

7. Solaimán had nearly missed the throne. Walíd, in the very year of his death, wished to have his son 'Abd al-'Azíz b. Walíd chosen as his successor, and had offered Solaimán a great sum of money to induce him to surrender his rights to the Caliphate; but Solaimán obstinately refused to do so. Walíd went still further, and sent letters to the governors of all the provinces, calling on them to make the people take the oath of allegiance to his son. None except Hajjáj and Kotaiba b. Moslim consented thus to set at nought the order of succession established by 'Abd al-Melik; and Solaimán succeeded without difficulty at the death of his brother. We can easily conceive the hatred felt by Solaimán for Hajjáj, and for all that belonged to him, far or near. Hajjáj himself escaped by death; but Solaimán poured out his wrath on his family, and strove to undo all that he had done. First of all, Mohammed b. Kásim, the conqueror of India, who was cousin to Hajjáj, was dismissed from his post and outlawed. Hajjáj had deprived Yazíd b. Mohallab of the government of Khorásán; Solaimán conferred on him that of 'Irák. Kotaiba b. Moslim, on learning the accession of Solaimán, knew that his own ruin was certain, and therefore anticipated the Caliph by a revolt. But Solaimán induced Kotaiba's troops to desert by authorising them to return to their homes; and when the illustrious general sought to carry his army with him, a conspiracy was formed against him which ended in his murder. Yazíd b. Mohallab, who preferred Khorásán to 'Irák, obtained permission to exchange. Immediately on his return to Khorásán he set on foot a series of new expeditions against Jorján and Tabaristán. But the inhabitants of Khorásán, which he governed oppressively, made complaints against him to the Caliph, accusing him of practising extortions in order to obtain such a sum of money as would enable him to rebel against his sovereign. From that day Solaimán determined to get rid of Yazíd. As, however, he was then dreaming of the conquest of Constantinople, he thought it prudent to dissemble his dissatisfaction for some time.

The Byzantine empire was disturbed by internal troubles during the years A.D. 715-717. Solaimán resolved to take advantage of these in order to rid himself for ever of the hereditary enemy of Islam, and prepared a formidable expedition. A fleet of eighteen hundred vessels, equipped at Alexandria, sailed to the coasts of Asia Minor, took on board the Moslem army, commanded by Maslama, and transported it to Europe. This army appeared under the walls of Constantinople, 15th August 717, five months after Leo III, the Isaurian, had ascended the throne. Once more the Greek fire prevailed against the Moslems. Their fleet was destroyed by this terrible engine of war; the army could obtain no fresh supply of provisions, and suffered all the horrors of famine. Meanwhile the Caliph, who desired to be present in person at the taking of Constantinople, had set out to join the army. He fell ill at Dábiq, not far from Aleppo, and died there on the 22d of September in the same year, after having nominated as his own successor his cousin, 'Omar b. 'Abd al-'Azíz, and as successor to the latter, Yazíd b. 'Abd al-Melik, his own brother. In vain did the new Caliph despatch from Egypt a fleet of four hundred ships to carry arms and provisions to the army before Constantinople; this fleet also was destroyed by the Greeks, and the Moslem army was decimated by famine, and soon by the plague as well. A hundred thousand men perished miserably under the walls of Constantinople, and Maslama brought back to Asia Minor a mere handful of soldiers, and that with great difficulty.

8. 'Omar b. 'Abd al-'Azíz, incensed at this disaster, took his revenge on the Christians of his own states by

excluding them from all public employments, in spite of the great services they rendered there, and by loading them with imposts to such an extent that one public functionary wrote thus to the Caliph: "If things continue to go on in Egypt as at present, all the Christians will become Moslems to escape taxation, and the State will lose its revenue." To this the pious 'Omar replied: "I should look on the conversion of all the Christians as a great piece of good-fortune; for God sent his prophet to act the part of an apostle, and not of a tax-gatherer." By his religious intolerance, by the simplicity of his life, and by his vigour in observing the precepts of his religion and enforcing their observance, 'Omar has acquired in Moslem history the reputation of a saint. But the sanctity of a prince does not ensure the greatness of a State; and the reign of 'Omar, as we shall see, was injurious rather than advantageous to Islam. He alienated the provincial governors by his severity; and the family of 'Abbás took advantage of the general discontent to stir up the people secretly, and thus to prepare the way for the fall of the dynasty.

It will be remembered that Solaimán died before carrying out his purpose of deposing Yazíd b. Mohallab, the governor of Khorásán. 'Omar II. took it on himself to fulfil this design. He summoned Yazíd to his presence, and on his arrival at Damascus, threw him into prison, and demanded the restitution of the money which he believed him to have misappropriated. As Yazíd alleged that he could render no account of it, the Caliph banished him to Dahlak, a small island in the Red Sea, but soon brought him back, and placed him in close confinement. It was not till A.H. 101, when 'Omar II. was dying, that Yazíd succeeded in escaping and took refuge in 'Irák. Mohallab, the son of Yazíd, whom his father, on quitting Khorásán, had left there as his lieutenant, was also summoned to Damascus, and the Caliph at first appointed Jarráh b. 'Abdalláh governor of that province, but soon after, on receiving complaints against him, replaced him by 'Abd al-Rahmán al-Koshairi, whom he desired to use every effort for the conversion of the unbelievers, rather than to think of extending the Moslem power by force of arms. With so pacific a disposition, it is easy to understand that the Caliph did not signalize his reign by any conquest; except a revolt of the Khárijites in 'Irák, which was suppressed by Maslama, his caliphate was not distinguished by any warlike event. Its most noticeable occurrence, as we have said above, was the commencement of the 'Abbásid movement.

The 'Abbásid family derived its name from 'Abbás, who was Mohammed's uncle on the father's side, and who, during the Prophet's life, had enjoyed universal consideration among the Moslems. It was he who, at the death of the Prophet, had the charge of washing the corpse. The first Caliphs, Abúbekr, 'Omar, 'Othmán, and 'Alí, showed the utmost deference to 'Abbás; and his eldest son 'Abdalláh had been united in the closest friendship with Hosain, the unfortunate son of 'Alí. After the assassination of 'Alí, and the slaughter of Hosain, 'Abdalláh had retired to Mecca, and there brought up his numerous family in hatred of the Omayyads. It was from his youngest son 'Alí, born A.H. 40, that the 'Abbásid dynasty sprang. Under the Caliph 'Abd al-Melik, this 'Alí was living at Damascus; but, on his marrying Labhába, the divorced wife of 'Abd al-Melik, the Caliph conceived a great aversion for 'Alí. Walíd, the son and successor of 'Abd al-Melik, inherited his father's prejudices, subjected 'Alí to every kind of insult, and drove him from his court. Walíd's successor, Solaimán, gave him leave to return to Damascus, but 'Alí, instead of availing himself of this permission, preferred to retire to Homaima, a town situ-

ated in the south of Syria, on the confines of Arabia. It was in this retirement that his son Mohammed conceived the design of supplanting the Omayyad dynasty. We have said that the first 'Abbásids were closely united with the family of 'Alí. Mohammed b. 'Alí, the 'Abbásid, saw clearly that it was only among the followers of 'Alí that he was likely to be able to form a party. To attain this object, he formed the plan of making it believed that a descendant of the Prophet's son-in-law had transmitted to him his rights to the Caliphate. It will be remembered that Mohammed b. Hanafiya had come forward as a pretender to the throne at the troublous period when Ibn Zobair and 'Abd al-Melik were disputing the Caliphate. According to the story of the 'Abbásids, Abú Hášim 'Abdalláh, the son of Ibn Hanafiya, had gone to Homaima, to the house of Mohammed b. 'Alí, and had made on his deathbed a legal transfer of his rights to Mohammed, by appointing him his heir. Whatever may be the truth respecting this transfer, Mohammed the 'Abbásid spread abroad the report of it, and chose especially for its propagation the provinces in which the family of 'Alí had the greatest number of adherents, 'Irák and Khorásán. Emissaries sent by him into these two provinces, under the caliphate of 'Omar II., began to stir up the people in secret against the reigning house. 'Omar was probably acquainted with these intrigues, but he had not time to repress them, for he died on the 20th or 25th of Rajab, A.H. 101 (5th or 10th February 720), after a reign of about two years and a half.

9. Yazíd, the son of 'Abd al-Melik, ascended the throne without resistance. His first care was to pursue Yazíd b. Mohallab, who had escaped from his prison and taken refuge in 'Irák. Besides reasons of state, Yazíd II. had personal reasons for ill-will to Yazíd b. Mohallab. One of the wives of the new Caliph, the same who gave birth to that son of Yazíd II. who afterwards reigned under the name of Walíd II., was niece to the celebrated Hajjáj, who, as it will be remembered, had hated and persecuted Yazíd b. Mohallab. Aware of the alliance of the new Caliph with the family of Hajjáj, the son of Mohallab had made every effort to escape as soon as he was informed of the illness of 'Omar II.; for he well knew that Yazíd II. would spare neither him nor his family. In fact, the Caliph sent express orders to the prefect of 'Irák to arrest all the brothers and other members of the family of Mohallab who were to be found at Basra; and this order was immediately carried out. But Yazíd b. Mohallab had many partisans in 'Irák. He collected a small army, and fought with such valour that in a short time he succeeded in making himself master of Basra, where he had himself proclaimed Caliph. The public treasury fell into his hands, and he employed it in paying his troops and in raising fresh ones, whom he sent on expeditions into Khúzistán or Ahwáz, Fársistán, Mokrán, and Sind. As this revolt threatened to spread far and wide, Yazíd II. was obliged to have recourse for its suppression to the celebrated Maslama. Early in A.H. 102, this illustrious general took the field, and completely defeated Ibn Mohallab near Basra. Yazíd fell in the battle, and his brothers fled beyond the Indus, but were pursued and slain by the lieutenants of Maslama.

This revolt suppressed, Yazíd II. was able to give his thoughts to the extension of the empire, an object which had been so much neglected by his predecessor. Several expeditions were directed against Farghána in Transoxiana, against the Khazars in Armenia, and against the Greeks in Asia Minor, but without any very decided results. In

¹ The 'Abbásid Caliph Ma'mún certainly did not believe in it, for he thought it his duty to restore the Caliphate to the family of 'Alí by appointing as his successor 'Alí Ridá, a descendant of the Caliph 'Alí.

Africa, serious troubles had been caused by the appointment as governor of a certain Yazíd b. Abí Moslim, who had been secretary to Hajjáj, and who followed the example of his master's implacable harshness. The Berbers rose in insurrection, slaughtered the unfortunate governor, and chose in his place Mohammed b. Aus. The Caliph at first ratified this choice, but soon after dismissed Mohammed from his post, and replaced him by Bishr b. Safwán, who sent out an expedition against Sicily.

In Europe, the Arabs obtained at first some degree of success. Under the orders of Samah, then governor of Spain, they crossed the Pyrenees, and took possession of Narbonne; but, having been beaten at Toulouse, they had to retrace their steps. It was the celebrated Abderamé ('Abd al-Rahmán) who effected their retreat.

Yazíd II. died three years later of a lingering illness, caused, it is said, by his grief for the death of a favourite slave-girl. At his accession, Yazíd had designated as his successors, in the first place his son Hishám, and in the second his son Walíd. Hishám ascended the throne without opposition.

10. Hishám was a pious prince and an enemy of luxury; as rigid in his religion as 'Omar II. To this severity may in part be attributed the disturbances which broke out in the provinces during his reign. The governors were accustomed to remain loyal to the Caliphs only when the latter did not exact from them too rigorous an account. Hishám was, besides, very avaricious, a fault highly calculated to make him odious to those about him. Lastly, he favoured the Yemenites, and this alienated from him the powerful party of the Kaisites. All these circumstances emboldened the 'Abbásids to carry on actively their propaganda in 'Irák and Khorásán, and it succeeded beyond their hopes. The Kaisite tribes, offended at seeing the Caliph bestow the best posts on Yemenites, were ready to espouse with enthusiasm the cause of any one whose aim was the overthrow of the Omayyads. Rebellion had been smouldering in the provinces for thirteen years; it broke out at last at Cufa and in the whole of 'Irák, under chiefs called Moghíra and Bahlúl; and when these insurgents had been chastised, others sprung up in their place, 'Amr al-Yashkeri, Al-'Anazi, and Al-Sakhtayáni. The prefect of 'Irák, Khálid b. 'Abdalláh, was accused of favouring this revolt, was degraded, and replaced by Yúsuf b. 'Omar, who threw him into prison, where he remained for eighteen months. This measure increased the discontent of the people of 'Irák, and a member of the family of 'Alí, Zaid b. 'Alí, collected round him a small body of partisans, and had himself proclaimed Caliph, A.H. 122 (A.D. 739-740). Unfortunately for Zaid, he had to do with the same Cufans whose fickleness had already been fatal to his family. In the moment of danger he was deserted by his troops, slain in an unequal conflict, and his head sent to Damascus. In Khorásán also there were very serious disturbances. In the year 106 (A.D. 724-725) there had already been a revolt at Balkh, excited by the emissaries of the 'Abbásids. The following years brought with them fresh troubles, which led to the dismissal of the governor of Khorásán, Asad, the brother of Khálid b. 'Abdalláh, who had been prefect of 'Irák. Under the successors of Asad, who were successively Ashras b. 'Abdalláh, Jonaid b. 'Abd al-Rahmán, and 'Asim b. 'Abdalláh, seditions broke out in Transoxiana, which were repressed with great difficulty; and it was not until the year 120 that, by the appointment of the brave and prudent Nasr b. Sayyár as governor of Khorásán, peace was for a time restored to that region. The 'Abbásid emissaries, nevertheless, secretly continued their propaganda.

In India, several provinces which had been converted

to Islam under the Caliphate of 'Omar II. declared themselves independent; and this led to the founding of several strong cities for the purpose of controlling those provinces. It was thus that the cities of Mahfúza and Mansúra had their origin.

In the north and north-west of the empire there were no internal disorders, but the Moslems had much to do to maintain themselves there against the Alans, the Turkomans, and the Khazars. The illustrious Maslama lost his life in battle, and Merwán b. Mohammed, afterwards Caliph, took his place as prefect of Armenia and Azerbaijan. He succeeded in imposing peace on the petty princes of the Eastern Caucasus, and in consolidating the Arab power in that quarter. The war against the Byzantines lasted during the whole of Hishám's reign. In Asia Minor, the Moslems reoccupied Casarea, and laid siege to Nicaea. Arab writers even declare that Constantine, afterwards Emperor of Constantinople, was made prisoner in the year 114 (A.D. 732-733), but the Byzantine authorities make no mention of this fact. On the other hand, they notice an important defeat of the Moslem arms in A.D. 739. This defeat, which is acknowledged by the Arab writers, cost the life of their general, 'Abdalláh, surnamed al-Battál—"the hero"—whose prowess still lives in the memory of the people of Asia Minor.

In Africa, several successive prefects were fully occupied in repressing the constant insurrections of the Berbers. In Spain, the attention of the Moslems was principally turned to avenging their defeats beyond the Pyrenees. As early as the second year of the reign of Hishám, 'Anbasa, governor of Spain, crossed the Pyrenees, and pushed on military operations vigorously. Carcassonne and Nimes were taken. The death of 'Anbasa, in A.H. 107 (A.D. 725-726), put a stop to hostilities; but they recommenced still more vigorously six years later. 'Abd al-Rahmán (Abderame), the same who, under Yazid II., had led back to Spain the remnants of the Moslem army, crossed the mountains anew, and penetrated into Gascony by the passage of Roncevaux. The Moslems beat the Duke Eudes, gained possession of Bordeaux, and overran the whole of Southern Gaul as far as the Loire. But in A.H. 114 (A.D. 732) Charles Martel, whose aid the Duke of Aquitaine had implored, succeeded in inflicting on 'Abd al-Rahmán so severe a defeat, near Poitiers, that the Moslems were obliged to effect a hasty retreat, and to return to Spain. Two years later the new governor of Spain, 'Oqba b. al-Hajjáj, re-entered Gaul, and pushed forward expeditions as far as Burgundy and Dauphiné. Charles Martel, with the help of the Lombards, again drove back the Arabs as far as Narbonne. Thenceforth the continual revolts of the Berbers in Africa on the one side, and on the other the internal troubles which disturbed Spain, and which led at a later period to its independence, offered insurmountable obstacles to the ambition of the Moslems, and prevented their resuming the offensive.

Such was the state of the empire when Hishám died on the 6th of Rabí' II. A.H. 125 (6th Feb. A.D. 743), after a reign of twenty years. He had not been wanting in energy and ability. Yet under his reign the Moslem power declined rather than advanced, and signs of the decay of the Omayyad dynasty began to show themselves. The history of his four successors, Walid II., Yazid III., Ibráhím, and Merwán II., is but the history of the fall of the Omayyads.

11. Walid II., the son of Yazid II., ascended the throne without opposition at the death of Hishám; but he soon made himself so much hated and despised by his debaucheries and his irreligion that even the sons of Hishám and of Walid I. plotted with the enemies of the Omayyads. Yazid, one of the sons of Walid I., went so far as to take

openly the title of Caliph, and to march against Damascus, which Walid II. had quitted for fear of a pestilence which was then raging there. This step was fatal to the Caliph. The inhabitants of Damascus opened their gates to Yazid, who took possession of the arsenals, and used the arms they contained to equip new troops. Walid II., on his side, collected his adherents and marched against his rival. The two armies met at a place called Bakhrá, on the confines of Syria and Arabia. Yazid had no difficulty in overcoming his opponent, who was abandoned by his own soldiers. Walid II. died fighting, having reigned little more than a year, and his head was taken to Damascus, and carried about the city at the end of a spear. (Jomádí II., A.H. 126, March-April 744.)

12. The death of Walid II., far from appeasing the troubles of the State, put its unity in greater jeopardy than ever. The distant provinces escaped from the power of the new Caliph. In Africa, 'Abd al-Rahmán b. Habib declared himself independent. In Spain, every emir aspired to free himself from a suzerainty which appeared to him only nominal. In Khorásán the 'Abbásid emissaries were more and more busy, acting in the name of Ibráhím b. Mohammed, who had become the head of the family by the death of his father, Mohammed b. 'Alí. Even in Syria Yazid III. saw his authority disputed. Himself belonging to the sect of Mo'tazilites, who rejected the doctrine of predestination—a sect to which we shall have occasion to recur in treating of the religious history of Islam—he aroused all the orthodox against him. Besides this, many of the Syrians, from a sudden change of feeling, now desired to avenge the death of Walid II. The inhabitants of Emesa revolted, and marched against Damascus. They were beaten at a place called Thaníyat al-'Oqáb, or The Eagle's Pass, twelve miles from the capital. Palestine rose in its turn, and chose as its Caliph another Yazid, cousin of the reigning prince. This revolt also was suppressed. But a greater danger menaced Yazid III. The Omayyad Merwán b. Mohammed, who was, as we have said, governor of Armenia and of Azerbaijan, also prepared to dispute the supreme power with the Caliph of Damascus, and invaded Mesopotamia. Yazid III., in his alarm, offered him the government of this last province as the price of peace. Merwán accepted these conditions, but he would probably not have left his rival long at rest, had not the latter died after a reign of only six months.

13. Yazid III. left his brother Ibráhím as his successor. At the news of Yazid's death, Merwán collected a powerful army and entered Syria. Having beaten Ibráhím's generals one after the other and taken Emesa, he advanced rapidly towards Damascus. Solaimán b. Hishám tried to oppose his march, but he was defeated at 'Ain al-Jarr, between Baalbec and Damascus, and the Caliph Ibráhím took flight; while Solaimán, the son of Hishám, laid hands on the public treasure, and then fled in turn. Merwán entered Damascus, and caused himself to be proclaimed Caliph. The reign of Ibráhím had lasted only two months. Ibráhím himself soon acknowledged the new Caliph, and submitted to his authority.

14. Merwán II. was a man of energy, and might have revived the strength of his dynasty, if the ferment in the east of the empire had been less strong. Unfortunately for him, the 'Abbásid movement had never ceased to gain ground in Khorásán, and the chief adherent of the family of 'Abbás, Abú Moslim, was in no degree inferior to the Caliph in energy and ability. This Abú Moslim, whose origin is obscure and disputed, had been distinguished by the 'Abbásid Mohammed b. 'Alí, the same who alleged that he had been appointed heir to the claims of the family of 'Alí to the supreme power. If we may believe the legend,

Mohammed had even foretold that the accession of his family would take place in the year of the ass,¹ through the efforts of Abú Moslim, and that one of his three sons would ascend the throne. These three sons were: Ibráhím, 'Abdalláh, called Abú 'l-'Abbás, and 'Abdalláh, called Abú Ja'far. Whatever we may think of this prediction, it is certain that under Merwán II. Abú Moslim was the principal emissary of the 'Abbásid Ibráhím, and had been able to form a vast conspiracy in Khorásán, which broke out in A.H. 128, at the very moment when it had been discovered by Nasr b. Sayyár, the Omayyad governor of the province. Even before this, Merwán II. had had to repress disorders which had broken out in Syria, Palestine, and Trák; and the Caliph could now rely so little on Syria that he had thought it necessary to quit Damascus, and to fix his abode at Harrán, in Mesopotamia. On learning the revolt of Abú Moslim, Merwán II. wrote to Nasr b. Sayyár, directing him to act with vigour against the fomenters of sedition. It was easier to give such an order than to execute it, for Abú Moslim was at the head of a numerous army, absolutely devoted to the 'Abbásids. Merwán II. thought it necessary at the same time to secure the person of the 'Abbásid pretender Ibráhím, who was still living at Homaima. Ibráhím was therefore arrested, conveyed to Harrán, and thrown into prison. He found means, however, of communicating with his lieutenant Abú Moslim, and the latter, who had received the most extensive powers from his chief, marched direct upon Merv, the capital of Khorásán, and drove out the governor Nasr. At the news of this the Caliph, no longer able to restrain his anger, had his captive Ibráhím put to death; an execution which, at a later period, brought upon the Omayyads the most terrible reprisals. The brother of Ibráhím, Abú 'l-'Abbás, surnamed Saffáh, "The Sanguinary," on account of his cruelties, having by Ibráhím's death become chief of the 'Abbásids, immediately quitted Homaima with all the members of his family, and took refuge in Khorásán, that his presence there might sanction and encourage the insurrection. Abú Moslim, now master of Khorásán by the capture of Merv, had meanwhile sent an army against Trák, under the orders of Kahtaba b. Shabíb, who had beaten the Omayyad army, commanded by Yazid b. Hobaira, governor of that province. In A.H. 132 Abú 'l-'Abbás arrived at Merv. After remaining there some time, waiting for a favourable moment, he decided on openly assuming the title of Caliph. He installed himself in the governor's palace, and thence went in state to the mosque, where he mounted the pulpit, and officiated

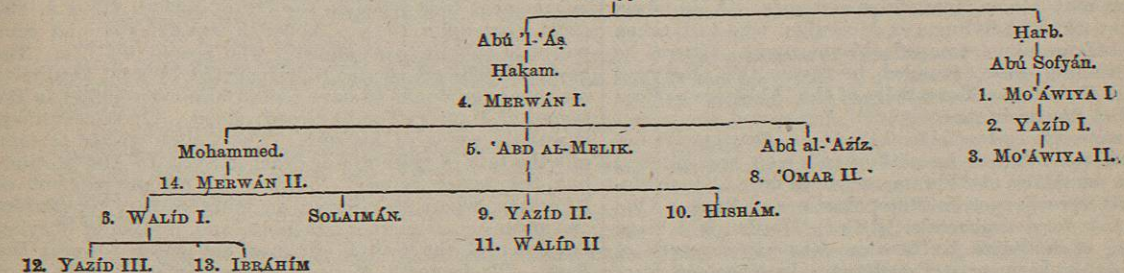
Al-Saffáh assumes the title of Caliph.

in the capacity of successor of the Prophet. All those present took the oath of allegiance to him, and Abú 'l-'Abbás returned to the palace, over which the black flag was flying, black being the distinctive colour of the 'Abbásids.² But he did not remain long at Merv. Committing the government of that city to his uncle Dáwúd, he went to review his army, and divided it into several corps, which he directed against different points. After this he went to Chaldæa, and there established himself in a spot not far from Cufa, to which he gave the name of Háshimíya, or the city of Háshim, the ancestor of his own family and of that of the Prophet. Another of his uncles, 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí, whom he had sent on an expedition against the city of Shahrozúr, took possession of that place, and leaving Abú 'Aun 'Abd al-Melik b. Yazid there as governor, rejoined his nephew and sovereign at Háshimíya. Meanwhile the Omayyad Caliph had marched against Shahrozúr. Abú 'Aun went out to meet him, and was joined by a strong reinforcement of cavalry under 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí. The 'Abbásids only numbered forty-five thousand soldiers, but these were experienced and resolute warriors. The Omayyad army, though much more numerous, was ill commanded and devoid of spirit. A battle ensued, and fortune favoured the rebels. In vain did Merwán show himself everywhere; his soldiers gave way and repassed the Zab in disorder, hurrying away in their flight the unfortunate Merwán. (Jomádí II. 11, A.H. 132, 25th January 750.) This victory cost the Omayyads their empire. Merwán attempted at first to take refuge at Mosul; but the inhabitants of that city having declared for the enemy, the prince went to his capital Harrán, whence he was soon driven by the army of 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí. From Harrán Merwán fled successively to Emesa, to Damascus, to Palestine, and finally to Egypt. He was pursued without intermission by Šálih, brother of 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí, who at last came up with him at Búsir, on the frontiers of the Delta. Merwán took refuge in a Coptic church, but the 'Abbásids pursued him into the building, and slew him at the foot of the altar. His head was cut off and sent to Cufa, where the new Caliph then was.

Thus perished in the East the dynasty of the house of Omayya, which, having been founded by usurpation, had only maintained itself by shedding torrents of blood, and was destined to perish in blood. We now enter upon the history of the new dynasty, whose origin we have described, and under which the power and glory of Islam reached their highest point.

Here we give the

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE OMAYYADS
Omayya.



¹ To understand this allusion we must know that Merwán II. had received the nickname of *Himár*, "the ass," on account of his temperance and the strength of his constitution.
² Historians are divided as to the date at which black became the 'Abbásid colour. According to some, the first 'Abbásids wore a robe

of black silk as early as at the battle called that of the Camél. According to others, it was only after the murder of Ibráhím by Merwán that the 'Abbásids adopted black as a sign of mourning. See Quatremère, *Mémoires historiques sur la dynastie des khalifes Abbassides*. Paris. 1837.

Triumph of the 'Abbásids.

SECT. II.—THE 'ABBASIDS.

1. From the death of Merwán may be reckoned the real accession of the 'Abbásid dynasty to the Caliphate, which thus returned to the hands of the grand-nephews of the Prophet. Abú 'l-'Abbás, whose proper name was 'Abdalláh, and who afterwards received the surname of Saffáh, was, as has been said above, a man of energetic will, who hesitated at nothing to ensure the triumph of his dynasty. When he caused himself to be proclaimed Caliph at Cufa, one of his partisans, Abú Salama, who had till then believed that Abú 'l-'Abbás was working to restore the posterity of 'Alí to the throne, and not to gain possession of the empire for himself, hesitated to take the oath of obedience to the new Caliph. Abú 'l-'Abbás immediately resolved on his destruction, but fearing that Abú Salama might have a secret understanding with the conqueror of Khorásán, he began by sending his own brother Abú Ja'far into that province to sound Abú Moslim. The latter loudly disclaimed any alliance with Abú Salama, and, that no suspicion might rest upon him, he sent a confidential agent to Cufa, and had Abú Salama assassinated. Still further to prove his zeal for the house of 'Abbás, Abú Moslim also got rid of Solaimán b. Kathir, another 'Abbásid emissary, whom he suspected of partiality towards the family of 'Alí. On his side, Abú 'l-'Abbás caused 'Abdalláh b. Mo'áwiya, an adherent of 'Alí's family, to be treacherously slain, though he had distinguished himself in the wars against Merwán. As for the Omayyads, they were systematically followed up and put to death. The new Caliph desired to exterminate that family, not only for the sake of revenge, but also that he might deprive the Syrians of any pretext for fresh insurrections. In fact, hardly had Abú 'l-'Abbás been proclaimed Caliph at Cufa, when the Omayyad governor of Kinnesrín, Abú 'l-Ward b. Kauthar, notwithstanding that he had taken the oath to the new sovereign, gave the signal for revolt in the name of the Omayyads. Abú 'l-'Abbás immediately ordered his uncle 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí, who had been made governor of Palestine, to act with the utmost rigour against all members of the Omayyad family on whom he could lay his hands. That he might let none of them escape, 'Abdalláh pretended to grant an amnesty to all Omayyads who should come in and acknowledge the new Caliph, and even promised them the restitution of all their property. Ninety members of that unfortunate family allowed themselves to be entrapped by these specious promises, and 'Abdalláh, on pretence of sealing the reconciliation of the two parties, invited them to a banquet. But when they were all collected, a body of executioners rushed into the hall, and slew the Omayyads with blows from whips and rods. A grandson of Hishám, 'Abd al-Rahmán b. Mo'áwiya, who had taken refuge in Africa, alone escaped this massacre. It was he who, at a later date, founded in Spain the Omayyad dynasty of Cordova. The cruelty of the 'Abbásids excited a feeling of horror in the whole of Syria, and the revolt soon became general. Abú 'l-Ward b. Kauthar found himself at the head of forty thousand men, and pitched his camp at Marj al-Akhram, a plain near Kinnesrín. The revolt spread even to Mesopotamia and Irák. One of Merwán's former generals, Ishák b. Moslim, laid siege to Harrán, while Yazíd b. Hobaira, formerly governor of Irák, raised an insurrection at Wásit. In Khorásán also, as many as thirty thousand malcontents took up arms against Abú Moslim. Notwithstanding this formidable display of force, the 'Abbásids remained conquerors. In Syria, 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí beat Abú 'l-Ward at Marj al-Akhram. Abú Ja'far, brother of the Caliph, compelled Ishák b. Moslim and Yazíd b. Hobaira in succession to

submit. Lastly, Abú Moslim quieted the rising in Khorásán. Mosul also attempted an insurrection, but Yahyá, a brother of the Caliph, quenched the revolt in streams of blood. All the provinces being thus reduced to peace, the new Caliph distributed them among the principal members of his family and his best generals. To his brother Abú Ja'far he gave a part of Mesopotamia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia; to his uncle 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí, Syria; to his uncle Dáwúd, Arabia, Hijáz, Yamána, and Yemen; to his cousin 'Isá b. Músá, the province of Cufa. Abú Moslim continued in possession of the government of Khorásán, Transoxiana, and a part of Fársistán. Egypt was entrusted to Abú 'Aun. Another uncle of the Caliph, Solaimán b. 'Alí, received the government of Basra, with Bahrain and 'Omán. Lastly, the province of Mosul was taken from the cruel Yahya, and granted to one of the uncles of Abú 'l-'Abbás, Ismá'il b. 'Alí, who received besides the government of Ahwáz. In Sind, the Omayyad governor had succeeded in maintaining himself, but was defeated by an army sent against him under Músá b. Ka'b, and the black standard of the 'Abbásids was raised over the city of Mansúra. If we omit Africa and Spain in describing this division of the provinces of the empire, it is because the 'Abbásids never gained any real footing in Spain, while Africa remained in only nominal subjection to the new dynasty.

Abú 'l-'Abbás, after having definitively established his power, left the town of Hášimíya and fixed his residence at Anbár, where he died on the 13th of Dhú 'l-Hijja, A.H. 136 (9th June 754).

2. Abú 'l-'Abbás had designated as his successors, first Abú Ja'far, and after him his cousin 'Isá b. Músá. At the moment of the death of Abú 'l-'Abbás, Abú Ja'far, who then assumed the title of Al-Mansúr, "the Victorious," was not in Irák. He had undertaken the leadership of the pilgrims who had started on the journey to Mecca, and among whom figured the celebrated Abú Moslim. 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí, uncle of Abú 'l-'Abbás, dissatisfied at having been excluded from the succession, took advantage of this absence to revolt. Having raised an army and proclaimed himself Caliph, he marched against Harrán and laid siege to it. On receiving this news, Abú Ja'far hastened to return to Anbár in company with Abú Moslim, whom he placed at the head of his troops, and sent against the rebel. At the approach of Abú Moslim, 'Abdalláh, who had among his troops a body of seventeen thousand men of Khorásán, fearing that they might declare for Abú Moslim, had them all slaughtered, as the historians assert, by his Syrians, and then hastened to meet his enemy. The two armies met at Nisibis, and, after a number of skirmishes, a decisive engagement took place on the 7th of Jomádi II., A.H. 137 (28th November 754). 'Abdalláh was defeated and compelled to submit to Al-Mansúr, who spared his life. The new and brilliant service thus rendered by Abú Moslim to his sovereign ought to have placed him even higher in the favour of Mansúr than he already stood. On the contrary, it was the cause of his ruin. The Caliph wished to commit the task of maintaining order in Syria to Abú Moslim; but the latter refused to give up his government of Khorásán, where he enjoyed an extraordinary reputation, and possessed numerous adherents, and, instead of obeying the order of the Caliph, directed his march towards the East. Thenceforth Mansúr looked on him only as a dangerous rebel, and sought for means of getting rid of him. On pretence of conferring with him on business of state, he induced him to come to Madáin (the ancient Ctesiphon), caused him to be put to death by his guards, and ordered his body to be thrown into the Tigris. Thus miserably perished the real founder of the 'Abbásid

Abú Ja'far al-Mansúr.

The Aghlabites in Africa.

dynasty, after having accomplished his work, which, as the historians assert, cost the lives of more than 600,000 men. Notwithstanding the defeat of 'Abdalláh b. 'Alí and the murder of Abú Moslim, the spirit of rebellion was not yet broken. Risings took place in Mesopotamia and to a still greater extent in Khorásán; and the Caliph's troops were repeatedly beaten by the rebels; but order was at last re-established by Mansúr's generals, by Kházim b. Khozaima in Mesopotamia, and by Mohammed b. al-Ash'ath in Khorásán.

About the same time Africa and Spain escaped from the dominion of the Eastern Caliphate; the former for a season, the latter permanently. The cause of the revolt of Africa was as follows: As soon as Mansúr ascended the throne, he wrote to 'Abd al-Rahmán, announcing the death of Abú 'l-'Abbás, and requiring him to take the oath of allegiance. 'Abd al-Rahmán sent in his adhesion to the new Caliph, and added a few presents of little value. The Caliph was so much dissatisfied that he replied by a threatening letter which excited the anger of 'Abd al-Rahmán. He called the people together at the hour of prayer, mounted the pulpit, publicly cursed Mansúr, and then declared his deposition from the Caliphate. He next caused a circular letter to be written, commanding all Maghrebins to refuse obedience to the Caliph, and this letter was circulated and read from the pulpit throughout the whole extent of the Maghrib (the West). A brother of 'Abd al-Rahmán, Ilyás, saw in this revolt an opportunity of obtaining the government of Africa for himself. Seconded by many of the inhabitants of Kairawán, who had remained faithful to the cause of the 'Abbásids, he attacked his brother, slew him, and proclaimed himself governor in his stead. This revolution in favour of the 'Abbásids was, however, of no long duration. Habíb, the eldest son of 'Abd al-Rahmán, had fled on the night of his father's murder, and Ilyás caused him to be pursued, with the object of transporting him to Andalusia. Habíb was captured, but the vessel which was to convey him to Spain having been detained in port by stress of weather, the partisans of independence took arms, rescued Habíb, and prepared to resist Ilyás, who was marching against them at the head of an army. Under these circumstances a fortunate idea occurred to Habíb. He challenged his uncle Ilyás to single combat. Ilyás hesitated, but his own soldiers compelled him to accept the challenge. He measured arms with Habíb, and was laid prostrate by him with a thrust of his lance. The party of independence thus triumphed, and several years elapsed before the 'Abbásid general, Al-Aghlab, was able to enter Kairawán, and regain possession of Africa in the name of the Eastern Caliph. From this time forward, it must be added, Africa only nominally belonged to the 'Abbásids; for, under the Caliphate of Harún al-Rashíd, Ibráhim, the son of Al-Aghlab, who was invested with the government of Africa, founded in that province a distinct dynasty, that of the Aghlabites.

Coincidentally with the revolt in Africa, the independent Caliphate of the Western Omayyads was founded in Spain. The long dissensions which had preceded the fall of that dynasty in the East, had already prepared the way for the independence of a province so distant from the centre of the empire. Every petty emir there tried to seize sovereign power for himself, and the people groaned under the consequent anarchy. Weary of these commotions, the Arabs of Spain at last came to an understanding among themselves for the election of a Caliph, and their choice fell upon the last survivor of the Omayyads, 'Abd al-Rahmán b. Mo'áwiya, grandson of the Caliph Hishám. This prince was wandering in the deserts of Africa, pursued by his implacable enemies, but everywhere protected and

concealed by the desert tribes, who pitied his misfortunes and respected his illustrious origin. A deputation from Andalusia sought him out in Africa, and offered him the Caliphate of Spain, which he accepted with joy. On 25th September, A.D. 755, 'Abd al-Rahmán landed in the Iberian Peninsula, where he was universally welcomed, and speedily founded at Cordova the Western Omayyad Caliphate, with which this history has no further concern.

While Mansúr was thus losing Africa and Spain, he was trying to take from the Greeks the city of Malatiya, which, from the importance of its situation, was looked on as the key of Asia Minor. In A.H. 139-140 (A.D. 756-757), a Moslem army of 70,000 men invested the place, and, after a vigorous siege, Malatiya was taken by assault. After this success the Moslems marched through Cilicia, entered Pamphylia, and cut to pieces a Greek army on the banks of the Melas. The Greeks asked and obtained a seven years' truce, which Mansúr was the more disposed to grant because new and very serious troubles had been stirred up in his empire by certain sectaries of Khorásán, called Ráwandís. These Ráwandís, like many other Persian sectaries, admitted a number of dogmas completely foreign to Islam, such as the transmigration of souls and the incarnation of the Deity as a man. They believed, for instance, as historians assure us, that divine honours ought to be paid to the Caliph Mansúr. They had their name from Ráwand, a city near Isfahán, where the sect originated. A great number of these sectaries had repaired to Hášimíya, the residence of the Caliph, and there persisted in marching in procession round his palace, as if it had been the Ka'ba. Mansúr, refusing to receive this impious homage, caused the principal chiefs of the sect to be seized and thrown into prison. The Ráwandís immediately rose in revolt, broke open the prison doors, rescued their chiefs, and pushed their audacity so far as to besiege the Caliph in his own palace. Very fortunately for Mansúr, the populace declared against the Ráwandís and massacred them; but from that time forward he took a dislike to the city of Hášimíya, and resolved to choose another residence. He had at first thought of fixing his place of abode at Cufa; but he remembered the fickle character of the inhabitants, and decided on founding an entirely new city on the banks of the Tigris. His choice fell upon a spot near the ancient Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sassanids, called Baghdád. There he himself laid the first stone of the city which was to be the centre of the civilised world as long as the Caliphate lasted. A revolt, however, of some importance soon called Mansúr's attention from the building of Baghdád. The descendants of 'Alí, who had had reason to think that the 'Abbásids were labouring for their advancement, were now cruelly un-deceived. In A.H. 145 (A.D. 762-763), Mohammed Mahdí, great-grandson of Hosain, and surnamed Al-Nafs al-Zakiya ("the pure soul"), collected a large number of adherents at Medina, and had himself proclaimed Caliph. The governor of Cufa, 'Isá b. Músá, received orders to march against him, and entered Arabia. The partisans of 'Alí were defeated, and Mohammed Mahdí fell in battle. But meanwhile his brother Ibráhim had gone to Basra, and had there succeeded in exciting a revolt, in presence of which the 'Abbásid governor had been obliged to capitulate. The adherents of 'Alí, emboldened by this success, spread themselves over Irák, and obtained possession of several places, among which was the city of Wásit. Ibráhim was already advancing towards Cufa, at the head of a strong army, when 'Isá b. Músá, who had been hastily recalled from Arabia, threw himself in his way. A terrible conflict took place. At last Ibráhim fell, pierced by an arrow, and, in spite of the desperate efforts

Founda-tion of Baghdád.