as far as Alexandria; that its hamlets and villages
 “ are much superior to those of other countries in the extent and commodi-
 “ ousness, and the fine designs and ornament, of their houses, which, from the
 “ continual white-washing, look like so many stars in a sky of olive trees. An
 “ Andalusian, who had visited both Cairo and Baghdád, being once asked whether
 “ he thought either of those cities superior to Seville, is said to have answered,
 “ after expatiating long in praise of Seville and its Axarafe,—

‘ Axarafe is a forest without wild beasts; its river a Nile without
 ‘ crocodiles.’¹²

“ I have heard also of the mountains called *Jebelu-r-rahmah*, (the mountain of
 “ mercy),¹³ which are in the neighbourhood of Seville, and where fig trees of the
 “ species called *Al-kúttí*¹⁴ (the Gothic), and *Ash-sha'rí*¹⁵ (the hairy), grow in great
 “ abundance; and I have been told by people who have travelled into almost every
 “ quarter of the globe that these two kinds of figs grew nowhere in such perfection
 “ as at Seville.

“ Musical instruments of all sorts may at any time be procured in Seville, where