

Travellers from distant lands, men of all ranks and professions in life, following various religions, princes, ambassadors, merchants, pilgrims, theologians, and poets, who were conversant with edifices of this kind and had surveyed this, all agreed that they had never seen in the course of their travels any thing that could be compared to it; they said more, they confessed that they had never heard or imagined in all the course of their lives of any building similar to this; and all the Andalusian writers bear testimony that it was in their time the chief wonder which travellers to Andalus in those ages desired to behold. Indeed, had this palace possessed nothing more than the terrace of polished marble²³ overhanging the matchless gardens, with the golden hall and the circular pavilion, and the works of art of every sort and description;—had it had nothing else to boast of but the masterly workmanship of the structure, the solidity of its foundations, the boldness of the design, the beauty of the proportions, the elegance of the ornaments, hangings, and decorations, whether of transparent marble or glittering gold, the columns that seemed from their symmetry and smoothness as if they had been turned by turning-machines,²⁴ the paintings that equalled the choicest gardens, the artificial lake so solidly constructed, the cistern perpetually filled with clear and limpid water, and the amazing fountains, with figures of living beings;—no imagination, however rich and fertile, could have formed an idea of it. Praise be ascribed to the Almighty God, who allowed those contemptible creatures to design and build such enchanting palaces as these, and who permitted them to inhabit them as a sort of recompense in this world, and in order that the faithful might be stimulated to follow the path of virtue by the reflection that, charming and delightful as the pleasures enjoyed by their owners were, they were still very far from giving even a remote idea of those reserved for the true believer in the celestial paradise! We shall further see how this abode of contentment and mirth, how this splendid and magnificent city, how these renowned bowers and gardens, were afterwards converted by the Berbers into places of desolation and ruin. There is no God but God! the great! the Almighty!

This naturally brings to our recollection the great palace which Al-mansúr Ibn Dhí-n-nún,²⁵ King of Toledo, built in that city, and in the construction of which he is said to have lavished countless treasures. He not only employed all the best artists of his age, but he sent also for architects, geometricians, and painters, from distant lands; made them execute the most fantastic and wonderful works, and rewarded their labours with the greatest munificence. Adjoining to his palace he planted a most luxuriant garden, in which he made an artificial lake, and in the centre of this he built a kiosk of stained glass, adorned with gold. His architect so contrived this, that by certain geometrical rules the water of the lake was made to ascend to

the top of the dome over the kiosk, and then, dropping at both sides, join the waters of the lake. In this room the Sultán could sit, untouched by the water, which fell every where round him, and refreshed the air in the hot season; sometimes, too, wax tapers were lighted within the room, producing an admirable effect upon the transparent walls of the kiosk. But of this more when we come to the narrative of the Kings of Toledo.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

CHAPTER IV.

Aqueduct of Cordova—Built by 'Abdu-r-rahmán III.—The palace and city of Az-záhirah—Christian churches in Cordova—Tribunal of appeal.

AN Andalusian historian has said that such were An-nássir's passion and taste for building that besides the erection of the magnificent palace that we have just described, and the considerable additions made to the great mosque, he also undertook and completed during his reign several public works for the improvement and ornament of his capital. Of this number was a most magnificent aqueduct, which conveyed excellent water from the mountains of Cordova to the palace of *An-na'úrah* (the water-wheel), in the western part of the city, by means of tubes geometrically arranged over arches connected one with another. The waters thus conveyed, in admirable order, and by dint of extraordinary science, were discharged into a vast reservoir, on which was a colossal lion of wonderful workmanship, and so beautifully imitated that the sight of it only was sufficient to cast fear into the hearts of the beholders, and that none devised by the Sultáns of former times had been seen equal to it, either in likeness or in magnificence. It was covered with the purest gold, and its two eyes were two jewels of inestimable value, which sent forth torrents of light. The waters of the aqueduct entered into the hind part of this múnster, and then poured out from his mouth into the aforesaid basin, which circumstance, united to the beautiful appearance of the animal, to its terrible and overawing aspect, to the two eyes which shone forth as if they belonged to a human creature, never failed altogether to produce the most extraordinary effect in the minds of those who beheld it for the first time. After supplying this palace, and irrigating with profusion every corner of its gardens, notwithstanding their great extent, the superabundant water went to augment the Guadalquivir. Every author we have consulted on the subject agrees in saying that this aqueduct, with the reservoir, and the figure pouring the water into it, must be considered as one of the most amazing structures ever raised by man; for if we attend to the length of

Aqueduct of
Cordova.

it, to the unfavourable nature of the ground through which it was conducted, the magnitude and solidity of the construction, the height of the piers over which the water was made to flow, sometimes ascending, sometimes descending, we shall scarcely find among the works of ancient kings which have reached us any thing to be compared to it.¹

Built by 'Abdu-
r-rahmán III.

The building of this aqueduct lasted fourteen months, counting from the day on which the preparatory works in the mountains were commenced to that on which the water began to flow over the arches, go into the lion, and then pour down into the reservoir. This took place on a Thursday, the third of Jumádí-l-akhar; on the same day the Khalif An-nássir invited to his palace of An-na'úrah a large party of the most illustrious citizens of Cordova, and gave them a most splendid entertainment; after which he distributed considerable largesses among his guests, and lavished all sorts of rich presents on the architects and geometricians who had directed the work, although they had already been most munificently remunerated from the royal treasury.²

Az-záhirah.

We have to mention another palace and city built by the famous Hájb, Mohammed Ibn Abí 'A'mir, commonly called Al-mansúr, although information respecting it is by no means so abundant with us as we should wish. We know that it existed at some distance from Cordova on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and that it was a most splendid structure, second to none but the palace of Az-zahrá, built by 'Abdu-r-rahmán; but, owing to the circumstance of its being destroyed by the Berbers, soon after the death of its founder,³ during the disastrous civil wars which brought to the ground the tottering throne of the Khalifs, the memory of it was soon effaced, and such particulars as have been handed down to us give but few details. Indeed, there are not wanting authors who suppose that it also was built by 'Abdu-r-rahmán An-nássir, confounding it no doubt with Az-zahrá, and being led into error by the similarity of the names;⁴ but, as Ibnu Khaldún has clearly shown, they were two distinct and separate cities; and the fact is further proved by the testimony of contemporary writers, as Ibnu Hayyán and others: they all agree that when Al-mansúr usurped the Khalifate, during the minority of Hishám, son of Al-hakem, he built for his own security and residence a palace, whither he transferred his treasures, stores, and arms. The edifice, which stood on the banks of the Guadalquivir, not far from Az-zahrá, was begun in the year three hundred and sixty-eight of the Hijra (A. D. 978-9), the greatest part of it being completed in the short space of two years. Al-mansúr betook himself to it, with his family, servants, guards, and adherents, in the year three hundred and seventy (A. D. 980-1). He, moreover, established in it the offices of the state, built magazines for grain, and erected mills; he also granted the adjoining lands to

his Wizírs, Kátibs, Generals, and favourites, who lost no time in building magnificent houses and palaces, and planting gardens in the neighbourhood ; people of all ranks and professions, anxious to fix their abodes near the ruler of the state, imitated their example, and built all round, so that in a very short time the suburbs of Az-záhirah joined those of Cordova.

I recollect having read in an historical work, the composition of the author of the *Kitábu-l-azhár wa-l-anwár*,⁵ which I saw in the library of Fez, the following anecdote respecting Al-mansúr, and the splendour and magnificence with which he used to surround his person while residing in his palace of Az-záhirah. There came once to the court of Al-mansúr ambassadors from the most powerful of the Christian kings of Andalus ; their object was to ascertain the real strength of the Moslems, and gain, if possible, a knowledge of their internal affairs. No sooner did Al-mansúr hear of their arrival than he issued orders for their suitable entertainment, and began to make preparations previous to their admission to his presence. He ordered that a vast lake, several miles in length, which was in the gardens of Az-záhirah, should be planted entirely with water-lilies ;⁶ he then caused four *kintars* of gold, and four *kintars* of silver, to be cast into as many small pieces as there were water-lilies in the lake, and ordered that one of those pieces should be introduced into the cavity of each water-lily. All this having been executed agreeably to his instructions, Al-mansúr dispatched a messenger to the Christian ambassadors, and bade them appear in his presence the next morning at dawn. The Christians did as they were desired, and found Al-mansúr sitting in the great hall of his palace, in a balcony overlooking the lake ; at sunrise one thousand Sclavonians dressed in silken robes embroidered with silver and gold, their waists being girt by sashes of gold tissue, and carrying in their hands gold and silver trays, made their appearance, and the ambassadors were very much struck to see the beauty of their personal appearance, the magnificence of their dresses and ornaments, and the admirable order in which they drew themselves up on each side of Al-mansúr's throne,—the five hundred with robes of gold tissue and gold trays to the right, and the five hundred with robes of silver tissue and silver trays to the left. The Christians, in the meanwhile, not knowing what was meant, were dumb with amazement ; but when the first sunbeams shone upon the water-lilies in the lake, all the Sclavonians left their ranks at a signal from their chief, hastened to the spot, and began plucking the flowers, placing those that had the silver pieces inside in the gold trays, and those that had the gold pieces in the silver trays, and when every water-lily on the lake had thus been plucked and placed in the silver and gold trays, they appeared again in the presence of Al-mansúr, and deposited their gatherings at his feet, thus raising a mountain of silver and gold before his throne. When the Christian

ambassadors saw this, they were seized with astonishment, and remained deeply convinced of Al-mansúr's immense resources and countless treasures; they addressed him in the most humble terms, asked for a truce, which was granted, and returned to their country, where they said to their king, "Do not make war upon these people, for, by the Lord, we have seen the earth yielding them its hidden treasures."

It is related by Abú Idrís Al-khaulání that as Al-mansúr was one day sitting in his palace of Az-záhirah, reflecting on its beauties, listening to the murmur of the running waters and to the songs of rare birds, inhaling the perfumes of the scented flowers, and regaling his eyes with the emerald green of the bowers and meadows,—as his whole soul in short was absorbed in the contemplation of the manifold beauties surrounding him on every side,—suddenly tears rolled down his cheeks, and he exclaimed, in deep sorrow, "O Az-záhirah! may the Almighty Lord save thee from the hands of the demon of war, who will ere long accomplish thy destruction!" and Al-mansúr, after saying this, wept bitterly and hid his face with both his hands. Then one of his favourites who was present said to him, "What ails thee, O Al-mansúr? What words are these? What is the meaning of expressions which thy lips never uttered before; and how comest thou to be assailed by thoughts so melancholy and sad as these, when the like of them never before entered thy mind?" "God grant," said Al-mansúr, "that my prediction be not fulfilled; for if my presentiments tell me truth, the fire of civil discord will soon rage within the precincts of this palace, and all the beauties of Az-záhirah will ere long be effaced,—all traces of it will disappear from the face of the earth, this splendid mansion will be pulled down and converted into a heap of ruins, the gardens transformed into a dreary desert, my treasures will be squandered and scattered, and what was formerly the scene of pleasure and mirth will be changed into a spot of desolation and ruin."

Al-khaulání continues: "Alas! this prophecy of Al-mansúr's was speedily fulfilled, as is well known; for his son Al-mudhfer, who after his death succeeded him in the command of the army and the management of public affairs, had neither the abilities nor the popularity of his father, and the power of the Khalifs began to decline. However, after the death of Al-mudhfer, whose administration did not last long, the reins of government were taken by his brother 'Abdu-r-rahmán, surnamed *Sanjiúl*,⁷ who was soon afterwards deposed and put to death by a successful rebel, a prince of the royal blood, named Mohammed Ibn Hishám Ibn 'Abdi-l-jabbár, who afterwards assumed the honourable appellation of Al-muhdí-billah⁸ (the directed by God). This Mohammed collected an army in the provinces, marched against the capital, which he entered, and having

“ succeeded in securing the persons of 'Abdu-r-rahmán and of his principal partisans, put them all to death. The rebels then repaired to Az-záhirah, which they levelled with the ground, as being the residence of the usurpers against whom the war was raised. So this Al-muhdí, whom Al-mansúr had not thought worthy his notice while he lived, not only cut off his lineage and snatched away the empire from the hands of his posterity, but demolished the very edifices which he had erected. The power of the Bení 'A'mir vanished for ever, and as a poet has remarked,—

‘ Hajún will no longer be As-safá's faithful companion, the pilgrims will no longer meet in Mekka to hold nightly confabulations.

‘ Indeed, we ourselves shall perish, like the course of time and the passing away of successive generations.’ ”⁹

Nor was the havoc and ruin confined to Az-záhirah only. The same fate befel Az-zahrá and other palaces raised by the Bení Umeyyah, for during the civil commotions which disturbed the capital, and the struggles of the contending parties to secure the empire, that splendid palace and city, where so many treasures had been spent by 'Abdu-r-rahmán and by his son Al-hakem, was completely destroyed, and vanished like evening; the royal chambers were plundered of their costly furniture and tapestry, every object of art was scattered, and the whole building transformed into a heap of ruins; it is even asserted that many of the precious articles which these palaces contained, such as arms, vases, jewels, and the like, were sold in Baghdád and other cities of the East.¹⁰

Abú Nasr Al-fat'h says in his *Matmah* that the Wizír Hazm Ibn Jehwar¹¹ happening once to pass with a friend of his by the palace of Az-zahrá, which in his time had already been converted into a haunt of wild beasts, he pointed to it and exclaimed,—

“ I once asked that house, whose inhabitants have now exterminated one another,—where are thy owners, the eminent lords who ruled over us?

“ And she answered me,—here they lived for a while, but they are now gone; they have vanished without my knowing where.”¹²

They say also that a holy man who lived in those days, one of those austere and pious Moslems whose thoughts are entirely consecrated to God, having once directed his steps towards Az-záhirah, when he came in sight of it was so much struck by the magnificence and size of the building, the luxuriance and excellent arrangement of the gardens, and the profusion of costly ornament and gilding lavished on it, that he could not help exclaiming,—

“ O palace of the kings! every house in this country has contributed to thy

“ ornament and perfection : thou shalt also (when in ruins) afford materials for
“ every house.”¹³

Few days had elapsed since that pious and holy man had made his prayer when all the treasures of Az-záhirah were plundered and scattered over the country, and the building itself was levelled with the ground, as we have previously stated, in consequence of the horrid and disastrous civil war which soon arose in Andalus, and from which no family or tribe escaped without contributing some victim. Praise be ascribed to God, whose decrees are infallibly executed upon his creatures ! There is no God but Him ! the high ! the great !

Christian
Churches.

The Christians, it appears, had likewise in Cordova a church to which pilgrims came from distant lands. It was called Santa Maria,¹⁴ and was held by them in great veneration and respect. They had besides, as Ibnu Hayyán relates, other churches and chapels within and out of the city, and some monasteries in the recesses of the neighbouring mountains, wherein their impious and abominable rites were performed in the very faces of the Moslems. But their principal church was the above-mentioned. The poet Ibn Shoheyd¹⁵ has preserved us the following anecdote respecting this church. “ I once entered at night,” says he, “ into the
“ principal Christian church ; I found it all strewed with green branches of myrtle,
“ and planted with cypress trees.¹⁶ The noise of the thundering bells resounded in
“ my ears, the glare of the innumerable lamps dazzled my eyes ; the priests, decked
“ in rich silken robes of gay and fanciful colours, girt by girdle cords,¹⁷ advanced
“ to adore Jesus. Every one of those present had banished mirth from their
“ countenances, and expelled from their minds all agreeable ideas ; and if they
“ directed their steps towards the marble font it was merely to take sips of water
“ with the hollow of their hands. A priest then rose and stood among them, and
“ taking the wine-cup in his hands prepared to consecrate it ; he applied to the
“ liquor his parched lips, as dark as the dusky lips of a beautiful maid ;¹⁸ the
“ fragraney of its contents captivated his senses, but when he had tasted the
“ delicious liquor, its sweetness and flavour seemed to overpower him.” On leaving
the church Ibn Shoheyd said extempore the following verses :

“ By the Lord of mercy ! This mansion of God is pervaded with the smell
“ of the fermented red liquor, so pleasant to the youth.

“ It was to a girl¹⁹ that their prayers were addressed, it was for her that
“ they put on their gay tunics instead of humiliating themselves before the
“ Almighty.

“ The priests, wishing us to stay long among them, began to sing round us
“ with their books²⁰ in their hands ;

“ Every wretch presented us the palm of his withered hand (with the holy water), but they were like the bat whose safety consists in his hatred for light ;

“ Offering us every attraction that their drinking of new wine or their eating of swine’s flesh can afford.”²¹

It has been said that one of the great privileges enjoyed by this illustrious city was that its jurisdiction in certain legal and religious matters was long acknowledged in the tribunals of Maghreb ; so much so that judges used to abstain from pronouncing upon some legal points, saying—this belongs to the jurisdiction of Cordova. As this subject, however, has been one of great dispute among the learned, we deem it convenient to state here a few of the arguments produced in favour of or against the proposition.

Tribunal of appeal.

The Imám Ibn ’Orfah, (the mercy of God be upon him !) treating about the conditions required from an Imám who is to pronounce judgment in conformity with one of the approved sects, says, “ And if both the parties concerned should resist the judge’s sentence there are three ways of remedying it, namely, to have recourse to the decisions of Al-bájí,²² or to the jurisdictional tribunals of Cordova, or to the civil law of Sahnún,²³ the judge still deciding in conformity with the sect he may follow from among the sects professed by the people of Medína.”

Al-márazí disputes the opinion delivered by Ibn ’Orfah ; he agrees as to the first appeal being right, but he denies the second, and declares that it is one of the errors propagated by At-tortoshí²⁴ in his work treating on the legal regulations of the people of Cordova, and adds that it is a gross mistake, exhibiting great ignorance on the part of the author ; the third however he admits.

Ibn Ghází entertains the same opinion as Al-márazí, and says that the whole error originated in a mistake made by At-tortoshí and copied by Ibn ’Orfah. Another author, Ibn Shás,²⁵ has also discussed this subject at full length ; but let us hear what our lord and ancestor Sídí Abú ’Abdillah Al-makkarí At-telemsání, who was Kádí-l-kodá (chief of the Kádís) at Fez, says in his work entitled “ foundations of civil law among the people of Cordova,”²⁶ after treating this subject at large. “ These were the duties incumbent upon the office of Kádí in Andalus, whence they were introduced and generally adopted in this country (Africa), for while we were disputing with each other for the jurisdiction of Medína, and decided for that of Kúfah, owing to its having been the residence of a greater number of the companions of the Prophet and heads of the law, such as ’Alí, Ibn Mes’úd, and others, the people of Cordova refused to acknowledge it, and decided in all matters without the assistance of the lawyers in those cities ; but God has spared my life and I have seen wonderful changes of fortune.

“ Alas ! at the time I am writing Cordova and its inhabitants have been lost to the Moslems, and the vices of that capital have cast their ominous influence over the rest of Andalus. And why?—because Satan resolved to accomplish the ruin of truth, and he obtained his purpose ; for the Deceiver ceased not tempting and enticing its inhabitants until he succeeded in implanting in it some of the appendages of idolatry, such as lamentations for the dead,²⁷ false pride, arrogance, incredulity, slander, vanity, divination, astrology, chiromancy, the art of drawing omens from accidental causes,²⁸ and similar impious practices ; besides the swearing of oaths, the telling of lies, and the committing every description of sins, the calling each other by opprobrious nicknames, and various other abominable practices which we are taught to avoid. Nor did the evil, when once it raged, stop at Cordova, for it spread widely among the people of other cities as soon as the power of the Sultáns of Cordova passed into the hands of the kings of small states.²⁹ The evil increased so much that they even neglected to appoint a head of the law,³⁰ but took as a foundation the old customs, and in this manner the love of poetry, eloquence, intonation, genealogy, and other sciences cultivated by the ancients, lost every charm for their hearts, and instead they gave all their attention to studies condemned by the heads of the law.”

The Hafedh Ibn Gházi, after quoting the preceding passage from the work of our illustrious ancestor, says as follows. “ I was told by a trustworthy person whom I once met, that when the very learned doctor, Abú Yahya Ash-sherif At-telem-sáni, came to the court of Fez, and began to give public lectures in the new city³¹ upon the art of commenting upon and explaining the Korán, the reigning Sultán, whose name was Abú Sa’id Al-meríní Al-hafíd, convoked the principal theologians of the place to a meeting in his palace, to discuss various points of law about which Al-makkarí entertained a different opinion from the rest of the profession ; and that, although the doctors had almost agreed among themselves to repudiate and condemn his doctrines, they could not help saying when they heard him express his opinion that he had not gone further in his doubts than other famous theologians, as Ibn Roshd and his disciples, Al-mateytí, and others among the people of Cordova.”

This is what we have thought fit to say about Cordova in the present Book. We shall, however, occasionally return to the subject when we treat about the Khalifs of the house of Umeyyah, who resided in it, making it the capital of their empire, ornamenting it with splendid buildings, magnificent palaces, and stupendous works of public utility. In this, as well as in the other Books, our narrative has been borrowed from the best Andalusian as well as Eastern authors, sometimes transcribing literally from their works, but mostly abridging and extracting their

accounts. In so doing we have endeavoured to select the most interesting as well as the most faithful records, by choosing among the descriptions of Cordova, which are to be met with in almost every book upon the history or topography of Andalus, those that appeared to us most interesting and true.

We shall now proceed to write the narrative of the occupation of that country by the Moslems, from the year ninety-two of the Hijra (A. D. 711), when it was first subdued by the Berbers, commanded by Músa's freedmen, until the moment when it pleased the Almighty God to chastise the sins of the Moslems, and to permit that the impious Christian should put his foot upon their necks. There is no strength, nor power, but in God! the high! the great!

The ensuing Book will therefore contain the narrative of the conquest of Andalus by the Moslems, together with a detailed account of the principal causes which led to it, and a sketch of the Arabian chiefs who took part in the invasion.



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

B O O K I V.

CHAP. I.

Causes of the conquest—Appointment of Músa—Takes possession of the government of Africa—Severe drought and famine—His conquests—Takes Tangiers—General submission of the Berbers—Músa meditates the conquest of Andalus—Siege of Ceuta by Tárík—King Wittiza sends reinforcements to the besieged—His death—Usurpation of Roderic—Ilyán, Lord of Ceuta—His discontent—His daughter's dishonour—Spells constructed by the Greeks for the preservation of their country.

THIS Book contains an account of the conquest of Andalus by the Moslems, commanded by Músa Ibn Nosseyr and his freedman Tárík Ibn Zeyád, and how that country became the arena wherein their noble steeds raced, and the halting-place wherein their camels laid down their burden and grazed, together with much useful and well selected information, drawn from various sources, and the accounts of historians compared together.¹

And, first, be it known that when God Almighty decreed that those words of his Messenger should be fulfilled which stand thus—"I have seen before my eyes the East and the West, and every one of the regions comprised in them shall be subdued by my people,"²—an enmity broke out between Ludherick (Roderic), King of the Goths, and the Lord³ of Ceuta, a city situate at the mouth of the Bahruz-zokák (strait of Gibraltar), and became the cause of the conquest of Andalus by the arms of Taríf and Tárík, and their master Músa Ibn Nosseyr, (the mercy of God be upon them all !)

Al-hijári, Ibnu Hayyán, and other writers, agree in saying that the first man who entered Andalus with hostile intentions and deeds was Taríf, the Berber, a freedman of Músa Ibn Nosseyr, the same who afterwards gave his name to the Island of Tarifa, situate on the strait. He was helped in that expedition by Ilyán⁴ the Christian, Lord of Ceuta, who had conceived some animosity towards Roderic,⁵ King of Andalus. The number of troops engaged in this first expedition amounted only to one hundred horsemen and four hundred foot. They crossed the strait in four vessels, landed on the opposite shore in the month of Ramadhán of the year

ninety-one (July, A. D. 710), overran the country, and returned loaded with spoil.

No sooner was Músa Ibn Nosseyr, then governor of Africa, apprised of the success of this first expedition, which, as we have already observed, took place in the month of Ramadhán of the year ninety-one (July, A. D. 710), than he appointed his freedman, Tárík Ibn Zeyád, to command another expedition against Andalus, and sent him over in company with Ilyán, King of Ceuta. The landing of Tárík and Tárík has been differently related; but as it is our intention to recount in detail every one of these events, and we shall therefore have many opportunities to return to the subject, we shall now proceed to examine the causes which are generally believed to have given rise to the conquest.

Ibnu Hayyán says, "One of the principal causes of the conquest of Andalus was the appointment of Músa Ibn Nosseyr to the government of Africa and more remote lands: this took place in the year seventy-eight of the Hijra (beginning March, A. D. 697),⁶ by the Khalif 'Abdu-l-malek Ibn Merwán. Músa, whose father, Nosseyr, had been a liberated slave of 'Abdu-l-'azíz, the Khalif's brother, left the court of Damascus, followed only by a few volunteers, and arrived in Egypt; while there he collected together the Moslem troops which garrisoned that province, and marched to take possession of his government."

Causes of the conquest.

But this event is differently related by other historians. They say that Músa was not directly appointed by 'Abdu-l-malek, as before stated, but by 'Abdu-l-'azíz Ibn Merwán,⁷ who then governed Egypt and Africa in the name of his brother 'Abdu-l-malek Ibn Merwán. Having received orders from the Khalif to send an army to Africa, 'Abdu-l-'azíz, who knew Músa's talents and ability, gave him the command of it, and dispatched him to make war on the Berbers, and other nations which had not yet been subdued. This, Al-homaydi states, took place in the year seventy-nine (beginning March, A. D. 698), namely, one year after the date assigned by Ibnu Hayyán.

Appointment of Músa.

No sooner had Músa arrived in Africa proper, than hearing that some of the nations inhabiting the frontiers of *Sús al-adání* (the nearest province of Sús)⁸ had shaken off the yoke of Islám, he sent against them his own son 'Abdullah, who soon returned with one hundred thousand captives. He sent Merwán, another of his sons, against the enemy in another quarter, and he also returned with one hundred thousand captives. According to Al-leyth Ibn Sa'd the number of captives taken in these two expeditions, commanded by the two sons of Músa, must have been still greater, since he asserts that the share of the Khalif amounted to sixty thousand.⁹ But this is no doubt exaggerated, for we have read elsewhere that the share belonging to the Khalif, being the fifth of the whole number, amounted only to twenty thousand, although Músa is said to have sent him soon afterwards twenty

Takes possession of the government of Africa.

thousand more, from new victories. But be this as it may, certain it is that the Khalif Al-walíd received from his general a prodigious number of Berber captives taken in war, and that the historian As-sadfí states that the captives (remaining) in the hands of Músa amounted to a number never before heard of in any of the countries subject to the rule of Islám.¹⁰

Severe drought
and famine.

Owing to this cause, adds the historian last mentioned, most of the African cities were depopulated, the fields remained without cultivation, and, a general drought ensuing, the Moslems were exposed to a most dreadful famine, as well as to most raging thirst. In this extremity Músa ordered a general fast throughout his dominions, and enjoined that public prayers should be said by all the Moslems. He also recommended alms-giving, and the practice of good and charitable actions, to appease the wrath of heaven. He then ordered a general procession, and placing himself at the head of his people, followed by their cattle and beasts of burden, he entered far into the desert.¹¹ There he separated the mothers from the young ones, and the cries and lamentations began, and he remained in the desert until noon-time, when he ordered a general prayer; and this being done, he preached the usual sermon (*khotbah*);¹² and some of the auditory having remarked that he had made no mention whatever of the Khalif Al-walíd, one man got up and said, "Why didst thou not, O Músa! mention the Khalif in thy sermon?" To which Músa replied, "Because this is neither the moment nor the place to invoke any one but Allah (may his name be exalted!)" No sooner did Músa speak these last words than the rain began to fall in torrents, numerous streams oozed up through the sands of the desert, and the men drank until their thirst was quenched.

His conquests.

After this, Músa went out against the Berbers, and pursued them far into their native deserts, leaving wherever he went traces of his passage, killing numbers of them, taking thousands of prisoners, and carrying on the work of havoc and destruction. He next penetrated into *Sús al-adání*, where he met with no resistance on the part of the inhabitants, who humbly besought him to grant them peace, and embraced Islám. Those, however, who still persisted in their hostility against the Moslems, Músa attacked in person, or by the various divisions of his army, defeated them in the field, and stormed their towns; and never ceased pushing his conquests until he arrived before Tangiers,¹³ the citadel of their country and the mother of their cities, which he also besieged and took, obliging its inhabitants to embrace Islám.

Takes Tan-
giers.

They say that Tangiers had never been taken by an enemy before the days of Músa; and, once in the hands of the Moslems, it became one of their strongest citadels.¹⁴

The same historian from whom we have borrowed the preceding particulars adds

that Músa next directed his arms against Ceuta, but that he had the greatest difficulty in gaining possession of it, owing to its Lord, Ilyán the Christian, being a shrewd and brave man.

When the nations inhabiting the dreary plains of Africa saw what had befallen the Berbers of the coast and of the interior, they hastened to ask for peace and place themselves under the obedience of Músa, whom they solicited to enlist them in the ranks of his army. Músa lent a favourable ear to their petitions, and gave them generals to command them. He also appointed his freedman Tárík Ibn Zeyád, the Berber, (whom some authors make of the tribe of Sadf,) to be governor of Tangiers and the neighbouring districts, and placed under his orders nineteen thousand Berbers, well provided with arms, and every requisite store to carry on the war. In order to instruct these Berbers in the duties of true religion, for they had all been previously converted to Islám, and their conversion had been sincere, Músa further left with them a few learned Arabs and theologians, to read and explain to them the sacred words of the Korán, and instruct them in all and every one of the duties enjoined by their new religion.¹⁵

General submission of the Berbers.

This arrangement being made, Músa returned to Africa proper, and when on looking round him he saw no more enemies to attack, no more nations to subdue, either among the Berbers or among the Greeks,¹⁶—when he perceived that the principal cities along the coast had all been taken,—he wrote to his freedman Tárík, who was governor of Tangiers, and ordered him to get himself and troops ready to make an incursion into the opposite land of Andalus. In compliance with this order from his master, Tárík put to sail from the port of Tangiers with twelve thousand of the new converts, and landed at the foot of the mountain which afterwards took his name on Monday, the fifth day of Rejeb, of the year ninety-two of the Hijra (A. D. April 28th, 711).

Músa meditates the conquest of Andalus.

We have said that Músa in person took the cities of Tangiers and Ceuta;—the contrary appears from the narrative of Al-khozeyní¹⁷ and other historians, who attribute the conquest to Tárík. They say that, having given to this general the command of an army, he directed him against the nations inhabiting the northern coast of Africa. Tárík marched first against Tangiers, which he took; he then directed his arms against certain districts which acknowledged the sway of the Kings of Andalus, and the capital of which was Ceuta, a strongly fortified city.¹⁸ A barbarian chief, named Ilyán, ruled as sovereign in it: he was a man of great resolution and courage; having been on a former occasion attacked by Músa, he not only bravely withstood the attack, but made a sally at the head of his best troops and obliged that general to raise the siege. Músa then retreated to Tangiers,¹⁹ whence he made frequent incursions into Ilyán's territory, laying waste

Siege of Ceuta by Tárík.

King Wittiza sends reinforcements to the besieged.

the country and destroying the fields, thinking that he would thus reduce them by famine; but this also proved unavailing, for Ghittishah (Wittiza),²⁰ who then reigned in Andalus, sent them reinforcements and provided them by means of his fleet with all sorts of provisions and military stores. As long as Wittiza occupied the throne of Andalus the garrison of Ceuta defended itself with the greatest courage and perseverance, and fought valiantly for the preservation of their families and liberty; but on the death of that monarch the state of affairs was entirely changed, and, owing to the civil dissensions which soon arose among the Goths, the Moslems were enabled not only to reduce such cities as still acknowledged their sway in Africa, but to push their conquests into the very heart of Andalus.

Death of Wittiza.

Wittiza left sons²¹ behind him, but the Goths not being satisfied with them this gave rise to much tumult and agitation, until they decided upon giving the crown to a chief named Roderic, who, although he was not of the royal blood, belonged to one of the principal families of the land, and was moreover known to be a brave and gallant soldier, and one much experienced in the affairs of the kingdom.

Usurpation of Roderic.

Ibnu Hayyán, in his *Muktabis*,²² gives some account of this Roderic. He agrees that he was not a descendant from the kings who occupied the throne of Andalus before him, but that he was a powerful and noble lord, much respected for his talents and his courage, and that having formed a considerable party among the people he succeeded in snatching the sceptre from the sons of King Wittiza.

Another writer says that when Wittiza died he left three sons, who being of tender years were not deemed fit to govern the country, upon which their mother²³ assumed the royal power, and, holding the reins of government, administered the kingdom in their name,—Toledo continuing to be her residence as well as the court of the empire. However, Roderic, who under the reign of her husband Wittiza had commanded the cavalry, refused to acknowledge the authority of the widow-queen, and, having created a rebellion in Cordova,²⁴ seized on the empire.

Ilyán, Lord of Ceuta.

But let us hear the account of Abú Zeyd Ibn Khaldún, who, after saying that Andalus was in the hands of the Goths, and that their king at the time was called Roderic, expresses himself in the following terms:—" Besides their kingdom of " Andalus the Goths had settlements beyond the sea, so that when Músa arrived " in Africa they were in possession of large tracts of land along its northern shore.²⁵ " These they were at first enabled to defend on account of their holding Tangiers, " which was the key of the straits, and owing also to the narrowness of the sea " which separates Andalus from Africa, and which enabled them to send reinforce- " ments wherever they were required, so as to keep those countries in obedience " and defend them against the Arabs. A great many of the tribes inhabiting the " coast were therefore subject to them. Now in that part of the country which is

“ now called *Jebál Ghomárah* (the mountains of Gomera) ²⁶ there was a king of
 “ the Berbers ²⁷ named Ilyán, who acknowledged himself a subject of the Gothic
 “ monarchs, obeyed their sway, and followed their religion. ²⁸ Africa was governed
 “ at the time by Músa Ibn Nosseyr, a lieutenant of the Khalif Al-walíd Ibn 'Abdi-l-
 “ malek, who resided at Cairwán, then the seat of the African governors. Under
 “ that general the Moslem armies subdued the greatest part of Africa and carried
 “ the war to the extreme western frontiers, after which they penetrated into the
 “ mountain districts about Tangiers, and opened themselves a passage until they
 “ reached the mouth of the straits, when King Ilyán, unable to withstand their
 “ attacks, surrendered, and submitted himself to the sway of Islám. Músa. Ibn
 “ Nosseyr then appointed his freedman Tárík Ibn Zeyád Al-leythí to the govern-
 “ ment of his new conquests, as well as to the command of all the troops encamped
 “ in those districts.” So far Ibnu Khaldún, whose account does not materially
 differ from that of the preceding writers.

We have said that one of the principal causes of the conquest of Andalus was the appointment of Músa Ibn Nosseyr to the government of Africa ; the second in order is the enmity that broke out between Ilyán and Roderic. Every historian that we have consulted alludes more or less explicitly to a certain quarrel between those two individuals, which led to the invasion of the Arabs. ²⁹ The author before quoted, Abú Zeyd Ibn Khaldún, attributes it to a desire on the part of Ilyán of revenging certain injuries he had received in the person of his daughter, who was then staying in the royal palace ; since, adds that historian, it was a custom among the Gothic nobles to send their daughters to be brought up and educated at the royal palace, along with the king's daughters. They say that when Ilyán heard of the outrage committed on the person of his daughter he repaired immediately to court, took her away, and brought her back to Africa. Not satisfied with this, he went to see Tárík, acquainted him with his desire of revenge, engaged him to invade Andalus, and offered to conduct his army through the enemy's country. Tárík, who wished nothing so much as an occasion of trying the fortune of arms against the neighbouring kingdom, immediately seized on Ilyán's offer, and, having previously obtained his master's leave, prepared for the intended expedition. But as the doings between Ilyán and Roderic, and the application made by the former to the Arabian general, are recounted more at length by other writers, we shall borrow from them what we deem necessary to make this our history both agreeable and instructive.

“ It was then the custom among the Goths,” says Al-khozeyní, ³⁰ “ for the
 “ princes of the royal blood, the great noblemen of the kingdom, and the governors
 “ of the provinces, to send to the supreme court at Toledo such among their sons
 Ilyán's daughter is dishonoured by Roderic.

“ as they chose to be promoted and advanced, and at the same time distinguished
“ by the favour of their sovereign, under whose eye they were trained to all
“ military exercises, and were afterwards appointed to commands in the army. In
“ the same manner the daughters were sent to the king’s palace, and educated with
“ his daughters, and when grown up the king would marry them to the young
“ noblemen at his court, according to their fathers’ dignity, and bestow upon them
“ marriage portions.

“ It happened that in compliance with this custom Ilyán, the Lord of Ceuta,³¹
“ a city then under the sway of King Roderic, and the inhabitants of which also
“ professed the Christian religion, having a daughter, a beautiful and innocent
“ creature, crossed the straits and took her to Toledo, then the court and capital
“ of the kingdom. When Roderic beheld her, he was so much struck with her
“ beauty that he fell desperately in love, and did not hesitate, when persuasion
“ had failed, to obtain by violence the gratification of his wishes. Some time
“ afterwards the girl found the means of secretly acquainting her father with the
“ treatment she had suffered at the hands of Roderic ; and it is related that when
“ Ilyán read his daughter’s message he fell into a most violent rage, and swore
“ to revenge the injury inflicted by Roderic, exclaiming,—‘ By the faith of the
“ Messiah ! I will undermine his throne and disturb his dominions, until the whole
“ is overturned and annihilated.’ So there can be no doubt that the injury done to
“ Ilyán’s daughter was one of the causes of the conquest of Andalus, subordinate
“ to what God Almighty had decreed about it. Ilyán embarked immediately for
“ Andalus, although the inclement season was far advanced,—it being then the month
“ of January³² and the depth of winter,—and hastening to Toledo presented himself
“ before the king, who, not expecting him at so unseasonable a time, upbraided
“ him for leaving his post, and addressed him in the following words : ‘ What
“ brought thee here ? Thou knowest very well that this is neither the time nor the
“ occasion for thy coming to court.’ To which Ilyán answered, excusing himself by
“ saying that his wife was dangerously ill, and desired greatly to see her daughter
“ once more before she died, and had begged and entreated him to fetch her. He
“ then asked Roderic to issue orders that his daughter should be delivered to
“ him, and all her baggage prepared for immediate departure. Roderic granted
“ his request, not without having previously made the daughter promise that she
“ would keep their intercourse a secret from her father, but the girl preferred her
“ father to the king, and informed the former of his conduct towards her. They
“ say, on the authority of Ilyán himself, that when about to take leave of the king
“ the latter addressed him as follows : ‘ O Ilyán ! I hope that I shall soon hear of
“ thee, and that thou wilt endeavour to procure for me some of those very swift

“ *shadhankah* ³³ (hawks) which are such a source of pleasure and amusement to me, since they chase and hunt the birds and bring them to me ;’ to which Ilyán answered, ‘ Doubt not, O King ! but that I will soon be back, and, by the faith of the Messiah ! I will never feel satisfied until I bring thee such *shadhankah* as thou never sawest in thy life ;’ meaning by this the Arabs, whom he already thought of bringing against his country. But Roderic did not understand the meaning of his words.”

No sooner did Ilyán find himself safe in Africa than he repaired to the city of Cairwán, where the Arabian governor then held his court, and by his glowing descriptions of the fertility, wealth, and extent of the island of Andalus, by representing his countrymen as divided and weakened by internal divisions, and enervated by their luxurious habits and a long peace, prevailed upon Músa, as we shall presently relate, to send with him some troops under the command of one of his Berber freedmen, who, with the rapidity of the hawk pouncing upon his prey, subdued the whole kingdom, and added new and extensive dominions to those already subject to the sway of Islám.

Some historians assign a third cause for the conquest of Andalus ; they say that there was at Toledo a palace built in times of old by a sage king, who, having predicted that Andalus would in times to come be invaded by people from Africa, had placed in one of its rooms a certain magic spell, by means of which the country was to be for ever preserved from foreign invasion. As long as the spell remained untouched Andalus was safe, but when broken (and it was so by Roderic) the ruin of that country became inevitable. This event is thus related by various historians.

It is well known that the Greeks ³⁴ were a nation famous for their knowledge in the sciences, as well as for their talent and acuteness in availing themselves of the secrets of nature. Before the times of Alexander they inhabited the East, but when the Persians predominated in those quarters, and subdued every one of the realms possessed by the Greeks, they decided upon emigrating and taking to a distant land their knowledge and their science. They fixed upon the island of Andalus, owing to its being placed at the extremity of the inhabited world, on which account it was scarcely known at the time, had never been possessed by any of the sage monarchs of olden times, and, finally, was then without inhabitants ; for although Andalus, son of Yáfeth, son of Núh, had settled in it soon after the deluge, taken it for his residence, given it his name, and left besides various traces of his domination, yet his generation had since perished, and the country was then a desert. ³⁵

Spell constructed by the Greeks for the preservation of their country.

It has been said that when the earth was first peopled after the deluge it appeared

in the shape of a bird,—the east being the head,—the north and south, the right and left feet,—the countries between, the stomach,—and the west, the tail,³⁶—and that when the Greeks fixed upon Andalus as the country in which they were to settle in preference to all others, it was owing to its relation to that despicable part of the body (the tail), according to the picture we have drawn of the earth at the time; for the Greeks of ancient days were more inclined to study than to war, making the former supply on every occasion the place of the latter: they were therefore a cowardly set, meeting their enemies with artifice rather than force, and, instead of being ashamed of this, they boasted of it on every opportunity, knowing very well that the cause of the decay and ruin of mighty empires was only to be looked for in war. In order, therefore, not to be hindered and disturbed in the study and cultivation of science, which made the principal business of their lives, they fled before the Persians, their enemies, and migrated to Andalus, where they had no sooner arrived than they began to dig canals, and to make cuts from the rivers for the purpose of irrigation; to erect bridges and aqueducts, to construct fortresses and castles, to plant gardens and vines, and to build cities and towns; ploughing and sowing the land, and raising whatever buildings were deemed necessary for the pleasure and comfort of the people. In fine, the country soon became so thickly peopled, and so studded with cities and towns, that one of their wise men, who knew well that the country they inhabited had been called “the bird’s tail,” owing to the supposed resemblance of the earth to a bird with extended wings, is said to have remarked that that bird was the peacock, the principal beauty of which is well known to be in the tail. This brings to our recollection a witty answer once made by a Western Arab to the Prince of believers, Hárún Ar-rashíd (the mercy of God be upon him!) That Khalif happened on a certain day to address a native of Africa in the following manner: “I am told, O man! that the world resembles “a bird in shape; and that the west is the tail.” “Thou hast been told right, O “Prince of the believers!” replied the Maghrebí, “but thy informer ought to have “added that that bird was the peacock;” hearing which, Ar-rashíd laughed and wondered much at the man’s quickness at repartee in defending his native country. But to proceed with our account of the spell.³⁷

The Greeks continued in possession of Andalus, leading a life of security and pleasure. They took for a capital the city of Toledo, owing to its being situate in the heart of Andalus, and their principal care consisted in strengthening it against their enemies and maintaining themselves in their possessions, and concealing from other nations the knowledge of the comforts they were enjoying. In order better to gain their object they began consulting the stars, and found that by two nations only were they to be disturbed in their enjoyments, and to be hated