

of Cordova, and the eyes of the people feasted on what had so long been concealed from them.

By this and other contrivances Al-mansúr managed to concentrate in himself all the power of the state, and to usurp the inheritance of the Bení Umeyyah. Fearing lest the members of that royal family should revolt against him or oppose the execution of his ambitious designs, he secretly dispatched, under various pretences, all those who stood nearest to the throne, or who seemed more dangerous to him, and the remainder he exiled to the provinces, obliging them to hide themselves in obscure and retired cells, and to exchange the splendour and magnificence of their convivial halls for a life of misery and privation in lonely woods and dreary deserts. Alluding to this rapid change of fortune, a poet has said—

“ O sons of Umeyyah ! where are now your [princes shining like] full moons in the dark night ? where are your constellations ? where your stars ?
“ Your lions were absent from their native forests when this usurper seized
“ on your empire.”⁵⁹

In the month of Safar, A. H. 392 (Jan. A. D. 1002), Al-mansúr prepared to invade for the fifty-second time the country of the infidels, intending to direct his attacks on the side of Kashtelah (Castile). Having summoned from Africa a considerable body of troops, which met him at Toledo, he reached the banks of the Dúroh (Duero), in the neighbourhood of which he committed great ravages and depredations. Having thence ascended the river, he penetrated into the dominions of the Count of Castile (Sancho Garcez), whom he found encamped near a castle called Kal'at An-nosor (the castle of the eagles), with innumerable troops collected from the neighbouring Christian kingdoms. Al-mansúr attacked and defeated him with great loss.⁶⁰

On his return from this expedition Al-mansúr was seized by an acute disorder, which caused his death. He, nevertheless, continued to wage war against the infidels, and to waste their territory, until, his disease increasing, he was placed in a wooden litter, on soft cushions, and covered with an awning and curtains. In this manner he was carried on the shoulders of his men, surrounded by his troops, until he arrived at Medínah Sélim (Medinaceli). His physicians being greatly divided as to the nature of his complaint, it naturally aggravated until his life was despaired of. He used to say, “ I leave behind me twenty thousand clients, “ all of whom are happy and contented ; may they to-morrow have no worse “ master than myself ! ” Perhaps he meant that twenty thousand warriors attended him on that expedition ; but, according to all accounts, the armies of Andalus in his time amounted to a much greater number, since he is said to have

Death of
Al-mansúr.

once passed in review on the plain of Cordova upwards of six hundred thousand men; and a contemporary historian relates that at the time of the expedition into Galicia, which terminated in the taking of Astorga and Leon, the invading army consisted of twelve thousand mounted Africans, five thousand Andalusians, and forty thousand infantry, besides an immense number of volunteers, who joined the expedition, and flocked under the banners of Al-mansúr for the purpose of participating in the rewards awaiting the Moslems who fight for the extension of the true religion. But to return.

In his last moments Al-mansúr showed great solicitude for the future destinies of Cordova, and it is added that he began to weep, and expressed himself as if he feared the immediate dissolution of the empire he had so powerfully extended and strengthened. Some time before his death he sent for his son 'Abdu-l-malek and some of his most confidential friends, and instructed them respectively [as to the management of the government after his death]. He then desired to be left alone with his son, to whom he repeated such instructions as he had already given him in the presence of the others. Whenever 'Abdu-l-malek offered, with tears in his eyes, to quit the room, that his father might take some rest, Al-mansúr retained him, and insisted upon his remaining. Then observing tears on his countenance, Al-mansúr reproached him with his want of courage, saying, "This is to me the first signal of the approaching decay [of this empire]." He ordered him to give the command of the troops to his brother 'Abdu-r-rahmán, and expired on Monday, the 25th of Ramadhan of the year 392 (Aug. 7, A. D. 1002),⁶¹ at the age of sixty-five, as he was born in the year 327 (Oct. 28, A. D. 938), or the year of Al-handik (*'A'mu-l-handik*), as it was called by the people of Andalus, owing to the disastrous battle of that name fought under the walls of Zamora between the Christians and the Moslems.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

State of literature under Hishám II.—Arrivals in Cordova—Notice of Sá'id Al-laghúwí—Anecdotes respecting Al-mansúr—His love of justice—His attention to business—His wisdom and sagacity—His experience in military affairs—Other anecdotes of Al-mansúr—Buildings erected by him.

It has been remarked, that after the death of Al-mansúr the Mohammedan empire in Andalus began to give visible signs of decay: the Christians, who during the administration of that victorious Hájjib had been almost reduced to the condition of slaves, put aside all their former fears, and, assailing the Moslem territory on all sides with the greatest fury, aimed many mortal blows against the sinking body of Islám. Although the valiant Almoravides, and the still more brave Almohades, stayed for some time the ruin of the common cause, yet their splendid victories were of no avail; and scarcely two centuries had elapsed since the death of Al-mansúr, when Toledo, Saragossa, Valencia, Cordova, Seville, and other important cities, which had once proved so many impregnable bulwarks, fell one by one into the hands of the enemy of God, and prepared the way for the final subjugation of the peninsula by the insolent and accursed Christians. (May the Almighty destroy them all!)

Before we proceed to give an account of the heart-rending calamities by which the Moslems of Andalus were afflicted; of the interminable feuds and sanguinary civil wars in which the petty rulers of that country became constantly engaged one against another; of their frequent revolts against their rulers; of the dastardly cowardice of some, and the overweening ambition of others; of their contempt of all divine and civil laws; of their enormous sins, which accelerated the ruin of our empire in Andalus;—we think it opportune to bring before our readers a few more extracts respecting the reign of Hishám and the administration of his enlightened and never-vanquished Hájjib, Mohammed Ibn Abí 'A'mir Al-mansúr.

State of literature under Hishám II.

During the reign of Hishám II., and under the administration of Al-mansúr, literature and the sciences flourished in Cordova. Even the Sclavonian eunuchs of the palace cultivated it with the greatest success; and Ibnu Hayyán has preserved the names of several who distinguished themselves by their productions in various kinds of literature. One of them was Fátin, who had not his equal in the knowledge of the Arabic language, and at whose death in 420 (A. D. 1029), a splendid collection of valuable books was sold. A Sclavonian named Habíb is said also to have written a work entitled "clear proofs and victorious arguments [in favour] of the excellences of the Sclavonic race,"¹ in which he introduced all manner of entertaining anecdotes, history, and verses of the Sclavonians. Ibn Joljol wrote his history of the Andalusian physicians, and 'Obádah Ibn Máí-s-semá that of the Andalusian poets. Abú-l-mugheyrah Ibn Hazm, who was a Wizír of Al-mansúr, Abú-l-walíd Ibnu-l-faradhí, Ibn Sahlún, Ibnu-d-dabbágh, Ibn Jesúr, Abú 'Abdah Hasan Al-laghúwí, and Yúsuf Ibn 'Abdi-l-barr, wrote each a history of his own times. Az-zubeydí wrote the lives of celebrated grammarians who were natives of Andalus, as well as those of eminent lawyers and theologians; and Ahmed At-talamankí those of all the historians, with the titles of their works, &c. We forbear mentioning the poets, theologians, orators, and rhetoricians who flourished under this reign, for they were as numerous as the sands of the ocean.

Arrivals in Cordova.

Many men, too, distinguished by their talents or renowned for their proficiency in some department of science or literature, visited Andalus under this reign, and were induced, through the liberality of Al-mansúr, to fix their residence in Cordova. In their number were Ahmed Ibn 'Alí, a native of Baghdád, 'Abdullah Ibn Ibráhím, Abú Bekr Al-azrak, Mohammed Ibn 'Abdi-l-wáhed Az-zubeyrí, surnamed Abú-l-barakát, a native of Mekka, Ahmed Ibn Fadhl Ad-dinawárí, and others, who settled in the capital and became celebrated by their writings.²

Notice of Sá'id Al-laghúwí.

Among the most celebrated was Abú 'Alí³ Sá'id Ibnu-l-huseyn Ibn 'Isa Ar-raba'í, surnamed Al-laghúwí (the philologist), who was a native of Baghdád, but originally from Maussal. Ibn Bessám says that Al-mansúr, having heard of his talents for poetry, sent for him and invited him to Cordova, imagining that he would eclipse the fame of the celebrated poet Abú 'Alí Al-kálí, who, as before related, came from Baghdád during the reign of 'Abdu-r-rahmán An-násir. "But Al-mansúr," continues Ibn Bessám, "found nothing in Sá'id to justify the high opinion which he had formed of him; and, moreover, the learned men of Cordova became his enemies, and spoke in the worst possible terms of him, of his learning, understanding, and religion. They called him a liar and an impostor, and they would neither receive traditional information of any sort from him, nor give credit to his words. When he composed his *Fossúss* (the

“book of gems), they criticised the work, and threw it, out of contempt, into the “river.” It is true that, if we are to believe the authors of that time, Sá'id was more remarkable for his quickness at repartee, and his facility in composing verses extempore, than either for his learning or his veracity, as the following anecdote will show. One day as Al-mansúr was sitting in his hall surrounded by the highest functionaries of his court and empire, and by all the men of his court eminent for their learning, as Az-zubeydí (Abú Bekr Mohammed), Al-'ássemí, Ibnu-l-'aríf, and others, he said to them, “Here is a man lately come among us “who pretends to be better informed [than any man in Cordova] in these sciences, “and I wish to put him to the test.” He accordingly sent for him, and Abú 'Alí came and prostrated himself before him, and was struck with awe and astonishment at the numerous assembly. Al-mansúr then rose from his couch, and advancing towards him, asked him about Abú Sa'id As-síráfí, a learned man whom Abú 'Alí pretended to have met in his travels, and to have read under his direction the book of Sibauyeh. Agreeably to the instructions of Al-mansúr, Al-'ássemí began to interrogate Sá'id about that work, and to put to him several questions respecting the science of grammar; but Sá'id answered not a single one, alleging as an excuse that grammar was not his favourite study: upon which Az-zubeydí said to him, “Will the Sheikh let us know that in which he is most versed, “that we may try his powers?”—“Philology,”⁴ answered Sá'id. “Very well,” replied Az-zubeydí; “tell us then what is the measure of *aulak*.” Upon which Sá'id burst out laughing and said, “Is it to one like me that thou puttest “such a question? Thou hadst better ask a school-boy.”—“That may be,” said Az-zubeydí, “but, such as it is, I am sure thou canst not answer it.” Sá'id's countenance suddenly changed, and he remained for some time silent; at last he said, “The measure of *aulak* is *af'al*.”⁵—“It is not,” said Az-zubeydí; “and “if thy master told thee that, he told thee a most egregious lie.”—“How is that? “does the Sheikh find fault with my derivation?”—“Yes, I do,” replied Az-zubeydí. “Well then,” said Sá'id, “it is not to be wondered at, for my principal “strength lies in knowing verses and history by heart, in explaining enigmatic “sentences, and in the science of music.” Sá'id was next attacked by Ibnu-l-'aríf, who disputed some time with him: but the former came off victorious; for scarcely was there a word uttered in the assembly, but Sá'id immediately replied with a quotation in verse, or with some anecdote in illustration of it,—a performance which struck Al-mansúr with amazement. He then showed him the *Kitábu-n-nawádir*, which Abú 'Alí Al-kálí wrote in praise of the Bení Umeyyah, which, being examined by Sá'id, he said to Al-mansúr, “If thou givest me permission, “I will compose a book in thy praise that shall be more valuable than this; I

“ say more, I will not touch upon any of the subjects treated by Abú 'Alí.” The permission being granted, Sa'id retired to the *jámi'* or principal mosque in the city of Az-záhirah, and wrote his work entitled *Al-fossúss* (the gems). No sooner had he completed it and presented it to Al-mansúr, than the learned men of Cordova, who were all anxious to see how Sá'id had treated the subject, immediately procured copies of it. What was their astonishment to find upon perusal that not one word or quotation in the book was true, and that no story [of those mentioned] could be traced to a source known to them! They therefore agreed unanimously to expose Sá'id's impudence, and make his ignorance public to the world. They requested Al-mansúr to have some quires of white paper bound together, so as to present the appearance of a written volume, with the following title, *Kitábu-n-nekat* (the book of lies); its author Abú-l-ghauth, of San'á. The book was then placed in a spot where Sá'id might see it when he entered the hall. The stratagem succeeded completely: no sooner had Sá'id cast his eyes on the volume than he exclaimed, “ I know this work well; I read it in such “ a country, under the direction of such a Sheikh.” Al-mansúr then took the volume into his hands, for fear that Sá'id should open it and find out the stratagem, and said to him, “ Well, then, since thou hast read it, tell us of its “ contents.”—“ It is so long since I perused it, that I am afraid I do not recollect “ any portion of it, however small; but this I can say, that it is composed of “ detached pieces without either poetry or anecdotes.”—“ Leave my presence “ immediately,” said Al-mansúr; “ I never saw a greater liar than thou. May “ God free me from men of thy stamp!” He then commanded that Sá'id should be sent out of the room, and his book thrown into the river, as was done.

It was in allusion to this occurrence that one of the poets of Cordova said—

“ The book of the gems is now engulfed in the river; may all bad books “ meet with a similar fate!”

To which Sá'id replied in the following verse:

“ The gems have returned to their mines, for in the bottom of the sea the “ gems are found.”⁶

Ibn Khallekán relates that Al-mansúr had given Sá'id five thousand dinárs⁷ for the composition of that work.

With all Sá'id's impudence, and his utter disregard of those qualities which ought to ornament a good poet, he nevertheless was at times extremely happy in his ideas, and no other poet of his time surpassed him in facility of extempore composition. The author of the *Bedáya'-l-bedáyat* (admirable beginnings)⁸ relates that Sá'id once attended a drinking-party at the house of one of his friends. When it came to his turn to drink, the page who poured out the wine filled Sá'id's cup out of a jar which he held in his hand. One of the company observing at the

mouth of the jar a drop of wine, which remained fixed to it, begged Sá'id to describe it in verse; and he said, without the least hesitation,—

“ When the fragrancy of the garden reaches us, it puts us in mind of the
“ sweet-smelling musk :

“ So does this jar of ours, with the wine in its mouth ; it reminds us of a
“ bird carrying a ruby in its bill.”⁹

Among the extraordinary anecdotes related of Sá'id, the following is one. Upon one occasion, as Al-mansúr was sitting in his hall, a man came in and presented him with a beautiful rose-bud out of season; upon which Sá'id, who was in the room at the time, said extempore these two verses :

“ O Abú 'A'mir! the rose just presented to thee will put thee in mind of
“ sweet-smelling musk.

“ See how it hides its head within its calyx, as the timid virgin [hides her
“ face behind her veil] to avoid the look of a stranger.”¹⁰

Al-mansúr was delighted with these verses; but Ibnu-l-'aríf, who was also in the room, and hated Sá'id most intensely, and was always endeavouring to do him all the harm possible, went up to Al-mansúr and said to him, “ Those two verses
“ are not the composition of Sá'id. I have seen them attributed to a poet of
“ Baghdád who resided in Cairo; and, what is more, I have them at home on
“ the fly-leaf of a book, and in the handwriting of the author himself.” Al-
mansúr having expressed a wish to see them, Ibnu-l-'aríf¹¹ left the room, mounted a horse, and hastened to the dwelling of a poet named Ibn Bedr, one of the quickest men of his time in composing poetry. Having told him his adventure, he requested him to write a poem in which he might intercalate the two verses delivered by Sá'id. Ibn Bedr, who, like most of the Cordovan poets, was exceedingly envious of Sá'id, immediately complied with his request, and gave him the following lines, which he hastened to produce before Al-mansúr :

“ I went one night to the palace of 'Abbásah, when sleep had overpowered
“ her guards.

“ I found her reclining on her nuptial couch, her energies prostrated by the
“ intoxicating liquor.

“ She said, ' Art thou come to me at the first sleep?' I answered, ' Nay,'
“ and she threw down her cup.

“ And she stretched her hand to a rose, the odour of which thou mightest
“ compare to sweet-smelling musk ;

“ A rose hiding its head within its calyx, as the timid virgin [hides her
“ face behind her veil] to avoid the look of a stranger.

“ She then said, ' Fear God, and do not insult thy cousin 'Abbásah.'

“ And, turning away from her, I retired carelessly, leaving her disappointed
“ and myself too.”¹²

Ibnu-l-'aríf took the verses and pasted them on the back of a book written in the Egyptian hand, with the capitals and heads of chapters in red ink; he hastened with it to the presence of Al-mansúr, who was waiting with the greatest impatience. No sooner had he perused the verses than his indignation was roused to the highest pitch, and he exclaimed, “ To-morrow we will summon Sá'id to our presence; and, unless he gives us a satisfactory answer to this charge, he shall be banished the country.” On the ensuing morning Al-mansúr sent for Sá'id, who, in obedience to his summons, hastened to the palace. He found Al-mansúr's hall thronged with courtiers and other persons who had been expressly invited for the occasion. In the middle of the hall a large tray,¹³ containing compartments ornamented with every variety of elegant design, had been placed by order of Al-mansúr. On the roof of the compartments were toys of jasmine made in imitation of females, and under the roof a reservoir of transparent water, the bottom of which was paved with pearls instead of common pebbles; in the water was a snake swimming. When Sá'id entered the hall and had seen all these curiosities, Al-mansúr said to him, “ This day thou must either rejoice and be happy with us, or else thou must be miserable whilst we are rejoicing. There are people in this room who pretend that none of the verses thou recitest are thy own composition, and certainly we have a proof that this is true with regard to some. Look at that tray, the like of which, I assert, was never placed before any other king but me.” He then proceeded to enumerate every one of the curiosities that were on it, and continued: “ If the charge brought against thee be false, prove it by describing to me in verse both the tray and its contents.” Sá'id immediately said—

“ O Abú 'A'mir! are not thy benefits always flowing, and thy enemies on earth always fearing?

“ [And why should they not] when the age brings thee every novelty, and presents thee with more wonders than can [easily] be described?

“ Here are the flowers which a fertilizing shower engendered, and the stocks of which are covered with fringes of yellow and bright green;

“ Which, to complete their beauty, have female slaves standing opposite [to them] with a variety of musical instruments in their hands;

“ Seeking shelter under the roofs of jasmine, as the gazelle looks for a shadowy spot [among the trees].

“ But that most to be wondered at is, that the maids are looking over a lake enfolding every beauty;

“ At the bottom of which are pearls instead of pebbles, and in the waters of which sports a poisonous, painted snake.

“ Cast thy eyes around ; thou wilt see its shores filled with animals, among which the turtle is one.”¹⁴

Such a composition, and in such a spot, at once established Sá'id's reputation as an extempore poet. Al-mansúr was exceedingly pleased with the verses, which he immediately wrote down himself, for fear he should forget them. There was, however, among the curiosities in the tray, one which Sá'id had not noticed ; it was a ship, in which was a maiden rowing herself with oars of gold. Al-mansúr therefore said to him, “ Very well, Sá'id ; I am pleased with thy verses, only thou hast forgotten to mention the ship with the maid inside.” Upon which Sá'id said immediately—

“ But what is most to be admired is the crowned maiden in the vessel, whose beauty no tongue can describe.

“ If the waves rock her vessel, she fears for her anchor, and dreads the high winds, precursors [of the storm].

“ Beauty itself is the pilot of this vessel ; holding in her right hand the oar to direct her with.

“ Certainly we never saw before this a palm-grove despoil itself of its trees to place them in the hands of maidens.

“ No wonder if the upper regions [of thy throne] surpass a garden [in verdure], and are spread with glittering gold and myriads of flowers.

“ For thou art a man who has no sooner formed a wish than the necks are stretched out [to accomplish it] ; and benevolence itself trembles for fear of thy displeasure.

“ If I utter a sentence or pronounce an extempore speech, what else is it for, but to sing thy praises ?”¹⁵

So pleased was Al-mansúr with the above two compositions, that he ordered to be given to Sá'id one thousand dinárs and one hundred dresses ; he assigned him, besides, a pension of thirty gold dinárs per month on his treasury, and made him one of his common guests. We have already said that Sá'id was celebrated above all things for his quickness and facility for inventing lies. Al-mansúr having once asked him what the *khanboshár* was, he answered immediately, “ The *khanboshár* is a plant which the Arabs of the desert use for thickening their milk. “ In allusion to it an ancient poet has said—

‘ The love of her lies as heavily on my heart, as the *khanboshár* adheres to the new milk.’”¹⁶

We might multiply the examples of the astonishing facility with which Sá'id

extricated himself from any difficulty, whenever he was asked what he did not know, but we will abstain for the sake of brevity, and will only cite the following instance of extraordinary coincidence.

Having upon one occasion presented Al-mansúr with a live stag, he wrote by the bearer an elegant *kassidah*, of which the following detached verses are an extract :

“ O refuge of the terrified, asylum of the persecuted, comfort to the
“ vilified !

* * * * *

“ O string of virtues, and repository of every brilliant quality ! thou art the
“ refuge of the needy.

* * * * *

“ A slave [of thine], whom thou didst take by the hand, and didst raise
“ from his station, presents thee with a stag.

“ I named it Garsiah, and I send it to thee [with a rope round its neck],
“ that the same may happen with its namesake [the Christian king].

“ Shouldst thou accept [this my present], I would consider it as the greatest
“ favour that a generous man can bestow.”¹⁷

Now it happened, in conformity with the decrees of the Almighty, that on the very day in which Sá'id presented the stag to Al-mansúr and named it Garsiah (Garcia), as a good omen, the Christian king of that name (Garci-Fernandez, Count of Castile) was taken prisoner by the Moslems. As Garsiah was one day hunting, he fell in with a party of Al-mansúr's cavalry, who surrounded him, made him prisoner with all his suite, and conveyed him to Cordova. Al-mansúr was so much struck by that coincidence of fate, and moreover was so much pleased with Sá'id's verses, that he granted him a greater share of his favour than he had ever possessed before, and from that day always defended him against the accusations of his enemies. As a proof of the great favour which Sá'id enjoyed with Al-mansúr, we shall here transcribe an anecdote borrowed from a history of that Hájib, entitled *Al-azháru-l-manthúrah fí-l-akhbári-l-máthúrah* (scattered flowers, or the memorable deeds of Ibn Abí 'A'mir). At the twenty-eighth flower (or chapter) of that work we read as follows : “ One day Sá'id collected together all the rags and tatters
“ of the dresses which Al-mansúr had at different times given him, and having
“ sent for his black slave Káfúr, he directed him to have a shirt made of them,
“ as if it were patch-work.¹⁸ When the shirt was made to fit him, says Sá'id,
“ I bade Káfúr accompany me one morning to the palace of Al-mansúr at an early
“ hour. Having been introduced to his presence, I remained with him some time,
“ until, seeing him in good humour, I said to him, ‘ My Lord ! thy slave has a

“request to make.”—“State it,” answered Al-mansúr. “I wish for permission to introduce here my slave Káfúr.”—“Is it to be now immediately?” replied Al-mansúr, and he added, “hast thou nothing more to ask for?”—“No, I have no other request to make, except that he be admitted to thy presence.”—“Well, let it be so,” said Al-mansúr; and he accordingly ordered his guards to introduce the black slave into the room. Soon after Káfúr made his appearance, accoutred, as before stated, in a shirt made of patch-work. He being as tall and supple as a young palm-tree, the sight was exceedingly ludicrous. Seeing him enter the room, Al-mansúr said, “Here comes the master of beauty and the king of rags. Pray what is the meaning of all this?” Upon which I answered, “Let the sight of my slave be my answer, and know, O my Lord, that thou gavest me this day the skin of Káfúr full of money.” Al-mansúr smiled, and said, “May God prosper those [who like thee] plunge into the depths of enigmatic speech to return thanks for a favour!” After which he ordered me a considerable sum of money and a handsome dress, and gave also a very fine dress to Káfúr.”

But since we have touched upon the history of Al-mansúr, we will not proceed any further without transcribing for the use of our readers the most remarkable anecdotes of his generosity, worldly wisdom, courage, and justice.

The story of Mohammed, the bleeder of Al-mansúr :—

Al-mansúr, desiring once to be bled, sent for his bleeder, Mohammed, who was at the same time his servant and his confidant. The messenger repaired immediately to the dwelling of Mohammed; but not finding him at home, he ascertained upon inquiry that he had just been confined in prison, on a sentence of the Kádí Mohammed Ibn Rúb, before whom he had been convicted of ill-using his wife; as he thought that his favour with Al-mansúr would save him from the punishment he deserved. The messenger then returned, and apprised Al-mansúr of the circumstance, who ordered that the bleeder should be released and brought to his presence, under the custody of one of the guards of the prison, and that, after performing the operation, he should again return to prison. His orders were punctually executed. Mohammed was brought to his presence, and after bleeding his master, as desired, was again marched out to prison. They say that as he was going out of the room, the bleeder began to expostulate; but Al-mansúr stopping him short, said to him, “No, Mohammed! he is the judge, and, if he be right in his judgment, it is not in our power to resist his authority or oppose his sentence: thou art now entirely in his power.” Mohammed returned accordingly to his prison; but, soon after, the Kádí, hearing of the circumstance, managed a reconciliation between him and his wife, and he was set at liberty in consequence.

The following anecdote has been preserved on the authority of Sho’alah. I said

Anecdotes respecting Al-mansúr.—His love of justice.

His attention to business.

one night to Al-mansúr, perceiving that he was watching, "I am afraid that our lord sits up too much at night, and that his body wants more sleep and rest than is allowed to it; and yet no one is better acquainted than he is with the ill effects produced by want of proper rest upon the nerves." He replied, "O Sho'alah, kings should never sleep whilst their subjects are at rest; for if I were to have my full sleep, there would be in the whole of this metropolis nothing but sleepers."

In illustration of this, an Andalusian writer has preserved the following anecdote. Al-mansúr was one night sitting [in his audience-room]; it was a dreadful night, the rain came down in torrents, the wind was high, and it was piercing cold besides. All of a sudden, Al-mansúr sent for one of the horsemen of his guard, and said to him, "Go down to Fej-Talyáresh (Tallares) and stop there until thou seest a person pass; seize him, whoever he may be, and bring him hither instantly." The horseman did as he was commanded; he rode to the spot which had been pointed out to him, and waited there nearly all night on his horse in the midst of the cold, rain, and wind, without seeing a single creature whom he might seize and convey to his master, as he had been directed. At last, a little before the dawn of day, and just as the horseman was thinking whether he should not return to the palace and report the non-success of his expedition, a very old man, bent by age, made his appearance, mounted on an ass, and having an axe by his side. "Where art thou going to, my good old man?" said the soldier to him. "I am going to the forest to cut some wood." Surely, thought the soldier to himself, this cannot be the man whom Al-mansúr wishes to see; he is only a wood-cutter going to cut some wood, I shall let him go. He therefore allowed him to pass on; but scarcely had the old man gone a little way, than the soldier recollected Al-mansúr's order, and dreading his vengeance, rode up to him, and desired him to turn round, and go with him to the presence of Al-mansúr. "And what can Al-mansúr want with a poor old man like myself? Pray let me go, and do not hinder me from earning my livelihood. I entreat thee, in the name of Allah, not to detain me."—"I cannot grant thy request," replied the soldier; "my master's orders must needs be obeyed; thou must come along with me." The soldier and his prisoner then proceeded together to the palace, and were immediately introduced to the presence of Al-mansúr, whom they found sitting in his hall, where he had been waiting all night, without retiring to rest. No sooner had he cast his eyes on the old man, than he said to the Sclavonians of his guard, "Search him!" The person of the old man was accordingly searched, but nothing was found on him. "Search then the pack-saddle¹⁹ of his ass," said Al-mansúr impatiently. This was done as he commanded; when, behold!

there was found concealed in the lining a letter from certain Christians, who were then employed in his service, to their friends, engaging them to make an incursion into the Moslem territory, and attack certain districts that were not well defended. The ensuing day an order came down from Al-mansúr for the arrest of the guilty parties, who, together with the bearer of their message, were by his orders taken outside the gate of Az-záhirah, and there beheaded.

An eastern merchant, who traded in jewels, once came to Cordova from 'Aden, a city in Arabia. Having repaired to Az-záhirah, where Al-mansúr was residing at the time, he asked leave to see him, and, being admitted to his presence, he forthwith proceeded to display before him all sorts of precious stones, of great value, which he had with him. Al-mansúr having taken those which he liked the most, caused the price of the jewels to be paid to the merchant, who, leaving his presence, returned by the same road he had come, taking with him the money which he had just received and which he stored in a bag made of a certain stuff manufactured in Yemen for fine carpets. The road which the merchant had to traverse was a sandy plain, stretching along the banks of the river: the day was a hot one, and the sun was high; so that, after travelling some distance, he felt an inclination to bathe in the river. He accordingly took off his clothes, and, having placed his bag of money upon them, jumped into the water. Scarcely, however, had he been in a few minutes, when a kite alighted on the clothes, and taking the bag for a piece of meat, seized it in its bill and flew away with its prey. For some time the merchant eagerly followed the thieving bird with his eyes; but, at last, it disappeared entirely, leaving him in the greatest possible agony of mind. Seeing, however, that his misfortune had no remedy, he put on his clothes and went to his dwelling, where the loss which he had just sustained so much preyed upon his mind as to occasion him a severe illness, through which he well-nigh lost his life. Upon his recovery the merchant went to see Al-mansúr a second time for the purpose of showing him other jewels; but he was so altered in his appearance, and the gloom and sorrow upon his countenance were such, that the Hájib could not but be struck by it, and he accordingly inquired what had happened to him; upon which the merchant related to him his adventure. "Why didst thou not come to us before? we might perchance have told thee of a plan to recover thy money or find out the thief. Which way did the kite fly?" The merchant answered, "It flew eastwards in the direction of this mountain, close to thy palace," meaning the sandy plain. Immediately upon learning this, Al-mansúr sent for one of his body-guard, and said to him, "Let all the old men who live in yonder plain repair immediately hither." His orders being punctually executed, there soon came before him several respectable old

men, who were the heads of so many families. He then directed them to make inquiries whether any of the people of the neighbourhood had been observed suddenly to pass from poverty to affluence, without any well-known cause. The old men did as they were ordered, and, after investigating the case, returned to Al-mansúr, and said to him, "We only know of one man in our neighbourhood who was exceedingly poor some time since [and whose condition is now changed]. He used to support himself and family entirely by the work of his hands, and he and his sons always went on foot [or carried their own loads] for want of a beast. We hear that this very day he has bought a nag for himself, besides a complete suit of the best materials for each of his sons." Upon this, Al-mansúr gave orders that the man alluded to should be brought into his presence the next morning, bidding the merchant to be also ready to appear before him at the appointed hour. When morning came, the man presented himself to Al-mansúr, who, upon his entering the room, went straight to him, and in the merchant's presence addressed him thus: "If any thing which we have lost should have fallen into thy hands, what wouldst thou do with it?" Upon which the man replied instantly, "Here it is, my Lord," and putting his hand into his trowsers' pocket, he took out the very bag which the merchant had lost. At sight of his lost treasure the merchant shouted with delight, and his joy was so great that he actually jumped. Al-mansúr then ordered the man to explain how the circumstance had happened, and he said, "As I was working in my orchard under a palm-tree, I saw something drop down a few yards before me. I picked it up, and to my great surprise and delight found it to be a handsome bag full of money. When I saw it, I thought to myself, I would swear this money belongs to our master, Al-mansúr, and that some bird has stolen it from his castle and dropped it in his flight in this neighbourhood. I then opened the bag, and examined its contents; when my extreme poverty tempted me to take ten gold dinárs out of the many which it contained, all the time saying to myself, I have no doubt that when my lord Al-mansúr, who is so generous, hears of the circumstance, he will not hesitate to give them to me." Great was Al-mansúr's surprise when he heard the poor man's story. Having taken the bag from him, he handed it over to the merchant, saying, "Take thy bag and count the money; whatever is wanting, thou wilt charge to my account." The merchant did as he was desired, and, having counted his money, said, "By the merits of thy head! there is nothing wanting but the few dinárs he has told us of, and those I willingly give up to him from this moment." "No," replied Al-mansúr, "the priority in this case belongs by right to us, and it is for us to reward the man [as he deserves]; we will take nothing from thy joy, it

“ must be complete.” Saying this, he caused ten dinárs to be given to the merchant instead of the ten wanting, and rewarded the gardener with ten more for his having had the virtue not to appropriate to himself the whole of the sum that fell into his hands. He then said, “ Had he confessed [his guilt] before we came “ to inquire into it, his reward would have been complete.” The merchant then began to praise Al-mansúr, and finding his spirits returned, he exclaimed, “ By “ Allah ! the fame of this deed of thine shall travel the regions of the world ; it shall “ be said of thee that thou exercisest over the birds of the air the same power “ which thou hast over the inhabitants of the land in these thy dominions ; there “ is no escaping thy will or avoiding thy power.” Al-mansúr smiled, and said, “ Be moderate in thy expressions, and may God pardon thee ! ” The assembly then withdrew in utter amazement of Al-mansúr’s sagacity in discovering the lost treasure, his readiness to allay the merchant’s grief, and the benevolence and forbearance he displayed in the midst of his power.

It is related by Abú Bekr At-tortúshí (from Tortosa),²⁰ who held it from Abú-I-walíd Al-bájí, that as Al-mansúr was once about to cross the frontier and penetrate into the enemy’s territory, he ascended to the summit of a hill for the purpose of reconnoitring the neighbouring country. Once at the top, he looked down and saw his troops encamped in the middle of an extensive plain stretching both right and left. Having for a while considered the imposing sight in silence, he turned towards the *Mukaddam*²¹ (leader of the van) of his army, whose name was Ibnu-l-mus’hafí, and said to him, “ What is thy opinion of an army like that ? ” — “ My opinion is,” answered Ibnu-l-mus’hafí, “ that it is a well-disciplined and “ numerous army.” — “ I should not be astonished,” replied Al-mansúr, “ if there “ were in an army of that sort one thousand warriors of undaunted courage, and “ matchless dexterity in the handling of weapons, capable, in short, of meeting “ hand to hand the stoutest champion of the Christians.” Ibnu-l-mus’hafí made no reply to the above observation, and kept silence. “ Why answerest thou not ? ” said Al-mansúr to him. “ Is there not in my army the number and description “ of warriors that I have just named ? ” — “ Certainly there is not,” was the officer’s reply. Al-mansúr was greatly startled by the answer ; yet he said almost immediately, “ If there be not that number, at least thou wilt grant that there “ are five hundred.” — “ Not even that number,” replied Ibnu-l-mus’hafí. Hearing this, Al-mansúr could hardly suppress his anger. “ Wilt thou not grant me one “ hundred ? ” — “ Not even fifty,” answered Ibnu-l-mus’hafí, with the greatest coolness.—Al-mansúr’s indignation could no longer be controlled ; he foamed at the mouth with rage, he abused Ibnu-l-mus’hafí, called him an infidel, a traitor, and a coward, and bade him leave his presence immediately, if he valued his head.

Some time after this occurrence a Christian army made its appearance on the plain where the Moslems were encamped, and as Al-mansúr never refused battle whenever it was offered to him by the enemy, he marshalled his troops, and made every preparation for the forthcoming engagement. The Christians, on the other hand, did the same; and the two hosts, having well chosen their ground, divided the extensive plain between them. The two armies were already drawn in line of battle, and the warriors of both nations were waiting only for the signal of their respective commanders to rush upon each other, when, behold! a Christian knight, cased in bright steel, came out from the ranks, and, advancing between the two hosts, began to prance his horse and to brandish his spear, challenging the Moslem warriors to single combat. "Is there any of you," said he, with a terrific voice which resounded through the plain, "who dares to come out?" Presently a Moslem champion sallied out; but, after a few blows were exchanged, he was unhorsed and slain. Great was the joy of the infidel dogs when they saw the Christian knight slay his adversary; their deafening shouts resounded through the air like claps of terrific thunder, whilst the Moslems were dejected and afflicted at the death of their comrade. Elated with success, the Christian knight again rode his steed between the two hosts, and said, "Is there no one to come out and fight me? If your brave men dare not come alone, let two of them, three more come out,—I will fight them all." Hearing this taunting bravado, another Moslem left the ranks; but alas! he shared the same fate with his companion. "Let three to one come out," cried the Christian with exultation, "one is not enough for me." A Moslem warrior then presented himself, but he was immediately dispatched like the two preceding ones. Again the infidels rent the air with their exclamations of joy, whilst the Moslems were afflicted and in dismay: a sort of panic fear ran throughout the whole army, which, there can be no doubt, would have been easily defeated, had the Christians then commenced the attack. Meanwhile Al-mansúr was mad with rage, pacing the ground with the greatest inquietude, and not knowing what to do to inspire courage into his dispirited troops. At last he sent for Ibnu-l-mus'hafí, and said to him, "Hast thou seen the feats of arms performed by yonder Christian dog?"—"I have," answered Ibnu-l-mus'hafí, "I watched attentively all his movements."—"And what is thy advice on this occasion?"—"Explain thy wishes to me," said Al-mus'hafí, "and I will counsel thee to the best of my understanding."—"I wish to humble the pride of the Christian, and put a stop to his insulting bravadoes." "That can only be attained," said Ibnu-l-mus'hafí, "by finding a Moslem who will be his superior in courage, strength, and dexterity; but I will see to that." Without loss of time Ibnu-l-mus'hafí galloped off to a division of the army where

he knew of some warriors renowned for their former exploits, and, having communicated to them the wishes of their general, a young man belonging to the troops of the *Thagher* came forwards mounted on a lean, sorry nag, extremely weak about its hind-quarters, having before his saddle a water-skin; the rest of his apparel was equally poor and ludicrous. "Well, my brave youth," said Ibnu-l-mus'hafí to him, "didst thou see the Christian slay thy comrades?"—"I did," replied the young soldier, "and what are thy wishes?"—"I want thee to bring me his head." The youth departed with his water-skin and his sorry nag, and arrived before the Christian, whom he attacked immediately. Scarcely a few minutes had elapsed, when the Moslem soldier was observed galloping back to his ranks with something in his hand, which, at his approach, proved to be the gory head of the Christian knight. Having laid his trophy at the feet of Al-mansúr, he was immediately promoted, and rewarded besides with a very large sum of money. Ibnu-l-mus'hafí then observed to Al-mansúr, "Was I not right when I told thee that there were not one thousand warriors, nor five hundred, nor one hundred, nor fifty, nor twenty, nor ten even? The event has proved it. This youth is one of the very few who can pass under that denomination." Al-mansúr restored Ibnu-l-mus'hafí to his favour, and from that day listened more attentively to his advice.

One of Al-mansúr's soldiers once left his banner [fixed in the earth] on a mountain close to a Christian town. After the retreat of the Moslem army, the Christians of the town, seeing the banner fluttering before the wind on the top of the mountain, felt desirous to get possession of it; but not knowing what troops there might be behind it, they dared not for several days quit the town. Let this be an example of the awe in which the worshippers of the Trinity stood in those glorious times of the servants of the only God; for it is a fact that whenever the proudest kings of the Christians met [in the field] Al-mansúr's invincible host, fear lodged in their hearts; and being convinced that resistance in the open field was of no avail, they invariably took to flight and sought refuge behind the walls of their towns and castles, from which they never moved, but watched from the top the movements of their enemies.

In one of his campaigns to the land of the Franks, Al-mansúr happened to pass between two lofty mountains by a narrow road or defile which led into the heart of the enemy's territory. No sooner had he crossed the pass, than he began, as usual, to make incursions into the neighbouring districts, wasting and burning every thing that lay in his way, and making prisoners right and left. As the Franks made no resistance, Al-mansúr pushed his ravages further into their country for several consecutive days, until, being satisfied with the plunder which he had

collected, he thought of returning by the same road he had come. On his arrival at the narrow pass he found it strongly guarded by the Christians, who had assembled in great numbers to oppose his passage. When Al-mansúr saw the Christians in possession of the pass, he was not the least disconcerted; he returned with his host to the country which he had lately traversed, and having chosen a suitable encampment for his army, set about constructing houses and dwellings for his soldiers, as it was then winter-time. This being done, he ordered his men to provide themselves with agricultural implements, and directed them to plough and sow the neighbouring fields. At the same time he sent marauding parties to plunder the country around, and make prisoners, who, when brought to the camp, were immediately beheaded, with the exception of the children, who were preserved [to be brought up in the Mohammedan faith]. The carcasses of the slain were then, by his orders, thrown at the mouth of the pass; their number being so great that the pass was actually blocked up with them, and that for several miles round the country became a complete desert. In the mean while the Christians sent a message to Al-mansúr, offering to let him pass unmolested with his army, if he would give up all his plunder and captives; but this Al-mansúr most indignantly refused: upon which the infidels sent him a second message, offering to let him pass with both plunder and captives; but Al-mansúr answered, "My men are no longer desirous to cross, but wish to remain where they are. Were they to cross the pass and return [to Cordova], they would soon have to recross it for the ensuing spring campaign. We are therefore determined to stop here till next year, and when we have gone through our campaign then will we cross the pass, and not before." However, the Franks kept importuning him until he granted them the peace they implored, on condition that they would furnish him with mules to carry his plunder and his captives, and would besides supply him with provisions for his army up to the time of his arrival in his own territory; and, moreover, that they should themselves remove the carcasses of their countrymen heaped up before the mouth of the pass; all which conditions the Christians faithfully fulfilled, Al-mansúr and his army passing unmolested through the pass. "By my life," observes the historian from whom the above narrative is borrowed, "there never was recorded a more splendid deed than this, or a case in which divine assistance was made more manifest; for causing the proud enemies of Islám to remove the putrid carcasses of their slaughtered countrymen is an exploit unprecedented in the annals of warfare."

Among the remarkable acts recorded of Al-mansúr, and which are not told of any other prince, one is, that his army was chiefly composed of [Christian] captives taken in his wars with the infidels. It is a well-authenticated fact, corroborated

by the testimony of contemporary historians. That with such troops Al-mansúr should have been enabled to accomplish what he did, and to defeat, wherever he met them, the best-appointed armies of the Christians, is only one proof more of the favours and assistance which the Almighty was pleased to dispense to him.

The above extracts are from the work of Ibnu Hayyán; we shall now transcribe from the *Azháru-l-manthúrah fi-l-akhbári-l-máthúrah* before mentioned. It is there said, in the twenty-ninth flower or chapter, that "As Al-mansúr was one day sitting under a tent in the plain outside of Cordova to pass in review his infantry and cavalry, and see them manœuvre,²² the reviewing field being filled with spectators, a soldier belonging to the African corps, and whose name was Wátirmár Ibn Abí Bekr Al-birzáli,²³ came up before him, and addressed him in language ludicrous enough to provoke to laughter a man who has just lost his friend or his son. 'O my Lord!' said he, 'neither I nor you have a dwelling, and I am actually in the street.'—'What then is become of thy spacious and comfortable dwelling, O Wátirmár!' replied Al-mansúr to him. 'Thou hast expelled me from it. May God show thee his favours! Thou gavest me fields and lands yielding enough produce to fill my house; but then thou didst expel me from it, and I am now but an hungry Berber, untrained to adversity. Dost thou not see that I am like the thirsty camel who is brought to a spring, and whose head is yet held up so that he cannot drink?' Hearing this incoherent speech, Al-mansúr burst out laughing and said, 'May God preserve thee from the shafts of calamity! Thy manner of returning thanks for a benefit is more pleasing to our ears and more gratifying to our hearts than the eloquent and learned perorations of other men.' Then turning round to the Andalusian officers who were close to him, he said, 'Friends, if you ever have to thank for a benefit, or to ask for the continuance of a favour, do it in this poor man's style, with the simplicity of nature, and without either strain or affectation.'²⁴ He then gave orders that among the houses then unoccupied the best should be put at the disposal of the Berber, which was done in compliance with his commands."

In the ensuing flower, which is the thirtieth, "Al-mansúr got up one Sunday morning, when the weather was boisterous, the wind very high, and the rain fell in torrents. It must be observed that Sunday²⁵ was a day of rest for the servants [of Al-mansúr's household], who were always allowed on that day some relaxation from their duties; so that both circumstances united made Al-mansúr think that he would have no applications made to him, and he exclaimed, 'I should think that this day we shall be free from importuners and pretenders! By my life, were one of them to make his appearance in spite

“ of the raging elements, I swear that he will carry off the first prize.’ Thus
 “ saying, he left his room, and went to meet his Hájib (chamberlain), to whom
 “ he imparted his determination. Scarcely, however, had Al-mansúr retired to
 “ his inner apartments, when the chamberlain appeared before him, and with
 “ a smile on his countenance said, ‘ My Lord! three Berbers, Abú-n-náss Ibn
 “ Sáleh and two more with him, are now at thy door [asking for admission].
 “ They are dripping wet, and desirous to see thee.’—‘ Bring them in to me,’
 “ was Al-mansúr’s answer. The chamberlain hastened to execute his master’s
 “ orders, and after a little time returned with the three Berbers, who were as
 “ wet as a piece of melting salt. Al-mansúr laughed to see them in that plight,
 “ and, bidding them to sit down, he inquired from them what had brought them
 “ to his palace in such weather, when all men of sense remained quiet at home,
 “ and even the birds of the air took refuge within their nests. Abú-n-náss then,
 “ answering for his friends, said, ‘ O our Lord! it is not every tradesman who sits
 “ [waiting for customers] in his shop; there are many who, tempted by gain,
 “ come after us and try to deceive us, and take our money from us; but we
 “ disappoint them by drawing tighter the strings of our purses. Nevertheless they
 “ persevere in their attempt, and wander through the streets, markets, and squares,
 “ actually wearing out their shoes and garments for the sake of gain. In a like
 “ manner do we wear out thy clothes upon the backs of our horses in an attempt
 “ to deserve thy favours. We therefore thought of coming to sit down in
 “ this market [to see what we might get].’ Hearing this, Al-mansúr laughed
 “ most heartily, and, having sent for robes and other presents, he distributed
 “ them among the Berbers, who returned to their dwelling highly rejoiced and
 “ content with their morning’s work.”

In the forty-fourth flower we read as follows: “ There was in Cordova during
 “ the administration of the Hájib Al-mansúr (Mohammed Ibn Abí ’A’mir) a youth
 “ who followed the pursuits of literature, in which he had attained considerable
 “ eminence. He occupied his time in reading books on the science of govern-
 “ ment, and frequented the libraries for that purpose, until he obtained an appoint-
 “ ment under government, in the exercise of which he embezzled a considerable
 “ sum of money. Being called to account, he was found to be a debtor to the
 “ state in three thousand dinárs. Al-mansúr, having been informed of the cir-
 “ cumstance, summoned the delinquent to his presence, and charged him with
 “ embezzling the public money. The youth then made a profound bow and con-
 “ fessed his guilt. ‘ What induced thee, young rascal, to appropriate to thyself
 “ the Sultan’s money?’ The youth replied, ‘ My reason was overpowered, and the
 “ temptation to breach of faith seized upon me.’—‘ By Allah! we intend to make

“ an example of thee. Here! a pair of shackles and a smith for this youth, and
“ away with him to prison.’ He then gave particular orders to the jailer to have
“ him well flogged, and to treat him with the greatest rigour. When the youth
“ was about to be marched out of the room, he repeated the two following verses :

‘ Alas! alas! the punishment which awaits me is still greater than I
‘ should have imagined.

‘ There is no escaping my miserable fate ; power and strength only belong
‘ to God.’²⁶

“ When Al-mansúr heard these verses, he said to his guards, ‘ Stay ;’ and then,
“ addressing himself to the youth, ‘ Hast thou any thing to say in thy defence,
“ or dost thou conform thyself to thy sentence?’—‘ I have,’ was the youth’s
“ answer. The shackles were then knocked off his feet ; and this being done, he
“ said extempore—

‘ Seest thou not that Al-mansúr’s forgiveness must needs be followed by a
‘ favour?

‘ Like Allah, who, after forgiving his servants, admits them into Paradise.’²⁷

“ He was right : not only did Al-mansúr set him at liberty, but he pardoned
“ him the sums which he had embezzled, and exempted him from all further
“ prosecution on that account.”

From the forty-fifth flower : “ Al-mansúr, feeling one day indisposed, wanted
“ to have a cautery applied to his leg. The surgeon was sent for, and, although
“ when he arrived, Al-mansúr was sitting on a raised throne, surrounded by his
“ courtiers and administering justice to his subjects, he nevertheless directed the
“ surgeon to apply the cautery to his leg ; which was done, the assembly perceiving
“ nothing until they actually smelt the burnt flesh and skin, which caused no
“ little astonishment among them.”

From the forty-sixth flower : “ Such was the awe in which Al-mansúr was
“ held by all those who surrounded his person, so rigorous the discipline which
“ he caused to be observed by the troops, and so great his care in upholding
“ the royal dignity, that no preceding sovereign ever met with such submissive
“ obedience to his commands. It is said, that whenever he passed his cavalry in
“ review, the most profound silence was kept by the soldiers, and that the horses
“ even were so trained as not to break it by their neighings. One day, as he
“ was reviewing his troops in a plain in the vicinity of Cordova, he happened
“ to see something glitter amidst a troop of men. Having inquired what it was
“ that attracted his eyes, he was answered, that one of the soldiers had unsheathed
“ his sword, thinking he could do so unperceived. ‘ Bring the man to me,’
“ said Al-mansúr to one of his officers. The soldier accordingly came out of

“ the ranks and saluted his general. ‘ What made thee unsheath thy sword at a time and in a spot where thou well knowest it is strictly forbidden to do so without previous leave from the general?’ The soldier confessed his guilt, but alleged as an excuse, that whilst he was in the act of pointing to a comrade with his sword, the scabbard, which was loose, fell off and left the blade uncovered. ‘ Crimes of this kind no excuse can palliate,’ replied Al-mansúr, and he ordered the soldier to be immediately beheaded with his own sword. He then caused his gory head to be fixed on a spear and to be paraded in front of the ranks, whilst a proclamation was read to the troops, stating the crime just committed, and the manner in which it had been punished.”

Buildings
erected by
Al-mansúr.

But what shall we say of the stupendous buildings erected both in Africa and in Andalus during the administration of Al-mansúr! What of his addition to the great mosque of Cordova, which we have described elsewhere, a work so highly meritorious in the eyes of God that it would, of itself, have procured him a place in Paradise! What of the magnificent palaces and gilded pavilions erected at his command, and which equalled, if they did not surpass, those constructed by the Sultáns of the family of Umeyyah! We have alluded elsewhere to his having built on the banks of the Guadalquivir, at some distance from Cordova, a strong castle, called Az-záhirah,²⁸ whither he conveyed all the treasures of the state. In the course of time a beautiful palace was erected in the neighbourhood, extensive gardens²⁹ were planted; houses, too, were built for the officers of his household, as well as barracks for the troops of his body-guard, and Az-záhirah became, in a very short time, a large and populous city. Ibn Khákán, who alludes to it in the *Mattmah*, says that Al-mansúr completed the building in A. H. 387, and that in the same year, having made, as usual, an incursion into the enemy's territory, he caused more havoc than he had ever done, penetrating into the most distant and retired districts of Galicia, and collecting more plunder than on any other former occasion.

Az-záhirah was not the only place built by Al-mansúr. We are told by Al-homaydí that he erected also, at a short distance from Cordova, and in the vicinity of Medínatu-z-zahrá, a magnificent country-residence, called Munityat Al-'ámiriyyah, surrounded by fields and plantations, in which one thousand *mudd* of barley were yearly sowed, to supply food for a stud of horses which Al-mansúr kept in it. It is related that Al-mansúr was so fond of the horses reared at this place, that on his return from a military expedition he never took any rest until he had summoned to his presence the master of the stud, and had ascertained from him how many colts had died during his absence, and how many were born. In a similar manner he never failed to inquire from his chief architect whether

any portion of the building required repair. At this place Al-mansúr had a manufacture of shields and weapons, of which no less than twelve thousand were made every year; and they say that the number of workmen employed in the manufactory, as well as those of the stud, and other servants, was so considerable, that no less than twelve thousand pounds of meat, exclusive of game and poultry, were distributed to them in the course of the year. Al-mansúr erected also a bridge on the river of Cordova (Guadalquivir), which was begun in the year 378 (beginning April 20, A. D. 988), and finished about the middle of 379 (beginning April 10, A. D. 989), at the expense of one hundred and forty thousand dinárs. It was a very useful work, and one that will perpetuate the memory of Al-mansúr. On the subject of the building of this bridge we recollect having read somewhere a very interesting anecdote. Among the lands which were appropriated for the building of the bridge, there was a patch of ground belonging to an old man of the lower classes. Al-mansúr ordered the inspectors of works to purchase it from him. Accordingly, having called upon the man, the inspectors spoke to him about his land, explained to him the necessity under which they were of appropriating it, as the bridge could not be erected on any other spot, and declared to him that they had received instructions to indemnify him fully for the loss of his property. Not wishing to part with his land, the old man asked what he considered a most exorbitant price, imagining that when the inspectors had heard his unreasonable demand, they would desist from their purpose; but to his great astonishment, no sooner had he mentioned the sum, ten dinárs of gold, and declared that he would not make over his property for a lesser consideration, than the inspectors caught him at his word, paid him the money down, and drew up a deed for the sale. When Al-mansúr was informed of the transaction, he could not help laughing at the old man's ignorance and imbecility; but he ordered his treasurer to pay him ten times the money he had asked, which was done agreeably to his commands. When the old man saw himself in possession of one hundred dinárs, his joy was extreme, and he had well-nigh lost his senses in the excess of his rejoicing. He presented himself to Al-mansúr, whom he thanked for the signal favour thus conferred on him; and the anecdote being circulated among the people, became the subject of history.

The above were not the only public works erected under the administration of Al-mansúr. A bridge was thrown over the river Sheníl (Xenil) at Ezija, by means of which a communication was established between that city and the neighbouring country, the roads leading to the city were more frequented, and provisions became more abundant. Granada, Seville, and other cities of Andalus, Ceuta and Fez in Africa, partook alike of the benefits of Al-mansúr's administration in this respect.

Among the meritorious actions of Al-mansúr, the following are particularly recorded. He wrote with his own hand a Korán, which he always carried with him on his military expeditions, and in which he used constantly to read. He collected and kept all the dust which adhered to his garments during his marches to the country of the infidels, or in his battles with them. Accordingly, whenever he halted at a place, his servants came up to him, and carefully collected the dust in kerchiefs, until a good-sized bag was filled, which he always carried with him, intending to have it mixed with the perfumes for the embalming of his body. He also took with him his grave-clothes, thus being always prepared to meet death whenever it should assail him. The winding-sheet was made of linen grown in the lands inherited from his father, and spun and woven by his own daughters. He used continually to ask God to permit him to die in his service and in war against the infidels, and this desire was granted. He became celebrated for the purity of his intentions, the knowledge of his own sins, his fear of his Creator, his numerous campaigns against the infidels, and many other virtues and accomplishments, which it would take us too long to enumerate. Whenever the name of God was mentioned in his presence, he never failed to mention it also; and if ever he was tempted to do an act which might deserve the chastisement of his Lord, he invariably resisted the temptation. Notwithstanding this he enjoyed all the pleasures of this world, which make the delight of kings, with the exception only of wine, the use of which he left off entirely two years before he died. We might fill whole volumes with extracts taken from those works which have been exclusively consecrated to the history of that remarkable man; but, however strong the temptation, we will resist it, and will resume the thread of our long-interrupted narrative, by recounting what happened in Cordova after the death of Al-mansúr.

CHAPTER II.

'Abdu-l-malek succeeds to the post of Hájb—His death—His brother 'Abdu-r-rahmán is proclaimed—He prevails upon Hishám to choose him for his successor—A conspiracy is formed against 'Abdu-r-rahmán—who is assassinated—Mohammed Ibn 'Abdi-l-jabbár is proclaimed under the name of Al-muhdi—The Berbers revolt against him—They are expelled from Cordova—They proclaim Suleymán—Defeat Al-muhdi—Take possession of the capital—Suleymán is defeated by Al-muhdi—Restoration of Hishám—Cordova taken by the Berbers—Massacre of its inhabitants—Origin of the Bení Hamúd—'Alí Ibn Hamúd revolts against Suleymán—Defeats him, and puts him to death—'Alí is proclaimed at Cordova—His exemplary justice—He becomes a tyrant—Assassination of 'Alí—His brother Al-kásim is elected by the army—Takes possession of the government—Proclamation of Al-murtadhi, of the house of Umeyyah—He is betrayed and put to death.

ABOUT two hours before Al-mansúr died, his son, 'Abdu-l-malek, rode in all haste to Cordova, where he arrived at the beginning of Shawwál (Aug. A. D. 1002), accompanied only by the Kádí Ibn Dhakwán. When the sad news was divulged [in Cordova], and the Khalif Hishám ascertained the state in which Al-mansúr lay, he summoned to his presence a number [of civil functionaries], in order to announce to them the fatal news; but such was the excess of his grief, that he could not utter a single word, and he stood speechless as a ghost, endeavouring to explain by signs to the assembly the fatal occurrence which he had to communicate. 'Abdu-l-malek then returned to the camp, and found that his father was dead, and that according to his last instructions he had been interred in the spot where he died, namely, in his palace at Medínah Sélim (Medinaceli). The army then broke up, the greater part going towards Hishám [in Cordova]; upon which 'Abdu-l-malek, after remaining some days at Medinaceli, returned to Cordova, accompanied by those who remained by him; and the singing women of his father's harem put on hair-cloth sacks and coarse blankets instead of the silk and brocade to which they had been used.

'Abdu-l-malek succeeds to the post of Hájb.

Hishám treated the son as he had treated the father; he himself clothed him with a *khi'ah* or dress of honour, and signed his appointment to the office of Hájb. This, however, was not accomplished without some alteration¹ among the eunuchs [of the palace]; but, at last, those who leaned were put straight, and the ill-disposed became loyal; things took their right course, the breasts [of the

Moslems] were expanded, and their hearts were rejoiced, when they heard of 'Abdu-l-malek's victories, and of the extensive districts which he daily conquered from the unbelievers; and the birth of a son [of 'Abdu-l-malek] was hailed as the greatest blessing which Andalus could receive.

In the year 393 (beginning Nov. 9, A. D. 1003) letters came from Al-mu'izz, chief of the tribe of Maghráwah, who, at the death of his father, Zeyri Ibn 'Attiyah, had become ruler of Fez and Western Africa, [acknowledging Hishám as his liege lord.] 'Abdu-l-malek granted Al-mu'izz the investiture of Western Africa, on condition that he would cause Hishám's name and his own to be proclaimed from the pulpits [of all the mosques] in his dominions, and that he would send every year to Cordova one horse and one shield, besides a certain sum of money, in token of vassalage; all which conditions Al-mu'izz promised to fulfil, sending his son Al-mu'anser as an hostage to Cordova.

His death.

'Abdu-l-malek followed in the steps of his celebrated father, as regards the [wise] administration of public affairs and the [yearly] expeditions against the Christians, of which he is said to have made no less than eight, always causing great loss to the unbelievers, as for instance that of 394 (A. D. 1004), when he is well known to have defeated the King of the Galicians, and to have taken and destroyed his capital, the city of Liún (Leon).² In commemoration of that exploit, 'Abdu-l-malek received the titles of *Seyfu-d-daulah* (sword of the state) and *Al-modhaffer* (the conqueror, or victorious). He died on his return from the country of the Christians, in the month of Moharram, A. H. 399 (Sept. A. D. 1008), or, according to other authorities, in the year before (A. H. 398), although the former date is the most probable. His administration lasted seven years, which were to the Moslems like a succession of festivals, owing to which the period of his rule was called *As-sábi'* or *Al-osbú'* (the week), comparing it with the first week after marriage.

His brother 'Abdu-rahmán is proclaimed.

After the death of 'Abdu-l-malek, his brother 'Abdu-rahmán succeeded him in the charge of Hájb (chamberlain). 'Abdu-rahmán assumed on the occasion the surname of *An-násir lidín-illah* (the defender of the faith); others say that he took that of *Al-mámún* (the trusted by the grace of God). He followed in the steps of his brother and father as regards the seclusion of the Khalif Hishám, of whose person he was the complete master, and the assumption into his hands of all the powers of the state.

He prevails upon Hishám to choose him for his successor.

In the course of time, however, he undertook to usurp even the insignia of the Khalifate as he had usurped the power, and to this end he asked Hishám to appoint him his successor to the throne,—a request with which that weak monarch complied, after assembling the counsellors of the state and the notaries to witness the ceremony, and to authorize it by their presence. "It was," says an author of those days, "a very solemn ceremony." The deed [of nomination]

was drawn by Abú Hafss Ibn Burd, and copied in the Khalif's own hand. We here subjoin it :

“ This is what the Khalif Hishám Al-muyyed-billah, Commander of the Faithful, stipulates with the people [of this country] in general, and what he himself promises to observe and swears to fulfil, by placing his right hand upon the deed as upon a true and valid contract.

“ After mature consideration and long deliberation, after reflecting upon the heavy duties which God has imposed upon him as Imám and Commander of the Faithful, the Khalif Hishám, son of the Khalif Al-hakem Al-mustanser-billah, and grandson of the Khalif 'Abdu-r-rahmán An-násir lidín-illah,—fearing lest fate should strike him that blow against which no mortal stands secure, and which no living creature has the power to avert; fearing lest death should assail him suddenly, and take him by surprise; fearing, in short, that if he were to die thus, the people of this country would have no banner left under which they might flock, and no place of refuge to which they might run [in case of need]; knowing that were he to present himself to his Creator after so flagrant a dereliction of his duty, he would certainly incur his anger for having neglected the charge intrusted to him, and having gone astray from the path of righteousness and truth,—has determined to select among the Arabs of the tribe of Koraysh, and others having their domicile in this country, one worthy of having this empire transmitted to him [as an inheritance], and of being intrusted with the prosperity and welfare of this nation,—one whose piety, religion, honesty, and good faith shall be notorious, one who shall be known to resist the temptations of sin, and to follow the path of righteousness by practising those duties which are acceptable to his God.

“ After searching, therefore, high ranks as well as low, the Khalif Hishám has found none more deserving to be appointed his successor, or to become the heir to the Khalifate after his death, than the trustworthy, honest, and beloved Abú-l-motref 'Abdu-r-rahmán, son of Al-mansúr Ibn Abí 'A'mir Mohammed, son of Ibn Abí 'A'mir. (May God prosper him!) And the Khalif has been induced to make this choice owing to the brilliant qualities which grace the said individual,—the generosity of his soul, the greatness of his origin, and the nobility of his descent; his piety, his prudence, his wisdom, his talents, all of which he knows him to possess, as he has watched him, and put him more than once to the trial, and has upon every occasion found him ready to do a good act, and to be the first in the path of righteousness, or to surmount any obstacles however great [in the prosecution of good purposes]; since, in short, he knows him to unite in his own person every good quality. But

“ are we to wonder that a man who had Al-mansúr for a father and Al-modhaffer
 “ for a brother should surpass every one in virtue, and exceed all in generosity ?

“ Another no less weighty consideration has moved the Commander of the Faithful
 “ to take this step, namely, that whilst perusing works on the occult sciences
 “ and turning over the inestimable treasures contained in them, he has discovered
 “ that he was to be succeeded [in the command of this country] by an Arab of
 “ the race of Kahttán, respecting whom there exists a well-authenticated tradition
 “ preserved by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amru Ibnu-l-'ass and Abú Horeyrah, both of whom
 “ ascribe the following words to our Prophet: 'The time shall come when a man
 “ of the stock of Kahttán will drive men before him with a stick.' Finding,
 “ therefore, no person to whom those words can be better applied; knowing that
 “ every thing that is good is centered in the person of the above-named, and
 “ that he is, moreover, ornamented with every brilliant quality; that he has no
 “ rivals and opponents, but, on the contrary, every one [in this country] looks
 “ up to him for direction, the Khalif intrusts to him the administration of affairs
 “ during his lifetime, and bequeaths to him the empire after his death. And this
 “ the Commander of the Faithful does spontaneously, of his own free will, and
 “ in the presence of witnesses [called for that purpose], and, as such, orders it
 “ to be transmitted and communicated to his subjects without any second thought
 “ or restriction, pledging himself in public as well as in private, by word and deed,
 “ by the stipulation of God, and by his promises, by the protection of his messenger
 “ Mohammed, and that of the four legitimate Khalifs who were his ancestors,
 “ and his own share in the intercession, to fulfil it in all its parts, and not swerve,
 “ change, wander, or fall aside in any part of it; taking God and his angels to
 “ witness of the truth of his words, and that he bequeaths his empire and transfers
 “ his sayings and doings to the here present Al-mámún Abú-l-motref 'Abdu-r-
 “ rahmán, son of Al-mansúr, (may God prosper him!) who accepts what is given
 “ to him, and binds himself to fulfil the duties imposed upon him.”

This took place in the month of Rabi' the first, A. H. 399 (Nov. A. D. 1008).
 The Wizírs, the Kádís, and other people present, witnessed the act by affixing
 their signatures to the deed; and from that day 'Abdu-r-rahmán was called
Wali-l-ahd (presumptive heir to the empire).

A conspiracy is
 formed against
 'Abdu-r-rah-
 mán.

In this manner were the wishes of 'Abdu-r-rahmán accomplished, and his name
 proclaimed from the pulpit of the great mosque; but the courtiers and the high
 functionaries of the state were averse to the measure; and it became in time the
 cause of his own ruin, and of the overthrow of his power and that of his family.
 The Bení Umeyyah and the Korayshites were the most opposed to it; they detested
 the rule of 'Abdu-r-rahmán, and, moreover, they were much afflicted at seeing the

power of the Korayshites and the rest of the Bení Modhar in the hands of their enemies the Yemenites. They therefore united their counsels, visited each other, and entered into a conspiracy to rid themselves of 'Abdu-r-rahmán. Accordingly, in the year 399 (A. D. 1009), whilst 'Abdu-r-rahmán was absent from Cordova on one of his expeditions to the country of the Galicians, they rushed upon his *Sáhibu-sh-shorttah* (captain of the guard), and slew him³ at his post, at the gate of the royal palace in Cordova: they then deposed Hishám Al-muyyed, and appointed in his room a prince of the posterity of the Cordovan Khalifs, whose name was Mohammed, son of Hishám, son of 'Abdi-l-jabbár, son of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Abdu-r-rahmán An-násir lidín-illah, on whom they conferred the honorary appellation of *Al-muhdi-billah* (the directed by the grace of God).

The news [of this revolution] having reached the point of the frontier where the Hájb 'Abdu-r-rahmán was then [at war with the Christians], he collected the scattered divisions of his army, and returned hastily to Cordova, burning to take vengeance on his enemies. However, when he approached the capital, he was deserted by a great portion of the army and the principal Berber officers, who immediately entered Cordova, and having sworn allegiance to the usurper Al-muhdi, instigated him against the Hájb 'Abdu-r-rahmán, whom they represented as a madman, and incapable of governing the people well. Some of them next went out of Cordova, returned to the camp, and seized on 'Abdu-r-rahmán,⁴ whom they beheaded, taking his head to Al-muhdi and to the people of Cordova. Thus was the power of the 'A'mirites overthrown. There is no God but God, He is the only survivor of empires!

Who is assassinated.

On his accession to power, Mohammed assumed the surname of *Al-muhdi* (the directed). Instead, however, of being contented with the title of Hájb, and reigning in Hishám's name, as Al-mansúr and his two sons had done, he confined that unhappy monarch to an apartment of his palace, gave out that he was dead, and took for himself the titles of Khalif and Imám. One of the first acts of his government was to seize as many as he could of the chiefs attached to the party of the 'A'mirites, and put them to death.

Mohammed Ibn 'Abdi-l-jabbár usurps the royal power.

It has been stated above, that the chiefs of the Berbers and of the Zenátah, seeing the bad rule of 'Abdu-r-rahmán, and the subsequent overthrow of his empire, had without difficulty embraced the party of the usurper Al-muhdi. The Bení Umeyyah, however, could not forget the assistance which the Berbers had formerly lent to the 'A'mirites, as they ascribed entirely to them the usurpation of the royal power by Al-mansúr and his two sons. They therefore hated them most cordially, and could not bear the sight of them; and had it not been that the Berbers were numerous, and united together by a sense of the necessity of self-preservation, they would undoubtedly have been all destroyed to a man. As

The Berbers revolt against him.

it was, the rabble of Cordova insulted and hooted at them [whenever they met them in the streets], and by their clamours and complaints prevailed upon Al-muhdi to issue orders that no Berber should be allowed to ride or bear arms within the precincts of Cordova. Moreover, as some of the Berber chiefs were once returning from the palace, their houses were in the mean while attacked by the populace and gutted of their contents. The offended immediately laid a complaint before Al-muhdi, who, not daring to disregard their claims altogether, had the guilty parties put to death. Yet with all this, Al-muhdi hated the Berbers, and let no opportunity pass without showing them all the ill-will he bore them; upon which the Berbers, having received intelligence of his ill designs, as well as of his intention to make a general slaughter among them, called upon their officers to advise them how to act upon the emergency. Having held a secret council, they came to the resolution of dethroning Al-muhdi and of proclaiming a prince of the race of Umeyyah, whose name was Hishám, son of Suleymán, son of the Commander of the Faithful, An-násir lidín-illah. Their meetings, however, could not be held so secretly as not to reach the ears of a few [influential citizens], who decided upon thwarting their plans. They, accordingly, instigated against them the populace of Cordova, who took up arms, attacked them in their cantonments, and expelled them from the city. This being done, Hishám and his brother Abú Bekr were arrested and conveyed to the presence of Al-muhdi, who beheaded them [with his own hand].

They are expelled from Cordova.

A nephew of the murdered princes, named Suleymán, who was the son of their brother Al-hakem, succeeded in leaving Cordova in disguise, and repaired to the camp of the Berbers, who, after their expulsion from the capital, had pitched their tents at a short distance from it, swearing not to raise them until they had taken ample vengeance on the citizens of Cordova. Suleymán was received with open arms by the Berbers, who hastened to swear allegiance to him, and proclaimed him Khalif under the appellation of *Al-musta'in-billah* (he who implores the assistance of God), on condition that he would immediately lead them against their enemies. Suleymán, however, thinking that the time was not yet come to make an attack upon Cordova, dissuaded them from their undertaking, and retired with them to the Thagher (frontiers of Toledo), where he applied for, and obtained, from the son of Alfonso,⁵ a strong body of troops to aid him in his war with Al-muhdi. Thus re-inforced, Suleymán advanced by forced marches against Cordova; upon which Al-muhdi, hearing of his approach, went out to meet him at the head of the citizens and of the troops of that capital. Having come to close battle, fortune turned against the Cordovans, upwards of twenty thousand of whom fell by the sword of the enemy. On that disastrous occasion the learned and

They proclaim Suleymán.

Defeat Al-muhdi.