

ARCH IN THE ALJAFERIA OF ZARAGOZA.

could not contemplate with composure the immunity of the Moslem power on the other side of the Pyrenees. As a good Christian he was pledged to extirpate the infidel; and, as an imperial conqueror, the existence of the independent kingdom of Andalusia was hateful to his pride. His opportunity came at last—when the accession of the first Spanish prince of the Omeyyad stock roused the hostility of some of the factions which were always prone to revolt in Spain. Charlemagne was invited to interfere and drive out the usurper. The Spanish chroniclers make Alfonso, King of the Asturias and heir of Pelagius,<sup>†</sup> summon the Frankish emperor to his aid; but there is more reason to believe that the invitation came from certain disappointed Moslem chiefs, who could not brook the authority of Abd-er-Rahmān the Omeyyad, and who were ready to submit even to the sworn enemy of Islam, rather than recognize the new ruler. The moment of their appeal was propitious; Charlemagne had just completed, as he thought, the subjugation of the Saxons; their chief Wittekind had been banished, and thousands of his followers were coming to Paderborn to be baptized. The conqueror's hands were thus free to turn to other schemes of victory. It was arranged that he should invade Spain, while the factious Moslem chiefs should make diversions in his favour at three different points. Fortunately for the newly-founded dynasty of Cordova, this formidable coalition came to naught. The allies in Spain miscalculated their time, and fell to blows with one another; and when Charlemagne crossed the

<sup>†</sup> On Pelayo or Pelagius, see below, ch. vii.

Pyrenees in 777, he found himself unsupported. He began the siege of Zaragoza, when news was brought him that Wittekind had returned and raised the Saxons, who were again in arms, and had advanced as far as Cologne. There was nothing for it but to hurry back and defend his dominions. He rapidly retraced his steps, and the main part of his army had already crossed the mountains when disaster overtook the rear in the Pass of Roncesvalles. The Basques, who nourished an eternal hatred against the Franks, had laid a skilful ambush among the rocky defiles of the Pyrenees, and, allowing the advanced part of the army to march through, waited till the rear-guard, encumbered with baggage; began slowly to thread its way through the pass. Then they fell upon it hip and thigh, so that scarcely a Frank escaped. The Christian chroniclers tell terrible tales of the slaughter done that day. According to them it was the Saracens, side by side with the knights of Leon, who wrought this havoc upon King Charles. We read in the old Spanish ballad how the legendary hero Bernardo del Carpio led the chivalry of Leon to the massacre of the Frankish host :

With three thousand men of Leon from the city Bernard goes,  
To protect the soil Hispanian from the spear of Frankish foes ;  
From the city which is planted in the midst between the seas,  
To preserve the name and glory of old Pelayo's victories.

Free were we born, 'tis thus they cry, though to our king we owe  
The homage and the fealty behind his crest to go :  
By God's behest our aid he shares, but God did ne'er command  
That we should leave our children heirs of an enslaved land.

Our breasts are not so timorous, nor are our arms so weak,  
Nor are our veins so bloodless, that we our vow should break,

To sell our freedom for the fear of prince or paladin :  
At least we'll sell our birthright dear—no bloodless prize they'll win.

At least King Charles, if God decrees he must be Lord of Spain,  
Shall witness that the Leonese were not aroused in vain :  
He shall bear witness that we died as lived our sires of old—  
Nor only of Numantium's pride shall minstrels' tale be told.

The LION that hath bathed his paws in seas of Lybian gore,  
Shall he not battle for the laws and liberties of yore ?  
Anointed cravens may give gold to whom it likes them well,  
But steadfast heart and spirit, Alfonso ne'er shall quell.

Side by side with the doughty warriors of Leon, who thus refused to join the Prince of the Asturias in his homage to Charlemagne, were (according to the romances) a host of valiant Saracens, who joined in the onset upon the retiring Franks. Pseudo-Turpin's legendary history of Charles and Orlando tells of a "fresh body of thirty thousand Saracens, who now poured furiously down upon the Christians, already faint and exhausted with fighting so long, and smote them from high to low, so that scarcely one escaped. Some were transpierced with lances, some killed with clubs, others beheaded, burnt, flayed alive, or suspended on trees." The massacre was horrible, and the memory of that day has never faded from the imagination of the peasantry of the district. When the English army pursued Napoleon's marshals through the pass of Roncesvalles, the soldiers heard the people singing the old ballad of the fatal field ; and Spanish minstrels have recorded many incidents, true or false, of the fight. One of the most famous is the ballad of Admiral Guarinos, which Don Quixote and Sancho Panza heard sung at Tohoso, according to the veracious history of Cervantes :



The day of Roncesvalles was a dismal day for you,  
Ye men of France, for there the lance of King Charles was broke in  
two :

Ye well may curse that rueful field, for many a noble peer  
In fray or fight the dust did bite beneath Bernardo's spear.

There captured was Guarinos, King Charles's Admiral :  
Seven Moorish kings surrounded him, and seized him for their thrall.

And the ballad goes on to tell the tale of Guarinos' captivity, and of his revenge at the tourney, when he slew his captor, and rode free for France.

Among the slain that day was Roland, the redoubtable Paladin, commander of the frontier of Brittany. He is the Sir Launcelot of the Charlemagne romance, and many are the doughty deeds recorded of him. He had fought all day in the thickest of the fray, dealing deadly blows with his good sword Durenda; but all his prowess could not save the day. So, wounded to death, and surrounded by the bodies of his friends, he stretched himself on the ground, and prepared to yield up his soul. But first he drew his faithful sword, than which he would sooner have spared the arm that wielded it, saying, "O sword of unparalleled brightness, excellent dimensions, admirable temper, and hilt of the whitest ivory, decorated with a splendid cross of gold, topped by a berylline apple, engraved with the sacred name of God, endued with keenness and every other virtue, who now shall wield thee in battle, who shall call thee master? He that possessed thee was never conquered, never daunted by the foe; phantoms never appalled him. Aided by the Almighty, with thee did he destroy the Saracen, exalt the faith of Christ, and win consummate

glory. O happy sword, keenest of the keen, never was one like thee ; he that made thee, made not thy fellow ! Not one escaped with life from thy stroke." And lest Durenda should fall into the hands of a craven or an infidel, Roland smote it upon a block of stone and brake it in twain. Then he blew his horn, which was so resonant that all other horns were split by its sound ; and now he blew it with all his might, till the veins of his neck burst. And the

blast of that dread horn,  
On Fontarabian echoes borne,

reached even to King Charles's ear as he lay encamped and ignorant of the disaster that had befallen the rear-guard eight miles away. The king would have hastened to answer the forlorn blast, that seemed to tell of a tragedy ; but a traitor told him that Roland was gone a-hunting, and Charlemagne was persuaded not to answer the summons of his faithful paladin ; who, after prayer and confession, gave up the ghost. Then Baldwin, another of the peers of France, came running to the king and told him of what had befallen the rear of his army, and the death of Roland and Oliver. Whereupon the king and all his army turned and marched back to Roncevalles, where the ground was strewn with dead, and Charles himself was the first to descry the body of the hero, lying in the form of a cross, with his horn and broken sword beside him. Then did Great Charles lament over him with bitter sighs and sobs, wringing his hands and tearing his beard, and crying, "O right arm of thy Sovereign's body, honour of the Franks, sword of justice, in-

flexible spear, inviolable breastplate, shield of safety, noble defender of the Christians, scourge of the Saracens, a wall to the clergy, the widow's and orphan's friend, just and faithful in judgment! Renowned Count of the Franks, valiant captain of our armies, why did I leave thee here to perish? How can I behold thee dead, and not die with thee? Why hast thou left me sorrowful and alone, a poor miserable king? But thou art exalted to the kingdom of heaven, and dost enjoy the company of angels and martyrs!" Thus did Charles mourn for Roland to the last day of his life. On the spot where he died the army rested, and the body was embalmed with balsam, aloes, and myrrh. The whole army of the Franks watched by it that night, honouring the corse with hymns and songs, and lighting fires on the mountains round about. Then they took him with them, and buried him right royally. Thus ended the fatal day—

When Roland brave and Oliver,  
And every paladin and peer,  
On Roncevalles died.

No action of so small importance has ever been made the theme of so many heroic legends and songs. It is the Thermopylæ of the Pyrenees, with none of the glory or the significance, but all the glamour, of its prototype.



### III.

#### THE PEOPLE OF ANDALUSIA.

THE victory of Charles Martel, in 733, had set a bound to the Saracens' invasion of Europe; they no longer thought of further conquest, but turned to the work of consolidating the kingdom they had acquired. After the brief and disastrous incursion of Charlemagne, they were left in almost undisturbed possession of their new territory for a period of three hundred years. It is true the descendants of the expelled Goths still held out in stubborn independence in the mountainous districts of the north, and from time to time recovered a portion of their ancient dominion; but these inroads, while they gave some trouble, did not materially endanger the domination of the Moors over the greater part of Spain until the eleventh century. The conquerors accepted the independence of the northern provinces as an inevitable evil, which would cost more blood to remove than the feat was worth; and leaving Galicia, Leon, Castile, and the Biscayan provinces to the Christians, they contented themselves with the better part of the land: the Christians might enjoy the dreary wastes and rocky defiles of the north, provided they did not interfere with the Moors' enjoyment of the warm and

fertile provinces of the south and east. From the end of the eighth century, when the Moorish boundaries took a tolerably final shape, to the time of the advance of the Christian kingdoms in the eleventh century, the division between the Christian north and the Moslem south may be roughly placed at the great range of mountains called the Sierra de Guadarrama, which runs in a north-easterly direction from Coimbra in Portugal to Zaragoza, from whence the Ebro may be taken as a rough boundary. The Moors thus enjoyed the fertile valleys of the Tagus, the Guadiana, and the Guadalquivir—the very name of which bears witness to its Arab owners, for Guadalquivir is a corruption of the Arabic Wady-l-kebir, or the "Great River"—besides possessing the famous cities of Andalusia, the wealth and commerce and climatic advantages of which had been celebrated from Roman times. The division was a natural one; the two parts have been distinguished geographically from time immemorial, on account of their climatic differences. The north is bleak and exposed to biting winds, subject to heavy rains and intense cold; a good pasturage country, but in most parts ill to cultivate. The south, while tormented by the hot winds that blow over from Africa, is genial, well watered, and capable of high cultivation. A great plateau divides the two, and though this fell chiefly on the Moorish side, it was to some extent debatable land and insecurely held. Its chilly heights rendered it distasteful to lovers of sunshine like the Moors, and they confided it chiefly to the care of the Berber tribes who had first come over with Tārik, and who



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JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

were always held in poor estimation by the true Arabs who reaped the fruits of the conquest.

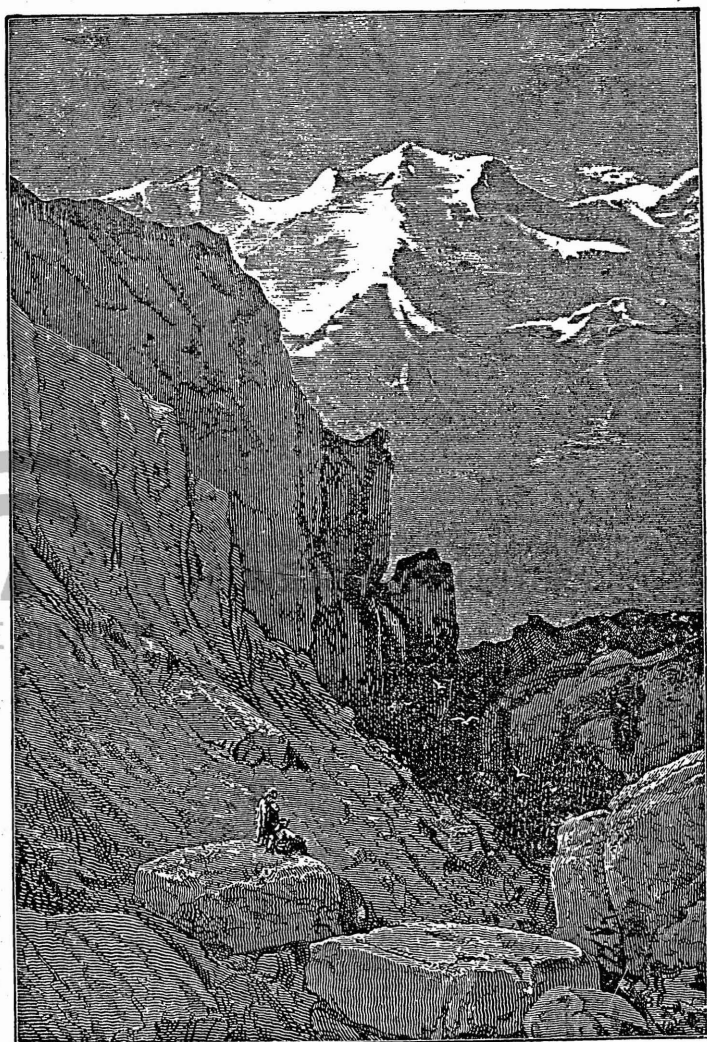
In the two-thirds of the peninsula thus marked off by nature for their habitation, which the Arabs always called "Andalus," and we shall call Andalusia, to distinguish it from the entire peninsula, the Moors organized that wonderful kingdom of Cordova which was the marvel of the Middle Ages, and which, when all Europe was plunged in barbaric ignorance and strife, alone held the torch of learning and civilization bright and shining before the Western world. It must not be supposed that the Moors, like the barbarian hordes who preceded them, brought desolation and tyranny in their wake. On the contrary, never was Andalusia so mildly, justly, and wisely governed as by her Arab conquerors. Where they got their talent for administration it is hard to say, for they came almost direct from their Arabian deserts, and the rapid tide of victories had left them little leisure to acquire the art of managing foreign nations. Some of their counsellors were Greeks and Spaniards, but this does not explain the problem; for these same counsellors were unable to produce similar results elsewhere, and all the administrative talent of Spain had not sufficed to make the Gothic domination tolerable to its subjects. Under the Moors, on the other hand, the people were on the whole contented—as contented as any people can be whose rulers are of a separate race and creed,—and far better pleased than they had been when their sovereigns belonged to the same religion as that which they nominally professed. Religion was, indeed, the smallest difficulty which



the Moors had to contend with at the outset; though it became troublesome afterwards. The Spaniards were as much pagan as Christian; the new creed promulgated by Constantine had made little impression among the general mass of the population, who were still predominantly Roman. What they wanted was, not a creed, but the power to live their lives in peace and prosperity. This their Moorish masters gave them.

At first of course there was a brief period of confusion, some burning, pillaging, massacring; but this was soon checked by the Arab governors. When things had settled down again, the subject populations found themselves at least no worse off than before, and they shortly began to perceive that they had benefited by the change of rulers. They were permitted to retain their own laws and judges; governors of their own race administered the districts, collected the taxes, and determined such differences as arose amongst themselves. The citizen classes, instead of bearing the whole burden of the State expenditure, had only to pay a poll-tax of no very exacting amount, and they were free of all obligations; unless they held cultivable land, in which case they paid the *Kharaj* or land-tax as well. The poll-tax was graduated according to the rank of the payer, from twelve to forty-eight *dirhems* a year, or from about three to twelve pounds at our present purchasing power of money; and its collection in twelve monthly instalments made it the easier to meet. The poll-tax was an impost upon heresy; it was levied only upon Christians and Jews: the land-tax, on the other hand, which varied accord-

*Saml Poole*



THE SIERRA NEVADA.

ing to the productiveness of the soil, was assessed equally on Christians, Jews, and Moslems. As a rule the old proprietors and cities preserved their property as before the conquest. The lands of the Church, indeed, and of those landowners who had fled to the mountains of the north, were confiscated, but even then their serfs were left upon them as cultivators, and were only required to pay a certain proportion, varying from a third to four-fifths, of the produce, to their new Moslem lords. Sometimes the cities, such as Merida and Orihuela, had been able to obtain exceptionally favourable terms from the conquerors, and were suffered to retain their goods and lands upon the payment of a fixed tribute. At the worst, beyond the poll-tax, the Christians were in no way subject to heavier exactions than their Moslem neighbours. They had even gained a right which had never been permitted them by the Gothic kings: they could alienate their lands.<sup>1</sup> In religious toleration they had nothing to regret. Instead of persecuting them, and forcing upon them a compulsory conversion, as the Goths had upon the Jews, the Arabs left them free to worship whom or what they pleased; and so valuable was the poll-tax to the treasury, that the Sultans of Cordova were much more disposed to discourage than to welcome any considerable missionary fervour that might deprive the State of so useful a source of revenue. The result was that the Christians were satisfied with the new *régime*, and openly admitted that they preferred the rule of the Moors to that of the Franks or Goths. Even their priests, who had lost most of all, were at

<sup>1</sup> Dozy: Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne, livre ii. ch. ii.

first but little incensed with the change, as the old chronicle, ascribed to Isidore of Beja, written at Cordova in 754, shows. The good monk is not even scandalized at so unholy an alliance as the marriage between Roderick's widow and the son of Mūsa. But the best proof of the satisfaction of the Christians with their new rulers is the fact that there was not a single religious revolt during the eighth century.

Above all, the slaves, who had been cruelly ill-used by the Goths and Romans, had cause to congratulate themselves upon the change. Slavery is a very mild and humane institution in the hands of a good Mohammedan. The Arabian Prophet, while unable to do away with an ancient institution, which was nevertheless repugnant to the socialistic principles of Islam, did his utmost to soften the rigours of slavery. "God," said he, "hath ordained that your brothers should be your slaves: therefore him whom God hath ordained to be the slave of his brother, his brother must give him of the food which he eateth himself, and of the clothes wherewith he clotheth himself, and not order him to do anything beyond his power. . . . A man who ill-treats his slave will not enter into Paradise." There is no more commendable action in Mohammedan morals than to free slaves, and such enfranchisement is enjoined by the Prophet especially as an atonement for an undeserved blow or other injustice. In Andalusia, the slaves upon the estates that had passed from the Christians into the possession of Moslems were almost in the position of small farmers; their Mohammedan masters, whose trade was war, and who despised heartily such menial occupa-

tions as tilling the soil, left them free to cultivate the land as they pleased, and only insisted on a fair return of products. Slaves of Christians, instead of being hopelessly condemned to servitude for all their lives, were now provided with the simplest possible road to freedom : they had only to go to the nearest Mohammedan of repute, and repeat the formula of belief, "There is no god but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet," and they became immediately free. Conversion to Islam thus carried with it enfranchisement, and it is no wonder that we find the Spanish slaves hastening to profess the new faith and thus to become free men. The Catholic priests had taken small pains to graft the Christian religion into their hearts ; they had enough to do to look after their estates and the souls of the nobles without troubling themselves about the spiritual wants of the ignorant ; and the change from semi-pagan, semi-Christian, vacuity to a perhaps equally unintelligent apprehension of Islam was no very severe wrench to the servile mind. Nor were the slaves by any means the only converts to the new religion. Many of the large proprietors and men of position became Mohammedans, either to avoid the poll-tax, or to preserve their estates, or because they honestly admired the simple grandeur of this latest presentment of theism. These converts or renegades were destined to cause some trouble in the State, as will presently be seen. While admitted to the equality involved in conversion, they were not really allowed equal rights and privileges ; they were excluded from the offices of State, and regarded with suspicion by the Moslems *de la vielle roche* as interested

converts, people who would sell their souls for pelf. In the end these distinctions died out, but not before they had produced serious dissensions and even insurrections.

As far as the vanquished were concerned, we have seen that the conquest of Andalusia by the Arabs was on the whole a benefit. It did away with the overgrown estates of the great nobles and churchmen, and converted them into small proprietorships; it removed the heavy burdens of the middle classes, and restricted the taxation to the test-tax per poll levied on unbelievers, and the land-tax levied equally on Moslem and Christian; and it induced a wide-spread emancipation of the slaves, and a radical improvement in the condition of the unemancipated, who now became almost independent farmers in the service of their non-agricultural Mohammedan masters.

It was otherwise with the victors. There is no greater mistake than to imagine that the Arabs, who spread with such astonishing rapidity over half the civilized world, were in any real sense a united people. So far was this from being the truth, that it demanded all Mohammed's diplomatic skill, and all his marvellous personal prestige, to keep up a semblance of unity even while he was alive. The Arabs were made up of a number of hostile tribes or clans, many of whom had been engaged in deadly blood-feuds for several generations, and all of whom were moved by a spirit of tribal jealousy which was never entirely extinguished. Had the newly-founded Mohammedan State been restrained within the borders of Arabia, there can be no doubt that it would speedily

have collapsed in the rivalry of the several clans ; as it was, the death of the Prophet was followed by a general rising of the tribes. Islam became a permanent and world-wide religion only when it clothed itself with armour and became a church militant. The career of conquest saved the faith. The Arabs laid aside for awhile their internecine jealousies, to join together in a grand chase for booty. There was of course a strong fanatical element in the enthusiasm of conquest. They fought partly because they were contending with the enemies of God and His Prophet, because a martyr's Benjamin's cup of happiness awaited those who fell in "the path of God," as they termed the religious war ; but there is no denying that the riches of Cæsars and Chosroes, the fertile lands and prosperous cities of the neighbouring kingdoms, formed a very large element in the Moslems' zeal for the spread of the faith.

As soon as the career of conquest was exchanged for the quiet of settled possession, the various jealousies and dissensions which the tumult and profits of invasion had kept to some degree in abeyance broke forth into dangerous activity. The party spirit of the Arab tribes extended to all parts of the vast empire they had subdued, and influenced even the Khalif at Damascus ; the nomination of the governors of the most distant provinces was actuated by mere factious motives. In Spain, where the "Emir of Andalus," as he was styled, was appointed either by the Governor of Africa or by the Khalif of Damascus himself, these party differences worked havoc with the peace and order of the kingdom



during the first fifty years of Moorish rule. Governors were appointed, deposed, or murdered, in deference to the mandates of some faction, who resented the government being entrusted to a man of the Medīna faction, or would not have a clansman of Kays, or objected to the nomination of a member of the Yemen party; and, throughout the history of the domination of the Moors in Spain, these baleful influences continued to work injury to the State.\*

In Andalusia, moreover, there was another and very important party to be reckoned with, besides the various Arab factions. The conquest of the peninsula had been effected almost entirely by Tārik and his Berbers, and these Berbers (who are the *Moors* proper, though the word is conveniently employed to denote the mixture of Arabs and Berbers) formed a leading factor in the new state of things. They were not an effete nation like the Romanized Spaniards; but a people full of life and martial energy. In their mountain fastnesses, and ranging the plains from Egypt to the Atlantic, in their numerous and widely distinguished clans, the Berbers had offered to the Arabs a much more formidable resistance than the trained soldiers of Persia or Rome. In many ways they resembled their invaders: they were clansmen like the Arabs; their political ideas were democratic like theirs, with the same reverence for noble families, which took away the dangerous qualities of pure democracy among an ignorant people. Their very manner of warfare was almost Arab. For seventy years the two races of nomads fought together, and

\* Dozy Hist. des Mus. d'Espagne, livre i.

when at last the Arabs obtained the upper hand, it was rather by the acquiescence of their foes than by any distinct submission. The Berbers permitted the Arab governor to hold his court near the coast, but insisted on preserving their own tribal government among themselves, and demanded to be treated as brothers, not as servants, by their antagonists. This fraternal system worked fairly well for a time. The Berbers, always a marvellously credulous people, were quick to accept any new faith, and embraced Islam with a fervour far exceeding anything the more sceptical mind of the Arab could evoke. Very soon Barbary became the hotbed of religious nonconformity; the arid doctrines of Islam were supplemented by those more mystical and emotional elements which imaginative minds soon engraft upon any creed so ever; and the Mohammedan dissenter, expelled from the more rigid regions of orthodoxy, found a singularly productive soil for his doctrines in the simple minds of the Berbers. The same susceptibility to religious emotion, which had produced so general a conversion that the conquest of Spain was effected by a Berber general and twelve thousand Berber troops, soon led to further movements. The *Marabout*—saint, missionary, or priest—came to exercise a more potent influence over this credulous people than tribal chief or Arab governor could ever acquire. It needed but a few mock miracles to bring a host of gaping devotees about the shrine of the *marabout*, and so clearly had an Arab general realized this condition of popularity that, when he perceived the influence which a priestess exercised over the people

by her jugglery, the subtle Moslem set to work in the same manner, and soon became an adept at legerdemain or whatever corresponded to spirit-rapping in those days, with the very best results. But a people so easily influenced by such means, a priest-ridden nation, is always liable to sudden and violent revolutions, which its priests can stimulate by a single word. The *marabouts* among the Berbers were responsible for most of the later changes that took place in North Africa: they set up the Fatimites, sent the Almoravides victorious through Barbary and Spain, and then put them down by the Almohades. They began very early to work against the Arab governors, and when one of these had indulged his passion for luxury at the expense of a cruel oppression of his subjects, the priests set the Berbers in revolt, and in a moment the whole of the western half of the Mediterranean coast was up in arms, and the Arabs were terribly defeated. Thirty thousand fresh troops were sent from Syria to recover the provinces, but these, joined to the Arabs that still remained in Africa, were repulsed with great slaughter, and the remnant were cooped up in Ceuta, where they daily awaited famine and massacre.

The Berbers in Andalusia, always in intimate touch with their kinsmen over the water, were quick to feel the influence of such a revolution as was then (741) going forward in Africa. They had cause to grudge the Arabs their lion's share of the spoils of Spain, which had been the trophies of the Berbers' bow and spear. While the Arabs, who had only arrived in time to reap the advantages of the conquest, had ap-

propriated all the most smiling provinces of the peninsula, the Berbers found themselves relegated to the most unlovely parts, to the dusty plains of Estremadura, or to the icy mountains of Leon, where they had to contend with a climate which severely tried natures brought up in African heats, and where, too, they had the doubtful privilege of forming a buffer between their Arab allies and the Christians of the North. Already there had been signs of disaffection. One of Tārik's Berber generals, Monousa, who had married a daughter of Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, raised the standard of revolt when he heard of the oppression of his countrymen in Africa; and now, when the Berber cause was triumphant across the Straits, a general rising took place among the northern provinces; the Berbers of the borders, of Galicia, of Merida, Coria, and all the region round about, took up arms, and began to march south upon Toledo, Cordova, and Algeciras, whence they intended to take ship and go to join their compatriots in Barbary.

The situation was full of peril, and the Arab Emīr of Andalusia, Abd-el-Melik, who had sternly refused to lend any assistance to the Syrian Arabs shut up in Ceuta, now found himself in this dilemma, that either he must submit to his own rebellious Berbers, or he must invite the co-operation of the very Syrians whom he had persistently refused to succour, and who, when they arrived, might possibly turn out to be a worse plague than that they came to remove. In grave apprehension, he sent ships and brought over the Syrians, after first making them promise to

go back when their work was done. Thus reinforced, the Arabs of Andalusia put the Berbers to utter rout, hunted them like wild beasts through the country to their mountain fastnesses, and gratified their vengeance to the full. And then the event which Abd-el-Melik had endeavoured to guard against came to pass. The Syrian auxiliaries refused to exchange the rich lands of Andalusia for the deserts of Africa and the spears of triumphant Berbers; they defied and murdered Abd-el-Melik, and set up their own chief in his stead. The result was a long and obstinate struggle between the old Arab party and the new-comers, accompanied by much bloodshed and devastation. The struggle was only decided when the Khalif of Damascus sent over a new and able governor, who divided the hostile factions by giving them settlements in cities far apart from each other, and banished the more turbulent of their leaders. Thus the Egyptian contingent of the Syrian army was settled in Murcia, which they re-christened "Misr" or Egypt; the men of Palestine at Sidonia and Algeciras; the people of the Jordan at Regio (Malaga), those of Damascus in Elvira (Granada), and the battalion of Kinnesrin at Jaen.<sup>2</sup> From this time one of the causes of faction in Andalusia was removed, but party spirit still ran high, and government was often changed to anarchy, until a ruler armed with peculiar prestige, carrying in his person the authority and blood of the Khalifs of Damascus, came to take into his hands the sceptre of

<sup>2</sup> Makkary: *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (Gayangos), vol. ii. p. 46. Dozy: *Hist. des Mus. d'Espagne*, livre i. ch. xii.

the disturbed country and to unite for awhile all factions under the standard of the Sultan of Cordova. This young man was the new ruler whom Charlemagne had so unsuccessfully come to expel, and his name was Abd er-Rahmān the Omeyyad.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife  
CULTURA



#### IV.

##### A YOUNG PRETENDER.

FOR six hundred years the greater part of the Mohammedan Empire was nominally under the authority of a central ruler called a Khalif, a title which signifies a "successor" or "substitute." At first this authority was real and powerful: the Khalif appointed the governors of all the provinces, from Spain to the borders of the Hindu Kush, and removed any of them at his pleasure. But the empire was too large to hold together round a central pivot for any length of time, and gradually various local governors made themselves virtually independent, although they generally professed the utmost devotion to the Khalif and paid him every honour except obedience. By degrees even this show of respect was thrown off, and dynasties arose which espoused heretical tenets, repudiated the spiritual supremacy of the Khalif, and denounced him and all his line as usurpers. Finally the time came when the Khalifs were as weak in temporal authority as the Pope of Rome, and were even kept prisoners in their palace by the mercenary body-guard they had hired to protect them against their rebellious nobles. This took place about three hundred years after the foundation of the Khalifate;



and for the second half of their existence the Khalifs were little more than ciphers to be played with by the great princes of the empire and to contribute a little pomp to their coronations. Finally the Khalifate was abolished in Asia by the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, and though the title is still claimed by the Sultan of Turkey, there is no Khalif now in the old comprehensive sense of the word.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest province to shake off the authority of the Khalif was Andalusia. To understand how this happened, we must remember that the Khalifs did not succeed one another in one unbroken line of family inheritance. After the first four (or "orthodox") Khalifs, Abu-Bekr, Omar, Othmān, and Aly, who were elected more or less by popular vote, the Syrian party set up Moāwia as Khalif at Damascus, and from him sprang the family of the Omeyyad Khalifs, so called from their ancestor Omeyya. There were fourteen Omeyyad Khalifs, who reigned from 661 to 750, when they were deposed by Es-Seffāh, "the Butcher," who was the first of the second dynasty of Khalifs, called Abbāsides, after their ancestor Abbās, an uncle of the Prophet Mohammed. The Abbāsides transferred the seat of government from Damascus to Baghdad, and held the Khalifate until its destruction by the Mongols in 1258. Among the members of the deposed family of the Omeyyads was Abd-er-Rahmān, a name which means "Servant of the Merciful God." Most of his relations were

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the power of the body-guard and the fall of the Khalifate, the reader is referred to *The Story of the Saracens*, by Arthur Gilman.

exterminated by the ruthless Abbāsides; they were hunted down in all parts of the world and slain without mercy. Abd-er-Rahmān fled like the rest, but with better fortune, for he reached the banks of the Euphrates in safety. One day, as he sat in his tent watching his little boy playing outside, the child ran to him in affright, and, going out to discover the cause, Abd-er-Rahmān saw the village in confusion, and the black standards of the Abbāsides on the horizon. Hastily seizing up his child, the young prince rushed out of the village, and reached the river. Here the enemy almost came up with them, and called out that they need have no fear, for no injury would be done to them. A young brother, who had accompanied him, and who was exhausted with swimming, turned back, and his head was immediately severed from his body; but Abd-er-Rahmān held on till he reached the other side, bearing his child, and followed by his servant Bedr. Once more on firm earth, they journeyed night and day till they came to Africa, where the rest of his family joined them, and the sole survivor of the Omeyyad princes had leisure to think of his future.

He was but twenty years of age, and full of hope and ambition. His mental powers were considerable, and to these he added the advantages of a noble stature and great physical energy and courage. The Arab historians, however, add the unfavourable details that he was blind of one eye and devoid of the sense of smell. In his childhood wise men had predicted great things of his future, and in spite of the ruin of his family he was not yet daunted. His first

thoughts turned to Africa ; for he clearly perceived that the success of the Abbāsides had left him no chance in the East. But after five years of wandering about the Barbary coast he realized that the Arab governor was not easily to be overturned, and that the already revolted Berbers in the West would not willingly surrender their newly-won independence for the empty glory of being ruled by an Omeyyad. His glance, therefore, was now directed towards Andalusia, where the various factions, in their perpetual strife, offered an opening to any clever pretender, and much more to one who could bring such hereditary claims as Abd-er-Rahmān. He therefore sent his servant Bedr to the chiefs of the Syrian party in Spain, among whom many were freedmen of the Omeyyads and were thus bound by the Arab code of honour to succour any relation of their former patrons. Bedr found these chiefs willing to receive the young prince, and, after some negotiation with the hostile factions, the support of the men from the Yemen was also promised. Upon this Bedr returned to Africa.

Abd-er-Rahmān was saying his prayers on the seashore when he saw the vessel approaching which brought him the good news ; and, prone as all Easterns are to draw omens from insignificant circumstances, the name of the first envoy from Andalusia who was presented to him, Abu-Ghālib Temmām (which means Father of Conquest Attainment) suggested a happy fate: "We shall *attain* our object," cried the prince, "and *conquer* the land!" Without delay he stepped on board, and they sailed for Spain in Sep-

tember, 755. The coming of the survivor of the Omeyyads to Andalusia was like a page of romance, like the arrival of the Young Pretender in Scotland in 1745. The news spread like a conflagration through the land; the old adherents of the royal family hurried to pay him homage; the descendants of the Omeyyad freedmen put themselves under his orders. Even the Yemen clans, though they could not be expected to feel any peculiar sentiment for the young prince, were sufficiently infected by the zeal of his adherents to keep to their promise and band together for his support. The Governor of Andalusia found himself deserted by most of his troops and forced to wait for a new army; and meanwhile the winter rains made a campaign impossible, and left Abd-er-Rahmān leisure to recruit and organize his forces.

In the spring of the following year the struggle began in earnest. Abd-er-Rahmān was received with enthusiasm at Archidona and Seville, and thence prepared to march on Cordova. Yūsuf, the governor, advanced to resist him, but the Guadalquivir was swollen with rains, and the two armies, on opposite banks, raced with each other who should first arrive at Cordova. At length Abd-er-Rahmān, by means of a deceitful stratagem, unworthy of a prince of romance, induced Yūsuf to let him cross the now falling river under pretext of peace; and once on the other side, he fell upon the unsuspecting enemy. Victory declared itself for the prince, and he entered Cordova in triumph. He had the grace to exert himself to arrest the plundering passions of

his troops, and to place the harīm or women-folk of the ex-governor in safety. Before the year was out he was master of all the Mohammedan part of Spain, and the dynasty of the Omeyyads of Córdova, destined to endure for nearly three centuries, was established.<sup>1</sup>

The King of Cordova, however, was not firmly seated without many a struggle. Abd-er-Rahmān had indeed been placed on the throne, but the feat had been accomplished by a small faction out of the numerous parties that divided the land. The new Sultan was, however, better able than most princes to hold his own amidst the striving elements of his kingdom. Prompt and decisive in action, troubled by few scruples, by turns terribly severe and perfidiously diplomatic, his policy was always equal to an emergency; and there were not a few occasions on which it was put to the test. He had not been long in Andalusia when Ibn-Mughīth sailed from Africa to set up the black standards of the Abbāsides in Spain. He landed in the province of Beja, and soon found supporters among the disaffected, always ready to join in some new thing. Abd-er-Rahmān was besieged for two months in Carmona. The situation was perilous in the extreme, for every day gave the enemy more opportunity of increasing their forces. Abd-er-Rahmān, ever full of resource, hearing that the enemy had somewhat relaxed their precautions, gathered together seven hundred of his bravest followers, kindled a great fire, and, saying that it was now a question of death or victory, flung his scabbard

<sup>1</sup> Dozy: *Hist. des Mus. d'Espagne*, livre i. ch. xiii., xvi.

into the flames. The seven hundred followed his example, in token of their resolution never to sheathe their swords again till they were free, and, sallying out after their leader, fell upon the besiegers tooth and nail. The Abbāsīde invasion was utterly annihilated. Abd-er-Rahmān, with the ferocity that occasionally disfigured him, put their leaders' heads in a bag, with descriptive labels attached to their ears, and confided the precious parcel to a pilgrim bound for Mekka, by whom it was put into the hands of the Abbāsīde Khalif Mansūr himself. When the Khalif had seen the contents of the bag, he was very wroth; but he could not help exclaiming, "Thank God there is a sea between that man and me!". While cordially detesting the successful Sultan of Cordova, his Abbāsīde foe was forced to render homage to his skill and courage. He called Abd-er-Rahmān "the hawk of the Koreysh," the falcon of the Prophet's own tribe. "Wonderful," he would exclaim, "is the daring, wisdom, and prudence, he has shown! To enter the paths of destruction, throw himself into a distant land, hard to approach, and well defended; there to profit by the jealousies of the rival parties, to make them turn their arms against one another instead of against himself; to win the homage and obedience of his subjects; and, having overcome every difficulty, to rule supreme lord of all! Of a truth, no man before him has done this!"

The defeat of the Abbāsīde invasion was followed by other successes on the part of the new Sultan. He induced the people of Toledo, who had long held out against him, to consent to a peace and deliver up

their chiefs ; and the leaders were grossly humiliated and then crucified. The chief of the Yemenite faction proving dangerous, Abd-er-Rahmān gave him a safe-conduct, and thus enticed him into his palace, where he tried to stab him with his own hand, but finding the Arab too vigorous, called in the guard and had him assassinated. Almost immediately, a great revolt of the Berbers of the northern borders occurred. Ten years were occupied in reducing them to obedience, and meanwhile the Yemenites, burning with vengeance for the murder of their chief, took advantage of the Sultan's absence in the north to rise. They had not yet realized the energy or the astuteness of the man. He had already set the revolted Berbers by the ears by playing upon their petty jealousies ; and he now exerted his diplomacy to breed discord among the Yemenites. He tampered with the Berbers who formed a large part of their army, so that they deserted in the midst of the fray, and Abd-er-Rahmān's soldiers fell upon the flying multitude, until thirty thousand bodies lay on the field : their huge grave long remained a sight to be seen by the curious. Then followed that formidable coalition between three disaffected Arab chiefs and Charlemagne, which was so near destroying the fabric that Abd-er-Rahmān had painfully built up, but collapsed before Zaragoza and at Roncesvalles without a single blow from the very person they had assembled to destroy.

Henceforward the Sultan was allowed to enjoy in comparative peace the fruits of his victories. He had subdued all the hostile elements in Spain to his iron



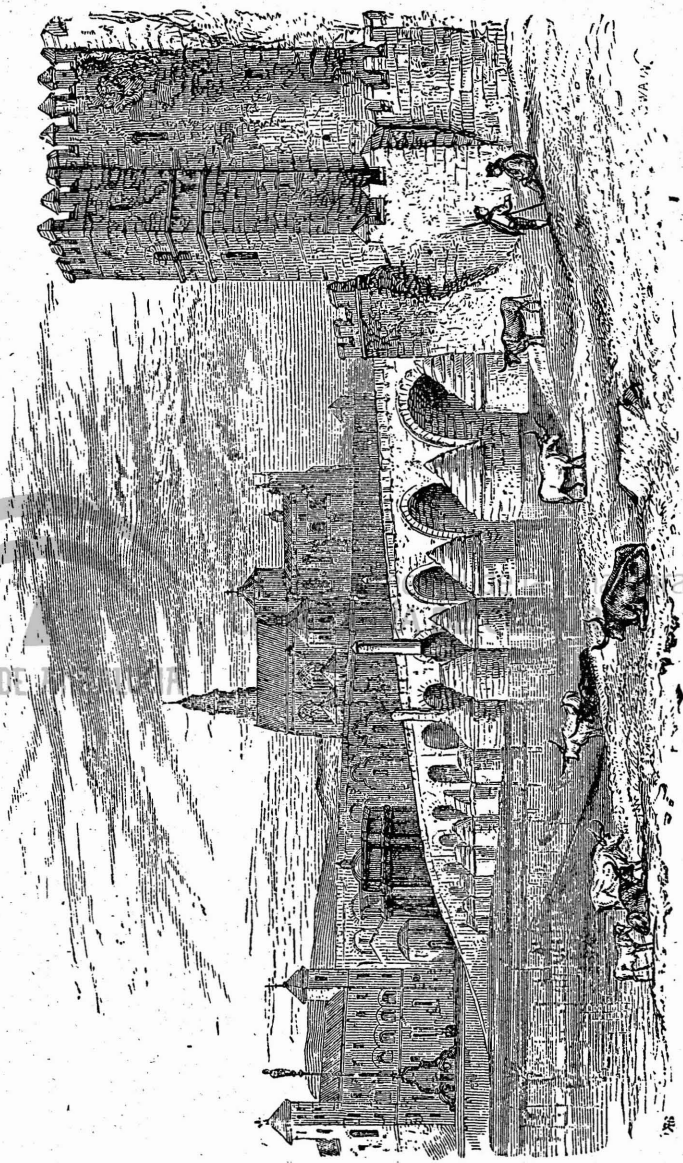
will ; he had cast down the proud Arab chiefs who had dared to measure swords with him ; he had massacred, or assassinated, the leaders of rebellion, and had proved himself master of the position. But tyranny, cruel and perfidious as his, brings its own punishment. The tyrant may force the submission, but he cannot compel the devotion of his people, and the empire that is won by the sword must be sustained by the same weapon. Honest men refused to enter into the service of a lord who could betray and slay as did this Sultan ; his old supporters, those who had first welcomed him to Spain, now turned coldly away when they saw the tyrant in his naked cruelty ; his own relations, who had flocked over to his Court, as an asylum from the Abbāsides, found his despotism so intolerable that they plotted again and again to depose him, with the inevitable result of losing their heads. Abd-er-Rahmān was left in mournful solitude. His old friends had deserted him ; his enemies, though helpless, cursed him none the less ; his very kinsmen and servants turned against him. It was partly that the long war with faction had spoilt a fine nature ; partly that the character was relentless. No longer could he mingle as before in the crowds that thronged the streets of Cordova ; suspicious of every one, wrapped in gloomy thoughts and distracted by bloody memories, he rode through the streets surrounded by a strong guard of foreigners. Forty thousand Africans, whose devotion to their paymaster was equalled by their hatred of the whole population whom they repressed, formed the Sultan's protection against the people.

whom he ground under his heel. In his desolation he wrote a poem on a palm which he transplanted from the land of his ancestors—for, like most Andalusian Arabs, he was something of a poet—in which he compassionated the tree for its exile: "Like me, thou art separated from relations and friends; thou didst grow in a different soil, and now thou art far from the land of thy birth." He had accomplished the object which he had set before himself in the days of his young ambition, when he came a stranger and alone to subdue a kingdom: he had brought the Arabs and Berbers into subjection, and restored order and peace in the land; but he had done it all at the expense of his subjects' hearts. The handsome youth who had come like "the young chevalier" to win the homage and devotion of the Spanish Arabs, after thirty-two years went down to his grave a detested tyrant, upheld in his blood-stained throne only by the swords of mercenaries whose loyalty was purchased by gold. He had inaugurated the sway of the sword in Spain, and his successors would have to maintain the principle. As the great historian of the Moors has observed, it is not easy to see by what other means the turbulent factions of Arabs and Berbers were to be kept in order, or how anarchy was to be averted without severe measures of repression: neither of these races was accustomed to monarchy. Nevertheless a tyranny so sustained formed a melancholy spectacle, despite all the glories and triumphs that illumined it.

An ancient Arab historian, Ibn-Hayyān, gives the following portrait of the first Sultan of Cordova:

“ Abd-er-Rahmān was kind-hearted and well disposed to mercy. He was eloquent in his speech, and endowed with a quick perception. He was very slow in his determinations, but constant and persevering in carrying them into effect. He was active and stirring ; he would never lie in repose, or abandon himself to indulgence. He never entrusted the affairs of government to any one, but administered them himself ; yet he never failed to consult in cases of difficulty the men of wisdom and experience. He was a brave and intrepid warrior, always the first in the battle-field ; terrible in his anger, and intolerant of opposition : his countenance inspired awe in those who approached him, friends and foes alike. He was wont to follow biers and pray over the dead, and in the mosque on Fridays he would often enter the pulpit and address the people. He visited the sick, and mixed with the people in their rejoicings.” This is doubtless the young Abd-er-Rahmān, before opposition and conspiracy had made him suspicious and cruel. Power has often a terrible manner of punishing its possessors.

The usual question that is asked, when a despot dies, is, Who will succeed him ? And the common answer is, Revolution and anarchy. A throne that is set upon steel edges does not readily pass from father to son. Yet the dynasty of Abd-er-Rahmān did not collapse with the death of its despotic founder. It was to be expected that the many hostile forces which he had with difficulty restrained, when released by his death, would have sprung into redoubled activity. Such, however, was not the case.



THE BRIDGE OF CORDOVA.

Generalife

JUNTA DE

Partly because he had too thoroughly terrified the people for them easily to recover their courage, and partly because in his successor they recognized the very antithesis of his father—a prince to be loved and honoured—the people remained quiet for some years. Hishām, who in 788 succeeded his father, at the age of thirty, was a model of all the virtues; and, as if to make sure that he should practise them with assiduity during his brief reign, an astrologer predicted that he had but eight years to live. The Sultan naturally devoted this short space to preparing for the next world. In his youth his palace had been filled with men of science, poets, and sages; and the boy was father of the man. His acts of piety were numberless, and in him the indigent and the persecuted had a sure refuge. He would send trusty emissaries into all parts of his dominions to seek out wrong-doing and repress it, and to further the cause of righteousness. He had the streets patrolled at night to prevent riotous and vicious conduct; and the fines they levied on the evildoers were distributed among those good souls whom rain and cold could not deter from attending the mosques at night-time. The Sultan himself visited the sick, and would often go forth on stormy nights to carry food to some pious invalid and to watch beside his bedside. With all this he was no poltroon. He would lead his armies against the Christians of the North, like the thoroughbred Arab he was; and, though the people affectionately dubbed him "The Amiable" and "The Just," he could show sufficient firmness when his reign was menaced by the conspiracies of his uncles. He increased the

number of his mamlûks, or body-guard, and a thousand of them were always on duty day and night on both sides of the river to protect his palace. He was a huntsman; yet so scrupulous was he that when he rebuilt the bridge of Cordova, which still stands to this day, hearing that his subjects murmured that he only built this great work to make his hunting parties more convenient, he vowed he would never cross it again; and he never did. Before the eight years had quite expired, this exemplary prince was gathered to his well-earned paradise; and then it became apparent that his very goodness had but served to stir up a new factor of rebellion in the State.

This new danger was the power of the Mohammedan priests. The term is hardly an accurate one, for in Islam there is no priesthood in the strict sense of Catholic Christianity. The men who recite the prayers and preach the weekly sermons in the mosques are laymen taken from their shops or other occupations, and appointed for the time to lead the congregations. There is no distinction between laic and cleric in Islam. Nevertheless, there is something which tallies more or less with what we mean by a priesthood. There is always in Mohammedan countries a body of men whose lives are specially devoted to religion; they may be dervishes with peculiar rites, or they may be merely theological students, pupils of some renowned teacher, whose doctrine fills them with unwonted zeal and enthusiasm; they may be reciters of the Koran, or schoolmasters. Such a body is found throughout the Moslem world, and it has to be reckoned with in every

Mohammedan country. The students of the Azhar mosque at Cairo, the Softas of Constantinople, the Mullas of many an Eastern city, have shown what the force of fanaticism can avail in times of excitement. In Andalusia this power was now about to be displayed. The first rebellion after Abd-er-Rahmān's death came from the least expected quarter; not from the Christians, nor from any special political party of Arabs or of Berbers, but from the devout sons of Islam, the theological students of Cordova.

These students were largely composed of renegades, or the sons of renegades. It has already been seen that the Spaniards cheerfully adopted Islam, and, like most converts, became more Moslem than the Moslems themselves. Abd-er-Rahmān was far too wise, and also far too worldly, to permit the theologians — especially those of Spanish blood — any preponderating influence in his kingdom; but the pious Hishām neither saw the danger, nor, had he perceived it, would have regarded it as a danger at all. He loved to place his confidence in holy men, whose conduct was dictated by the strict observance of their religion, and in whom he failed to detect the germs of common worldly ambition and love of power. It happened, too, that at this time the theologians were headed by a singularly gifted and active mind, a favourite pupil of one of the lights of the Holy City Medina, where the Arabian Prophet was buried and a man whose soul was devoured by that mixture of religious fervour and political ambition which has so often made havoc of nations. This doctor, Yahya, profited by the devotion



and piety of Hishām to raise the theologians of Cordova to a height of influence and power that might have made his shrewd father, Abd-er-Rahmān, turn in his grave. So long, indeed, as they had their own way, all went well. But in 796, when the good Hishām departed in the odour of sanctity, a complete change came over the Court. The new Sultan, Hakam, was not indifferent to religion or in any way a reprobate; but he was gay and sociable, and enjoyed life as it came to him, without the slightest leaning towards asceticism. Such a character was wholly objectionable to the bigoted doctors of theology. They spoke of the Sultan with pious horror, publicly prayed for his conversion, and even reviled and insulted him to his face. Finding him incurable in his levity, they plotted to set up another member of his family on the throne. The conspiracy failed, and many of the leading nobles, who had joined in the plot, together with a number of fanatical doctors, were crucified. Undeterred by this, in 806 the people, stirred up by the bigots, rose again, only to be as summarily repressed as before. Even the terrible fate of the nobles of Toledo,—who had rebelled, as was their wont, and were at this time treacherously inveigled into the hands of the Crown Prince and massacred to a man,—did not deter the Cordovans from another revolt.

For seven years, indeed, the memory of the "Day of the Foss," as the massacre at Toledo was called, kept the fanatics of Cordova within bounds; but as the recollection of that fearful hole into which the murdered bodies of all the nobility of Toledo had



been cast, grew fainter, there were symptoms of a fresh insurrection at the capital. Popular feeling ran very high, not only against the Sultan, because he would not wear sackcloth and ashes or pretend to be an ascetic, but still more against his large body-guard of "Mutes," so called because, being negroes and the like, they could not speak Arabic. The Mutes dared not venture in the streets of Cordova except in numbers; a single soldier was sure to be mobbed, and might be murdered. One day a wanton blow struck by a member of the guard roused the whole people. They rushed with one accord to the palace, led by the thousands of theological students who inhabited the southern suburb of the city, and seemed bent on carrying it by assault in spite of its fortifications and garrison. The Sultan Hakam looked forth over the sea of faces, and watched with consternation the devoted mob repulsing the charge of his tried cavalry; but even in this hour of desperate peril he did not lose the *sang-froid* which is the birthright of great men. Retiring to his hall, he told his page Hyacinth to bring him a bottle of civet, with which he proceeded calmly to perfume his hair and beard. The page could not repress his astonishment at such an occupation, when the cruel mob was even then battering at the gates; but Hakam, who was fully aware of his danger, replied: "Silence, rascal! How do you suppose the rebels would be able to find out my head among the rest, if it were not distinguished by its sweet odour?" He then summoned his officers, and took his measures for the defence. These were simple enough; but

they proved effectual. He despatched his cousin with a force of cavalry, by a roundabout way, to the southern suburb, which he set in flames, and when the people turned back in terror from the besieged palace to rescue their wives and children from their burning homes, Hakam and the rest of the garrison fell on them in the rear. Attacked on both hands, the unfortunate rebels were cut to pieces; the grim Mutes rode through them, slashing them down by the hundred, and disregarding, if they understood, their prayers for mercy. Hakam's manœuvre saved the palace and the dynasty; and the insurrection was converted into a wholesale massacre.<sup>1</sup>

Yet in the moment of his triumph the Sultan stayed his hand; he did not press his victory to the last limits, but was content with ordering the destruction of the rebellious suburb and the exile of its inhabitants, who were forced to fly, some to Alexandria, to the number of fifteen thousand, besides women and children, whence they eventually crossed to Crete; others, eight thousand in all, to Fez, in Africa. The majority of the exiles were descendants of the old Spanish population, who had embraced Islam, but were glad of a pretext to assert their racial antipathy for the Arab rule. The chief offenders, the *fakis*, or theological students, however, were left unpunished, partly, no doubt, because many of them were Arabs, and partly in deference to their profession of orthodoxy. To one of their leaders, who was dragged before Hakam, and who told the Sultan, in the heat of his fanatical rage, that in

<sup>1</sup> Dozy: Hist. des Mus. d'Espagne, livre ii. ch. iii., iv.

hating his king he was obeying the voice of God, Hákam made the memorable reply : " He who commanded thee, as thou dost pretend, to hate me, commands me to pardon thee. Go and live, in God's protection !"



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA



P.C. ... ental de la Alhambra y Generalife

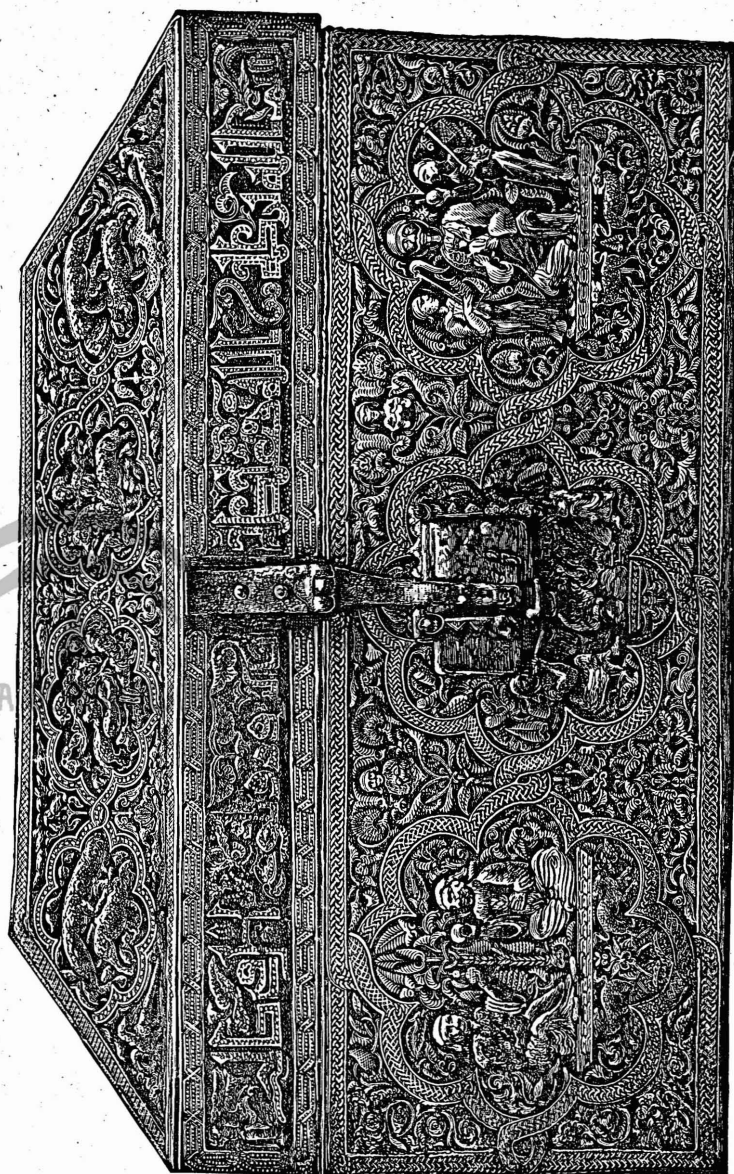
CULTURA



V.

THE CHRISTIAN MARTYRS.

THE Sultan Hakam died in 822, after a reign of twenty-six years. He left a comparatively tranquil inheritance to his son Abd-er-Rahmān II.; the renegades of Cordova had been subdued and exiled, the bigots had been given a lesson that they were not likely to forget, and there only remained the chronic disturbances on the Christian borders to be occasionally repressed. Abd-er-Rahmān II. inherited his father's talent for enjoyment, but not that strength of character by which self-indulgence was preserved from degenerating into weakness. The new Sultan converted Cordova into a second Baghdad, and imitated the prodigalities of the great Harūn-er-Rashīd, who had recently left the scene of his fantastic amusements for, let us hope, a better world. Abd-er-Rahmān built palaces, laid out gardens, and beautified his capital with mosques, mansions, and bridges. Like all cultivated Moslem sovereigns, he was a lover of poetry, and claimed to be no mean poet himself, though his verses were sometimes written by other pens whom he paid to compose for him. His tastes were refined, and his nature was gentle and easily led. Four people ruled him throughout his career: one



MOORISH IVORY CASSET OF THE 11TH CENTURY IN THE CATHEDRAL OF PAMPLONA.

was a singer, the second a theologian, the third a woman, and the fourth a black slave. The most influential of these was the theologian Yahya, the same who had before stirred up the students against Hakam, and who now acquired an absolute ascendancy over the mind of the new Sultan. The Queen Tarūb and the slave Nasr, however, exercised no light authority in political matters ; but the singer Ziryāb confined his interest to matters of taste and culture, and refused to meddle in the vulgar strife of politics. He was a Persian, and had been a pupil of the famous musician of Baghdad, Isaac the Mosilite, until one day he had the misfortune to excel his master in a performance before the Khalif Harūn, and had immediately afterwards been offered by the jealous Mosilite the choice of death or banishment. He accepted the latter ; and, arriving in Spain, was received with effusion by the cultivated Sultan, who assigned him a handsome pension, supplies of food, houses, and other privileges and allowances, so that the fortunate singer counted an immense income. So delighted was the Sultan with Ziryāb's talents that he would seat him beside him, and share his meals with him, and would listen for hours to his songs and to the wonderful tales he could tell of bygone times, and the wise sayings he could relate from his boundless stores of reading. He knew more than a thousand songs by heart, each with its separate tune, which he said the spirits of the air taught him ; he added a fifth string to the lute, and his style of playing was quite unlike any one else's, so that people who had heard him would listen to none other after-

wards. He had a curious way with his musical pupils. He used to make the would-be singer sit down and try to sing his loudest. If the voice was weak, he told him to tie a band round his waist to increase the volume of sound; if he stammered or had any defect in his speech, Ziryāb made him keep a piece of wood in his mouth till his jaws were properly stretched. After this, if the novice could shout *Ah* at the top of his voice, and keep the sound sustained, he took him as a pupil and trained him carefully; if not, he dismissed him.<sup>1</sup> Never was any one so polished, so witty, so entertaining as Ziryāb; he soon became the most popular man in Andalusia, and held the position of arbiter of fashion, like Petronius or Beau Brummell. He made the people change their manner of wearing their hair. He introduced asparagus and force-meat balls to Andalusia, and a dish was long afterwards known as "Ziryāb's fricassee." He set the example of drinking out of glass vessels instead of metal, of sleeping on leather beds, dining off leather mats, and a host of other refinements; while he insisted on a careful gradation of clothes, diminishing by slow degrees from the thick of winter to the thin of summer, instead of the abrupt change which the people had hitherto made. Whatever he prescribed, the fashionable world followed; there was nothing that this delightful epicure could not persuade them to think both necessary and charming.

But while the Court was preoccupied with the tasting of new dishes, or the cut of its hair, there

<sup>1</sup> Makkary: ii. 121. Dozy: livre ii. ch. v.



were earnest people among the subjects of the Sultan, in Cordova itself, who were absorbed by much deeper thoughts. It was not the external enemy that thus endangered the peace of the Moorish kingdom. Many a time, indeed, did Abd-er-Rahmān II., who was not wanting in personal courage and love of military glory, lead his armies with success against the Christians of the north, who, aided by Louis the Debonnaire, were continually making some expedition or foray over the frontiers. These petty campaigns were not yet serious enough to shake the stability of the Moslem rule. The trouble in these early days always came from within. In the present instance it arose from the too exalted spirit of a small number of Christians at Cordova. Most of the Christians, indeed, were by no means anxious to emphasize their creed; they found themselves well treated, free to worship as they pleased, with no hindrance from their rulers; and also free to trade and get rich, as well as their Moslem neighbours. What more could be desired, unless the recovery of their ancient kingdom? And as that was impossible just then, they were content to let well alone, and make the best of their mild and tolerant governors.

This temper was very general in Andalusia, but there were here and there ambitious or enthusiastic spirits that chafed against such compliance with the rule of the "infidel." They remembered the former power and prosperity of their church, and the priests especially could no longer restrain their hatred of the Moslems who had taken away from them their authority and substituted a false creed for the religion



of Christ. The very tolerance of the Moors only exasperated such fervent souls ; they preferred to be persecuted, like the saints of old ; they longed to be martyrs, and they were indignant with the Moslems, because they would not "persecute them for righteousness' sake" and ensure them the kingdom of heaven. Especially hateful to these earnest people was the open gaiety and sensuous refinement of the Moors ; their enjoyment of life and all its pleasure, their music and singing, their very learning and science, were abhorrent to these ascetics. Life, to the true believer, meant only scourges and fasts, penances and confessions, purification through suffering, the mortifying of the flesh and sanctifying of the spirit. What happened was, in truth, nothing but the manifestation of the ascetic or monastic form of Christianity among the subject populations. A sudden and violent enthusiasm took the place of the indifference that had hitherto been the prevailing characteristic of Spanish Christianity, and a race for martyrdom began.

It was a grievous pity to see good people throwing away their lives, and the lives of others, for a dream. The suicides of Andalusia were really no whit more reasonable or truly religious than the sufferings of the priests of Baal who cut themselves with knives, or of the Indian ascetics who let their nails grow through the palms of their hands. The fact that the Spanish "martyrs" were mad in a better cause does not make them less insane. Christianity does not teach its disciples to fling away their lives wantonly, out of mere joy in being tortured and killed. It was not as if the Christians were persecuted or hindered in the

exercise of their faith ; it was not as if the Moors were ignorant of Christianity and needed to be preached to. They knew more of the Scriptures than many of the Christians themselves, and they never spoke the name of Jesus Christ without adding, " May God bless him." Mohammedanism recognizes the inspired nature of Christ, and inculcates profound reverence towards him. The Moslems were not ignorant of Christianity, but they preferred their own creed ; and while they let the Christians hold to theirs, there was no excuse for the latter posing in the heroic character of persecuted believers. Indeed there was no rational way of getting martyred ; since Christians were allowed free exercise of their religious rites, might preach and teach without let or hindrance, they could not find a legal ground for being persecuted unless they left the paths of the Gospel and set aside the great lesson of Christ, " Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." They were not despitefully used or persecuted ; the mass of the Christians were entirely unmolested, and though the priests were sometimes subjected to some public ridicule by the street boys and common people, the better class of Moslems never joined in this ; yet so far were the poor Christians from attempting to love these mild adversaries that they went out of their way to curse them and blaspheme their religion, with the simple intention of being martyred for their pains. Now it is a well-known law in Moslem countries that he who blasphemes the Prophet Mohammed or his religion must die. It is a