

Rev. George Bush

Life of Mohammed



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"The history of the Church confirms and illustrates the teachings of the Bible, that yielding little by little leads to yielding more and more, until all is in danger; and the tempter is never satisfied until all is lost. – Matthias Loy, *[The Story of My Life](#)*

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MOHAMMED

THE

LIFE OF MOHAMMED

FOUNDER

OF

THE RELIGION OF ISLAM, AND OF THE
EMPIRE OF THE SARACENS

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE present work lays claim to no higher character than that of a compilation. This indeed must necessarily be the character of *any* work attempted, at this day, upon the same subject. All the accessible facts in the life and fortunes of the Arabian prophet have long since been given to the world. New theories and speculations, moral and philosophical, founded upon these facts, and many of them richly deserving attention, are frequently propounded to the reflecting, but they add little or nothing to the amount of our positive information. All therefore that can now be expected is such a selection and arrangement and investment of the leading particulars of the Impostor's history, as shall convey to the English reader, in a correct and concentrated form, those details which are otherwise diffused through a great number of rare books, and couched in several different languages. Such a work, discreetly prepared, would supply, if we mistake not, a very considerable desideratum in our language—one which is beginning to be more sensibly felt than ever, and which the spirit of the age loudly requires to have supplied. How

far the present sketch may go towards meeting the demand, it becomes others than the writer to judge. He has aimed to make the most judicious use of the materials before him, and from the whole mass to elicit a candid moral estimate of the character of the Founder of Islam. In one respect he may venture to assure the reader he will find the plan of the ensuing pages an improvement upon preceding Memoirs ; and that is, in the careful collation of the chapters of the Koran with the events of the narrative. He will probably find the history illustrated to an unexpected extent from this source—a circumstance, which, while it serves greatly to *authenticate* the facts related, imparts a zest also to the tenor of the narrative scarcely to be expected from the nature of the theme.

In order to preserve the continuity of the story from being broken by incessant reference to authorities, the following catalogue is submitted, which will present at one view the principal works consulted and employed in preparing the present Life :—Sale's Koran, 2 vols. ; Universal History, Mod. Series, vol. i. ; Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. iii. ; Prideaux's Life of Mahomet ; Boulainvillier's do. ; do. in Library of Useful Knowledge, No. 45 ; Bayle's Historical Dictionary, Art. Mahomet ; Hottinger's *Historia Orientalis* : Abul-Faragii *Historia Dynastarum*, Pocock's Transl. ; Morgan's *Mahometism Explained*, 2 vols. ; Forster's *Mahometanism Unveiled*, 2 vols. ; D'Herbeiot's *Bibliotheque Orien-*

tale; Rycaut's Present State of the Ottoman Empire; Ockley's History of the Saracens, 2 vols.; White's Bampton Lectures; Lee's Translation of the Rev. H. Martyn's Controversial Tracts; Whitaker's Origin of Arianism; Faber's Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, 3 vols.; Buckingham's, Keppel's, Burekhardt's, and Madden's Travels in the East.

On the subject of the Arabic proper names so frequently occurring in this work, it may be useful to the English reader to be informed, that *Al* is a particle equivalent to our definite article *The*. Thus, *Alcoran* is composed of two distinct words signifying *The Koran*, of which the last only ought to be retained in English. Again, *Ebn* is the Arabic word for *son*, as is *Bint* or *Binta* for *daughter*, and with the particle *Al* after it, according to the Arabic usage, *Ebno'l* is, *the son*. So *Abu*, *father*, with the article after it, *Abu'l*, *the father*. Thus, *Said Ebn Obeidah Abu Omri*, is, *Said, the son of Obeidah father of Omri*; it being usual with the Arabs to take their names of distinction from their sons as well as their fathers. In like manner, *Ebno'l Athir*, is, *the son of Athir*; *Abu'l Abbas*, *the father of Abbas*: and as *Abd* signifies *servant*, and *Allah*, *God*; *Abdo'lah* or *Abdallah* is, *servant of God*; *Abdo'l Sñems*, *servant of the sun*, &c.

The deciding between the different modes in which the prophet's name is, or ought to be, writ-

ten, and the adoption of the most eligible, has been a matter of perplexing deliberation. Upon consulting the Greek Byzantine historians, it appears that the same diversity of appellation which now prevails, has obtained for seven centuries. In some of them we meet with *Maometis*, from which comes our *Mahomet*, the most popular and familiar title to the English ear; and in others, *Machomed*. Other varieties among ancient authors might doubtless be specified. But it will be observed, for the most part, that writers acquainted with the Arabic tongue and who have drawn their materials directly from the original fountains, as well as the great body of recent Oriental travellers, are very unanimous in adopting the orthography of the name which appears in our title page. If the Arabic usage be in fact the proper standard, as will probably be admitted, *Mohammed*, instead of either *Muomet*, *Mahomed*, or *Mahommed*, is the genuine form of the name, and the mode in which it should be uniformly written and pronounced. The fact, that the example of most Oriental scholars of the present day has given currency to this form, and the probability that it will finally supplant all others, has induced us, on the whole, to adopt it though with considerable hesitation.

The following list of names and titles frequently occurring in connexion with the affairs of the East, together with their etymological import, will not be deemed inappropriate to the object of the present work.

MOHAMMED, } From HAMAD; *praised, highly ce*
 AHMED. } *lebrated, illustrious, glorious.*

MOSLEM, } All from the same root, ASLAM:
 MUSSULMAN, } *signifying to yield up, dedicate,*
 ISLAM, } *consecrate entirely to the service*
 ISLAMISM. } *of religion.*

KORAN.—From KARA, *to read; the reading, legend,*
or that which ought to be read.

CALIPH.—*A successor; from the Hebrew CHALAPH;*
to be changed, to succeed, to pass round in
a revolution.

SULTAN.—Originally from the Chaldaic SULTAN;
signifying authority, dominion, principality.

VIZIER.—*An assistant.*

HADJ.—*Pilgrimage; HADJI; one who makes the*
pilgrimage to Mecca.

SARACEN.—Etyymology doubtful; supposed to be
 from SARAK, *to steal; a plunderer, a robber.*

HEJIRA, } *The Flight; applied emphatically to Mo-*
 or } *ammed's flight from Mecca to Me-*
 HEJRA. } *dina. See page 106.*

MUFTI.—The principal head of the Mohammedan
 religion, and the resolver of all doubtful
 points of the law.—An office of great dig-
 nity in the Turkish empire.

IMAM.—A kind of priest attached to the mosques,
 whose duty it is occasionally to expound
 B

a passage of the Koran. They, at the same time, usually follow some more lucrative employment.

MOOLLAH.—The Moollahs form what is called the Ulema, or body of doctors in theology and jurisprudence, who are entrusted with the guardianship of the laws of the empire, and from whose number the Mufti is chosen.

EMIR.—Lineal descendants of the Prophet himself, distinguished by wearing turbans of deep sea-green, the colour peculiar to all the race of Mohammed. They have special immunities on the score of their descent, and one of them carries the green standard of the Prophet when the Grand Seigneur appears in any public solemnity.

PASHA.—The title given to the provincial governors. A Pasha is to a province or pashalic, what the Sultan is to the empire, except that the judicial power is in the hands of the cadis, the provincial magistrates. The *tails* of a Pasha are the standards which he is allowed to carry; one of three tails is one of three standards, which number gives the power of life and death.

REIS EFFENDI.—This officer may be termed the High Chancellor of the Ottoman empire. He is at the head of a class of attorneys

which at this time contains the best informed men of the nation.

SERAGLIO.—This word is derived from *Serai*, a term of Persian origin, signifying a *palace*. It is therefore improperly used as synonymous with *Harem*, the apartments of the women. The Seraglio is, in strictness of speech, the place where the court of the Grand Seignior is held; but it so happens that at Constantinople this building includes the imperial Harem within its walls.

CRESCENT.—The national ensign of the Turks, surmounting the domes and minarets attached to their mosques, as the Cross does the churches of the Roman Catholics in Christian countries. This peculiar and universal use of the Crescent is said to have owed its origin to the fact, that at the time of Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina *the moon was new*. Hence the half moon is commemorative of that event.

SUBLIME PORTE.—This title, which is frequently applied to the court, cabinet, or executive department of the Ottoman empire, is derived, as the words import, from a lofty arched gateway of splendid construction, forming the principal entrance to the Seraglio or palace. It is a phrase equivalent to "Court of St. James," "Court of St. Cloud," &c.

As one grand object continually aimed at by the compiler of the ensuing pages has been to exhibit the Arabian prophet as a signal instrument in the hands of Providence, and to put the whole system of his imposture, with its causes, accompaniments, and effects, where it properly belongs, into the great scheme of the Divine administration of the world, it is hoped that the prophetic investigations of this subject in the Appendix will not be overlooked. The writer is disposed to lay a peculiar, perhaps an unreasonable, stress of estimation upon this portion of the work. Not that he deems the interpretation proposed as infallible, but he is in hopes that this essay towards a right explication may contribute somewhat to inspire a more general interest in this province of scriptural elucidation, and thus to pave the way for the eventual correction of the errors of this and every preceding exposition. No one who admits the truth of revelation but will acknowledge that events, which are so overruled in the providence of God as to revolutionize a great portion of the civilized and Christian world, are important enough to claim a place in the prophetic developements of futurity; and if predicted, these predictions, when accomplished, are worthy of being explained. Otherwise, we willingly and culpably forego one of the main arguments in favour of the truth and divinity of the inspired oracles.

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INTRODUCTION

No revolution recorded in history, if we except that effected by the religion of the Gospel, has introduced greater changes into the state of the civilized world, than that which has grown out of the rise, progress, and permanence of Mohammedanism. The history and character, therefore, of this religion becomes an object of laudable curiosity with every enlightened mind. Considered merely as a department of the general annals of the world, apart from any connexion with the true religion, it furnishes some of the most interesting records of the human race. But when viewed as a part of the great chain of providential and predicted events, designed to have a direct bearing upon the state of the Christian church, through the whole period of its disastrous prevalence, it urges a new and stronger claim upon our attention. By many distinguished writers, who have deeply studied its origin, genius, and history, the religion of the Koran is confidently regarded rather as a *Christian heresy*, or the product of a Christian

heresy, than as a heathen superstition.* Consequently, its fate is involved in that of all false doctrines which have corrupted the Gospel; and as far as the disclosures of prophecy, or the present posture of the nations of the earth, hold out a hope of the speedy downfall of delusion, and of the establishment of the truth, the eye is naturally turned with deepening interest and anxiety to those regions of the globe where this religion has so long prevailed.

But in proportion to the interest inspired in the general subject of Mohammedanism, is that which is felt in the life, character, and actions of its founder. That an obscure individual, sprung from the roving tribes of Arabia, following no higher occupation than that of a caravan-trader, possessing no peculiar advantages of mental culture, nor distinguished in the outset by any pre-eminence of power or authority, should yet have been enabled, in spite of numerous obstacles, to found such an extensive empire over the minds, as well as persons, of millions of the human race, and that this dominion should have been continued for more than twelve hundred years, presents a phenomenon which increases our wonder the more steadily it is contemplated.

licence, says the learned and exemplary Mede, "Mahometanism has frequently been accounted a *Christian heresy*; and as it had its origin in Christianity, so to Christ it looks in the end. For, according to the creed of the Mahometans, Jesus is expected to descend to earth, to embrace the religion of Mahomet, to slay Antichrist, and to reign with his saints." The same authority affirms, "that the Mahometans are nearer to Christianity than many of the ancient heretics; the Cerinthians, Gnostics, and Manichees."

It is proposed in the ensuing pages to exhibit the prominent events of the life and fortunes of this remarkable man. It will not, of course, be expected that, at this distance of time and remoteness of place, a mass of facts entirely new should be communicated to the world. The discreet use of the materials already extant is all that can now be reasonably required or attempted. Yet we are not without hope, that in one aspect, at least, our theme may present itself arrayed in a character of novelty and of unwonted interest; we mean, in its connexions with Christianity. An enlightened Christian estimate of the prophet of Arabia and his religion is, we believe, seldom formed, simply because the subject has seldom been so presented as to afford the means of such an estimate. A brief sketch, therefore, of the state of Christianity at the time of Mohammed's appearance, especially in that region of the world in which his imposture took its rise, will properly invite the reader's attention at the outset of the work. This will show more clearly the intended providential bearings of the entire fabric of Mohammedan delusion upon the church of Christ; and, apart from this particular view of it, we are persuaded that an entirely correct or adequate judgment of Islamism cannot be formed.

*State of Christianity in the Sixth Century,
particularly in the Eastern Churches.*

The distinction of Eastern and Western churches, in ecclesiastical history, is founded upon a similar geographical division of the Roman empire under the emperors, into two great departments; the one including the countries of Asia or the East, which had been subjected to the Roman arms, and the other those of Europe, more properly denominated the West. This distinction became still more common from the days of Constantine, who removed the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople, though the final and complete rupture between the Greek and Latin churches did not occur till the seventh century.

Over the largest portion of the Roman empire the Christian religion was early propagated, and for two or three centuries subsisted in a great degree of its original simplicity and purity. Flourishing churches were planted by the Apostles themselves in the different provinces of Asia Minor, and along the eastern limits of Europe; from which "the word sounded out" to the adjacent territories with a multiplying power, so that the cause and kingdom of the Redeemer continued to spread long after its first propagators had entered into their rest. But a gradual degeneracy supervened upon the primitive prosperity of the church. During the fourth century "the mystery of iniquity," which had been long before working in secret,

began to discover itself more openly, and though the Christians, by the laws of the empire, were exempted from persecution, yet from this time forward a growing declension and defection among them is to be traced through every subsequent period, till at length, in the seventh century, “the man of sin” became fully revealed, and, according to the predictions of holy writ, took his seat “as God in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.” It was about the period at which Mohammed arose that this fearful apostacy had attained its height—that “the transgressors had come to the full”—and the degree to which the nominal church had departed from the standard of faith, morals, and worship contained in the Scriptures, well nigh surpasses belief. Then it was that those foul corruptions and superstitions were introduced into the church, which finally grew to such a pitch of enormity as to occasion the separation of Luther and the other reformers from what they deemed and denominated the communion of Antichrist. At this period it was, that the veneration for departed saints and martyrs—the idolatrous worship of images and relics—the rendering divine honours to the Virgin Mary—the doctrine of purgatory—and the adoration of the Cross, had become firmly established; and thus the lustre of the Gospel suffered a dark eclipse, and the essence of Christianity was lost under a load of idle and superstitious ceremonies.

In the eastern parts of the empire, especially

Syria and the countries bordering upon Arabia, as well as in some parts of Arabia itself, these evils were aggravated by the numerous sects and heresies that prevailed, and by the incessant controversial wars which they waged with each other. The church was torn to pieces by the furious disputes of the Arians, Sabellians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Collyridians, by whom the great doctrines of Christianity were so confounded with metaphysical subtleties and the jargon of schools, that they ceased, in great measure, to be regarded as a rule of life, or as pointing out the only way of salvation. The religion of the Gospel, the blessed source of peace, love, and unity among men, became, by the perverseness of sectaries, a firebrand of burning contention. Council after council was called—canon after canon was enacted—prelates were traversing the country in every direction in the prosecution of party purposes, resorting to every base art, to obtain the authoritative establishment of their own peculiar tenets, and the condemnation and suppression of those of their adversaries. The contests also for the episcopal office ran so high, particularly in the West, that the opposing parties repeatedly had recourse to violence, and, in one memorable instance, the interior of a Christian church was stained by the blood of a number of the adherents of the rival bishops, who fell victims to their fierce contentions. Yet it is little to be wondered at that these places of preferment should have been so greedily sought after by men of corrupt minds, when we learn.

that they opened the direct road to wealth, luxury, and priestly power. Ancient historians represent the bishops of that day, as enriched by the presents of the opulent, as riding abroad in pompous state in chariots and sedans, and surpassing, in the extravagance of their feasts, the sumptuousness of princes ; while, at the same time, the most barbarous ignorance was fast overspreading the nations of Christendom, the ecclesiastical orders themselves not excepted. Among the bishops, the legitimate instructors and defenders of the church, numbers were to be found incapable of composing the poor discourses which their office required them to deliver to the people, or of subscribing the decrees which they passed in their councils. The little learning in vogue was chiefly confined to the monks. But they, instead of cultivating science, or diffusing any kind of useful knowledge, squandered their time in the study of the fabulous legends of pretended saints and martyrs, or in composing histories equally fabulous.

This woful corruption of doctrine and morals in the clergy was followed, as might be expected, by a very general depravity of the common people : and though we cannot suppose that God left himself altogether without witnesses in this dark period, yet the number of the truly faithful had dwindled down to a mere remnant, and the wide-spreading defection seemed to call aloud for the judgments of heaven. In view of this deplorable state of Christianity, anterior to the appearance of Mohammed, we are prepared to admit at once the

justness of the following remarks upon the moral ends designed to be accomplished by Providence in permitting this desolating scourge to arise at this particular crisis of the world.

“At length,” says Prideaux, “having wearied the patience and long-suffering of God, he raised up the Saracens to be the instruments of his wrath to punish them for it ; who, taking advantage of the weakness of their power, and the distraction of counsels which their divisions had caused among them, overran, with a terrible devastation, all the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. And having fixed that tyranny over them which hath ever since afflicted those parts of the world, turned every where their churches into mosques, and their worship into a horrid superstition ; and instead of that holy religion which they had abused, forced on them the abominable imposture of Mahomet.— Thus those once glorious and most flourishing churches, for a punishment of their wickedness, being given up to the insult, ravage, and scorn of the worst of enemies, were on a sudden overwhelmed with so terrible a destruction as hath reduced them to that low and miserable condition under which they have ever since groaned ; the all-wise providence of God seeming to continue them thus unto this day under the pride and persecution of Mahometan tyranny, for no other end but to be an example and warning unto others against the wickedness of separation and division.”

LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

CHAPTER I.

National Descent of the Arabs—Proved to be from Ishmael, son of Abraham

IN tracing the genealogy of nations to their primitive founders, the book of Genesis is a document of inestimable value. With those who do not hesitate to receive this and the other inspired books of the Scriptures as authentic vouchers for historical facts, the national descent of the Arabs from Ishmael, the son of Abraham, is a point which will not admit of dispute. The fact of this derivation, however, has been seriously brought into question by several skeptical writers, particularly by the celebrated historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. With his usual dexterity of insinuation, he assails the united authority of Scripture history and Arabian tradition, respecting the pedigree of this remarkable people. Yet in no case does he undertake, in a formal manner, to *disprove* the fact to which he still labours to give the air of a fiction.* A succinct view, therefore, of the testimonies which go to establish the Ishmaelitish origin of the Arabs

* Decline and Fall, ch 1

may form no unsuitable introduction to the present work, detailing the life and character of the individual who has done so much towards rendering the race illustrious.

From the narrative of Moses we learn not only the parentage, birth, and settlement of Ishmael in Arabia, but the fact also of a covenant made with Abraham in his behalf, accompanied with a prophecy respecting his descendants, singularly analogous to the prophetic promise concerning the more favoured seed of Isaac. "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee ! And God said, Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed ; and thou shalt call his name Isaac : and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee : Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly ; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."* In like manner, it will be recollected, the nation of Israel sprung from the twelve sons of Jacob, and was divided into twelve tribes. In a subsequent part of the Mosaic records we find the notice of the incipient fulfilment of this prediction concerning the posterity of Ishmael "And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations : The first-born of Ishmael, Nebajoth, and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massah, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur.

* Genesis, xvii 18—20.

Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles: twelve princes according to their nations.”* Their geographical residence is clearly ascertained in a subsequent verse. “And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt as thou goest towards Assyria.”† Havilah and Shur, by the consent of the best sacred geographers, are allowed to have composed part of the region between the Euphrates and the Red Sea, denominated Arabia.‡ From causes now unknown, the tribes of Nebajoth and Kedar appear to have acquired an ascendancy over the rest, so that the whole country is sometimes designated from one, sometimes from the other of them, just as the entire nation of Israel is sometimes called Judah from the superior numbers, power, or influence of that tribe. Among the ancient profane historians also we find the names of *Nabitheans* and *Kedarenes* frequently employed as an appellation of the roving inhabitants of the Arabian deserts. This testimony is directly confirmed by that of Josephus. After reciting the names of the twelve sons of Ishmael, he adds:—“These inhabit all the country extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea, giving it the name of the *Nabatenean* region. These are they who have given names to the whole race of the Arabs with their tribes.”§ In the fourth century, Jerome, in his commentary on Jeremiah, de-

* Genesis, xxv. 13—16.
 † Wells's Sac. Geogr. vol i. p. 341.

† Ver. 18.
 § Ant. Jud. b. i. ch 12. § 4

scribes Kedar as a country of the Arabian desert, inhabited by the Ishmaelites, who were then termed Saracens. The same father, in his commentary on Isaiah, again speaks of Kedar as the country of the Saracens, who in Scripture are called Ishmaelites; and observes of Nebajoth, that he was one of the sons of Ishmael, after whose names the Arabian desert is called.

Another source of evidence in relation to the national descent of the Arabs, is their having practised, from time immemorial, the rite of circumcision. Josephus has a very remarkable passage touching the origin of this rite among the Jews and Arabs, in which he first makes mention of the circumcision of Isaac; then introduces that of Ishmael; and states concerning each, as matter of universal and immemorial notoriety, that the Jews and the Arabians severally practised the rite, conformably with the precedents given them, in the persons of their respective fathers. His words are these:—"Now when Sarah had completed her ninetieth, and Abraham his hundredth year, a son (Isaac) is born unto them: whom they forthwith circumcise on the eighth day; and from him the Jews derive their custom of circumcising children after the same interval. But the Arabians administer circumcision at the close of the thirteenth year: for Ishmael, the founder of their nation, the son of Abraham by his concubine, was circumcised at that time of life."* Similar to this is the testimony of Origen, who wrote in the third

* Ant. Jud. b. i. ch. 10, § 5.

century of the Christian era. "The natives of Judea," says he, "generally circumcise their children on the eighth day; but the Ishmaelites who inhabit Arabia universally practise circumcision in the thirteenth year. For this history tells us concerning them."* This writer, like Josephus, lived near the spot, and had the best opportunities of obtaining correct information respecting the Arabians. It is evident, therefore, beyond contradiction, from his words, that the fact of their derivation from Abraham through Ishmael was an established point of historical record, and not of mere traditional fame, at the period at which he wrote.

The direct testimony to the Ishmaelitish extraction of the Arabs furnished by the earliest records of the Bible, and confirmed as we see by foreign authorities, is strikingly corroborated by repeated references, bearing upon the same point, in later inspired writers, particularly the prophets. Through the long course of sacred history and prophecy, we meet with reiterated allusions to existing tribes of Arabia, descending from Ishmael, and bearing the names of his several sons, among which those of Nebajoth and Kedar usually predominate. Thus the Prophet Isaiah, in foretelling the future conversion of the Gentiles, makes mention of the "rams of *Nebajoth*," the eldest, and "all the flocks of *Kedar*," the second of the sons of Ishmael; that is, of the Arab tribes descending from these brothers; a passage which not only affords strong

* Orig. Op. tom. ii. p. 16. ed. Bene'

proof of our main position, but conveys also an intimation of the future in-gathering of the Mohammedan nations into the Christian Church. The same Prophet, in another part of his predictions, notices "the *cities of the wilderness*, the villages that *Kedar* doth inhabit." And again, when denouncing impending calamity upon the land of Arabia, he foretells how "all the glory of *Kedar* shall fail;" he employs the name of this single tribe as synonymous with that of the entire peninsula. In this connexion the words of the Psalmist may be cited:—"Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in *the tents of Kedar*." These words are supposed by some of the Jewish commentators to have been written by David, under the influence of inspiration, as the prophetic plaint of the Christian Church, labouring and groaning, as it has sometimes done, under the yoke of Mohammedan oppression. In Jeremiah, also, we find mention of *Kedar*. He speaks of it as "the wealthy nation that dwelleth without care, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone." Ezekiel, moreover, prophesies conjointly of "Arabia and all the princes of *Kedar*." An allusion to Tema, the ninth son of Ishmael, as the name of a warlike people of Arabia, occurs as early as in the book of Job: "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them." Lastly, the tribes sprung from *Jetur* and *Naphish*, the tenth and eleventh sons of Ishmael, are commemorated in the first book of Chronicles, who are there called *Hagarites*, from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, and

of whom a hundred thousand males were taken captives.

When to this mass of Scripture evidence of the descent of the Arabs from Ishmael we add the acknowledged coincidence between the national character of this people in every age, and the predicted personal character of their progenitor—"And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him"—and the fact, that the Ishmaelitish origin of the Arabs has ever been the constant and unvarying tradition of that people themselves, the subject scarcely admits of a more irrefragable proof. There are certainly few landmarks of history more universal or more permanent than the names of countries affixed by original settlers, or flowing from them, and we may as justly question the derivation of Hungary from the Huns, France from the Franks, Turkey from the Turks, or Judea from Judah and the Jews, as those of the several districts of Arabia from the respective sons of Ishmael.*

* The argument in this chapter is condensed from a more ample discussion of the subject in the Appendix to "Forster's Manometanism Unveiled."

CHAPTER II.

Birth and Parentage of Mohammed—Loses his Parents in early Childhood—Is placed under the care of his uncle Abu Taleb—Goes into Syria on a trading expedition with his uncle at the age of thirteen—Enters the service of Cadijah, a widow of Mecca, whom he afterward marries.

MOHAMMED, the Legislator of Arabia, the Founder of the Moslem or Mohammedan religion, and thence dignified by himself and by his followers with the title of Prophet and Apostle of God, was born at Mecca, a city of Arabia, A. D. 569.* His lineage, notwithstanding that many of the earlier Christian writers, under the influence of inveterate prejudice against the prophet and his religion, have represented his origin as base and ignoble, is clearly shown to have been honourable and illustrious; at least, when rated by the common standard of distinction among his countrymen. The ancient Arabians, deriving their pedigree from Ishmael, and inheriting the nomadic habits of their ancestor, had from time immemorial been divided into a number of separate independent tribes, roving at large over the immense sandy regions of which their country is composed, except where here and there a few thousands of them were gathered into cities, and engaged in merchandise. Some of these tribes,

* Other authorities place his birth in A. D. 571. The precise year cannot be determined with certainty.

from various causes, were more numerous, powerful, and renowned than others. That of Koreish, from the founder of which Mohammed was in a direct line descended, had long been accounted the most noble of them all, and his ancestors, for several generations, had ranked among the princes of Mecca, and the keepers of the keys of the Caaba,* its sacred temple. His father's name was Abdallah, one of the thirteen sons of Abdol Motaleb, the chief personage in his day among the Koreish, and inheriting from his father Hashem the principal place in the government of Mecca, and succeeding him in the custody of the Caaba. This Hashem, the great-grandfather of Mohammed, was the most distinguished name in all the line of his predecessors, and from him not only is the appellation of Hashemites bestowed upon the kindred of the prophet, but even to this day, the chief magistrate, both at Mecca and Medina, who must always be of the race of Mohammed, is invariably styled "The Prince of the Hashemites." The name of Mohammed's mother was Amina, whose parentage was traceable also to a distinguished family of the same tribe. Her lot was envied in gaining the hand of the son of Abdol Motaleb, as the surpassing beauty of his person is said to have ravished the hearts of a hundred maidens of Arabia, who were left, by his choice of Amina, to sigh over the wreck of their fondest hopes.

Abdallah, though the son of a rich and princely

father, was possessed of but little wealth, and as he died while his son was an infant, or, as some say, before he was born, it is probable that that little was seized with the characteristic rapacity of the Arabs, and shared among his twelve surviving brothers, the powerful uncles of Mohammed. Although the laws of the Koran, in respect to inheritances, promulgated by the prophet himself, breathe more of the spirit of equity and kindness; yet the pagan Arabs, previous to his time, as we learn from Eastern writers, were wont to treat widows and orphans with great injustice, frequently denying them any share in the inheritances of their fathers and husbands, under the pretence that it ought to be distributed among those only who were able to bear arms, and disposing of widows, even against their own consent, as a part of their husband's possessions. The fatherless Mohammed, accordingly, faring like the rest of his countrymen, received, in the distribution of the patrimony, no more than five camels and an Ethiopian female slave.

The Moslem writers, in order to represent the birth of their pretended prophet as equally marvellous with that of Moses or of Christ, the ancient messengers of God who preceded him, have reported a tissue of astonishing prodigies said to have occurred in connexion with that event. If the reader will receive their statements with the same implicit faith with which they seem to be delivered, he must acknowledge, that at the moment when the favoured infant was ushered into the world, a flood of light burst forth with him and illuminated every

part of Syria ; that the waters of the Lake Sawa were entirely dried up, so that a city was built upon its bottom ; that an earthquake threw down fourteen towers of the king of Persia's palace ; that the sacred fire of the Persians was extinguished, and all the evil spirits which had inhabited the moon and stars were expelled together from their celestial abodes, nor could they ever after animate idols or deliver oracles on earth. The child also, if we may trust to the same authorities, discovered the most wonderful presages. He was no sooner born than he fell prostrate, in a posture of humble adoration, praying devoutly to his Creator, and saying, " God is great ! There is no God but God, and I am his prophet ! " By these and many other supernatural signs, equally astounding, is the prophet's nativity said to have been marked. To some of them it would indeed appear that the earlier Christians gave an honest credence ; with this difference, however, between their belief and that of his followers, that while the latter ascribed them without hesitation to the hand of God, giving in this manner a gracious attestation to the prophetic character of his servant, the former referred them directly to the agency of the devil, who might naturally be supposed, they thought, to work some special wonders on the present occasion. Upon the narrative of these miraculous phenomena the reader will form his own judgment. They are mentioned in the absence of all authentic information touching the period and the event in question. Until the facts alleged are proved, by competent historical testi-

mony, to have taken place, it is scarcely necessary to call in the aid of divine or diabolical agency to account for them ; as it is much easier to imagine that an imposition or illusion may have been practised upon the first reporters, or that the whole catalogue of wonders is a mere fabrication of interested partisans, than that the ordinary course of nature should have been disturbed at this crisis.

The Arabic biographers of the prophet, moreover, inform us that Abdol Motalleb, his grandfather, the seventh day after the birth of the child, gave a great entertainment, to which he invited the principal men of the Koreish, who, after the repast was over, desired him to give the infant a name. Abdol Motalleb immediately replied — “ I name this child Mohammed.” The Koreish grandees at once expressed their surprise that he did not call his grandson, according to custom, by a name which had belonged to some one of the family. But he persisted in the selection he had made, saying, “ May the Most High glorify in Heaven him whom he has created on earth !” alluding to the name Mohammed, which signifies *praised* or *glorified*.

At the early age of two years Mohammed lost his father ; and four years after, his mother. The helpless orphan, now cast upon the kindness of his relations, was taken into the house and family of his grandfather, under whose guardian care he remained but two years, when the venerable Motalleb himself was also called to pay the debt of nature. In a dying charge, he confided this tender plant of

the ancient stock of the Koreish to the faithful hands of Abu Taleb, the eldest of his sons and the successor of his authority. "My dearest, best beloved son"—thus history or tradition reports the tenor of his instructions—"to thy charge I leave Mohammed, the son of thine own brother, strictly recommended, whose natural father the Lord hath been pleased to take to himself, with the intent that this dear child should become ours by adoption; and much dearer ought he to be unto us than merely an adopted son. Receive him, therefore, at my dying hands, with the same sincere love and tender bowels with which I deliver him to thy care. Honour, love, and cherish him as much, or even more than if he had sprung from thine own loins; for all the honour thou showest unto him shall be trebled unto thee. Be more than ordinarily careful in thy treatment towards him, for it will be repaid thee with interest. Give him the preference before thine own children, for he exceedeth them and all mankind in excellency and perfection. Take notice, that whensoever he calleth upon thee, thou answer him not as an infant, as his tender age may require, but as thou wouldst reply to the most aged and venerable person when he asketh thee any question. Sit not down to thy repasts of any sort soever, either alone or in company, till thy worthy nephew Mohammed is seated at the table before thee; neither do thou ever offer to taste of any kind of viands, or even to stretch forth thine hand towards the same, until he hath tasted thereof. If thou observest these my injunctions, thy goods

shall always increase, and in nowise be diminished.”*

Whether Abu Taleb recognised in the deposit thus solemnly committed to his trust an object of such high destiny and such profound veneration as his father’s language would imply, we are not informed; but there is good evidence that he acted towards his nephew the part of a kind friend and protector, giving him an education, scanty indeed, but equal to that usually received by his countrymen. His followers, it is true, in order to magnify their prophet’s supernatural gifts, and render the ~~composition of the Koran a greater miracle, generally affirm that he was wholly illiterate, neither able to read or write.~~ In this, indeed, they are authorized by the pretensions of Mohammed himself, who says, “~~Thus have we sent down the book of the Koran unto thee.—Thou couldst not read any book before this; neither couldst thou write it with thy right hand: then had the gainsayers justly doubted of the divine original thereof.~~”†—“Believe, therefore, in God and his apostle, the illiterate prophet.”‡ But in the Koran, a complete ~~fabric~~ of imposture, the last thing we are to expect is an honest adherence to truth. There is abundant evidence, from the pages of this spurious revelation itself, that writing was an art in common use among the Arabs at that time. The following precept concerning bonds puts it beyond question.

* Morgan’s Mahometanism Explained, vol. i. p. 50

† Koran, ch. xxix.

‡ Ch. vii.

“O, true believers, when ye bind yourselves one to the other in a debt for a certain time, write it down; and let a writer write between you according to justice, and let not the writer refuse writing according to what God hath taught him.” We learn also that Ali Taleb, the son of Abu Taleb, and cousin of Mohammed, with whom the prophet passed his childhood, afterward became one of his scribes, of whom he had a number employed in making copies of the Koran as its successive portions were revealed to him. How did it happen that Abu Taleb should have had his son instructed in writing, and not his nephew? The city of Mecca, moreover, being a place of traffic, the merchants must have hourly felt the want of some mode of recording their transactions; and as we are informed that Mohammed himself was for several years engaged in mercantile pursuits before he commenced the propagation of a new religion, it is scarcely supposable that he was unacquainted with the use of letters.

Of the infancy, childhood, and youth of the future prophet no authentic details have reached us. The blank has indeed been copiously supplied by the fabulous legends of his votaries, but as they are utterly void of authority, they will not repay the trouble of transcription. Being destined by his uncle to the profession of a merchant, he was taken, as some affirm, at the age of thirteen, into Syria with Abu Taleb's trading caravan, in order to his being perfected in the business of his intended vocation. Upon the simple circumstance of this journey, the

superstition of his followers has grafted a series of miraculous omens all portending his future greatness. Among other things, it is said by his historians, that upon his arriving at Bozrah, a certain man named Boheira, a Nestorian monk, who is thought by Prideaux to be otherwise called Sergius, advanced through the crowd collected in the market-place, and, seizing him by the hand, exclaimed, "There will be something wonderful in this boy; for when he approached he appeared covered with a cloud." He is said to have affirmed also, that the dry trees under which he sat were every where instantly covered with green leaves, which served him for a shade, and that the mystic seal of prophecy was impressed between his shoulders, in the form of a small luminous excrescence. According to others, instead of a bright cloud being the criterion by which his subsequent divine mission was indicated, the mark by which Boheira knew him was the *prophetic light* which shone upon his face. This miraculous light, according to the traditions of the Mohammedans, was first placed upon Adam, and from him transmitted to each individual in the line of his descendants, who sustained the character of a true prophet. The hallowed radiance at length rested upon the head of Abraham, from whom it was divided into a twofold emanation, the greater or clearer descending upon Isaac and his seed, the less or obscurer to Ishmael and his posterity. The light in the family of Isaac is represented as having been perpetuated in a constant glow through a long line of inspired messengers and prophets,

among the children of Israel ; but that in the family of Ishmael is said to have been suppressed, and to have lain hidden through the whole tract of ages, from Ishmael down to the coming of Mohammed, in whom the sacred symbol was again revived, and now pointed out to Boheira the high destiny of him on whose person it appeared. However intrinsically vain and visionary this legend may be deemed, it may, nevertheless, be worth advertising to, as affording perhaps, in its remoter sources, a hint of the origin of the *halo*, which in most of the paintings or engravings of the Saviour is made to encircle his sacred brows.

When Abu Taleb was about to return with his caravan to Mecca, Boheira, it is said, again repeated his solemn premonition, coupled with a charge, respecting the extraordinary youth. "Depart with this child, and take great care that he does not fall into the hands of the Jews ; for your nephew will one day become a very wonderful person."

The early Christian writers have laid hold of the narrative of this interview with the Syrian monk, as affording a clew to the true origin and authorship of the Koran. According to them, this Boheira, alias Sergius, who, they say, was an apostate Jew or Christian, instructed Mohammed in the histories and doctrines of the Bible, and that they in concert laid a plan for creating a new religion, a motley compound of Judaism and Christianity, to be carried into execution twenty years afterward : and that accordingly the monk, rather than Mo-

ammed, is entitled to the credit of the most important parts of the Koran. Others again, deeming it altogether incredible that a youth of thirteen should have conceived the vast idea of forming and propagating a new religion, place this correspondence with Sergius at a later period of his life; that is to say, when he was not far from twenty years of age, at which time he is alleged to have taken a second journey into Syria. But, as we shall see hereafter, the question how far Mohammed was assisted by others in the composition of the Koran is not susceptible at the present day of a satisfactory solution.

The next remarkable event in the life of Mohammed is his appearance in the character of a soldier. At the age of fourteen, or, as others say, nearer the age of twenty, he served under his uncle, who commanded the troops of his tribe, the Koreish, in their wars against the rival tribes of the Kenan and the Hawazan. They returned from the expedition victorious, and this circumstance doubtless tended to render the people of the tribe still more devoted to the uncle and the nephew, and to acquire for Mohammed a notoriety which he was afterward enabled to turn essentially to his account.

From this time to the age of twenty-five he appears to have continued in the employ of Abu Taleb, engaged in mercantile pursuits. As he advanced in years there is reason to believe that his personal endowments, which were doubtless of a superior order, together with strong native powers

of intellect, an acute observation, a ready wit, and pleasing address combined to render him both popular and prominent among his associates. Such, at least, is the concurrent testimony of all his biographers, and we have no means of invalidating their statements. It is, however, natural to suppose, that a strong colouring would be put upon every superior quality of a pretended messenger of God, sent to restore the true religion to the world, and that he, who was by character a prophet, should be represented by his adherents as a paragon of all external perfections. About this period, by the assistance of his uncle, he was entered into the service of a rich trading widow of his native city, who had been twice married, and whose name was CADIJAH. In the capacity of factor or agent to this his wealthy employer, he took a second journey of three years into Damascus and the neighbouring regions of Syria, in which he devoted himself so assiduously to the interests of Cadijah, and managed the trust committed to him so entirely to her satisfaction, that upon his return she rewarded his fidelity with the gift of her hand and her fortune. It may be imagined, that in entering into this alliance, she was probably influenced by the family connexions and the personal attractions of her suitor. But whatever were her motives, the union subsequently appears to have been one of genuine affection on both sides; Mohammed never forgot the favours he had received from his benefactress, and never made her repent of having placed her person and her for-

tune at his absolute disposal. Although Cadijah, at the time of her marriage, was forty, and Mohammed not more than twenty-eight, yet till the age of sixty-four, when she died, she enjoyed the undivided affection of her husband; and that too in a country where polygamy was allowed, and very frequently practised. By her he had eight children, of whom Fatima alone, his eldest daughter, survived him. And such was the prophet's respect to the memory of his wife, that after her death he placed her in the rank of the four perfect women.

CHAPTER III.

Mohammed forms the design of palming a new Religion upon the world—Difficult to account for this determination—Considerations suggested—Retires to the Cave of Hera—Announces to Cadijah the Visits of Gabriel with a portion of the Koran—She becomes a Convert—His slow progress in gaining Proselytes—Curious Coincidence.

BEING now raised by his marriage to an equality with the first citizens of Mecca, Mohammed was enabled to pass the next twelve years of his life in comparative affluence and ease; and, until the age of forty, nothing remarkable distinguished the history of the future prophet. It is probable that he still followed the occupation of a merchant, as the Arabian nation, like their ancestors the Ishmaelites, have always been greatly addicted to commerce. It was during this interval, however, that he meditated and matured the bold design of palming a new religion upon the world. This therefore becomes, in its results, the most important period in his whole life; and it is greatly to be regretted, that the policy of the impostor, and the ravages of time, have deprived us of all sources of information, which might afford a satisfactory clew to the real origin of this design. The circumstances which first suggested it, the peculiar train of reflection which went to cherish it, the ends which he proposed to accomplish by it, together with the real agencies employed in bringing it forward, are

all matters wrapped in impenetrable mystery; yet these are the very points on which the inquiring mind, intent upon tracing great events to their primary sources, is most eager for information. At the present day, it is impossible to determine whether Mohammed commenced his career as a deluded enthusiast or a designing impostor. Those who have most profoundly considered the whole subject of Mohammedanism in its rise, progress, genius, and effects, are, on this point, divided in their opinion.

On the one hand, it is supposed by some, that Mohammed was constitutionally addicted to religious contemplation—that his native temperament was strongly tinged with enthusiasm—and that he might originally have been free from any sinister motive in giving scope to the innate propensities of his character. As the result of his retired speculations he might, moreover, it is said, have been sincerely persuaded in his own mind of the grand article of his faith, the unity of God, which in his opinion was violated by all the rest of the world, and, therefore, might have deemed it a meritorious work to endeavour to liberate his countrymen and his race from the bondage of error. Impelled by this motive in the outset, and being aided by a warm imagination, he might at length have come, it is affirmed, as enthusiasts have often done, to the firm conviction, that he was destined by Providence to be the instrument of a great and glorious reformation; and the circumstance of his being accustomed to solitary retirement would na-

turally cause this persuasion to take a deeper root in his mind. In this manner, it is supposed, his career might have commenced; but finding himself to have succeeded beyond his expectations, and the force of temptation growing with the increase of his popularity and power, his self-love at last overpowered his honesty, ambition took the place of devotion, his designs expanded with his success, and he who had entered upon a pious enterprise as a well-meaning reformer degenerated in the end into a wilful impostor, a gross debauchee, and an unprincipled despot.

On the other hand, it is maintained, and we think with more of an air of probability, that his conduct from the very first bears the marks of a deep-laid and systematic design; that although he might not have anticipated all the results which crowned the undertaking, yet in every step of his progress he acted with a shrewdness and circumspection very little savouring of the dreams of enthusiasm; that the pretended visits of an angel, and his publishing, from time to time, the chapters of the Koran, as a divine revelation, are wholly inconsistent with the idea of his being merely a deluded fanatic; and that, at any rate, the discovery of his inability to work a miracle, the grand voucher of a divine messenger, must have been sufficient to dispel the fond illusion from his mind.

Many circumstances, moreover, it is said, may be adduced, which might have concurred to prompt and favour the design of this arch imposture

1. Mohammed's genius was bold and aspiring

His family had formerly held the ascendancy in rank and power in the city of Mecca, and it was merely his misfortune in having lost his father in infancy, and being left an orphan, that prevented him from succeeding to the same distinction. It was therefore the dictate of a very obvious principle of human nature, that he should contrive, if possible, to make the fortune and influence acquired by his marriage a step to still higher honours, and to raise himself to the ancient dignity of his house. 2. He had travelled much in his own and foreign countries. His journeys would of course bring him acquainted with the tenets of the different sects of the religious world, particularly the Jewish and the Christian, which were then predominant, and the latter greatly corrupted and torn to pieces with internal dissensions. Being a sagacious observer of men, he could not fail to perceive that the distracted state of the existing religions had put the Eastern world into a posture extremely favourable to the propagation of a new system. His own countrymen, the people of Arabia, were, indeed, for the most part sunk in idolatry, but the vestiges of a purer faith, derived from patriarchal times, were still lingering among them, to a degree that afforded him the hope of recovering them to a sounder creed. 3. The political state of things at that time was such as signally to favour his project. The Roman empire, on the one hand, and the Persian monarchy on the other, had both become exceedingly enfeebled in the process of a long decline, towards

the last stages of which they were now rapidly approaching. The Arabs, on the contrary, were a strong and flourishing people, abounding in numbers, and inured to hardships. Their being divided into independent tribes presented also advantages for the spread of a new faith which would not have existed had they been consolidated into one government. As Mohammed had considerable opportunities to acquaint himself with the peculiar situation of these empires; as he had carefully noted the genius and disposition of the people which composed them; and as he possessed a capacity to render every circumstance subservient to his purpose, it is contended, that his scheme was much more legitimately the fruit of policy than of piety, and that the pseudo-prophet, instead of being pitied for his delusion, is rather to be reprobated for his base fabrication.

After all, it is not improbable that Infinite Wisdom has so ordered it, that a veil of unpenetrated darkness should rest on the motives of the impostor, in order that a special providence may be recognised in the rise and establishment of this arch-delusion in the world. In the absence of sufficient human causes to account for the phenomena, we are more readily induced to acknowledge a divine interposition. In the production of events which are overruled in the government of God to operate as penal evils for the punishment of the guilty, reason and revelation both teach us reverently to acknowledge the visitation of the Divine Hand, whoever or whatever may have been the subordi

nate agents, or their motives. "Is there evil in the city, saith the Lord, and I have not done it?" i. e. the evil of *suffering*, not of *sin*. It cannot be doubted that, as a matter of fact, the rise and reign of Mohammedanism has resulted in the infliction of a most terrible scourge upon the apostate churches in the East, and in other portions of Christendom; and, unless we exclude the Judge of the world from the exercise of his judicial prerogatives in dealing with his creatures, we cannot err, provided we do not infringe upon man's moral agency, in referring the organ of chastisement to the will of the Most High. The life and actions of Mohammed himself, and his first broaching the religion of the Koran, are but the incipient links in a chain of political revolutions, equal in magnitude and importance to any which appear on the page of history—revolutions, from which it would be downright impiety to remove all idea of providential ordainment. If then we acknowledge a peculiar providence in the astonishing success of the Saracen arms subsequent to the death of Mohammed, we must acknowledge it also in the origination of that system of religion which brought them under one head, and inspired them to the achievement of such a rapid and splendid series of conquests.

The pretended prophet, having at length, after years of deliberation, ripened all his plans, proceeded in the most gradual and cautious manner to put them in execution. He had been, it seems, for some time in the habit of retiring daily to a certain cave in the vicinity of Mecca, called the cave of

Hera, for the ostensible purpose of spending his time in fasting, prayer, and holy meditation. The important crisis having now arrived, he began to break to his wife, on his return home in the evening, the solemn intelligence of supernatural visions and voices with which he was favoured in his retirement. Cadijah, as might be expected, was at first incredulous. She treated his visions as the dreams of a disturbed imagination, or as the delusions of the devil.* Mohammed, however, persisted in assuring her of the reality of these communications, and rising still higher in his demands upon her credulity, at length repeated a passage which he affirmed to be a part of a divine revelation, recently conveyed to him by the ministry of the angel Gabriel. The memorable night on which this visit was made by the heavenly messenger is called the "night of Al Kadr," or the night of the *divine decree*, and is greatly celebrated, as it was the same night on which the entire KORAN descended from the seventh to the lowest heaven, to be thence revealed by Gabriel in successive portions as occasion might require. The Koran has a whole chapter devoted to the commemoration of this event, entitled *Al Kadr*. It is as follows: "In the name of the most merciful God. Verily, we sent down the Koran in the night of Al Kadr. And what shall make thee understand how excellent the night of Al Kadr is? This night is better than a thousand months. Therein do the angels

* This is the account given by Prideaux. Sale, however, says, "I do not remember to have read in any Eastern author, that Cadijah ever rejected her husband's pretences as delusions, or suspected him of any imposture."—*Prelim. Disc. n. 58. note.*

descend, and the spirit Gabriel also, by the permission of their Lord, with his decrees concerning every matter. It is peace until the rising of the morn.)* On this favoured night, between the 23d and 24th of *Ramadan*, according to the prophet, the angel appeared to him, in glorious form, to communicate the happy tidings of his mission. The light issuing from his body, if the apostle-elect may be believed, was too dazzling for mortal eyes to behold; he fainted under the splendour; nor was it till Gabriel had assumed a human form, that he could venture to approach or look upon him. The angel then cried aloud, "O MOHAMMED, THOU ART THE APOSTLE OF GOD, AND I AM THE ANGEL GABRIEL!" "Read!" continued the angel; the prophet declared that he was unable to read. "Read!" Gabriel again exclaimed, "read, in the name of thy Lord, who hath created all things; who hath created man of congealed blood. Read, by thy most beneficent Lord, who hath taught the use of the pen; who teacheth man that which he knoweth not."† The prophet, who professed hitherto to have been illiterate, then read the joyful tidings respecting his ministry on earth, when the angel, having accomplished his mission, majestically ascended to heaven, and disappeared from his view. When the story of this surprising interview with a celestial visitant was related to Cadijah in connexion with the passage repeated, her unbelief, as tradition avers, was wholly overcome, and not only so, but she was wrought by it into a kind of ecstasy, declaring, "By Him in whose

* Koran, ch xvii.

† Ch xviii

hands her soul was, that she trusted her husband would indeed one day become the prophet of his nation." In the height of her joy she immediately imparted what she had heard to one Waraka, her cousin, who is supposed by some to have been in the secret, and who, being a Christian, had learned to write in the Hebrew character, and was tolerably well versed in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. He unhesitatingly assented to her opinion respecting the divine designation of her husband, and even affirmed, that Mohammed was no other than the great prophet foretold by Moses, the son of Amram. This belief that both the prophet and his spurious religion were subjects of inspired prediction in the Old Testament Scriptures, is studiously inculcated in the Koran. "Thy Lord is the mighty, the merciful. This book is certainly a revelation from the Lord of all creatures, which the faithful spirit (Gabriel) hath caused to descend upon thy heart, that thou mightest be a preacher to thy people in the perspicuous Arabic tongue; and it is borne witness to in the Scriptures of former ages. Was it not a sign unto them that the wise men among the children of Israel knew it?"*

Having succeeded in gaining over his wife, he persevered in that retired and austere kind of life which tends to beget the reputation of pre-eminent sanctity, and ere long had his servant, Zeid Ebn Hareth, added to the list of proselytes. He rewarded the faith of Zeid by manumitting him from

* Koran, ch. xxiii

servitude, and it has hence become a standing rule among his followers always to grant their freedom to such of their slaves as embrace the religion of the prophet. Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, Mohammed's cousin, was his next convert, but the impetuous youth, disregarding the other two as persons of comparatively little note, used to style himself the first of believers. His fourth and most important convert was Abubeker, a powerful citizen of Mecca, by whose influence a number of persons possessed of rank and authority were induced to profess the religion of Islam. These were Othman, Zobair, Saad, Abdorrahman, and Abu Obeidah, who afterward became the principal leaders in his armies, and his main instruments in the establishment both of his imposture and of his empire. Four years were spent in the arduous task of winning over these nine individuals to the faith, some of whom were the principal men of the city, and who composed the whole party of his proselytes previously to his beginning to proclaim his mission in public. He was now forty-four years of age.

It has been remarked, as somewhat of a striking coincidence, that the period of Mohammed's retiring to the cave of Hera for the purpose of fabricating his imposture corresponds very nearly with the time in which Boniface, bishop of Rome, by virtue of a grant from the tyrant Phocas, first assumed the title of Universal Pastor, and began to lay claim to that spiritual supremacy over the church of Christ, which has ever since been arrogated to themselves by his successors. "And from this

time," says Prideaux, "both he (the bishop of Rome) and Mohammed having conspired to found themselves an empire in imposture, their followers have been ever since endeavouring by the same methods, that is, those of fire and sword, to propagate it among mankind; so that Antichrist seems at this time to have set both his feet upon Christendom together; the one in the East, the other in the West, and how much each hath trampled upon the church of Christ, all succeeding ages have abundantly experienced." The agreement of dates here adverted to may be worth noticing; both events having occurred within the first six or eight years of the seventh century; but we have as yet met with no evidence to convince us of the propriety of applying the epithet Antichrist to Mohammed. It is, however, the opinion of many Protestant expositors of prophecy, that this appellation is properly attributable to that system of ecclesiastical domination so long exercised by the Romish hierarchy, and the continuance of which, it is maintained, is limited by the prophetic term of 1260 years. If, therefore, this predicted period, assigned to the reign of the Roman Antichrist, be dated from near the commencement of the seventh century, we are not very far from the era of great moral changes in the state of the world; and there are reasons to be adduced in a subsequent part of this work, which lead us to believe, that the career of Mohammedanism runs parallel to that of Popery, and that, taking their rise from nearly a common era, they are destined also to synchronise in their fall.

CHAPTER IV.

The Prophet announces his Mission among his kindred of the Koreish—Meets with a harsh repulse—Begins to declare it in public—Views of his fundamental Doctrines—His pretensions respecting the Koran.—The disdainful Rejection of his Message by his fellow-citizens—His consequent Denunciations against them.

THE mission of Mohammed had hitherto been conducted in private. The proselytes he had thus far gained had been won over from among the circle of his immediate friends and connexions. The time had now come, he affirmed, when the Lord commanded him to make his message publicly known, beginning with his kindred of the tribe of Koreish. "O thou covered, arise and preach, and magnify thy Lord."* "And admonish thy more near relations."† To this end he directed Ali to prepare a generous entertainment, and invite to it the sons and descendants of Abdol Mottaleb, where, when they were all convened, he would formally divulge to them the solemn fact of his apostolic commission. Some disturbance, occasioned by Abu Laheb, caused the company to break up before he had an opportunity of effecting his purpose, which induced him to give them a second invitation on the ensuing day. About forty of them accordingly assembled around his board, when the prophet arose, and thus addressed his

* Koran, ch. lxxv

† Ch. xxvi

wondering guests :—“ I know no man in the whole peninsula of the Arabs who can propose any thing more excellent to his relations than what I now do to you ; I offer you happiness both in this life and in that which is to come ; God Almighty hath commanded me to call you unto him ; who therefore among you will be my vizier (assistant), and will become my brother and vicegerent ?” General astonishment kept the assembly silent ; none offered to accept the proffered office till the fiery Ali burst forth and declared that he would be the brother and assistant of the prophet. “ I,” said he, “ O prophet of God, will be thy vizier ; I myself will beat out the teeth, pull out the eyes, rip open the bellies, and cut off the legs, of all those who shall dare to oppose thee.” The prophet caught the young proselyte in his arms, exclaiming, “ This is my brother, my deputy, my successor ; show yourselves obedient unto him.” At this apparently extravagant command, the whole company burst into laughter, telling Abu Taleb that he must now pay obedience and submission to his own son ! As words were multiplied, surprise began to give way to indignation, the serious pretensions of the prophet were seriously resented, and in the issue the assembly broke up in confusion, affording the ardent apostle but slender prospects of success among his kinsmen.

Undeterred by the failure of his first public attempt, Mohammed began to preach still more openly before the people of Mecca. He announced to them that he was commissioned by the

Almighty to be his prophet on the earth ; to assert the unity of the Divine Being ; to denounce the worship of images ; to recall the people to the true and only religion ; to bear the tidings of paradise to the believing ; and to threaten the deaf and unbelieving with the terrible vengeance of the Lord. His main doctrine, and that which constitutes the distinguishing character of the Koran is, that there is but one God ; that he only is to be worshipped ; and that all idolatry is a foul abomination, to be utterly abolished. The 112th ch. of the Koran, entitled "The Declaration of God's Unity," is held in the most profound veneration by the Mohammedans, and declared, by a tradition of the prophet, to be equal in value to a third part of the whole Koran. It is said to have been revealed in answer to the Koreish, who inquired of the apostle concerning the distinguishing attributes of the God whom he invited them to worship. It consists of a single sentence. "In the name of the most merciful God. Say, God is one God ; the eternal God ; he begetteth not, neither is he begotten : and there is not any one like unto him." In the incessant repetition of this doctrine in the pages of the Koran, the author is aiming not only at the grosser errors of polytheism and idolatry, then common among the Eastern nations, but is levelling a blow also at the fundamental tenet of Christianity, that Jesus Christ is the son of God, "the only begotten of the Father." Like others in other ages, Mohammed could conceive of no mode of understanding the doctrine of the filia-

tion of Christ, as held by Christians, which did not directly militate with the truth of the essential unity of the Most High ; and in his view the first-born of absurdities was, to affirm in the same breath that Christ was the son of God, and yet coequal and coeternal with the Father. The New Testament declarations, therefore, respecting the person and character of the Messiah find no mercy at the hands of the author of the Koran, who either had not the candour or the capacity to discriminate between the doctrine of the Trinity and that of Tritheism. “ O ye who have received the Scriptures, exceed not the just bounds in your religion, neither say of God any other than the truth.”—i. e. either by rejecting Jesus as the Jews do, or by raising him to an equality with God as do the Christians. “ Verily, Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the apostle of God, and his word, which he conveyed into Mary, and a spirit proceeding from him. Believe, therefore, in God and his apostles, and say not there are three Gods ; forbear this ; it will be better for you. God is but one God. Far be it from him that he should have a son ! Unto him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on earth ; and he is sufficient unto himself.”* “ They are certainly infidels who say, Verily, God is Christ the son of Mary. Whoever shall give a companion unto God, God shall exclude him from paradise, and his habitation shall be hell-fire. They are certainly infidels who say God is the third of three : for there is no God be

* Koran, ch. iv

sides one God. Christ, the son of Mary, is no more than an apostle; and his mother was a woman of veracity: they both ate food.”* “There is no God but, he: the curse be on those whom they associate with him in his worship.”†

With this fundamental article of the Moslem creed, Mohammed connected that of his being, since Moses and Jesus, the only true prophet of God. “We gave unto the children of Israel the book of the law, and wisdom, and prophecy; and we fed them with good things, and preferred them above all nations: and we gave them plain ordinances concerning the business of religion. Afterward we appointed thee, O Mohammed, to promulgate a law concerning the business of religion: wherefore follow the same, and follow not the desires of those who are ignorant.”‡ The object of his mission, he affirmed, was not so much to deliver to the world an entirely new scheme of religion, as to restore and replant the only true and ancient faith professed by the patriarchs and prophets, from Adam down to Christ. “Thus have we revealed unto thee an Arabic Koran, that thou mayest warn the metropolis of Mecca, and the Arabs who dwell round about it. He hath ordained you the religion which he commanded Noah, and which we have revealed unto thee, O Mohammed, and which we commanded Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus; saying, Observe this religion, and be not divided therein. Wherefore, invite them to receive the sure faith, and be urgent with them as thou hast been

* Koran, ch. v.

† Ch. ix.

‡ Ch. xlv.

commanded.” This revival and re-establishment of the ancient faith, he taught, was to be effected by purging it of the idolatrous notions of the Arabs, and of the corruptions of the Jews and Christians. For while he admits the fact that the books of the Old and New Testaments were originally written by inspiration, he at the same time maintains, that they have been since so shamefully corrupted by their respective disciples, that the present copies of both are utterly unworthy of credit; and therefore, he seldom quotes them in the Koran according to the received text. From the following extracts, the reader will perceive how unsparingly the restorer of the primitive faith deals forth his rebukes upon those who had wilfully adulterated and disfigured it. “O ye who have received the Scriptures, why do ye clothe truth with vanity, and knowingly hide the truth?—And there are certainly some of them who read the Scriptures perversely, that ye may think what they read to be really in the Scriptures, yet it is not in the Scriptures; and they say this is from God; but it is not from God; and they speak that which is false concerning God, against their own knowledge.”* “Wherefore, because they have broken their covenant, we† have cursed them, and hardened their hearts; they dislocate the words of the Pentateuch from their places, and have forgotten part of what they were admonished;

* Koran, ch. iii.

† The reader will notice that notwithstanding Mohammed's strenuous assertion of God's absolute unity, and his execrations of those who ascribe to him “associates,” yet when he introduces him speaking in the Koran it is usually in the plural number.

and wilt thou not cease to discover the deceitful practices among them, except a few of them?" "O ye who have received the Scriptures, now is our apostle come unto you, to make manifest unto you many things which ye have concealed in the Scriptures."*

In the execution of his high behest, he declared himself appointed to promulge a new revelation in successive portions, the aggregate of which was to constitute the Bible of his followers. The original or archetype of the Koran,† he taught, was laid up from everlasting in the archives of Heaven, being written on what he termed the *preserved table*, near to the throne of God, from which the series of chapters communicated by Gabriel were a transcript. This pretended gradual mode of revelation was certainly a master stroke of policy in the impostor. "The unbelievers say, unless the Koran be sent down to him entire at once, we will not believe. But in this manner have we revealed it that we might confirm thy heart thereby, and we have dictated it gradually by distinct parcels."‡ Had the whole volume been published at once, so that a rigid examination could have been instituted into its contents as a whole, and the different parts brought into comparison with each other, glaring inconsistencies would have been easily detected, and objections urged which he would probably have found it impossible to answer. But by pretending to receive his oracles in separate portions, at dif

* Koran, ch. v.

† See Appendix C.

‡ Koran, ch. xxv

ferent times, according as his own exigences or those of his followers required, he had a ready way of silencing all cavils, and extricating himself with credit from every difficulty, as nothing forbade the message or mandate of to-day being modified or abrogated by that of to-morrow. In this manner, twenty-three years elapsed before the whole chain of revelations was completed, though the prophet informed his disciples that he had the consolation of seeing the entire Koran, bound in silk and adorned with gold and gems of Paradise, once a year, till, in the last year of his life, he was favoured with the vision twice. A part of these spurious oracles were published at Mecca before his flight, the remainder at Medina after it. The particular mode of publication is said to have been this: When a new chapter had been communicated to the prophet, and was about to be promulgated for the benefit of the world, he first dictated it to his secretary, and then delivered the written paper to his followers, to be read and repeated till it had become firmly imprinted upon their memories, when the paper was again returned to the prophet, who carefully deposited it in a chest, called by him "the chest of his apostleship." The hint of this sacred coffer was doubtless taken from the Ark of the Covenant, the holy chest of the Jewish tabernacle, in which the authentic copy of the law was laid up and preserved. This chest Mohammed left at his death in the care of one of his wives; and from its contents the volume of the Koran was afterward compiled. The first collection and arrangement of

these prophetic relics, more precious than the scattered leaves of all the Sybils, was made by Abubeker, but the whole was afterward revised and new-modelled by Othman, who left the entire volume of the Koran in the order in which we now have it.

Mohammed's first reception by the mass of his fellow-citizens of Mecca was scarcely more hopeful than it had been among his kindred. His alleged divine messages, especially when they assumed a tone of reprehension and reproach towards his countrymen, for their idolatry, obstinacy, and perverseness, were met with indignant scoffs and railings. Some called him a magician and a sorcerer; others, a silly retailer of old fables; and others directly charged him with being a liar and an impostor. The reader will be amused and interested by the insertion of a few out of the scores of allusions, with which the Koran abounds, to the profane and contemptuous treatment shown towards the prophet at this time. "The Meccans say, O thou, to whom the admonition (the Koran) hath been sent down, thou art certainly possessed with a devil: wouldst not thou have come unto us with an attendance of angels if thou hadst spoken the truth? Answer, We send not down the angels but on a just occasion."* "Verily I have permitted these Meccans and their fathers to live in prosperity, till the truth should come unto them, and a manifest apostle: but now the truth is come

unto them, they say, this is a piece of sorcery ; ~~and we believe not therein. And they say, Had this Koran been sent down unto some great man in either of the two cities, we would have received it~~* “ The time of giving up their account draweth nigh unto the people of Mecca. No admonition cometh unto them from their Lord, but when they hear it they turn it to sport. They say, The Koran is a confused heap of dreams : nay, he hath ~~forged it~~† “ And the unbelievers say, this Koran is no other than a forgery which he hath contrived ; and other people have assisted him therein : but they utter an unjust thing and a falsehood. They also say, These are fables of the ancients, which he hath caused to be written down ; and they are dictated unto him morning and evening. Say, He hath revealed it who knoweth the secrets in heaven and earth. ~~And they say, What kind of apostle is this ? He eateth food, and walketh in the streets as we do. The ungodly also say, Ye follow no other than a man who is distracted~~‡ “ When our evident signs are rehearsed unto them, the unbelievers say of the truth, This is a manifest piece of sorcery. Will they say, Mohammed hath forged it ? Answer, If I have forged it, verily, ye will not obtain for me any favour from God : he well knoweth the injurious language which ye utter concerning it.—I follow no other than what is revealed unto me ; neither am I any more than a public warner.”§

* Koran, ch. xliii.

† Ch. xxi

‡ Ch. xxv.

§ Ch. xlv.

But these stiff-necked idolaters were plainly taught that they were not to promise themselves impunity in thus pouring contempt upon the testimony of an authorized legate of heaven. The Most High himself was brought in confirming by an oath the truth of his prophet's mission. "I swear by that which ye see and that which ye see not, that this is the discourse of an honourable apostle, and not the discourse of a poet: how little do ye believe! Neither is it the discourse of a soothsayer: how little are ye admonished! It is a revelation from the Lord of all creatures. If Mohammed had forged any part of these discourses concerning us, verily we had taken him by the right hand, and had cut in sunder the vein of his heart; neither would we have withheld any of you from chastising him. And verily, this book is an admonition unto the pious; and we well know there are some of you who charge the same with imposture: but it shall surely be an occasion of grievous sighing unto the infidels; for it is the truth of a certainty."* "Because he is an adversary to our signs, I will afflict him with grievous calamities; for he hath devised contumelious expressions to ridicule the Koran. May he be cursed! I will cast him to be burned in hell. And what shall make thee understand what hell is? It leaveth not any thing unconsumed, neither doth it suffer any thing to escape; it searcheth men's flesh; over the same are nineteen

* Koran ch. lxxx

angels appointed. We have appointed none but angels to preside over hell-fire.”* “Verily we have prepared for the unbelievers chains, and collars, and burning fire.”† “Verily those who disbelieve our signs we will surely cast out to be broiled in hell-fire: and when their skins shall be well burned, we will give them other skins in exchange, that they may taste the sharper torment.”‡

* Koran, ch. lxxiv.

† Ch. xi.

‡ Ch. iv.

CHAPTER V.

Mohammed not discouraged by Opposition—The burden of his Preaching—Description of Paradise—Error to suppose Women excluded—Of Hell—Gains some Followers—Challenged to work a Miracle—His Reply—The Koran the grand Miracle of his Religion—Judicial Obduracy charged upon the Unbelievers.

BUT no repulses, however rude or rebellious, operated to deter the prophet from prosecuting his apostolic ministry. No injuries or insults, however galling, availed to quench that glow of philanthropy, that earnest solicitude for the salvation of his countrymen, for which his divine revelations plainly give him credit. “Peradventure, thou afflictest thyself unto death lest the Meccans become not true believers.”* “Verily, God will cause to err whom he pleaseth, and will direct whom he pleaseth. Let not thy soul, therefore be spent in sighs for their sakes, on account of their obstinacy; for God well knoweth that which they do.”† And it must be acknowledged, that his firmness at this stage of his career, in the midst of bitter opposition, opprobrious taunts, and relentless ridicule, has very much the air of having been prompted by a sincere though enthusiastic belief in the truth and rectitude of his cause. The scope of several chapters of the Koran promulgated at this time leads to the same impression.

* Koran ch. xxvi.

† Ch. xxxv.

They are strikingly hortatory and impassioned in their character, inculcating the being and perfections of the one only God, the vanity of idols, a future resurrection, a day of judgment, a state of rewards and punishments, and the necessity of works of righteousness. The marks of imposture are much more discernible upon the pages subsequently revealed, in which the prophet had private ends of a sinister nature to accomplish. But he contented not himself with merely preaching in public assemblies, and proclaiming in streets and market-places the solemn and awakening burden of his message. With a zeal worthy of a better cause, and with a perseverance and patience that might serve as a model to a Christian missionary, he backed his public appeals by private addresses, and put in requisition all the arts of persuasion and proselytism, in which he was so eminently skilled. He applied himself in the most insinuating manner to all classes of people; he was complaisant and liberal to the poor, cultivating their acquaintance and relieving their wants; the rich and noble he soothed by flattery; and bore affronts without seeking to avenge them. The effect of this politic management was greatly enhanced by the peculiar character of those inspired promises and threatenings which he brought to enforce his message.

His promises were chiefly of a blissful paradise in another life; and these he studiously aimed to set forth in colours best calculated to work upon the fancies of a sensitive and sensual race, whose

minds, in consequence of their national habits, were little susceptible of the images of abstract enjoyment. The notions of a purely intellectual or spiritual happiness pertain to a more cultivated people. The scorching heat of those tropical regions, the aridness of the soil, and the consequent lack of a verdant vegetation, made it natural to the Arabs, and other oriental nations, to conceive of the most exquisite scenes of pleasure under the images of rivers of water, cooling drinks, flowery gardens, shaded bowers, and luscious fruits. The magnificence also of many of the Eastern buildings, their temples and palaces, with the sumptuousness of their dresses, the pomp of processions, and the splendour of courts, would all tend to mingle in their ideas of the highest state of enjoyment an abundance of gold and silver and precious stones—treasures for which the East has been famed from time immemorial. Mohammed was well aware that a plenitude of these visible and palpable attractions, to say nothing of grosser sources of pleasure, was an indispensable requisite in a heaven suited to the temperament of his countrymen. Accordingly, he assures the faithful, that they shall enter into delectable gardens, where the rivers flow, some with water, some with wine, some with milk, and some with clarified honey; that there will be fountains and purling streams whose pebbles are rubies and emeralds, their earth of camphire, their beds of musk, and their sides of saffron. In feasting upon the banquets of paradise. at one time the most delicious

fruits shall hang dependent from the branches of the trees under which their couches are spread, so that they have only to reach forth their hands to pluck them ; again, they shall be served in dishes of gold filled with every variety of grateful food, and supplied with wine of ambrosial flavour. But the prophet's own glowing pictures of the joys of his promised paradise will do more justice to the subject. " They shall repose on couches, the linings whereof shall be of thick silk interwoven with gold ; and the fruit of the two gardens shall be near at hand to gather. Therein shall receive them beauteous damsels, refraining their eyes from beholding any besides their spouses, having complexions like rubies and pearls. Besides these there shall be two other gardens that shall be dressed in eternal verdure. In each of them shall be two fountains pouring forth plenty of water. In each of them shall be fruits, and palm-trees, and pomegranates. Therein shall be agreeable and beauteous damsels, having fine black eyes, and kept in pavilions from public view, whom no man shall have dishonoured before their predestined spouses, nor any genius." " They shall dwell in gardens of delight, reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones ; sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths, which shall continue in their bloom for ever, shall go round about to attend them, with goblets and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine : their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed." " Upon them shall be

garments of fine green silk, and of brocades, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall give them to drink of a most pure liquor—a cup of wine mixed with the water of Zenjebil, a fountain in paradise named Salsabil.”

“But those who believe and do that which is right, we will bring into gardens watered by rivers, therein shall they remain for ever, and therein shall they enjoy wives free from all infirmities; and we will lead them into perpetual abodes.”

“For those who fear their Lord will be prepared high apartments in paradise, over which shall be other apartments built; and rivers shall run beneath them.” “But for the pious is prepared a place of bliss: gardens planted with trees, and vineyards, and damsels of equal age with themselves, and a full cup.”*

Such is the Mohammedan paradise, rendered alluring by its gross, carnal, and luxurious character. It cannot indeed be denied that there are occasional intimations, in the Koran, of some kind of spiritual happiness to be enjoyed by the pious in addition to their corporeal pleasures. “Their prayer therein shall be, Praise be unto thee, O God! and their salutation therein shall be, Peace! and the end of their prayer shall be, Praise be unto God, the Lord of all creatures.”† But it is beyond question, that the main ingredients in the anticipated happiness of the Moslem saints are of a sensual kind, addressed to the inferior principles

* Koran, ch. iii. iv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xl. xlii. xlvii. lxxviii.

†  

of our nature, and making their paradise to differ but little from the Elysium of the heathen poets.

The reader of the Koran will meet with repeated declarations subversive of the vulgar opinion, that the religion of Mohammed denies to women the possession of souls, and excludes them from all participation in the joys of paradise. Whatever may have been imagined or affirmed on this point by some of his more ignorant followers, it is certain that Mohammed himself thought too highly of women to inculcate any such doctrine, as the following passages will evince: "Whoso doeth evil, shall be rewarded for it; and shall not find any patron or helper besides God; but whoso doeth good works, whether he be male or female, and is a true believer, they shall be admitted into paradise, and shall not in the least be unjustly dealt with."* "The reward of these shall be paradise, gardens of eternal abode, which they shall enter, and whoever shall have acted uprightly, of their fathers, and their wives, and their posterity; and the angels shall go in unto them by every gate, saying, Peace be upon you, because ye have endured with patience; how excellent a reward is paradise!"†

If these vivid representations of the future bliss of the faithful were calculated to work strongly upon the passions of his hearers, his denunciations of the fearful torments reserved for unbelievers,

* Koran, ch. iv.

† Ch. xiii

were equally well fitted to produce the same effect. The most revolting images of bodily suffering, hunger, thirst, the torture of fire, and the anguish of piercing cold, were summoned up by the preacher to alarm the workers of evil, and to call off the worshippers of idols from their impiety. "But for the transgressors is prepared an evil receptacle, namely hell: they shall be cast into the same to be burned, and a wretched couch shall it be." "And they who believe not shall have garments of fire fitted unto them: boiling water shall be poured on their heads; their bowels shall be dissolved thereby, and also their skins; and they shall be beaten with maces of iron. So often as they shall endeavour to get out of hell, because of the anguish of their torments, they shall be dragged back into the same; and their tormentors shall say unto them, Taste ye the pain of burning."* "It shall be said unto them, Go ye into the punishment which ye denied as a falsehood: go ye into the shadow of the smoke of hell, which shall ascend in three columns, and shall not shade you from the heat, neither shall it be of service against the flame; but it shall cast forth sparks as big as towers, resembling yellow camels in colour."† "Hath the news of the overwhelming day of judgment reached thee? The countenances of some, on that day, shall be cast down; labouring and toiling; they shall be cast into a scorching fire to be broiled: they shall

* Koran, ch. xvii.

† Ch. lxxviii.

be given to drink of a boiling fountain: they shall have no food but of dry thorns and thistles; which shall not fatten neither shall they satisfy hunger." "Is this a better entertainment, or the tree of Al Zaccum? How different is the tree Al Zaccum from the abode of Eden! We have planted it for the torment of the wicked. It is a tree which issueth from the bottom of hell: the fruit thereof resembleth the heads of devils; and the damned shall eat of the same, and shall fill their bellies therewith; and there shall be given them thereon a mixture of filthy and boiling water to drink: afterward shall they return into hell."*

Such was the burden of his exhortations, while he warned the people of the danger of unbelief, and urged them by his eloquence to avoid eternal damnation by putting faith in the apostle of God. In addition to these powerful motives, drawn from another world, he was lavish in the menaces of fearful punishments in this life also, if they hearkened not to his voice. For this purpose, he set before them the calamities which had overtaken those who, in former times, had refused to listen to the prophets sent among them. "Do they not consider how many generations we have destroyed before them? Other apostles have been laughed to scorn before thee, but the judgments which they made a jest of encompassed those who laughed them to scorn. Say, Go through the earth, and behold what has been the

* Koran ch xxxvii.

end of those who accused our prophets of imposture.”* “We have already sent messages unto sundry nations before thee, and we afflicted them with trouble and adversity, that they might humble themselves: yet when the affliction which we sent came upon them, they did not humble themselves; but their hearts became hardened, and Satan caused them to find charms in rebellion. And when they had forgotten that concerning which they had been admonished, we suddenly laid hold on them, and behold they were seized with despair; and the utmost part of the people which had acted wickedly was cut off: praise be unto God, the Lord of all creatures!”† He cited the case of the inhabitants of the old world, who perished in the deluge for not giving heed to the preaching of Noah; of Sodom, overwhelmed by fire for not receiving the admonition of Lot; and of the Egyptians, who were buried in the Red Sea for despising Moses. To give still greater effect to his warnings, and ingratiate himself into the favour, as well as to awaken the fears, of his auditors, he took repeated occasions to allege his entire disinterestedness in the work in which he was engaged. He preached because he was commanded to preach, and not because he intended covertly to make gain of his hearers. He therefore boldly takes them to witness that he demanded no compensation for his services. He looked to a higher source for reward. “But we

* Koran ch vi.

† Ch. vi.

have brought them their admonition; and they turn aside from their admonition. Dost thou ask of them any maintenance for thy preaching? since the maintenance of thy Lord is better; for he is the most bounteous provider.”* “We have sent thee to be no other than a bearer of good tidings, and a denouncer of threats. Say, I ask not of you any reward for this my preaching, besides the conversion of him who shall desire to take the way unto his Lord.”† As the prophet therefore disclaimed all sinister views in the execution of his office, as he expressly renounced the expectancy of any earthly advantage whatever, so he was commanded to divest his mind of all undue anxiety as to the result of his labours of love. “O apostle, let not them grieve thee who hasten to infidelity.” “Whoso is wilfully blind, the consequence will be to himself. We have not appointed thee a keeper over them: neither art thou a guardian over them.” “And be not thou grieved on account of the unbelievers, neither be thou troubled for that which they subtly devise.”‡

It is not therefore to be wondered at that the rousing appeals of the prophet should have taken effect; that one after another should have listened—pondered—wavered—and yielded—especially as the gravity and sanctity of his deportment seem, at this time, to have corresponded with the solemn strain of his expostulations. Such accordingly was the fact. The number of his followers gra-

* Koran, ch xxiii

† Ch. xlii.

‡ Ch. xvi.

dually increased, so that in five years from the commencement of his mission, his party, including himself, amounted to forty.

That which operated more than any thing else to disconcert the impostor was the demand repeatedly made upon him to prove the truth of his mission by working a miracle. "Moses and Jesus," said his hearers, "and the rest of the prophets, according to thine own doctrine, wrought miracles to prove themselves sent of God. Now if thou be a prophet, and greater than any that were before thee, as thou boastest, let us see a miracle from thee also. Do thou make the dead to rise, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear; or else cause fountains to spring out of the earth, and make this place a garden adorned with vines and palm trees, and watered with rivers running through it in divers channels; or do thou make thee a house of gold beautified with jewels and costly furniture; or let us see the book which thou allegest to have come down from heaven, or the angel which thou sayest brings it unto thee, and we will believe." This natural and not unreasonable demand, he had, as we learn from the Koran, several ways of evading. At one time, he tells them he is only a man sent to preach to them the rewards of paradise and the punishments of hell. "The infidels say, unless a sign be sent unto him from his Lord, we will not believe. Thou art commissioned to be a preacher only, and not a worker of miracles."* "Answer, Signs are

* Koran, ch. xiii.

in the power of God alone ; and I am no more than a public preacher. Is it not sufficient for them that we have sent down unto thee the book of the Koran, to be read unto them ?”* “ We sent not our messengers otherwise than bearing good tidings and denouncing threats. Say, I say not unto you, The treasures of God are in my power : neither do I say, I know the secrets of God : neither do I say unto you, Verily I am an angel : I follow only that which is revealed unto me.”† At another, that their predecessors had despised the miracles of the former prophets, and for this reason God would work no more among them. Again, that those whom God had ordained to believe, should believe without miracles, while the hapless non-elect, to whom he had not decreed the gift of faith, would not believe though ever so many miracles were wrought before them. “ And though we had sent down angels unto them, and the dead had spoken unto them, they would not have believed, unless God had so pleased.”‡ “ If their aversion to thy admonitions be grievous unto thee, if thou canst seek a den whereby thou mayest penetrate into the inward parts of the earth, or a ladder by which thou mayest ascend into heaven, that thou mayest show them a sign, do so, but thy search will be fruitless ; for if God pleased he would bring them all to the true direction.”§ At a later period, when he was at Medina at the head of an army, he had a more summary way of

* Koran. ch. xiii.

† Ch. vi.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

solving all difficulties arising from this source, for his doctrine then was, that God had formerly sent Moses and Jesus with the power of working miracles, and yet men would not believe, and therefore he had now sent him, a prophet of another order, *commissioned to enforce belief by the power of the sword*. The sword accordingly was to be the true seal of his apostleship, and the remark of the historian is equally just and striking, that "Mohammed, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity and of Rome."*

By some of the more credulous of the prophet's followers, there are, it is true, several miracles attributed to him; as that he clave the moon asunder; that trees went forth to meet him; that water flowed from between his fingers; that the stones saluted him; that a beam groaned at him; that a camel complained to him; and that a shoulder of mutton informed him of its being poisoned, together with several others. But these miracles were never alleged by Mohammed himself, nor are they maintained by any respectable Moslem writers. The only miracle claimed either by him or his intelligent votaries is the Koran, the composition of which is the grand miracle of their religion. On this point the reader will perceive that the prophet's assumptions in the following passages are high-toned indeed. "If ye be in doubt concerning that revelation which we have sent

* Gibbon.

down unto our servant, produce a chapter like unto it, and call upon your witnesses, besides God, if ye say the truth.”* “Say, Verily, if men and genii were purposely assembled, that they might produce a book like this Koran, they could not produce one like it, although the one of them assisted the other.”† “Will they say, He hath forged the Koran? Bring therefore ten chapters like unto it, forged by yourselves; and call on whomsoever ye may to assist you.”‡ The infatuation of the Meccans in rejecting this inestimable “admonition,” stamped as it was with the evident impress of the divinity, he hesitates not to ascribe to the effect of a fearful judicial obstinacy, such as the Jewish prophets frequently threaten against the perverse nation of Israel. “If we had revealed the Koran in a foreign language, they had surely said, Unless the signs thereof be distinctly explained, we will not receive the same: Answer, It is unto those who believe a sure guide and a remedy; but unto those who believe not, it is a thickens of hearing in their ears, and it is a darkness which covereth them.”§ “As for the unbelievers, it will be equal unto them whether thou admonish them or do not admonish them; they will not believe. God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing; a dimness covereth their sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment.”|| “There is of them who hearkeneth unto thee when thou radest the Koran; but we have cast

* Koran, ch.
 † Ch. xli

‡ Ch. xvii.
 § Ch. ii.

‡ Ch xi

veils over their hearts, that they should not understand it, and a deafness in their ears ; and though they should see all kinds of signs, they will not believe therein ; and their infidelity will arrive to that height, that they will even come unto thee to dispute with thee.”* Still his preaching prevailed. He became more and more popular ; proselytes flocked around him ; and, as Gibbon remarks “ he had the satisfaction of beholding the increase of his infant congregation of Unitarians, who revered him as a prophet, and to whom he seasonably dispensed the spiritual nourishment of the Koran.”†

* Koran, ch. vi.

† Dec. and Fall, ch. 1

CHAPTER VI.

The Jews persecute and alarmed by Mohammed's growing success—Some of his followers seek safety in flight—New converts—The Koreish form a League against him—Abu Taleb and Cudijah die—He makes a temporary Retreat from Mecca—Retains and preaches with increased zeal—Some of the Pilgrims from Medina converted.

THE zeal of the prophet in proclaiming his doctrines, together with the visible increase of his followers, at length alarmed the fears of the head men of the tribe of Koreish; and had it not been for the powerful protection of his uncle, Mohammed would doubtless at this time have fallen a victim to the malice of his opponents. The chief men of the tribe warmly solicited Abu Taleb to abandon his nephew, remonstrating against the perilous innovations he was making in the religion of their fathers, and threatening him with an open rupture in case he did not prevail upon him to desist. Their entreaties had so much weight with Abu Taleb, that he earnestly dissuaded his relative from prosecuting his attempted reformation any farther, representing to him in strong terms the danger he would incur both for himself and his friends by persisting in his present course. But the ardent apostle, far from being intimidated by the prospect of opposition, frankly assured his uncle, "That if they should set the sun against him on his right hand, and the moon on his left,

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yet he would not relinquish his enterprise." Abu Taleb, seeing him thus determined, used no farther arguments to divert him, but promised to stand by him against all his enemies; a promise which he faithfully kept till he died, though there is no clear evidence that he ever became a convert to the new religion.

The Koreish, finding that they could prevail neither by fair words nor by menaces, had recourse to violence. They began to persecute his followers; and to such a length did they proceed in their injurious treatment, that it was no longer safe for them to continue at Mecca. Mohammed therefore gave leave to such of them as had not friends to protect them, to seek refuge elsewhere. Accordingly sixteen of them, among whom was Mohammed's daughter and her husband, fled into Ethiopia. These were afterward followed by several others, who withdrew in successive companies, till their number amounted to eighty-three men, and eighteen women, with their children. These refugees were kindly entertained by the king of Ethiopia, who peremptorily refused to deliver them to the emissaries of the Koreish sent to demand them. To these voluntary exiles the prophet perhaps alludes in the following passage: "As for those who have fled from their country for the sake of God, after they had been unjustly persecuted, we will surely provide them an excellent habitation in this world, but the reward of the next life shall be greater, if they knew it." *

* Koran, ch. xvi.

In the sixth year of his mission, he had the pleasure of seeing his party strengthened by the conversion of his uncle Hamza, a man of distinguished valour, and of Omar, a person of equal note in Mecca, who had formerly made himself conspicuous by his virulent opposition to the prophet and his claims. This new accession to the rising sect exasperated the Koreish afresh, and incited them to measures of still more active persecution against the proselytes. But as persecution usually advances the cause which it labours to destroy, so in the present case Islamism made more rapid progress than ever, till the Koreish, maddened with malice, entered into a solemn league or covenant against the Hashemites, and especially the family of the Motalleb, many of whom upheld the impostor, engaging to contract no marriages with them, nor to hold any farther connexion or commerce of any kind; and, to give it the greater sanction, the compact was reduced to writing and laid up in the Caaba. Upon this the tribe became divided into two factions; the family of Hashem, except one of Mohammed's uncles, putting themselves under Abu Taleb as their head, and the other party ranging themselves under the standard of Abu Sophyan. This league, however, was of no avail during the lifetime of Abu Taleb. The power of the uncle, who presided in the government of Mecca, defended the nephew against the designs of his enemies. At length, about the close of the seventh year of the mission, Abu Taleb died; and, a few days after his death, Mo-

ammed was left a widower, by the decease of Cadijah, whose memory has been canonized by the saying of the prophet ; “ That among men there had been many perfect, but of women, four only had attained to perfection, viz. Cadijah, his wife ; Fatima, his daughter ; Asia, the wife of Pharaoh ; and Mary (Miriam), the daughter of Imran and sister of Moses ” As to Abu Taleb, though the prophet ever cherished a most grateful sense of the kindness of his early benefactor yet if the following passage from the Koran has reference, as some of the commentators say, to his uncle, it shows that the dictates of nature in the nephew’s breast were thoroughly brought into subjection to the stern precepts of his religion. “ It is not allowed unto the prophet, nor those who are true believers, that they pray for idolaters, although they be of kin, after it is become known unto them that they are inhabitants of hell.” * This passage, it is said by some, was revealed on account of Abu Taleb, who, upon his death-bed, being pressed by his nephew to speak a word which might enable him to plead his cause before God, that is, to profess Islam, absolutely refused. Mohammed, however, told him that he would not cease to pray for him till he should be forbidden by God ; such a prohibition, he affirmed, was given him in the words here cited. Others suppose the occasion to have been the prophet’s visiting his mother Amina’s sepulchre, who also was an infidel, soon after the capture of Mecca. Here, while standing at the

* Koran, ch. iv

tomb of his parent, he is reported to have burst into tears and said, "I asked leave of God to visit my mother's tomb, and he granted it me; but when I asked leave to pray for her, it was denied me." 'This twofold affliction of the prophet, in the loss of his uncle and his wife on the same year, induced him ever after to call this "The Year of Mourning."

The unprotected apostle was now left completely exposed to the attacks of his enemies, and they failed not to improve their advantage. They redoubled their efforts to crush the pestilent heresy, with its author and abettors, and some of his followers and friends, seeing the symptoms of a fiercer storm of persecution gathering, forsook the standard of their leader. In this extremity Mohammed perceived, that his only chance of safety was in a temporary retreat from the scene of conflict. He accordingly withdrew to Tayef, a village situated sixty miles to the East of Mecca, where he had an uncle named Abbas, whose hospitality afforded him a seasonable shelter. Here, however, his stay was short, and his prophetic labours unavailing. He returned to Mecca, and boldly taking his stand in the precincts of the Caaba, among the crowds of pilgrims who resorted annually to this ancient shrine, he preached the gospel of Islam to the multitudinous assemblies. New proselytes again rewarded his labours; and, among the accessions now made to his party from these pilgrim hordes, were six of the inhabitants of Medina, then called Yatreb, who, on their return

home began at once to relate to their fellow-citizens the story of their conversion, and to extol, in no measured terms, their new religion and its apostle. This circumstance gave eclat to Mohammed in the city of Medina, and paved the way to a train of events which tended more than any thing else to promote his final success in Arabia. In the mean time, in order to strengthen his interest in Mecca, he married Ayesha, the daughter of Abubeker, and shortly after Sawda, the daughter of Zama. By thus becoming the son-in-law of two of the principal men of his party he secured their patronage to his person and his cause.

CHAPTER VII.

The Prophet pretends to have had a night-journey through the Seven Heavens—Description of the memorable Night by an Arabic writer—Account of the Journey—His probable Motives in feigning such an extravagant fiction.

IT was in the twelfth year of the pretended mission that Mohammed was favoured, according to his own account, with his celebrated night-journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to the seventh heaven, under the conduct of the angel Gabriel. In allusion to this the seventeenth chapter of the Koran commences thus:—"Praise be unto him who transported his servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show some of our signs; for God is he who heareth and seeth." This idle and extravagant tale, which is not related in the Koran, but handed down by tradition, was probably devised by the impostor in order to raise his reputation as a saint, and to put himself more nearly upon a level with Moses, with whom God conversed, face to face, in the holy mount. The story, however, is devoutly believed by the Mussulmans, and one of their writers has given the following highly-wrought description of the memorable night in which it occurred. "In the

darkest, most obscure, and most silent night that the sun ever caused by his absence, since that glorious planet of light was created or had its being; a night in which there was no crowing of cocks to be heard throughout the whole universe, no barking of dogs, no howlings, roarings, or yellings of wild beasts, nor watchings of nocturnal birds; nay, and not only the feathered and four-footed creatures suspended their customary vociferations and motions, but likewise the waters ceased from their murmurings, the winds from their whistlings, the air from its breathings, the serpents from their hissings, the mountains, valleys, and caverns from their resounding echoes, the earth from its productions, the tender plants from their sproutings, the grass of the field from its verdancy, the waves of the sea from their agitations, and their inhabitants, the fishes, from plying their fins. And indeed upon a night so wonderful it was very requisite, that all the creatures of the Lord's handy-work should cease from their usual movements, and become dumb and motionless, and lend an attentive ear, that they might conceive by means of their ears what their tongues were not capable of expressing. Nor is any tongue able to express the wonders and mysteries of this night, and should any undertake so unequal a task, there could nothing be represented but the bare shadow: since what happened in this miraculous night was infinitely the greatest and most stupendous event that ever befell any of the posterity of Adam, either expressed in any of the sacred writings which

came down from above, or by signs and figures. From the sublime altitudes of heaven the most glorious seraph of all those which God ever created or produced, the incomparable Gabriel, upon the latter part of the evening of that stupendous night, took a hasty and precipitate flight, and descended to this lower world with an unheard-of and wonderful message, the which caused an universal rejoicing on earth, and filled the seven heavens with a more than ordinary gladness; and, as the nature of the message both required and inspired joy, he visited the world under the most glorious and beautiful appearance that even imagination itself is capable of figuring. His whiteness obscured that of the driven snow, and his splendour darkened the rays of the noontide sun. His garments were all covered with the richest flowers in embroidery of celestial fabric, and his many wings were most beautifully expanded, and all interspersed with inestimable precious stones. His stature was exceeding tall, and his presence exquisitely awful. Upon his beauteous capacious forehead he bore two lines written in characters of dazzling light; the uppermost consisted of these words, *La illah il' allah*—THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH; and in the lowermost line was contained, *Mohammed Rasoul Allah*—MOHAMMED IS GOD'S MESSENGER.*

In passing from this poetical prelude, conceived in the true gorgeous style of oriental description, to the meagre and puerile story of the journey it-

* Morgan's Mahometanism Explained.

self, we feel at once that the prophet's fancy suffers by comparison with that of his disciple, who could certainly, from the above specimen, have given a vastly more interesting fiction of a celestial tour than the miserable tissue of absurdity which appears in the fabrication of the prophet. Without detailing all the particulars of this nocturnal expedition, in which the marvels thickened upon him till he had reached the utmost height of the empyrean, the following outline will afford the reader an idea of its general character.

While the prophet was reposing in his bed, with his beloved Ayesha at his side, he was suddenly awakened by the angel Gabriel, who stood before him with seventy pair of expanded wings, whiter than snow and clearer than crystal. The angel informed him that he had come to conduct him to heaven, and directed him to mount an animal that stood ready at the door, and which was between the nature of an ass and a mule. The name of this beast was Alborak, signifying in the Arabic tongue, "The Lightning," from his inconceivable swiftness. His colour was a milky white. As he had, however, remained inactive from the time of Christ to that of Mohammed—there having been no prophet in the interval to employ him—he now proved so restless and refractory, that Mohammed could not succeed in seating himself on his back till he had promised him a place in paradise. Pacified by this promise, he suffered the prophet quietly to mount, and Gabriel, taking the bridle in his hand, conveyed him from Mecca

to Jerusalem in the twinkling of eye. When he arrived at the latter place, the departed prophets and saints came forth to meet and to salute him, and to request an interest in his prayers when he came near to the throne of glory. Going out of the temple he found a ladder of light ready fixed for them, and tying Alborak to a rock, he followed Gabriel on the ladder till they reached the first heaven, where admittance was readily granted by the porter, when told by Gabriel that his companion was no other than Mohammed, the prophet of God. This first heaven, he tells us, was all of pure silver, adorned with stars hanging from it by chains of gold, each of them of the size of a mountain. Here he was met by a decrepid old man, whom the prophet learned to be our father Adam, and who greatly rejoiced at having so distinguished a son. He saw also in this heaven innumerable angels in the shape of birds, beasts, and men; but its crowning wonder was a gigantic cock, whose head towered up to the second heaven, though at the distance of five hundred days journey from the first! His wings were large in proportion, and were decked with carbuncles and pearls; and so loud did he crow, whenever the morning dawned, that all creatures on earth, except men and fairies, heard the tremendous din. The second heaven was of pure gold, and contained twice as many angels as the former. Among these was one of such vast dimensions, that the distance between his eyes was equal to the length of seventy thousand days

journey. Here he met Noah, who begged the favour of his prayers. Thence he proceeded to the third, where he was accosted by Abraham with the same request. Here he found the Angel of Death, with an immense table before him, on which he was writing the names of the human race as they were born, and blotting them out as their allotted number of days was completed, when they immediately died. At his entrance into the fourth heaven, which was of emerald, he was met by Joseph, the son of Jacob. In the fifth he beheld his honoured predecessor, Moses. In the sixth, which was of carbuncle, he found John the Baptist. In the seventh, made of divine light instead of metals or gems, he saw Jesus Christ, whose superior dignity it would seem that he acknowledged by requesting an interest in his prayers, whereas in every preceding case the personages mentioned solicited this favour of him. In this heaven the number of angels, which had been increasing through every step of his progress, vastly exceeded that of all the other departments, and among them was one who had seventy thousand heads, in every head seventy thousand mouths, in every mouth seventy thousand tongues, in every tongue seventy thousand voices, with which day and night he was incessantly employed praising God!

The angel having conducted him thus far, informed him, that he was not permitted to attend him any farther in the capacity of guide, but that he must ascend the remainder of the distance to the

throne of God alone. This he accordingly undertook, and finally accomplished, though with great difficulty, his way lying through waters and snows, and other formidable obstacles, sufficient to daunt the stoutest heart. At length he reached a point where he heard a voice addressing him, saying, "O Mohammed, salute thy Creator." Mounting still higher, he came to a place where he beheld a vast extension of light of such dazzling brightness, that the powers of mortal vision were unable to endure it. In the midst of the effulgence was the throne of the Eternal; on the right side of which was written in luminous Arabic characters: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." This inscription, he says, he found written on all the gates of the seven heavens through which he passed. Having approached to within two bow-shots of the Divine presence, he affirmed that he there beheld the Most High seated upon his throne, with a covering of seventy thousand veils before his face, from beneath which he stretched forth his hand and laid it upon the prophet, when a coldness of inconceivable intensity pierced, as he said, to "the very marrow of his back." No injury, however, ensued, and the Almighty then condescended to enter into the most familiar converse with his servant, unfolding to him a great many hidden mysteries, making him to understand the whole law, and instructing him fully in the nature of the institutions he was to deliver to mankind. In addition to this he honoured him with several distinctions above the rest of his

race ; as that he should be the most perfect of all creatures ; that at the day of judgment he should have the pre-eminence among the risen dead ; that he should be the redeemer of all that believe in him ; that he should have the knowledge of all languages ; and, lastly, that the spoils of all whom he should conquer in war should belong to him alone. After receiving these gracious assurances, he retired from the presence of the Divine Majesty, and, returning, found the angel awaiting him at the place where they parted, who immediately reconducted him back, in the same manner in which he came, to Jerusalem and Mecca.

Such were the puerile conceptions of the prophet. Such the silly rhapsody which he palmed upon the credulity of his followers as the description of a most veritable occurrence. The story, however, carried on the face of it such glaring absurdity, that several of his party forsook him at once, and his whole cause came near to being utterly ruined by it. At length Abubeker, the man of greatest influence among the prophet's friends, by professing to give credence to the tale, at once put to shame the infidelity of the rest, and extricated his leader from his unhappy dilemma. He boldly vouched for the prophet's veracity. " If Mohammed affirms it, it is undeniably true, and I will stand by him. I believe every word of it. The Lord's elected cannot lie." This seasonable incident not only retrieved the prophet's credit, but increased it to such a degree, that it made him sure of being able ever after to impose any fiction he pleased upon the

easy faith of his disciples. So that this senseless and paltry fable, which at first threatened to blast all the impostor's schemes in the bud, did in fact serve, by a peculiar combination of circumstances, materially to promote his success. Abubeker henceforth had the honorary title of "Faithful Witness" bestowed upon him.

We learn from Sale, the English commentator upon the Koran, that it is still somewhat disputed among the Mohammedan doctors, whether their prophet's night-journey was really performed by him corporeally, or whether it was only a dream or a vision. Some think it was no more than a vision, and allege an express tradition of Moawiyah, one of Mohammed's successors, to that purpose. Others suppose, that he was carried bodily to Jerusalem, but no farther; and that he thence ascended to heaven in spirit only. But the received opinion is, that it was no vision, but that he was actually transported in the body to his journey's end; and, if any impossibility be objected, they deem it a sufficient answer to say, that it might easily have been effected by an omnipotent Being.

It is by no means improbable that Mohammed had a farther design in forging this extravagant tale than merely to astonish his adherents by the relation of a miraculous adventure. The attentive observer of the distinguishing traits of Islamism will not fail to discover innumerable points of resemblance between that system and the divinely-revealed religion of the Jews; and it appears to have been an object studiously aimed at by the

impostor to assimilate himself as much as possible to Moses, and to incorporate as many peculiarities of the Jewish economy into his own fabrication as he could without destroying the simplicity of his creed. This fact is in keeping with what may be asserted in general terms, that the descendants of Ishmael, under a consciousness that the covenanted blessings of Jehovah have flowed down in the line of Isaac and Jacob, have ever shown a disposition to imitate what they could not attain. More striking proofs of this will appear in the sequel. We adduce the observation here as affording a probable clew to the motives of the prophet in feigning this memorable night-journey. Hitherto he had only imparted to his followers the Koran, which, like the books of Moses, may be termed his *written law*. In making this revelation he had professed himself merely an organ through whom the divine counsels were to be uttered to the race of men. He simply gave forth what was communicated to him through the medium of the angelic messenger, and that without interposing any comments or expositions of his own. Accordingly, when pressed by the cavils of his adversaries, his usual refuge was to affirm that the Koran was not his book, but God's, and that he alone could give a just interpretation of its meaning which was in some places to be understood literally, in others allegorically. "There is no God but God, the living, the self-subsisting: he hath sent down unto thee the book of the Koran with truth, confirming that which was revealed before it.—"

It is he who hath sent down unto thee the book, wherein are some verses clear to be understood; they are the foundation of the book; and others are parabolical. But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein, out of love of schism, and a desire of the interpretation thereof; yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof except God.”* But having by some means become acquainted with the fact, that the Jews, in addition to the *written law* dictated by God himself, were in possession of another, called the *oral law*, said to have been given to Moses at the same time with the former on the holy mount; and from him handed down by tradition from age to age; understanding, moreover, that this law was accounted of equal authority with the written, while it had its origin solely from certain verbal declarations or dictates of Moses which were preserved in the memories of those who conversed with him; the prophet may from this have taken the hint of a similar mode of advancing his authority, and of giving the weight and character of oracles to his private sayings. To this end it is not unlikely that he originated the fabulous legend of his nocturnal travel into the regions of the spheres. He was well aware, that could he once succeed in making it believed that he had been favoured to hold this high converse with God in the secret of his presence, and that he had been there fully instructed in the profound mysteries of heaven, he could upon this foundation erect just such

* Koran, ch. iii.

a fabric of imposture as he pleased, and impose it upon his credulous followers. Such at any rate was the actual result. From this time forth a peculiar sacredness attached to the most trivial sayings and the most inconsiderable actions of the prophet in every thing that regarded his religion. They were reverently noted during his lifetime, and devoutly collected from traditional reports after his death, and at length brought together in those volumes of traditions, which compose the *Sonnah*, answering precisely to the oral law of the Jews. And as the Jewish Rabbins employ themselves in collating, digesting, and explaining their ancient traditions, by many of which they make the law of God of none effect, so also among the Mohammedan divines, there are those who devote themselves to the business of expounding the *Sonnah*, as containing the sum of their theology, both speculative and practical. It was not without reason, therefore, that the impostor was extremely anxious to have this marvellous recital cordially believed, or that he should have introduced the Most High in the Koran confirming the truth of his servant's asseverations. "By the star when it setteth, your companion Mohammed erreth not, nor is he led astray: neither doth he speak of his own will. It is no other than a revelation which hath been revealed unto him. The heart of Mohammed did not falsely represent that which he saw. Will ye therefore dispute with him concerning that which he saw?"*

* Koran. ch. liii.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Embassy sent to the Prophet from Medina—Enters into a League with them—Sends thither a Missionary—Another Deputation sent to proffer him an Asylum in that City—His Enemies renew their Persecutions—Determines to fly to Medina—Incidents on the way—Makes a Solemn Entry into the City—Apostate Christians supposed to have joined in tendering him the Invitation.

THE fame of Mohammed had now extended beyond the walls of his native town. While he was opposed, scorned, and derided at Mecca, his reputation was growing, and his doctrines secretly spreading at Medina. This city, anciently known by the name of Yatreb, and lying at the northern extremity of the province of Hejaz, about seventy miles from Mecca, had been distinguished by the early introduction of letters, arts, and science; and its inhabitants, composed of pagan Arabs, heretical Christians, and Jews, were frequently designated as the *people of the book*. The two principal tribes which now had possession of the city were the Karejites and the Awsites, between whom a hereditary feud had long subsisted, and the disturbances occasioned by the rivalry of these two tribes were enhanced by the disputes of the religious factions, Jewish and Christian, which distracted all classes of citizens. It has been already observed that several of the inhabitants, in a pilgrimage to the Caaba, had been converted by the preaching of Mohammed, and that on their re-

urn they had not been slothful in the propagation of their new sentiments. That they were both sincere and successful disciples of the prophet may be inferred from the fact, that on this year, the twelfth of the mission, called *the accepted year* twelve men came to Mecca, and took an oath of fidelity to Mohammed at Al Akaba, a hill on the north of that city. The amount of this oath was: "That they should renounce all idolatry; that they should not steal nor commit fornication, nor kill their children, as the pagan Arabs used to do when they apprehended they should not be able to maintain them; nor forge calumnies; and that they should obey the prophet in every thing that was reasonable." When they had solemnly bound themselves to the conditions of the oath, Mohammed sent one of his disciples, named Masab Ebn Omair, to instruct these men fully in the principles and practices of the new religion. Masab's mission was eminently successful. Among the proselytes were Osaid Ebn Hodeira, a chief man of the city, and Saad Ebn Moadh, prince of the tribe of Aws; and scarce a house in the city but numbered one or more converts. If the terms may be allowed, the excitement was little short of a Mohammedan revival.

The next year, the thirteenth of the mission, Masab returned to Mecca accompanied by seventy-three men and two women who had professed Islamism, besides several who were as yet unbelievers. The object of this deputation was to proffer to the apostle an asylum or any assist

ance in their power, as they had learned that, from the strength and malice of his adversaries, he stood in special need of auxiliaries. It was in fact a political association which was proposed to be entered into, "in which we may perceive," says Gibbon, "the first vital spark of the empire of the Saracens." In this secret conference with the prophet, his kinsmen, and his disciples, vows of fealty and of mutual fidelity were pledged by the parties. The deputies from Medina promised, in the name of the city, that if he should be banished, they would "receive him as a confederate, obey him as a leader, and defend him to the last extremity, like their wives and children." "But if you are recalled to your country," they asked, "will you not abandon your new allies?" "All things," replied Mohammed, "are now common between us; your blood is as my blood; your ruin as my ruin. We are bound to each other by the ties of honour and interest. I am your friend and the enemy of your foes." "But if we are killed in your service, what will be our reward?" "PARADISE!" replied the confident apostle. This treaty was then ratified, and they separated, Mohammed having first chosen twelve out of their number, who were to have the same authority among them as the twelve apostles of Christ had among the disciples.

Abu Sophyan succeeded Abu Taleb in the government of Mecca, in whom Mohammed found a mortal enemy to his family, his religion, and himself. No sooner was he called to the head of the

state than he determined to exterminate the apostle and his new-fangled heresy. A council of the Koreish and their allies was called, and the death of the impostor decided upon. It was agreed that a man should be chosen out of each of the confederated tribes for the execution of the project, and that each man should have a blow at him with his sword in order to divide the guilt of the deed, and to baffle the vengeance of the Hashemites; as it was supposed that with their inferior strength they would not dare, in the face of this powerful union, to attempt to avenge their kinsman's blood. The prophet declared that the angel Gabriel had revealed to him the atrocious conspiracy, to which he thus alludes some time afterwards: "And call to mind, when the unbelievers plotted against thee that they might either detain thee in bonds, or put thee to death, or expel thee the city; and they plotted against thee; but God laid a plot against them; and God is the best layer of plots."* The heavenly minister, however, who disclosed the plot, pointed out no way of defeating it but by a speedy flight. Even this chance of safety had like to have been cut off through the vigilance of his enemies. He was indebted for his escape to the devoted zeal of Ali, who wrapped himself in the green mantle of the prophet, and lying down upon his bed deceived the assassins who had besieged the house of his friend. Mohammed, in the mean time, in company with his faithful friend

* Koran. ch. viii.

Abubeker, succeeded in getting safely out of the city, and in reaching a cave three miles distant, called the cave of Thor, where the two fugitives concealed themselves three days from their pursuers. A tradition of his followers states that the assassins, having arrived at the mouth of the cave, were deceived by the nest of a pigeon made at its entrance, and by a web which a spider had fortunately woven across it. Believing this to be sufficient evidence that no human being was within, they desisted from all farther examination. The manifest tokens of divine protection vouchsafed to the prophet on this occasion, afforded him signal encouragement ever after, even in the entire destitution of human resources. "If ye assist not the prophet, verily God will assist him, as he assisted him formerly, when the unbelievers drove him out of Mecca, the second of two (i. e. having only Abubeker with him); when they were both in the cave; when he said unto his companion, Be not grieved, for God is with us. And God sent down his security upon him, and strengthened him with armies which ye saw not."* Leaving the cave after the departure of their enemies, they made their way as rapidly as the perils of their flight would permit towards the city of refuge, where they arrived sixteen days after leaving Mecca. Having halted at Koba, two miles from Medina, he was there met by five hundred of the citizens who had gone forth for the purpose, and

* Koran, ch. ix.

by whom his arrival was greeted with a cordial welcome. The prophet, having mounted a camel with an umbrella spread over his head, and a turban unfurled instead of a banner, made his public and solemn entry into the city, which was hereafter to be sanctified as the place of his throne. This flight of the apostle of Islamism, called in the Arabic tongue the HEJIRA, or more properly the HEJRA, has become the grand era of all the Mohammedan nations, being employed by them for the same purposes as the year of our Saviour's birth is throughout the nations of Christendom. It took place A. D. 622, in the fifty-third year of the prophet's age.

The waiting adherents of the messenger of truth, composed of those of his friends who had by his orders fled from Mecca a short time before him, and the proselytes of Medina whom he had never seen, now flocked obsequiously about his person, and the distinction henceforth became established among his followers, of the *Mohajerins*, or the *companions of his flight*, and the *Ansars*, or *helpers*; familiar appellations for the fugitives of Mecca, and the auxiliaries of Medina. "As for the leaders and the first of the Mohajerin and the Ansars, and those who have followed them in well doing; God is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased in him; and he hath prepared them gardens watered by rivers; they shall remain therein for ever; this shall be great felicity."^{*}

* Koran, ch ix.

At this distance of time it is not possible to decide what class of citizens had the principal share in tendering this invitation to the prophet, and granting him such a ready reception. From the following passage, occurring in the first published chapter of the Koran after entering Medina, some writers have inferred that the nominal Christians of that city were the most active agents in introducing the impostor. "Thou shalt surely find the most violent of all men in enmity against the true believers to be the Jews and the idolaters (i. e. pagan Arabs); and thou shalt surely find those among them to be the most inclinable to entertain friendship for the true believers who say, We are Christians. This cometh to pass because there are priests among them and monks, and because they are not elated with pride: and when they hear that which hath been sent down unto the apostle read unto them, thou shalt see their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth which they perceive therein; saying, O Lord, we believe: write us down therefore with those who bear witness to the truth: and what should hinder us from believing in God, and the truth which hath come unto us, and from earnestly desiring that our Lord would introduce us into paradise with the righteous people?"* This is certainly important as a historical document, and if the inference drawn from it be correct, it affords a melancholy proof of the deep degeneracy of the eastern churches, that they

* Koran, ch. lii

should be among the first to embrace the foul imposture. If that were the fact, it furnishes palpable demonstration also, that when men have once began to swerve and deviate from the truth, no limits can be set to the degree of apostacy into which they are liable to fall. A fearful illustration is thus afforded of the law of the divine judgments, that where men, under the cloak of a Christian profession, receive not the love of the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, and that too to their inevitable ruin.

CHAPTER IX.

The Prophet now raised to a high Pitch of Dignity—Builds a Mosque—A Change in the Tone of his Revelations—The Faithful now commanded to fight for the true Religion—His first war-like Attempt unsuccessful—The Failure compensated in the Second—Account of the Battle of Beder—This Victory much boasted of—Difficulties in the Division of the Spoil—Caab, a Jew, assassinated at the Instance of the Prophet.

FROM a fugitive Mohammed became a monarch. No sooner had he arrived at Medina than he found himself at the head of an army devoted to his person, obedient to his will, and blind believers in his holy office. He began at once to make arrangements for a permanent settlement, and his first business, after giving his daughter Fatima in marriage to Ali, was to erect a dwelling house for himself, and a temple or mosque, adjacent to his own residence, for a place of religious worship, in which he might publicly pray and preach before the people. For he now, in his own person, combined the temporal and the religious power; he was leader of his army, judge of his people, and pastor of his flock.

With the change of his fortunes, his doctrines began also to vary. Hitherto he had propagated his religion by the milder arts of arguments and entreaties, and his whole success before leaving Mecca is to be attributed solely to the effect of persuasion, and not of force. "Wherefore warn thy

people ; for thou art a warner only : thou art not empowered to act with authority over them.”* Up to the period of his flight, he had utterly disclaimed the use of any species of coercion in propagating, or of violence in defending, the principles of his holy faith. In numerous passages of the Koran, published at Mecca, he expressly declares that his business was only to preach and adinuish ; that he had no authority to compel any one to embrace his religion ; and that whether people believed or disbelieved was no concern of his, but a matter that belonged solely to God. “ We have also spoken unto thee, O Mohammed, by revelation, saying, Follow the religion of Abraham, who was orthodox, and was no idolater. Invite men unto the way of thy Lord by wisdom and mild exhortation ; and dispute with them in the most condescending manner : for thy Lord well knoweth him who strayeth from his path, and he well knoweth those who are rightly directed. Wherefore do thou bear opposition with patience ; but thy patience shall not be practicable unless with God’s assistance. And be not thou grieved on account of the unbelievers.”† “ Let there be no violence in religion.”‡ Indeed, so far was he from allowing his followers to resort to violence, that he exhorted them to bear with meekness the injuries offered them on account of their faith, and when persecuted himself, chose rather to quit the place of his birth, and retire to a distant village than

* Koran, ch, lxxxviii.

† Ch. xvi.

‡ Ch. ii.

make any resistance. But this exemplary moderation, continued for the space of twelve years, seems to have been owing altogether to his want of power, and the ascendancy of his enemies; for no sooner was he enabled, by the assistance of the men of Medina, to withstand his adversaries, than he suddenly “altered his voice,” declaring that God had allowed him and his followers to defend themselves by human weapons against the infidels; and as his forces increased, he pretended to have the divine permission to act upon the offensive also, to attack his foes, to root out idolatry at all hazards, and to urge the true faith at the point of the sword. “War is enjoined you against the infidels.”* “Fight, therefore, against the friends of Satan, for the stratagem of Satan is weak.”† “O true believers, take your necessary precaution against your enemies, and either go forth to war in separate parties, or go forth all together in a body.”‡ And when the months wherein ye shall not be allowed to attack them shall be past, kill the idolaters wherever ye shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place.”§ “When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads until ye have made a great slaughter among them; and bind them in bonds; and either give them a free dismissal afterward, or exact a ransom, until the war shall have laid down its arms.”|| “Verily, God hath purchased of the true believers their

* Koran, ch. ii.
§ Ch. ix.

† Ch. iv.
|| Ch. xvii.

‡ Ibid.

souls, and their substance, promising them the enjoyment of paradise on condition that they fight for the cause of God : whether they slay or be slain, the promise for the same is assuredly due by the law, and the gospel, and the Koran.”* This fierce, intolerant, and sanguinary spirit will be found to distinguish most of the chapters revealed at Medina, so that it can frequently be determined, from the tone and temper pervading it, without consulting the date, whether the portion was revealed before or after the flight. The prophet’s followers have faithfully acted up to the spirit of these precepts ; and the terrific announcement attending the Moslem arms has been, “ The Koran, death, or tribute !” Even to the present day, every other religious sect living under the government of Mohammedan nations is compelled to pay an annual tax as a mulct for their infidelity, and are sure to meet with persecution, if not with death, if they oppose or vilify any of the tenets of the holy prophet. Indeed, every thing like argument or controversy with the unbelievers, though not absolutely forbidden, is far from being countenanced, as we may gather from the following precept to the prophet himself. “ Let them not, therefore, dispute with thee concerning this matter : but invite them unto thy Lord : for thou followest the right direction. But if they enter into debate with thee, God well knoweth that which ye do : God will judge between you on the day of resurrection concerning that wherein ye now disagree.”†

* Koran, ch. ix.

† Ch. xxii

The prophet was now enabled to put in operation a more effectual system of measures to compass his great ends than he had hitherto had power to adopt. He had begun to wield the sword by divine commission, and he was not disposed to let its potency remain unproved. Yet the first warlike enterprise undertaken under the auspices of the martial apostle, an expedition designed to harass the Koreish, was unsuccessful. Having learned that a caravan, the property of the hostile tribe, was on its way from Syria to Mecca, he despatched his uncle Hamza, with a party of thirty horse to capture it. But the nearer approach of the caravan discovering to the assailants that it was guarded by a body of three hundred men, they deemed it prudent to forbear an attack, and to return quietly to Mecca.

The shame of the prophet's failure on this occasion was more than compensated by the success of his arms at the battle of Beder, so famous in the Mohammedan annals, which took place the ensuing year. A rich caravan proceeding to Mecca, and guarded by Abu Sophyan with between thirty and forty men, tempted at once the revenge and the cupidity of Mohammed. The spies of the prophet informed him that their rich and apparently easy prey was within his grasp. He advanced with a few followers in pursuit of it; but before he could overtake the unprotected band, Abu Sophyan had despatched a messenger to his brethren of Mecca or a reinforcement. Roused by the fear of losing their merchandise and their provisions, unless they

hastened to his relief, a troop of nine hundred and fifty men, among whom were the chief persons of the city, instantly obeyed the summons. Mohammed was posted between the caravan and the approaching succour with only three hundred and thirteen soldiers, mounted, for the most part, on camels. Of these, seventy-seven were fugitives, the rest auxiliaries. Undismayed by this disparity of force Mohammed determined to try the event of a battle, and risk his fortune, his reputation, and perhaps his life, upon the issue of the contest. The troops were persuaded to engage the superior forces of the enemy, abandoning for the present the tempting prize of Abu Sophyan's wealthy caravan. The prophet animated them by his prayers, and, in the name of the Most High, promised them certain victory. But however assured he might have been of divine assistance, he was careful to omit no human means of securing success. A slight entrenchment was formed to cover the flank of his troops, and a rivulet, flowing past the spot he had chosen for his encampment, furnished his army with a constant supply of water. When the enemy appeared descending from the hill, Mohammed, alluding to his own party, exclaimed, "O God, if these are destroyed, by whom wilt thou be worshipped on earth? Courage, my children, close your ranks, discharge your arrows, and the day is your own!" Before the armies, however, could engage, three combatants, Ali, Al Hareth, and Hanza, on the side of the Moslems, and three of the Koreish, joined in single combat. The Moslem champions were vic-

torious, and thus gave to both armies a presage of the issue of the coming engagement. At the commencement of the battle, the prophet, together with Abubeker, mounted a kind of throne or pulpit, earnestly asking of God the assistance of Gabriel with three thousand angels ; but when his army appeared to waver, he started from his place of prayer, threw himself upon a horse, and casting a handful of sand into the air, exclaiming, "Confusion fill their faces!" rushed upon the enemy. Fanaticism rendered his followers invincible. The forces of the Koreish were unable to break the ranks or to resist the furious charges of his confiding soldiers. They trembled and fled, leaving seventy of their bravest men dead on the field, and seventy prisoners to grace the first victory of the faithful. Of the Moslems, only fourteen were slain, whose names have been handed down to posterity, and enrolled among the list of martyrs, whose memory the pious Mussulman is taught to cherish with devout veneration. The dead bodies of the Koreish were stripped, and with a savage barbarity cast into a well ; two of the most obnoxious prisoners were punished with death, and the ransom of the others fixed at four thousand drams of silver. This sum would compensate, in a measure, for the escape of the booty ; for, notwithstanding the defeat, Abu Sophyan managed to effect a decent retreat, and to arrive safely at Mecca with the greater part of the caravan. The spoils however arising from the ransom of the prisoners, and the partial plunder of the caravan, amounted to a

considerable sum, the division of which had like to have proved fatal to the victors themselves. For of the two parties composing the prophet's army the Ansars, or auxiliaries, being the most numerous, laid claim to the greatest share. The Mohajerins, from being first in the faith, assumed equal, at least, if not superior, merit to that of their comrades, and a furious altercation ensued. Mohammed, in order to put an end to the contention, feigned a seasonable revelation from Heaven, in which orders were given him to divide the booty equally, after having deducted a fifth part for the uses of the prophet, and certain specified purposes of charity. "In the name of the most merciful God: They will ask thee concerning the spoils: Answer, The division of the spoils belongeth unto God and the apostle; therefore, fear God and compose the matter amicably among you; and obey God and his apostle, if ye be true believers." "Know that whenever ye gain any spoils, a fifth part thereof belongeth unto God and to the apostle, and his kindred, and the orphans, and the poor, and the traveller."* The part which the prophet adjudged to himself on this occasion, amounted to several thousand drams, or dirams, of silver; how much of this sum he allotted to "the poor, the orphans, and the traveller," history gives us no intimation.

The success of Mohammed, with his little band of devotees, at the battle of Beder, is frequently alluded to in the Koran in a style of self-satisfied

* Koran, ch. viii.

vaunting and triumph, and is often appealed to by his followers as nothing less than a miraculous attestation of God himself in favour of the prophet. "Ye have already had a miracle shown you in two armies which attacked each other: one army fought for God's true religion, but the other were infidels; they saw the faithful twice as many as themselves in their own eyesight; for God strengthened with his help whom he pleaseth."* Besides the miracle of the infidels seeing the Moslem army double to what it was, two others are said to have been wrought on this memorable occasion. 1. The sand or gravel which Mohammed threw into the air is said to have been carried by the power of God with such force against the faces of the enemy that they immediately turned their backs and fled. "And ye slew not those who were slain at Beder yourselves, but God slew them. Neither didst thou, O Mohammed, cast the gravel into their eyes, when thou didst seem to cast it; but God cast it."† 2. We are also taught, that God sent down to the prophet's aid, first a thousand, and afterwards three thousand angels, having their heads adorned with white and yellow sashes, the ends of which hung down between their shoulders; and that this troop of celestial auxiliaries, borne upon black and white horses, and headed by Gabriel upon his steed Hiazum, really did all the execution in the defeat of the Koreish, though Mohammed's men fought bravely and, until better instructed, gave the credit of the victory entirely to themselves. "And

* Koran, ch. xii.

Ch. viii.

God had already given you the victory at Beder, when ye were inferior in numbers ; therefore, fear God, that ye may be thankful. When thou saidst unto the faithful, Is it not enough for you, that your Lord should assist you with three thousand angels, sent down from Heaven. Verily, if ye persevere, and fear God, and your enemies come upon you suddenly, your Lord will assist you with five thousand angels, distinguished by their horses and attire.”*

The vindictive spirit of the prophet was strikingly evinced not long after this event by the assassination of Caab, the son of Al-Ashraf, a Jew. This man, having a genius for poetry, and being inveterately opposed to Mohammed, went to Mecca after the battle of Beder, and with a view to excite the Ko-reish to revenge, deplored in touching verses the unhappy fate of those of their brethren who had fallen while valiantly resisting a renegade prophet, with his band of marauders. He afterward returned to Medina, and had the hardihood to recite his poems to the people within the walls of that city. Mohammed was so exceedingly provoked by the audacity of the poet, who must, indeed, have been possessed of the highest phrensy of his tribe to promise himself impunity in these circumstances, that he exclaimed, “ Who will deliver me from the son of Al-Ashraf ? ” A certain namesake of the prophet, Mohammed, the son of Mosalama, a ready tool of his master, replied, “ I, O prophet of God, will rid you of him.” Caab was soon after murdered while entertaining one of the apostle’s followers.

* Koran ch. iii.

CHAPTER X.

Mohammed alters the Kebla—Many of his Followers greatly offended thereby—Mohammedan Institution of Prayer—Appoints the Fast of Ramadan—Account of this Ordinance.

ON the second year of the Hejira, Mohammed altered the *Kebla* for his disciples, that is, the point of the compass towards which they were to direct their prayers. It was usual among the votaries of all the religions of the East to observe some particular point in the heavens towards which they turned their faces when they prayed. The Jews, in whatever part of the world they chanced to be, prayed with their faces towards Jerusalem, the seat of their sacred temple; the Arabians, towards Mecca, because there was the Caaba, the centre of their worship; the Sabians, towards the North Star; the Persians, who deified fire and light, towards the East, where the Sun, the fountain of Light, arose. "Every sect," says the Koran, "have a certain tract of heaven to which they turn themselves in prayer."* Mohammed, when he first arrived in Medina, deeming the particular point itself a matter of perfect indifference, and with a view probably to ingratiate himself with the Jews, directed his disciples to pray towards Jerusalem, which he used to call *the Holy City, the City of*

* Koran, ch. ii.

the Prophets, and which he, at one time, intended to have made the grand seat of his worship, and the place of pilgrimage to his followers. But finding the Jews too intractable, or that his other converts still retained a superstitious regard for the temple of Mecca, for so many ages the place of idolatrous resort, and thinking it would tend to conciliate the inhabitants of that city, if he kept up the sanctity of their temple, he, at the end of six or seven months, repealed his former law regulating the Kebla, and thenceforward required all the faithful to offer their supplications with their faces directed towards Mecca. Though not now in actual possession of that city, yet anticipating the time when it would be in the hands of Moslem masters, he fixed upon it as the future "holy city" of his followers. "From what place soever thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the holy temple; and wherever ye be, thitherward turn your faces, lest men have matter of dispute against you."* This change was indeed an offence to many of his disciples, from its indicating a singular degree of fickleness in a professed prophet, and large numbers accordingly forsook him altogether on account of it. But his growing aversion to the Jews made him steadfast in the present alteration, to which he thus alludes in the Koran: "The foolish men will say, What hath turned them from their Kebla towards which they formerly prayed? Say, Unto God belongeth the East and the West: he directeth whom he pleaseth in the right way."† "We

* Koran, ch. li.

† Ibid.

have seen thee turn about thy face towards heaven with uncertainty; but we will cause thee to turn thyself towards a Kebla that will please thee. Turn therefore thy face towards the holy temple of Mecca; and, wherever ye be, turn your faces towards that place.”* “Verily, although thou shouldst show unto those to whom the Scripture hath been given all kinds of signs, yet they will not follow thy Kebla, neither shalt thou follow their Kebla; nor will one part of them follow the Kebla of the other.”† The bearing or situation of Mecca, with its holy temple, from any particular region of the Mohammedan world, is pointed out within their mosques by a niche, which governs the direction of their faces; and without, by the situation of the doors which open into the galleries of the minarets. There are also tables calculated for the purpose of readily finding out their Kebla, when they have no other means of ascertaining the right direction.

No duty enjoined by the Mohammedan creed is more prominent than that of prayer. The prophet himself used to call prayer “the pillar of religion and the key of paradise,” and to say that there could be no good in that religion which dispensed with it. He therefore prescribed to his followers five stated seasons in the space of twenty-four hours for the performance of their devotions. 1. In the morning, between daybreak and sunrise. 2. Just after noon, when the sun begins to decline from the meridian. 3. At the middle hour between

* Koran, ch. ii.

† Ibid.

noon and sunset. 4. Between sunset and dark
5. An hour and a half after night has fully closed
in. At these times, of which public notice is given
by the muezzins, or criers, from the galleries of
the minarets attached to the mosques—for the Mo-
hammedans use no bells—every conscientious
Moslem engages in this solemn duty, either in a
mosque, or by spreading his handkerchief, and
kneeling in any clean place upon the ground. Such
extreme sacredness do they attach to this part of
worship, and with such intensity of spirit do they
hold themselves bound to attend upon it, that the
most pressing emergency, the bursting out of a fire
in their chamber, or the sudden irruption of an
armed enemy into their gates or camps is not con-
sidered a sufficient warrant for their abruptly break-
ing off their prayers. Nay, the very act of cough-
ing, spitting, sneezing, or rubbing their skin in
consequence of a fly-bite, in the midst of their
prayers, renders all the past null and void, and
obliges them to begin their devotions anew. In
the act of prayer they make use of a great variety
of postures and gestures, such as putting their
hands one on the other before them, bending their
body, kneeling, touching the ground with their
foreheads, moving the head from side to side, and
several others, among which it is impossible to
distinguish those enjoined by Mohammed himself
from those which were common among the ancient
Arab tribes before he arose. Still it is affirmed
by travellers, that, notwithstanding the scrupulous
preciseness of the Moslem devotions, no people

are more deeply tinctured with the pharisaical spirit of ostentation, or love better to pray in the market-places, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men, and obtain their praise. Among the Turks especially it is said that wherever they find the greatest concourse of spectators, particularly if they be Christians, there they are ever sure to spread their handkerchiefs, whatever inconveniences may attend the location, and begin their adorations. In these petitions, a very prominent object of request is, that God would grant the blessing of dissensions, wars, and tumults to be enkindled among Christians ; and the rumours of such joyful events are hailed as tokens of his gracious answers to their prayers.

On the same year the prophet introduced into his religion the holy fast of *Ramadan*, or *Ramazan*, so called from its being continued through the whole of this month, which is the ninth in the order of the months of the Arabic year. Of this duty Mohammed used to say, it was “the gate of religion,” and that “the odour of the mouth of him who fasted is more grateful to God than that of musk.” An acceptable fast, according to the Moslem doctrine, includes abstinence from food, the restraining all the senses and members from their accustomed gratifications, and the withdrawment of the thoughts from every thing but God. The institution is thus announced in the Koran : “O true believers, a fast is ordained you, as it was ordained unto those before you, that ye may fear God. A certain number of days shall ye fast :

but he among you who shall be sick, or on a journey, shall fast an equal number of other days And those who can keep it and do not, must redeem their neglect by maintaining of a poor man. But if ye fast, it will be better for you, if ye knew it. The month of Ramadan shall ye fast, in which the Koran was sent down from Heaven, a direction unto men.”* By the law of their religion, therefore, the disciples of Islam are required to fast, while the sun is above the horizon, during the entire month of Ramadan, from the time the new moon first appears, till the appearance of the next new moon. Throughout that period they abstain wholly from the pleasures of the table, the pipe, and the harem ; they neither eat, drink, nor receive any thing into their mouths during the day, till the evening lamps, hung around the minarets, are lighted by the Imam, or priest of the mosque, when they are released from the obligations of abstinence. They then give themselves, without restraint, to the pleasures of the palate, and compensate in full measure for the penance of the day by the indulgence of the night. This is continued, according to the law of the prophet, “till they can plainly distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the daybreak,”† when the season of self-denial commences again for the ensuing day. As most of the Mohammedans, however, are not too scrupulous to quell the annoyance of appetite by sleeping away the hours of the day, the observance of the

* Koran, ch. li.

† Ibid

fast of Ramadan is little more than turning day into night, and night into day. As the Arabic year is lunar, each month in a period of thirty-three years, falls into all the different seasons of the solar year and consequently the observance of the fast, when the month of Ramadan occurs in summer, is rendered, by the length and heat of the days, extremely rigorous and trying ; especially as the poor are still compelled to labour during the day ; and yet are forbidden, upon pain of death, to assuage their thirst by a drop of water.

CHAPTER XI.

The Koreish undertake a new Expedition against the Prophet—The Battle of Uhcd—Mohammed and his Army entirely dejected—His followers murmur—The Prophet's poor devices to retrieve the disgrace incurred in this action—Resolves it mainly into the doctrine of Predestination—Wine and Games of chance forbidden—Sophyan, son of Caled, slain—War of the Ditch.

THE resentment of Abu Sophyan and the citizens of Mecca, for the loss and the disgrace sustained the preceding year, stimulated them to undertake a new expedition against the warlike apostle. The Koreish accordingly assembled an army of three thousand men under the command of Abu Sophyan, and proceeded to besiege their enemy in the city of Medina. Mohammed, being much inferior in numbers to the invading army, determined at first to await and receive their attack within the walls of the city. But the ardour of his men, enkindled by the recollection of their former success, could not brook restraint; they clamorously demanded to be led out to battle; and he unwisely yielded to their request. Impelled, also, himself, by the same spirit of rash confidence, he unwarily promised them certain victory. The prophetic powers of the apostle were to be estimated by the event. Mohammed, in every encounter, seems to have manifested, in a high degree, the talents of a general. In the present instance his army, con-

sisting of about one thousand men, was advantageously posted on the declivity of the mountain Ohod, four miles to the north of Medina. Three standards were confided each one to a separate tribe, while the great standard was carried before the prophet, and a chosen band of fifty archers were stationed in the rear, with peremptory orders to remain there till commanded to the attack by Mohammed himself. The Koreish advanced in the form of a crescent; Caled, the fiercest of the Arabian warriors, led the right wing of the cavalry; while Hinda, the wife of Abu Sophyan, accompanied by fifteen matrons of Mecca, incessantly sounded timbrels to animate the troops to the approaching conflict. The action commenced by the Moslems charging down the hill, and breaking through the enemy's ranks. Victory or paradise was the reward promised by Mohammed to his soldiers, and they strove with frantic enthusiasm to gain the expected recompense. The line of the enemy was quickly disordered, and an easy victory seemed about to crown the spirit and valour of the Moslem troops. At this moment, the archers in the rear, impelled by the hope of plunder, deserted their station and scattered themselves over the field. The intrepid Caled, seizing the favourable opportunity, wheeled his cavalry on their flank and rear, and exclaiming aloud, "Mohammed is slain!" charged with such fury upon the disordered ranks of the Moslems, as speedily to turn the fate of the day. The flying report of the death of their leader so dispirited the faithful, that they gave way

in every direction, and the rout soon became general. Mohammed endeavoured in vain to rally his broken troops; he fought with desperate valour; exposed his person where the danger appeared greatest; was wounded in the face by a javelin; had two of his teeth shattered by a stone; was thrown from his horse; and would in all probability have been slain, but for the determined bravery of a few chosen adherents, who rescued their leader from the throng, and bore him away to a place of safety. The day was utterly lost; seventy of his soldiers were slain, among whom was his uncle Hamza; and his reputation as a prophet and apostle was in imminent peril. His followers murmured at the disastrous issue of the conflict, and had the hardihood to affirm that the prophet had deceived them; that the will of the Lord had not been revealed to him, since his confident prediction of success had been followed by a signal defeat. The prophet, on the other hand, threw the blame on the sins of the people; the anger of the Lord had fallen upon them in consequence of an overweening conceit of their security, and because he had determined to make trial of their sincerity. "After a misfortune hath befallen you at Ohod, do ye say, Whence cometh this? Answer, This is from yourselves: for God is almighty, and what happened unto you was certainly by the permission of God, that he might know the faithful and that he might know the ungodly.—And we cause these days of different success interchangeably to succeed each other among men, that God

might prove those who believe, and might destroy the infidels.—Did ye imagine that ye should enter paradise, when as yet God knew not those among you who fought strenuously in his cause ; nor knew those who persevered with patience ?—Verily, they among you who turned their backs on the day whereon the two armies met each other at Ohod, Satan caused them to slip for some crime which they had committed.”* In order to stifle the murmurs of those who were overwhelmed with grief at the loss of their friends and relatives, he represented to them, that the time of every man’s death is distinctly fixed by the divine decree, and that those who fell in battle could not have avoided their predetermined fate even if they had staid at home ; whereas now they had obtained the glorious privilege of dying martyrs for the faith, and were consequently translated to the bliss of paradise. “O true believers, be not as they who believe not, and said of their brethren when they had journeyed in the land, or had been at war, If they had been with us, those had not died, nor had these been slain : whereas, what befell them was so ordained.—No soul can die unless by the permission of God, according to what is written in the book containing the determination of things.—Thou shalt in no wise reckon those who have been slain at Ohod, in the cause of God, dead : nay, they are sustained alive with their Lord, rejoicing for what God of his favour hath granted them.”† With these miserable evasions did he excuse the

falsehood of his prediction, and salve over the ignominy of his defeat. This doctrine of fatalism however, took a deep root among his followers, and to this day the Mohammedans are the most strenuous sticklers of any people on earth for the doctrine of absolute unconditional predestination. "No accident," saith the Koran, "happeneth in the earth, nor in your persons, but the same was entered in the book of our decrees, before we created it."*

Abu Sophyan, for reasons now inexplicable, did not pursue the advantages he had gained on this occasion. He merely gave the prophet a challenge to meet him again in the field on the ensuing year, which was readily accepted, although somewhat more than a year elapsed before the actual renewal of hostilities.

* "We had at the same time the following striking instance of the frivolous appeals to the Deity among the Mohammedans. A man went round the caravan, crying with a loud voice, 'In the name of God, the just, the merciful. My cup is gone from me: it disappeared while I prayed at sunset (and may God grant my evening prayer). To whoever may find the same, may God lengthen out his life, may God augment his pleasures, and may God bring down affairs of business on his head!' This pompous appeal to Heaven, and prayers for good fortune to the finder of the missing utensil, were all powerless, however, in their effect. The lost cup was not found; and the consolation then assumed was, '*God knows where it is gone; but it was written in heaven from of old.*'"—*Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia*, vol. i. p. 281, Lond. 1827.

"While this was going on, the author of our calamity [a vessel had been run aground] was pacing the deck, the picture of terror and indecision, calling aloud on Mohammed to assist us out of the danger. His fears were not much lessened by the threats thrown out by each passing tar. 'I say, Jack,' said one of them, "we'll string you up for this;" making his observation intelligible, by pointing with one hand to the yard-arm, and with the other to the neck of his auditor, at the same time imitating the convulsive guggle of strangulation. When called to account for his obstinacy, the pilot gave us an answer in the true spirit of (Mohammedan) predestination;—'*If it is God's pleasure that the ship should go ashore, what business is it of mine?*'"—*Keppel's Journey from India to England*, in 1824. p. 33.

About this time, or in the fourth year of the Hejira (A. D. 626), Mohammed prohibited the use of wine and of games of chance to his followers. "They will ask thee of wine and lots. Answer, In both these there is great sin, and also some things of use unto men; but their sinfulness is greater than their use."* The occasion of this prohibition seems to have been the prophet's witnessing their bad effects in producing discord and broils among his disciples. "O true believers, wine and games of chance are an abomination, of the work of Satan; therefore avoid them, that ye may prosper. Satan seeketh to sow dissension and hatred among you by means of wine and lots, and to divert you from remembering God, and from prayer; will ye not, therefore, abstain from them?" The sins of the past, arising from this source, are graciously remitted on condition of future amendment. "In those who believe and do good works, it is no sin that they have tasted wine or gaming before they were forbidden; if they fear God and believe, and do good works, and shall for the future fear God and believe, and shall persevere to fear him and to do good. Obey God, and obey the apostle, and take heed to yourselves: but if ye turn back, know that the duty of our apostle is only to preach publicly."† Under wine are comprehended also all kinds of strong and inebriating liquors; and though Mussulmans of lax and libertine principles, and many such there are, will indulge themselves with the forbidden beverage, yet the

* Koran, ch. li.

† Ch. v.

more conscientious scrupulously avoid it, and not only hold it criminal to taste of wine, but also to press grapes for the making of it, to buy or to sell it, or even to maintain themselves with the money arising from the sale of it.

Another act of blood stains the fame of Mohammed in this part of his history. Being informed that Sophyan, the son of Caled, was collecting men for the purpose of attacking him, he ordered Abdallah, the son of Onais, surname Dhul-Malldhrat, that is, *a man ready to undertake any thing*, to assassinate his designing foe. Abdallah obeyed the prophet's command, and murdered Sophyan in the valley of Orsa. He immediately returned to Mohammed, who, upon hearing the success of the enterprise, gave him as a token of his friendship the cane with which he usually walked.

In the fifth year of the Hejira occurred *the war of the ditch*, or, as it is otherwise termed, *the war of the nations*; which, but for peculiar circumstances, would probably have resulted in the entire overthrow of the impostor. The Koreish, in conjunction with a number of the neighbouring tribes or *nations*, many of whom were Jews, assembled an army of ten thousand men, and making common cause against the grand adversary of their ancient religion, advanced to the siege of Medina. On their approach, Mohammed, by the advice of Soliman, or Salman, the Persian,* ordered a deep

* This Soliman, otherwise called Suleiman Pauk (i. e. the Pure), has a celebrated tomb erected to his memory near the ruins of the ancient

ditch, or intrenchment, to be dug around the city for its security, behind which he remained fortified for near a month. During this period, no other acts of hostility occurred than a few ineffectual attempts to annoy each other by shooting arrows and slinging stones. In the mean time, tradition says, the prophet was busily employed by his arts and emissaries, in corrupting and bringing over to his interest the leading men among the enemy. Having succeeded with several, he employed them in sowing dissensions among the rest; so that at length the camp of the confederates was torn to pieces with divisions, and one party breaking off after another, nearly the whole army was finally dissipated, and the little remnant that remained thrown into confusion and made powerless by the direct visitation of an angry God. For while they

Ctesiphon, on the Tigris. It is among the prominent objects of curiosity to modern travellers to the East. "From the ruins we went to the tomb of Suleiman Pauk, whose name has superseded that of the builder of this magnificent pile, in giving a name to the district. The tomb is a small building with a dome; the interior, to which they allowed us access, on our pulling off our shoes, was ornamented with arabesque arches, and the surrounding enclosure was used as a *caravanserai*."—*Keppel's Journey*, p. 82.

"After traversing a space within the walls strewed with fragments of burnt brick and pottery, we came in about half an hour to the tomb of Selman Pauk, which is within a short distance of the ruined palace of Chosroes. We found here a very comfortable and secure retreat, within a high-walled enclosure of about a hundred paces square, in the centre of which rose the tomb of the celebrated favourite of Mohammed. This Selman Pauk, or Selman the Pure, was a Persian barber, who, from the fire-worship of his ancestors, became a convert to Islam, under the persuasive eloquence of the great prophet of Medina himself, and after a life of fidelity to the cause he had embraced, was buried here in his native city of Modain (Ctesiphon). The memory of this beloved companion of the great head of their faith is held in great respect by all the Mohammedans of the country; for, besides the annual feast of the barbers of Bagdad, who, in the month of April visit his tomb as that of a patron saint, there are others who come to it on pilgrimage at all seasons of the year."—*Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia*, vol. 2
450.

lay encamped about the city, a remarkable tempest, supernaturally excited, benumbed the limbs of the besiegers, blew dust in their faces, extinguished their fires, overturned their tents, and put their horses in disorder. The angels, moreover, co-operated with the elements in discomfiting the enemy, and by crying "ALLAH ACBAR!" (*God is great!*) as their invisible legions surrounded the camp, struck them with such a panic, that they were glad to escape with their lives.

The prophet was not insensible to the marks of the divine favour vouchsafed him in these illustrious prodigies, nor did he fail to hold them up to the consolation of his followers on subsequent occasions. "O true believers, remember the favour of God towards you, when armies of infidels came against you, and we sent against them a wind, and hosts of angels which ye saw not."* But, to whatever it were owing, whether to human or heavenly agency, it is certain that from this time the Koreish gave up all hopes of putting an end to the growing power and spreading conquests of Mohammed. They henceforth undertook no more expeditions against him.

* Koran, ch. xxxii

CHAPTER XII.

The Jews the special objects of Mohammed's Enmity—Several Tribes of them reduced to Subjection—Undertakes a Pilgrimage to Mecca—The Meccans conclude a Truce with him of ten years—His Power and Authority greatly increased—Has a Pulpit constructed for his Mosque—Goes against Chaibar, a City of the Arab Jews—Besieges and takes the City, but is poisoned at an Entertainment by a young Woman—Is still able to prosecute his Victories.

WHATEVER might have been the prophet's early reverence for the city of Jerusalem, and his friendship towards the Jews, who, together with the sons of Ishmael, claimed in Abraham a common father, their obstinacy converted his favour into implacable hatred; and to the last moment of his life he pursued that unfortunate people with a rigour of persecution unparalleled in his treatment of other nations. The Jewish tribes of Kainoka, Koraïdha, and the Nadhirites, lying in the vicinity of Medina, were singled out as the next objects of his warlike attempts; and as they fell an easy prey to the power of his arms, spoliation, banishment, and death were the several punishments to which he adjudged them, according to the grade of their crime in rejecting a prophet or opposing a conqueror.

Our intended limits will not permit us to enumerate the various battles fought by Mohammed during the five succeeding years. Suffice it to

say, that, according to the computation of some of his biographers, no less than twenty-seven expeditions were undertaken, in which he commanded personally, and in which nine pitched battles were fought. The heart sickens in following a professed messenger and apostle of God from one scene of blood and carnage to another, making the pretences of religion a cloak to cover the most unbounded ambition and the vilest sensuality. A mind untrained to a deep sense of the purity and peaceableness of the religion of Jesus may be dazzled by the glare of a tide of victories, and lose its detestation of the impostor in admiring the success of the conqueror. But to one who feels the force of Christian principles, no relief is afforded by the view of arduous battles won, of sieges undertaken, or of cities sacked or subjected, by the prowess of a leader whose career is stained like that of the founder of Islam.

One or two subsequent expeditions, however, are too important in the prophet's history to be passed over without notice. In the sixth year of the Hejira, with fourteen hundred men, he undertook what he declared to be a peaceful pilgrimage to the holy temple of Mecca. The inhabitants were jealous of his intentions; and while he halted several days at Hodeibiya, from whence he despatched an emissary to announce his intention, they came to a determination to refuse him admittance, and sent him word, that if he entered the city, it must be by forcing his way at the point of the sword. Upon this intelligence, the warlike

pilgrim called his men together, and it was resolved to attack the city. The Meccans, in the mean time, having more accurately measured their strength, or estimated their policy, and having been, besides, somewhat wrought upon by an unexpected act of clemency on the part of Mohammed, in pardoning and dismissing eighty prisoners of their fellow-citizens, who had fallen into his hands, altered their purpose of resistance, and sent an ambassador to his camp to confer upon terms of peace. Some umbrage was given to the Moslems by the facility with which their leader waived the title of Apostle of God,* but the result was the concluding of a truce of ten years, in which it was stipulated, that the prophet and his followers should have free access to the city and temple whenever they pleased, during the period of the truce, provided they came unarmed as befitted pilgrims, and remained not above three days at a time. In the 48th chapter of the Koran, entitled "The Victory," the prophet thus alludes to the events of this expedition; "If the unbelieving Meccans had fought against you, verily they had turned their backs; and they would not have found a patron or protector; according to the ordinance of God, which hath been put in execution heretofore against the

* "In wording the treaty, when the prophet ordered Ali to begin with the form, *In the name of the most merciful God*, they (the Meccans) objected to it, and insisted that he should begin with this, *In thy name, O God*; which Mohammed submitted to, and proceeded to dictate: *These are the conditions on which Mohammed, the apostle of God, has made peace with those of Mecca*. To this Sohail again objected, saying, *If we had acknowledged thee to be the apostle of God, we had not given thee any opposition*. Whereupon Mohammed ordered Ali to write as Sohail desired, *These are the conditions which Mohammed, the son of Abdal lah,*" &c.—*Sale's Koran*, vol. 2 p. 394. note.

opposers of the prophets. It was he who restrained their hands from you, and your hands from them, in the valley of Mecca." The entrance into Mecca on this occasion is vaunted of by the apostle as the fulfilment of a prophetic dream. "Now hath God in truth verified unto his apostle the vision, wherein he said, Ye shall surely enter the holy temple of Mecca, if God please, in full security."

This event tended greatly to confirm the power of Mohammed; and not long after, he was solemnly inaugurated and invested with the authority of a king by his principal men. With the royal dignity he associated that of supreme pontiff of his religion, and thus became at once the king and priest of his Moslem followers, whose numbers had by this time swelled to a large amount. So intense had their devotion to their leader now become, that even a hair that had dropped from his head, and the water in which he washed himself, were carefully collected and preserved, as partaking of superhuman virtue. A deputy, sent from another city of Arabia to Medina to treat with the prophet, beheld with astonishment the blind and unbounded veneration of his votaries. "I have seen," said he, "the Chosroes of Persia, and the Cæsar of Rome, but never did I behold a king among his subjects like Mohammed among his companions."

With this new addition to his nominal authority, he began to assume more of the pomp and parade due to his rank. After the erection of the mosque at Medina, in which the prophet himself officiated

as leader of worship, he had for a long time no other convenience in the way of stand, desk, or pulpit, than the trunk of a palm-tree fixed perpendicularly in the ground, on the top of which he was accustomed to lean while preaching. This was now become too mean an accommodation, and by the advice of one of his wives he caused a pulpit to be constructed, with a seat and two steps attached to it, which he henceforth made use of instead of the "beam." The beam, however, was loath to be deprived of its honour, and the dealers in the marvellous among his followers say, that it gave an audible groan of regret when the prophet left it. Othman Ebn Affan, when he became Caliph, hung this pulpit with tapestry, and Moawiyah, another Caliph, raised it to a greater height by adding six steps more, in imitation, doubtless, of the ivory throne of Solomon, and in this form it is said to be preserved and shown at the present day, as a holy relic, in the mosque of Medina.

This year he led his army against Chaibar, a city inhabited by Arab Jews, who offering him a manly resistance, he laid siege to the place and carried it by storm. A great miracle is here said to have been performed by Ali, surnamed "The Lion of God." A ponderous gate, which eight men afterward tried in vain to lift from the ground, was torn by him from its hinges, and used as a buckler during the assault!* Mohammed, on entering

* "Abu Rafe, the servant of Mohammed, is said to have affirmed that he was an eye-witness of the fact; but who will be witness for Abu Rafe?"—Gibbon.

the town, took up his quarters at the house of Hareth, one of the principal inhabitants, and here met with a reception which eventually cost him his life. Zeinab, the daughter of Hareth, while preparing a meal for the conqueror and his attendants, inserted a quantity of poison into a shoulder of mutton which was served up at the table. Bashar, a companion of Mohammed, had scarcely begun to eat of it, before he was seized with convulsions, and died upon the spot. Mohammed, by spitting out the greatest part of what he had taken into his mouth, escaped immediate death, but the effects of the fatal drug had entered his system, and, resisting every effort of medicine to expel or counteract it, in somewhat more than three years afterward it brought him to his end. If, as the reporters of Mohammed's miracles affirm, the shoulder of mutton informed the prophet of its being poisoned, it is certain the intelligence came too late. The seeds of death were henceforth effectually sown in his constitution; and his own decline ever after kept pace with his growing power. When Zeinab was asked, how she had dared to perpetrate a deed of such unparalleled enormity, she is said to have answered, "that she was determined to make trial of his powers as a prophet: if he were a true prophet," said she, "he would know that the meat was poisoned; if not, it would be a favour to the world to rid it of such a tyrant." It is not agreed among the Mohammedan writers what was the punishment inflicted upon this second Jael, or whether she suffered any. Some affirm that she was pardoned; others that she was put to death.

The progress of the prophet's disease was not such as to prevent him from prosecuting that successful course of conquests in which he was now engaged. The Jews, the constant objects of his vengeance, again tempted his victorious sword. He proceeded against Beder, Watiba, and Selalima; places which he brought under subjection, permitting their inhabitants to retain possession on condition of paying him one half the product of their date-trees as an annual tribute. On these terms they remained undisturbed in their towns and villages during the lifetime of the prophet; till at length, in the reign of Omar, who pretended that Mohammed in his last sickness had given him a charge not to permit two religions to coexist in Arabia, they were all expelled from their ancient settlements.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mohammed alleges a Breach of Faith on the part of the Meccans, and marches an Army against them—The City surrendered to the Conqueror—Abu Sophyan and Al Abbas, the Prophet's Uncle, declare themselves Converts—Mecca declared to be Holy Ground—The neighbouring Tribes collect an Army of four thousand men to arrest the growing power of the Prophet—The Confederates entirely overthrown—A rival Prophet arises in the person of Moseilama—Is crushed by Caled.

Two years had scarcely elapsed when Mohammed accused the Meccans of violating the truce, and made their alleged breach of faith a pretence for summoning an army of ten thousand men with a design to make himself master of the city. He was now strong, and his enemies were weak. His superstitious reverence for the city of his birth, and the temple it contained, served to influence his determination for war. The time since the concluding of the truce had been skilfully employed in seducing the adherents of the Koreish, and converting to his religion, or enticing under his standard, the chief citizens of Mecca. By forced marches he urged his large army rapidly towards the city, and so unexpectedly was the place invested by the Moslem troops, that they had scarcely time to put themselves in a posture of defence before they were driven to such extremities, that the surrender of the city at discretion, or total destruction, seemed to be the only alternative. In these cir-

umstances the former step was resolved upon, humiliating as it was, and Abu Sophyan, the former inveterate enemy of Mohammed and his religion, accompanied by Al Abbas, an uncle of the impostor, came forth and presented the keys of the city to the conqueror. Nor was this all: they both crowned their submission by bowing to the prophetic claims of their new master, and acknowledging him as the apostle of God. This we may suppose was a constrained admission, made under the uplifted scimitar of the furious Omar, and yielded as the price of life. Mohammed, though a conqueror and an impostor, was not habitually cruel; his anger was directed rather against the gods of his country, than its inhabitants. The chiefs of the Koreish prostrated themselves before him, and earnestly demanded mercy at his hands. "What mercy can you expect from the man you have wronged?" exclaimed the prophet. "We confide in the generosity of our kinsman." "You shall not confide in vain," was the generous or politic reply of Mohammed. "Be gone; you are safe; you are free." They were thenceforth left unmolested, and places of honour and trust were still confided to them. On his entry into the city, of which he had now made himself absolute master with the sacrifice of only three men and two women, whom he ordered to be executed, he proceeded to purge the Caaba of its three hundred and sixty idols, and to consecrate that temple anew to the purposes of his religion. The apostle again fulfilled the duties of a pilgrim, and a per-

petual law was enacted, that no unbeliever should dare to set his foot on the territory of the holy city. On the day on which the prophet entered Mecca in triumph, he ordered Belal, his crier, to mount to the top of the temple at noon, and from thence to call the people to prayer for the first time under the new institution. This custom has been religiously observed in Mohammedan countries from that day to the present; the crier, who is called *muezzin*, still giving the people notice of the hour of prayer from the minarets of their mosques.

When the news of the conquest of Mecca reached the neighbouring tribes of Arabs, the Hawazins, Takifians, and others, hastily assembled a force amounting to about four thousand men, with the design of crushing the usurper before his dangerous power had attained to any greater height. Mohammed, appointing a temporary governor of the city, marched out with an army of no less than twelve thousand men, and met the enemy in the valley of Honein, three miles from Mecca, on the way to Tayef. The Moslems, seeing themselves so vastly superior in point of numbers, were inspired with a presumptuous confidence of victory, which had like to have resulted in their ruin. In the first encounter, the confederates rushed upon the faithful with such desperate valour, that they put nearly the whole army to flight, many of them retreating back to the walls of Mecca itself. Mohammed, mounted on a white mule, with a few of his faithful followers at his side, boldly maintained

his ground ; and such was his ardour in this crisis of the conflict, that it was by main force that one of his uncles and a cousin, laying hold of his bridle and stirrup, restrained him from rushing alone into the midst of the enemy. “ O my brethren,” he exclaimed, “ I am the son of Abdallah ! I am the apostle of truth ! O men, stand fast in the faith ! O God, send down thy succour ! ” His uncle Abbas, who possessed a Stentorian voice, exerting the utmost strength of his lungs, recalled the flying troops, and gradually rallied them again around the holy standard ; on which the prophet, observing with pleasure “ that the furnace was rekindled,” charged with new vigour the ranks of the infidels and idolaters, and finally succeeded in obtaining a complete victory, though not, as appears from the Koran, without the special assistance of angels. The giving way in the first instance was a mark of the Divine displeasure against the Moslems for their overweening confidence in their superior numbers. “ Now hath God assisted you in many engagements, and particularly at the battle of Honein ; when ye pleased yourselves in your multitudes, but it was no manner of advantage unto you ; the earth seemed to be too narrow in your precipitate flight : then did ye retreat and turn your backs. Afterward God sent down his security upon his apostle and upon the faithful, and troops of angels which ye saw not.”*

The remaining part of the year was spent in demolishing the temples and idols of the subject

* Koran, ch. ix.

Arabs. Saad, Caled, and others of his Moslem chieftains were despatched in various directions over the conquered provinces with orders to wage a war of extermination against the idols of the ancient superstition. This pious crusade was crowned with the conversion of many idolaters, as well as with the destruction of the "lying vanities" of their worship, and it is not strange that they should have admitted the doctrine of the divine unity, when the destroying sword of the apostle had cut off all gods but one.

The prophet having now become in fact the sovereign of Arabia, he began, in the ninth year of the Hejira, to meditate the conquest of Syria. He did not live fully to accomplish this design, which was executed by his successors; but he entered upon it, and notwithstanding the expedition was undertaken in the heat of the summer, and the scarcity of water subjected his men to almost intolerable sufferings, yet he succeeded in obtaining possession of Tabuc, a town on the confines of the Greek empire, from whence he made a victorious descent upon the adjacent territories of Daura and Eylâ. Their princes yielded to the destiny which now seemed to accompany the arms of the impostor wherever they were turned, and they were henceforth enrolled among his tributaries. This was the last expedition on which the prophet went forth in person. The fame of his power had now become so extensive and imposing, that distant tribes were awed into submission, and sent their emissaries to tender to him the voluntary

acknowledgment of their homage and fealty. The numerous deputations which for this and other purposes, waited upon Mohammed this year, induced him to call it "The Year of Embassies."

The close of this year was distinguished by the prophet's last pilgrimage to Mecca, called, from its being the last, "The Pilgrimage of Valediction." An idea of the amazing increase of his followers since he last visited Mecca may be formed from the fact, that on this occasion he is said to have been accompanied by one hundred and fourteen thousand Moslems!

Signal success in any enterprise seldom fails to call forth imitators and rivals. Mohammed had now become too powerful to be resisted by force, but not too exalted to be troubled by competition. His own example in assuming the sacred character of an apostle and prophet, and the brilliant success which had attended him, gave a hint to others of the probable means of advancing themselves to a similar pitch of dignity and dominion. The spirit of emulation, therefore, raised up a formidable fellow-prophet in the person of Moseilama, called to this day by the followers of Islam, "the lying Moseilama," a descendant of the tribe of Huleifa, and a principal personage in the province of Yemen. This man headed an embassy sent by his tribe to Mohammed, in the ninth year of the Hejira, and then professed himself a Moslem; but on his return home, pondering on the nature of the new religion and the character and fortunes of its founder the sacrilegious suggestion

occurred to him, that by skilful management he might share with his countryman in the glory of a divine mission ; and accordingly, in the ensuing year, began to put his project in execution. He gave out that he also was a prophet sent of God, having a joint commission with Mohammed to recall mankind from idolatry to the worship of the true God. He moreover aped his model so closely as to publish written revelations like the Koran, pretended to have been derived from the same source. Having succeeded in gaining a considerable party from the tribe of Honeifa, he at length began to put himself still more nearly upon a level with the prophet of Medina, and even went so far as to propose to Mohammed a partnership in his spiritual supremacy. His letter commenced thus : “ From Moseilama, the apostle of God, to Mohammed, the apostle of God. Now let the earth be half mine and half thine.” But the latter, feeling himself too firmly established to stand in need of an associate, deigned to return him only the following reply : “ From Mohammed, the apostle of God, to Moseilama, the liar. The earth is God’s : he giveth the same for inheritance unto such of his servants as he pleaseth ; and the happy issue shall attend those who fear him.” During the few months that Mohammed lived after this revolt, Moseilama continued, on the whole, to gain ground, and became, at length, so formidable as to occasion extreme anxiety to the prophet now rapidly sinking under the effects of his disease. An expedition under the command of

Caled, "the Sword of God," was ordered out to suppress the rival sect, headed by the spurious apostle, and the bewildered imagination of Mohammed, in his moments of delirium, was frequently picturing to itself the results of the engagement between his faithful Moslems and these daring apostates.

The army of Caled returned victorious. Mo-seilama himself and ten thousand of his followers were left dead on the field; while the rest, convinced by the shining evidence of truth that gleamed from the swords of the conquerors, renounced their errors, and fell quietly back into the bosom of the Mohammedan church. Several other insurgents of similar pretences, but of minor consequence, were crushed in like manner in the early stages of their defection.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Religion of the Prophet firmly established—The principal Countries subjected by him—The effects of the Poison make alarming Inroads upon his Constitution—Perceives his End approaching—Preaches for the last Time in Public—His last Illness and Death—The Moslems scarcely persuaded that their Prophet was dead—Tumult appeased by Abubeker—The Prophet buried at Medina—The Story of the hanging Coffin false.

WE have now reached the period at which the religion of Mohammed may be considered to have become permanently established. The conquest of Mecca and of the Koreish had been, in fact, the signal for the submission of the rest of Arabia; and though several of the petty tribes offered, for a time, the show of resistance to the prophet's arms, they were all eventually subdued. Between the taking of Mecca and the period of his death, somewhat more than three years elapsed. In that short period he had destroyed the idols of Arabia; had extended his conquests to the borders of the Greek and Persian empires; had rendered his name formidable to those once mighty kingdoms; had tried his arms against the disciplined troops of the former, and defeated them in a desperate encounter at Muta. His throne was now firmly established; and an impulse given to the Arabian nations, which induced them to invade, and enabled them to conquer, a large portion of the globe. India, Persia, the Greek empire, the whole of Asia

Minor, Egypt, Barbary, and Spain, were eventually reduced by their victorious arms. Mohammed himself did not indeed live to see such mighty conquests achieved, but he commenced the train which resulted in this wide-spread dominion, and before his death had established over the whole of Arabia, and some parts of Asia, the religion which he had devised.

And now, having arrived at the sixty-third year of his age, and the tenth of the Hejira, A. D. 632, the fatal effects of the poison, which had been so long rankling in his veins, began to discover themselves more and more sensibly, and to operate with alarming virulence. Day by day he visibly declined, and it was evident that his life was hastening to a close. For some time previous to the event, he was conscious of its approach, and is said to have viewed and awaited it with characteristic firmness. The third day before his dissolution, he ordered himself to be carried to the mosque, that he might, for the last time, address his followers, and bestow upon them his parting prayers and benedictions. Being assisted to mount the pulpit, he edified his brethren by the pious tenor of his dying counsels, and in his own example taught a lesson of humility and penitence, such as we shall scarcely find inculcated in the precepts of the Koran. "If there be any man," said the apostle, "whom I have unjustly scourged, I submit my own back to the lash of retaliation. Have I aspersed the reputation of any Mussulman? let him proclaim my faults in the face of the con-

gregation. Has any one been despoiled of his goods? the little that I possess shall compensate the principal and the interest of the debt.”—“ Yes,” replied a voice from the crowd, “ thou owest me three drachms of silver.” Mohammed heard the complaint, satisfied the demand, and thanked his creditor, that he had accused him in this world rather than at the day of judgment. He then set his slaves at liberty, seventeen men and eleven women; directed the order of his funeral; strove to allay the lamentations of his weeping friends, and waited the approach of death. He did not expressly nominate a successor, a step which would have prevented the altercations that afterward came so near to crushing in its infancy the religion and the empire of the Saracens; but his appointment of Abubeker to supply his place in the function of public prayer and the other services of the mosque, seemed to intimate indirectly the choice of the prophet. This ancient and faithful friend, accordingly, after much contention, became the first Caliph of the Saracens,* though his reign was closed by his death at the end of two years. The death of Mohammed was hastened by the force of a burning fever, which deprived him at times of the use of reason. In one of these paroxysms of delirium, he demanded pen and paper, that he might compose or dictate a divine book. Omar, who was watching at his side, refused his

* Saracen is the name bestowed by the ancient *foreign* writers upon the Arabs. They may have tolerated the title, but it is not one of their own imposition or of their liking.

request, lest the expiring prophet might dictate something which should supersede the Koran. Others, however, expressed a great desire that the book might be written; and so warm a dispute arose in the chamber of the apostle, that he was forced to reprove their unbecoming vehemence. The writing was not performed, and many of his followers have mourned the loss of the sublime revelations which his dying visions might have bequeathed to them. His favourite wife Ayesha hung over her husband in his last moments, sustaining his drooping head upon her knee, as he lay stretched upon the carpet, watching with trembling anxiety his changing countenance, and listening to the last broken sounds of his voice. His disease, as it drew towards its termination, was attended at intervals with most excruciating pains, which he constantly ascribed to the fatal morsel taken at Chaibar; and as the mother of Bashar, the companion who had died upon the spot from the same cause, stood by his side, he exclaimed, "O mother of Bashar, the cords of my heart are now breaking of the food which I ate with your son at Chaibar." In his conversation with those around him, he mentioned it as a special prerogative granted to him, that the angel of death was not allowed to take his soul till he had respectfully asked of him his permission, and this permission he condescendingly granted. Recovering from a swoon into which the violence of his pains had thrown him, he raised his eyes towards the roof of the house, and with faltering accents ex-

claimed, " O God! pardon my sins. Yes, I come among my fellow-labourers on high!" His face was then sprinkled with water, and that by his own feeble hand, when he shortly after expired.

The city, and more especially the house, of the prophet, became at once a scene of sorrowful, but confused, lamentation. Some of his followers could not believe that he was dead. " How can he be dead, our witness, our intercessor, our mediator with God? He is not dead. Like Moses and Jesus he is wrapped in a holy trance, and speedily will he return to his faithful people." The evidence of sense was disregarded, and Omar, brandishing his scimitar, threatened to strike off the heads of the infidels who should affirm that the prophet was no more. The tumult was at length appeased by the moderation of Abubeker. " Is it Mohammed," said he, " or the God of Mohammed, whom ye worship? The God of Mohammed liveth for ever, but the apostle was a mortal like ourselves, and, according to his own prediction, he hath experienced the common fate of mortality."*

The prophet's remains were deposited at Medina, in the very room in which he breathed his last, the floor being removed to make way for his sepulchre, and a simple and unadorned monument some time after erected over them. The house

* " Mohammed is no more than an apostle: the other apostles have already deceased before him: if he die, therefore, or be slain, will ye turn back on your heels?"—Koran, ch. iii.

" Verily, thou, O Mohammed, shalt die, and they shall die; and ye shall debate the matter [idolatry] with one another before your Lord at the day of resurrection."—Ibid. ch. xxxix.

itself has long since mouldered or been demolished, but the place of the prophet's interment is still made conspicuous to the superstitious reverence of his disciples. The story of his relics being suspended in the air, by the power of loadstone, in an iron coffin, and that too at Mecca, instead of Medina, is a mere idle fabrication; as his tomb at the latter place has been visited by millions of pilgrims, and from the authentic accounts of travellers who have visited both these holy cities in disguise, we learn that it is constructed of plain mason work, fixed without elevation upon the surface of the ground.

CHAPTER XV.

Reflections upon the extraordinary Career of Mohammed—Description of his Person—General View and Estimate of his Character.

THUS closed the earthly career of one of the most remarkable men, and of decidedly the most successful impostor, that ever lived. By the force of a vast ambition, giving direction to native talents of a superior order, he had risen from small beginnings to the pinnacle of power among the Arab nation, and before his death had commenced one of the greatest revolutions known in the history of man. He laid the foundation of an empire, which, in the short space of eighty years, extended its sway over more kingdoms and countries than Rome had mastered in eight hundred. And when we pass from the political to the religious ascendancy which he gained, and consider the rapid growth, the wide diffusion, and the enduring permanence of the Mohammedan imposture, we are still more astonished. Indeed, in this, as in every other instance where the fortunes of an individual are entirely disproportioned to the means employed, and surpass all reasonable calculation, we are forced to resolve the problem into the special providence of God. Nothing short of this could have secured the achievement of such mighty results; and we must doubtless look upon Mohammedanism

at the present day as a standing monument of the mysterious wisdom of Jehovah, designed to compass ends which are beyond the grasp of human minds, at least till they are accomplished.

As to his person, Mohammed, according to his Arabic biographers, was of a middling stature and of a florid complexion. His head was large and well formed; his hair smooth and of a glossy black; his eye of the same colour; and so uncommonly vigorous and robust was his frame, that at the time of his death scarcely any of the marks or infirmities of age had appeared upon him. His features were large, yet regular; his cheeks full; his forehead prominent; his eyebrows long and smooth, mutually approaching each other, yet not so as to meet; and between them was a vein, of which the pulse was quicker and higher than usual whenever he was angry. He had an aquiline nose and a large mouth, with teeth of singular brilliancy and somewhat singular form, as they were pointed like the teeth of a saw, and placed at some distance from each other, though still in beautiful order. When he laughed he discovered them, and they appeared, if tradition may be credited, like hail-stones or little white pearls. Even his laughter is said to have been full of majesty, and in his smile there was such a peculiar contraction of the muscles of the mouth and cheeks, and such an expression given to the countenance, as rendered it irresistibly attractive. In his later years he became corpulent; but he had always a

free, open air, a majestic port, and a most engaging address.

The Moslem writers are unbounded in their eulogy of the prophet's character as a man. Even those of them who treat as it deserves the foolish fiction of his having been taken by two angels in his childhood, his body laid open by a knife, his heart taken out, and pressed, and wrung, till its original corruptions oozed out in the form of large black fetid drops, when it was again replaced, purified and perfect, in his bosom, and the wound miraculously healed, still maintain that his moral qualities were such as to lift him quite out of the grade of the common race of men. But here the history of his life and the pages of the Koran will enable us to make those abatements which, in respect to his personal accomplishments, we can only suspect *ought* to be made. His followers extol his piety, veracity, justice, liberality, humility, and self-denial, in all which they do not scruple to propose him as a perfect pattern to the faithful. His charity, in particular, they say, was so conspicuous, that he seldom had any money in his house, keeping no more than was just sufficient to maintain his family, and frequently sparing even a part of his own provisions to supply the necessities of the poor. All this may have been so, but in forming our judgment of the exhibition of these moral traits, we cannot forget that he had private ends to answer, and we thus find it impossible to distinguish between the generous impulses of a

kind and noble heart, and the actings of an interested policy. It is no unusual thing for a strong ruling passion to bring every other passion, even the most opposite and discordant, into harmony and subserviency to its dictates. Ambition will sometimes control avarice, and the love of pleasure not unfrequently govern both. A man may afford to be just and generous, and to act the part of a very saint, when he has no less a motive before him than to gain the character of a prophet and the power of a monarch. If Mohammed really evinced the virtues of a prophet, he doubtless had his eye upon "a prophet's reward." But we would not be gratuitously harsh in our judgment of the impostor's moral qualities. We think it by no means improbable, that his disposition was naturally free, open, noble, engaging, perhaps magnanimous. We doubt not injustice may have been done by Christian writers to the *man* in their unmeasured detestation of the *impostor*. But as long as we admit the truth of history, as it relates to Islamism and its founder, it is plain, that if he were originally possessed of praiseworthy attributes, they ceased to distinguish him as he advanced in life; for his personal degeneracy kept pace with his success, and his delinquencies became more numerous, gross, and glaring, the longer he lived.

Of his intellectual endowments, his followers speak in the same strain of high panegyric. His genius, soaring above the need of culture, unaided by the lights of learning, despising books, bore him by its innate strength into the kindred subli-

ilities of prophecy and poetry, and enabled him in the Koran, without models or masters, to speak with an eloquence unparalleled in any human production. But here it has escaped them, that they praise the prophet at the expense of his oracles; that whatever credit, on the score of authorship, they give to him, so much they detract from the evidence of its inspiration; since Mohammed himself constantly appeals to his revelations as proceeding from an "illiterate prophet," and therefore carrying with them, in their unequalled style, the clearest evidence of being, not a human, but a divine composition. On the point, however, of the literary merits of the Koran, and of the mental endowments of its author as evinced by it, the reader will judge for himself. We can more readily assent to their statements when they inform us, that his intellect was acute and sagacious, his memory retentive, his knowledge of human nature, improved as it was by travel and extended intercourse, profound and accurate, and that in the arts of insinuation and address he was without a rival. Neither are we able to gainsay their accounts when they represent him as having been affable, rather than loquacious; of an even cheerful temper; pleasant and familiar in conversation; and possessing the art, in a surprising degree, of attaching his friends and adherents to his person.

On the whole, from a candid survey of his life and actions, we may safely pronounce Mohammed to have been by nature a man of a superior cast of character, and very considerably in advance of

the age in which he lived. But the age and the country in which he arose and shone were rude and barbarous; and the standard which would determine him great among the roving tribes of Arabia might have left him little more than a common man in the cultivated climes of Europe. Men's characters are moulded as much by their circumstances and fortunes as by their native genius and bias. Under another combination of accidents, the founder of the Moslem faith and of the empire of the Saracens might have sunk to oblivion with the anonymous millions of his race, as the drops of rain are absorbed into the sands of his native deserts. His whole history makes it evident, that fanaticism, ambition, and lust were his master-passions; of which the former appears to have been gradually eradicated by the growing strength of the two last. An enthusiast by nature, he became a hypocrite by policy; and as the violence of his corrupt propensities increased, he scrupled not to gratify them at the expense of truth, justice, friendship, and humanity. It is right, indeed, in forming our estimate of his conduct in its most repulsive respects, that we should make allowance for the ignorance, the prejudices, the manners, the laws of the people among whom he lived. A heathen people cannot be fairly judged by the rules of Christian morality. In the mere circumstance of multiplying his wives, he followed the common example of his countrymen, with whom polygamy had been, from the earliest ages, a prevailing practice. And so, though

we cannot justify, yet we may in some measure palliate, the murder of Caab and Sophyan, if we supposed the prophet to have viewed them as enemies from whom his own life was in jeopardy ; for in this no violence was done to the common sentiments of the Arab race. Even at the present day, among the prophet's disciples all over the East, no trait is more common or more revolting than *recklessness of life*, which is doubtless to be ascribed as much to national habits as to a native cruelty or ferocity of disposition. We must, indeed, think but little of the morality of such a people, and must behold with indignation a pretended prophet, while professing to purify the moral code of his countrymen, continuing still in the practice of some of the worst of its tenets. Here, in fact, our heaviest condemnation falls upon Mohammed. *He did not observe those rules of morality which he himself laid down, and which he enforced upon others by such terrible sanctions.* No excuse can be offered for the impostor on this score. He abused his claims as a prophet to screen the guilty excesses of his private life, and under the pretence of a special revelation, dispensing him from the laws imposed by his own religion, had the female sex abandoned without reserve to his desires. "O prophet, we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given their dower, and also the slaves which thy right hand possesseth, of the booty which God hath granted thee ; and the daughters of thy uncle and the daughters of thy aunts, both on thy father's side and on thy mother's

side, who have fled with thee from Mecca, and any other believing woman, if she give herself unto the prophet; in case the prophet desireth to take her to wife. This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee, above the rest of the true believers.”* The exceedingly liberal grant thus made to the prophet on the score of matrimonial privilege may be contrasted with the allowance made to his followers. “Take in marriage of such women as please you two, three, or four; and not more. But if ye fear that ye cannot act equitably towards so many, marry one only.”†

Respect to decorum forbids our entering into details relative to this part of Mohammed’s conduct and character. But from what has been already adduced, the reader cannot have failed to perceive how completely the prophet’s imposture was made an engine for promoting the gratification of sensual passion. One of the grossest instances of his unhallowed abuse of the claims to which he pretended occurs in the history of his intercourse with Mary, an Egyptian slave. The knowledge of his illicit amours with this “possession of his right hand” having come to the ears, or rather to the eyes, of one of his lawful wives, who thereupon reproached him most bitterly for his infidelity, he went so far, in order to pacify her, as to promise with an oath never to be guilty of a repetition of the offence. But the infirmity of nature having not long after triumphed again over the strength of his resolution, he had recourse to his revelations

* Koran, ch. xxxiii.

† Ch. iv.

to cover the scandal of this shameless lapse. The expedient now resorted to forms one of the blackest stains upon the pages of the Koran, and upon the character of its author. It was nothing less than a pretended absolution of the prophet from the obligation of his oath. "O prophet, why holdest thou that to be prohibited which God hath allowed thee, seeking to please thy wives; since God is inclined to forgive, and merciful? God hath allowed you the dissolution of your oaths, and God is your Master."* Here is an alleged dispensation of the prophet, which must be construed as actually legalizing perjury on the part of a professed messenger of truth; one too who thus instructs his followers: "Perform your covenant with God, when ye enter into covenant with him, and violate not your oaths after the ratification thereof; since ye have made God a witness over you. Verily, God knoweth that which ye do. And be not like unto her who undoeth that which she hath spun, untwisting it after she hath twisted it strongly." "Therefore take not your oaths between you deceitfully, lest your foot slip after it hath been steadfastly fixed, and ye taste evil in this life, and suffer a grievous punishment in the life to come."† This is but too fair a specimen of the general character of the Koran. By far the greater part of its contents were fabricated to answer particular purposes, which he could effect in no other way; and this was an expedient which never failed. If any new enterprise was to be

* Koran, ch. lxvi

† Ch. xvi

undertaken, any new objections answered, any difficulty to be solved, any disturbance among his followers to be hushed, or any offence to be removed, immediate recourse was had to Gabriel, and a new revelation, precisely adapted to meet the necessities of the case, was granted. As an inevitable consequence, a vast number of variations and contradictions, too palpable to be denied, occur in the course of the book. His commentators and disciples acknowledge the fact, but account for it by saying, that whenever a subsequent revelation plainly contradicts a former, the former is to be considered as having been revoked or repealed by the latter; and above a hundred and fifty verses are enumerated as having been thus set aside by after-discoveries of the divine will. In this they are countenanced by the words of the impostor himself. "Whatever verse we shall abrogate, or cause thee to forget, we will bring a better than it, or one like unto it."* "When we substitute in the Koran an abrogating verse in lieu of a verse abrogated (and God best knoweth the fitness of that which he revealeth), the infidels say, Thou art only a forger of these verses: but the greater part of them know not the truth from falsehood."† When this feature of their religion is objected to modern Mohammedans, as it was by Henry Martyn in his controversy with them, they reply, that "this objection is altogether futile; for the precepts of God are always delivered with a special regard to the necessities of his servants. And

* Koran, ch. ii.

† Ch. xvi.

there can be no doubt that these must vary with the varying exigences of the times in which they are delivered. The divine Lawgiver may here be considered as the spiritual physician of his people ; who, like a temporal physician, prescribes such regimen and medicines as are most likely to suit the wants of his patient.”* The pupil here is certainly worthy of the master, when they both agree in teaching, that the grand principles of morality are not eternal and immutable, growing out of the very nature of the relation subsisting between the Creator and his creatures, but are mere arbitrary rules, subject to be relaxed, modified, or dispensed with, as circumstances may dictate. Seeing that this pitiful device of feigning dispensations and abrogations of particular duties subjects the immutable counsels of the Almighty to the charge of weakness and fickleness, it is surprising that his disciples should have been blinded by so flimsy a disguise ; yet such is evidently the fact. And it adds another proof of the truth of the remark, that as there is no error or absurdity in religion too monstrous to be conceived or broached, so there is none too gross to be imposed upon the credulity of others.

* Lee's Translation of H. Martyn's *Controversial Tracts*.

CHAPTER XVI.

Account of the Prophet's Wives—Cadijah—Ayesha—Hafsa—Zainab—Safyn—His Concubines—Singular Precepts in the Koran respecting the Wives of Mohammed—His comparative Treatment of Jews and Christians—Predictions of the Prophet alleged by Mohammedans to be contained in the sacred Scriptures.

As the subject of women occupies a prominent place in the Koran, so in a complete history of the prophet's life his numerous wives, of which the number is variously stated from fifteen to twenty-one, form a topic of too much interest to be omitted.

During the lifetime of Cadijah, it does not appear that she was ever pained with the sight or suspicion of a rival. After her death, when at length his reputation as a prophet had become established, and his authority too firmly rooted to be shaken, the restraints which policy had imposed upon passion were gradually thrown off, and the most unlimited license in this respect marked his subsequent conduct.

His third and best beloved wife was Ayesha, the daughter of Abubeker, whom he married in the first year of the Hejira. Vague rumours of conjugal infidelity have cast a stain upon the character of Ayesha not entirely effaced even at the present day. They were not believed, however, by the prophet, and the divine acquittal in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Koran has done much

towards shielding her fame from reproach. “As to the party among you, who have published the falsehood concerning Ayesha—every man of them shall be punished according to the injustice of which he hath been guilty; and he among them who hath undertaken to aggravate the same shall suffer a grievous punishment. Did not the faithful men and the faithful women say, This is a manifest falsehood? Have they produced four witnesses thereof? Wherefore, since they have not produced the witnesses, they are surely liars in the sight of God. Had it not been for the indulgence of God towards you, and his mercy in this world, and in that which is to come, verily a grievous punishment had been inflicted on you for the calumny which ye have spread; when ye published that with your tongues, and spoke that with your mouths, of which ye had no knowledge; and esteemed it to be light, whereas it was a matter of importance in the sight of God.”*

Ayesha was married—such is the surprising physical precocity peculiar to an eastern climate—at the early age of nine; and survived her husband forty-eight years. Her memory is held in great veneration by the Moslems, who have bestowed upon her the title of *Prophetess*, and *Mother of the Faithful*, probably from the circumstance of her being much resorted to after her husband’s death, as an expositor of the doubtful points of the law; an office which she performed by giving the sense which

* Koran, ch. xi

she had heard the prophet affix to them in his lifetime. Her expositions, together with those of Mohammed's first ten converts, form what is called the *Sonnah*, or the *Authentic Traditions*, of the professors of Islam, which bear a striking resemblance to the traditions of the Jews. Ayesha was the inveterate enemy of Ali, the rival candidate with Abubeker to the honour of being the prophet's successor; and when at last he attained to that dignity, she appeared in arms against him. Her expedition was indeed unsuccessful, yet she found means, some time after, to excite a defection among Ali's followers, which finally resulted in the ruin of himself and his house.

Hafsa, the daughter of Omar, was next in favour with the prophet. To her, as being the eldest of his wives, he committed the Chest of his apostleship, containing the original copies of his pretended revelations, from which the volume of the Koran was composed after his death, by Abubeker. She died at the age of sixty-six.

Zeinab, another of his wives, was originally the wife of his servant Zeid; upon whom, as we learn from the Koran, God had bestowed the grace to become one of the earliest converts to the true faith. The circumstances which led to her becoming the wife of the prophet, form a story worth relating. Mohammed, having occasion, one day, to call at the house of Zeid upon some matter of business, and not finding him at home, accidentally cast his eyes on Zeinab his wife. Being a woman of distinguished beauty, the prophet was so

smitten with her charms at first sight, that he could not forbear exclaiming, " Praised be God, who turneth the hearts of men as he pleaseth !" and thenceforth became violently in love with her Zeid, when made acquainted with the circumstance, was thrown into great perplexity. His affection for his wife and his wish to retain her were counterbalanced by his sense of obligation to his master, who had not only freed him from servitude, but had also publicly adopted him as his son and heir, by a religious ceremony at the black stone of the Caaba. Upon mature reflection he determined to part with Zeinab in favour of his benefactor, whom he privately acquainted with his intention, at the same time giving out in public that he no longer retained any affection for her, in order to pave the way for a divorce. Mohammed, aware of the scandal that would ensue among his people, from his taking to his bed one who stood to him in the relation of a daughter, made a feint of dissuading him from his purpose, and endeavoured to suppress the violence of his passion. But finding the flame which consumed him unconquerable, a chapter of the Koran came seasonably to his relief, which at once removed all impediments in the way of a union. " And remember, when thou saidst to him unto whom God had been gracious (Zeid), and on whom thou also hadst conferred favours, keep thy wife to thyself and fear God ; and thou didst conceal that in thy mind (i. e. thine affection to Zeinab) which God had determined to discover. and didst fear men ; whereas it

was more just that thou shouldst fear God. But when Zeid had determined the matter concerning her, and had resolved to divorce her, we joined her in marriage unto thee, lest a crime should be charged on the true believers in marrying the wives of their adopted sons : and the command of God is to be performed. No crime is to be charged on the prophet as to what God hath allowed him.”* Here the Most High is represented not only as sanctioning the marriage, but as conveying a gentle rebuke to the prophet, that he should so long have abstained from the enjoyment of this favour out of regard to public sentiment, as though he feared men rather than God! Zeinab hereupon became the wife of this most favoured of mortals, and lived with him in great affection to the time of his death ; always glorying over her associates, that whereas *they* had been married to Mohammed by their parents and kindred, *she* had been united to him by God himself, who dwells above the seven heavens !

Another of his wives, Safya, was a Jewess. Of her nothing remarkable is related, except that she once complained to her husband of being thus reproached by her companions : “ O thou Jewess, the daughter of a Jew and of a Jewess.” To which the prophet answered, “ Canst thou not say, Aaron is my father, Moses is my uncle, and Mohammed is my husband ?” But in reference to these insulting taunts, an admonition was conveyed

* Koran, ch. xxxiii

to the offenders from a higher source than the prophet himself. " O true believers, let not men laugh other men to scorn, who peradventure may be better than themselves ; neither let women laugh other women to scorn, who may possibly be better than themselves. Neither defame one another, nor call one another by opprobrious appellations."*

In addition to his wives, the harem of the prophet contained a number of concubines, among whom Mary, the Egyptian, was his favourite. By her he had a son, Ibrahim (Abraham), who died in infancy, to the unspeakable grief of the prophet and his disciples. He had no children by any of the rest of his wives except Cadijah, who was the mother of eight—four sons and four daughters ; but most of these died in early life, none of them surviving their father except Fatima, the wife of Ali, and she only sixty days.

The following passages from the Koran evince that not the prophet only was an object of the divine care, beneficence, and guidance, but that his wives also shared in the same kind providence, and that whatever instructions or admonitions their frailties might require were graciously bestowed upon them. From an infirmity not uncommon to the sex, they had become, it appears, more devoted to the decoration of their persons than was creditable for the wives of a holy prophet, and had demanded of him a larger allowance on the score of dress than he deemed it prudent to grant. They

* Koran, ch xlix

are thus rebuked: "O prophet, say unto thy wives, If ye seek this present life and the pomp thereof, come, I will make a handsome provision for you, and I will dismiss you with an honourable dismissal: but if ye seek God and his apostle, and the life to come, verily God hath prepared for such of you as work righteousness a great reward."* "O wives of the prophet, ye are not as other women: if ye fear God, be not too complaisant in speech, lest he should covet in whose heart is a disease of incontinence; but speak the speech which is convenient. And sit still in your houses; and set not out yourselves with the ostentation of the former time of ignorance, and observe the appointed times of prayer, and give alms; and obey God and his apostle; for God desireth only to remove from you the abomination of vanity, since ye are the household of the prophet, and to purify you by a perfect purification."†

The prophet interdicted to all his wives the privilege of marrying again after his death, and though some of them were then young, they scrupulously obeyed his command, delivered to them, like every thing else in the Koran, in the form of a mandate of heaven, and lived and died in widowhood. The passage in which this severe edict is found is a curiosity, and will doubtless lead the reader to suspect that it was prompted by a spirit of mean jealousy, the effects of which he aimed to perpetuate when he was no more. It is pre

* Koran, ch. xxxiii.

† Ibid

fac'd by some wholesome cautions to his followers respecting the etiquette to be observed in their intercourse with the prophet and his household.

“ O true believers, enter not into the houses of the prophet, unless it be permitted you to eat meat with him, without waiting his convenient time ; but when ye are invited, then enter. And when ye shall have eaten, disperse yourselves ; and stay not to enter into familiar discourse ; for this incommodeth the prophet. He is ashamed to bid you depart, but God is not ashamed of the truth. And when ye ask of the prophet's wives what ye may have occasion for, ask it of them behind a curtain. This will be more pure for your hearts and their hearts. Neither is it fit for you to give any uneasiness to the apostle of God, *or to marry his wives after him for ever* ; for this would be a grievous thing in the sight of God.”*

In the outset of his career, Mohammed appears to have been more favourably disposed towards the Jews than the Christians. This is inferred from his enjoying with them a common descent from the patriarch Abraham ; from his agreement with them in the fundamental doctrine of the divine unity ; and from his proffering to make Jerusalem the point of pilgrimage and of the Kebla to his followers. But conceiving a pique against them about the time of his entrance into Medina, he thenceforward became their inveterate enemy, and in all his wars pursued them with a more relentless

* Koran, ch. xxxiii

severity than he showed towards any other people. Thus this descendant of Ishmael, without intending it, made good the declaration of holy writ respecting the antagonist seeds of Hagar and of Sarah. "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now."* *Their* opposition to him can easily be accounted for on the score of national and religious prejudice. And the opprobrious name which they gave to the corrupt system of the heresiarch, tended still more to provoke his indignation. For while he professed to be a restorer of the true primitive religion which God communicated to Abraham, and Abraham to his son Ishmael, and which the prophet denominated Islam, or Islamism, from a word signifying *to devote* or *dedicate to religion*, the Jews, by a transposition of letters, called the new creed *Ismaelism*, from the prophet's progenitor, and thus cast the greatest possible reproach on the bastard faith of their enemy. *Their* effrontery Mohammed neither forgot nor forgave. Still, both Jews and Christians were admitted to protection in ordinary cases on the payment of a specified tribute.

Towards the Christians, though the Koran, and all who embrace it, breathe the most inveterate malice and the most sovereign contempt against the

* Gal. ch. iv.

“dogs” and “infidels” who profess the Gospel faith, yet rather more forbearance is exercised than towards the Jews; and some of the Moslems will grant, that Christianity, next to their own, is the best religion in the world, particularly as held by Unitarians. Yet Mohammed, in the Koran, loses no opportunity to pour his revilings indiscriminately upon both. “The Jews and the Christians say, We are the children of God and his beloved. Answer, Why, therefore, doth he punish you for your sins?”* “They say, Verily, none shall enter paradise, except they who are Jews or Christians: this is their wish. Say, Produce your proof of this, if ye speak truth. The Jews say, The Christians are grounded on nothing; and the Christians say, The Jews are grounded on nothing: yet they both read the Scriptures.”† “O ye, to whom the Scriptures have been given, why do ye dispute concerning Abraham? Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; but he was of the true religion, one resigned unto God, and was not of the number of idolaters.”‡

The religion of the Koran tolerates Christian churches in places where they have been anciently founded, but permits them not to be reared on new foundations. Christians may repair the walls and roofs of their places of worship, but are not allowed to lay a stone in a new place consecrated to the site of a holy building; nor, if fire or any other accident should destroy the superstructure, are they suffered to renew the foundations, so as

* Koran, ch. v.

† Ch. li

‡ Ch. iii.

to erect another building. The consequence is; that Christian churches, in the Mohammedan dominions, must necessarily at length sink to ruin, and vast numbers of them have already gone entirely to decay. In the great fires which happened in Galata and Constantinople in 1660, numerous Christian churches and chapels were reduced to ashes, and when the piety and zeal of their votaries had re-edified and almost completed the greatest number of them, a public order was issued that they should all be again demolished, it being judged contrary to Turkish law to permit the restoration of churches where nothing but the mere foundation remained.

The fact may be here adverted to, in drawing our sketch to a close, that Mohammed not only admitted the Old and New Testaments as divinely inspired books, though corrupted by their disciples, but affirmed that they bore unequivocal prophetic testimony to his future mission as prophet and apostle: "And when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, O children of Israel, Verily I am the apostle of God sent unto you confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmed (Mohammed)." * In support of what is here alleged, the Persian paraphrast quotes the words of Christ in his last address to his disciples: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you." This passage the Moham-

medan doctors unanimously teach has a direct inference to their prophet, and is fulfilled in him only. But then, in order to make good their interpretation, they are obliged to hold that the Christians in their copies have corrupted the true reading, which, instead of *Paraclete* (*Comforter*), is *Pericyte* (*illustrious, renowned*), a word perfectly synonymous with Ahmed.

The following passage (Deut. xxxiii. 2) is also suborned to the support of the same bad cause: "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Mount Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of his saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them." By these words, say the Moslem expositors, is set forth the delivery of the law to Moses, on Mount Sinai; of the Gospel to Jesus at Jerusalem; and of the Koran to Mohammed at Mecca. By Seir, they maintain that the mountains of Jerusalem are meant, and by Paran, those in the neighbourhood of Mecca. But their geography will appear as lame as their divinity, when it is stated, that Seir was a hundred miles distant from Jerusalem, and Paran five hundred from Mecca. Their other glosses of this nature need no confutation.

In another sense, however, wholly different from that intended by Mohammed or his followers, we doubt not that this grand impostor and his religion are distinctly foretold in the sacred volume. The religion promulgated, and the empire established, by the author of Islam, has been too

signal a scourge to the Church and the civilized world not to be entitled to a place in the prophetic annunciations of the Bible. As the subject of the rise, progress, and permanence of Mohammedanism cannot be duly appreciated apart from the predictions concerning it, we have determined to devote a portion of the Appendix to the consideration of the most prominent and striking of these prophecies, to which the reader will permit us to bespeak his attention.

APPENDIX.

[A.]*

PROPHECY.—Dan. vii. 8—26.

(THE VISION.)

- ‡ The he-goat waxed very great : and when he was strong, the great horn was broken ; and for it came up four notable ones toward the
9. four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great toward the south and toward
 10. the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven ; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars
 11. to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host, and by him was the daily sacrifice
 12. taken away, and the piace of his sanctuary was cast down. And a host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression ; and it cast down the truth to the ground ; and it practised and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and
 13. another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the
 14. host to be trodden under foot ? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

(THE INTERPRETATION.)

21. And the rough goat is the king (kingdom) of Grecia : and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king (kingdom).
22. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding (*Heb.* making to understand, teaching) dark sentences, shall stand
24. up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power : and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise,
25. and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand ; and he

* For the materials of this chapter, and occasionally for some portion of the language, the compiler acknowledges himself indebted principally to Faber's Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, Foster's Mahometanism Unveiled, and Fry's Second Advent of Christ. He has moreover given a minute and critical attention to these prophecies in the original languages.

- shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true; wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. Dan. vii. 8—26.

THE prophecy of Daniel contains a prospective view of the providential history of the world, including the four great empires of antiquity, together with the powers which should succeed them to the end of time, and consummation of all things. It is reasonable therefore to expect, that a system of predictions thus large upon the history of the world, would not omit a revolution of such magnitude and prominence as that occasioned by Mohammed and Mohammedanism. No event, moreover, has had a more direct and powerful bearing upon the state of the Church than the establishment of this vast imposture; and as the preceding chapter contains a full and exact portraiture of the Papal tyranny which was to arise and prevail in the western portion of Christendom, so the present is very generally admitted to contain a prediction of that great apostacy which was destined to grow up and overwhelm the Church in the East. The reasons of this opinion we now proceed to state.

The theatre of this prophecy is the Macedonian empire, founded by Alexander; from one of the four dismembered kingdoms of which the little horn of the vision was to spring up. In the vision, the prophet saw the first great horn of the he-goat, or the kingdom of Alexander, "broken;" indicating that that kingdom was no longer to have a place as a kingdom in the eye of prophecy. The dominions of Alexander at his death were divided between four of his generals: Macedon and Greece in the west were assigned to Cassander; Thrace and Bithynia in the north to Lysimachus; Egypt in the south to Ptolemy; and Syria with the eastern provinces to Seleucus.

Ver. 9. And out of one of them came forth a little

horn.—A “horn,” in the symbolical language of prophecy, represents a civil or ecclesiastical kingdom. The little horn here mentioned was to come forth out of one of the four notable horns or members of the subdivided kingdom of Alexander. The question has been much agitated whether Alexander seized and retained any portion of the Arabian peninsula: the fact of his having done so may be seen in any map of the Macedonian empire. “The empire of Alexander,” observes M. Rollin, “was distributed into four kingdoms; of which Ptolemy had Egypt, Libya, *Arabia*, Cœlosyria, and Palestine.” The district occupied was indeed no more than an outskirt, but that outskirt comprised part of the province of Hejaz; that is to say, part of that very district which gave birth to Mohammed and his religion.—As the horn in the vision was *a little one*, so Mohammedanism in its first rise perfectly corresponded with the symbol. It originated with an obscure inhabitant of a desert corner of Asia, whose earliest converts were his wife, his servant, his pupil, and his friend; and whose party at the end of three years scarcely numbered a dozen persons.

Which waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.—Mohammedanism accordingly, in its primitive course of conquest, did presently wax exceedingly great; and *that* in the very line marked out by the prophecy. Its conquests extended southward over the large peninsula of Arabia, over Egypt, and over a considerable portion of central Africa; eastward, over Persia, Bokhara, and Hindostan; and northward, over Palestine, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Tartary, the countries now forming the Turkish empire. “The pleasant land,” or, literally, “the beauty,” “the ornament,” is an appellation bestowed upon the land of Judah, from its being in a peculiar manner the residence of the divine glory, the seat of worship, containing the city of Jerusalem

and the temple, which were “a crown of beauty and a diadem of glory” to the nation of Israel. The original word here employed is found in a parallel sense in Ezek. xx. 6. 15; “a land flowing with milk and honey, which is the *glory* of all lands.” Jerusalem was captured by the Saracens A. D. 637, after a siege of four months.

Ver. 10. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven.—The “host of heaven” is but another name for the multitude of stars in the firmament. But stars, in the idiom of prophecy, are a standing emblem of ecclesiastical officers. The word “host” accordingly is not only applied to the priests and Levites performing the service of the sanctuary (Num. iv. 3), but to the nation of Israel as a great organized ecclesiastical body, or kingdom of priests. Ex. xii. 41. And when Christ says (Rev. i. 20), “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches,” his meaning undoubtedly is, that these stars are symbols of the spiritual rulers of the churches. The grand scope, therefore, of the present prophecy is, to point out a spiritual desolation, achieved by a hostile power suddenly attaining great strength, and forcibly thrusting itself into the body of true worshippers, with a view to their discomfiture and dispersion.

And it cast down some of the host, and (i. e. even) of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.—As in the figurative language of prophecy the stars denote the spiritual pastors of God’s church, so the violent dejection of such stars from heaven to earth signifies a compulsory apostatizing from their religion. Mohammedanism strikingly fulfilled this prophecy from the date of its first promulgation, when it stood up against the allegorical host, or the degenerate pastors of the Christian Church. Such of them as lay within the territories of the Greek empire were especially given into the hand of this persecuting superstition; but by its inroads into Africa, and Spain,

and France, and Italy, it waxed great against the whole host. Of the eastern clergy, it cast some to the ground, or compelled them altogether to renounce the Christian faith. And as for those who still adhered to the form of their religion, it stamped them, as it were, under its feet with all the tyranny of brutal fanaticism.

Ver. 11. Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host.—If the starry host be the pastors of the Church, the prince of that host must obviously be the Messiah. Mohammedanism has most clearly verified this prediction by magnifying its founder to a pitch of dignity and honour equal to that of Christ. In fact, it has set up Mohammed above Christ. The Arabian impostor allowed Jesus to be a prophet; but he maintained that he himself was a greater prophet, and that the Koran was destined to supersede the Gospel. Thus did Mohammedanism magnify itself “even to” the Prince of the host.

And by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.—The term rendered “daily sacrifice,” or, literally, “the daily,” “the continual,” is a term frequently used respecting the daily repeated sacrifices of the Jewish temple, typifying the death of Christ till he should come. Now, what this continual burnt-offering was with respect to Christ’s first coming, are the daily offerings of prayer and praise, and all the solemnities of the Christian Church, as administered by a divinely appointed order of men. When, therefore, the Saracens and Turks by their victories and oppressions broke up and dispersed the churches of the East, and abolished the daily spiritual worship of God, then did the “little horn” take away the “continual offering” established by the Prince of the host. But the predicted desolation was to extend yet farther. The place of God’s sanctuary was to be razed to its foundation, and both the sanctuary and the host for a long course of ages to be trodden

under foot. Accordingly, Mohammedanism began this appointed work by the subversion of the Christian churches and altars in every stage of its progress against the Greek empire ; and has continued the desolation during nearly twelve hundred years, until it has all but completed the extinction of Eastern Christianity. Gibbon observes, that upon the taking of Jerusalem, “ by the command of Omar, the ground of the temple of Solomon was prepared for the foundation of a mosque.”* And it is worthy of notice, that whereas the original word used by Daniel for “ sanctuary” is *Kodsh*, the same historian remarks, that the epithet *Al Kods* is used now, and was then among the Arabs as the proper appellation of the Holy City, of which the sanctuary or temple was the distinguishing ornament and glory.

Ver. 12. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression : and it cast down the truth to the ground : and it practised and prospered.—From this it would appear, that power was to be given to the little horn, not merely for the subversion of the true religion, but also for the permanent substitution of another faith. “ Host,” we may naturally suppose, means in this place the same as when it was used in a former verse,—“ a host of stars,” symbolical of the several orders of Christian pastors and ministers. “ An host,” then, to be given to the little horn, implies that he too should have his *orders of teachers*, and a regular system of religious worship, and that by means of this new and spurious ecclesiastical polity, the Christian ministry should be opposed and superseded, and “ the truth cast to the ground.” The prediction, thus interpreted, according to the natural force of the language and construction, is applicable to no other known power ; but as applied to the heresy of Mohammed, its fulfilment appears perfect. For the

* Dec. and Fall, ch. li.

religion of Islam permanently overthrew the Christian priesthood and altars, by the permanent erection of other altars and of another priesthood in their room. Every where throughout its vast domains the mosques replaced the Christian temples; and the Imams and the Muezzin were substituted for the appointed ministry of Christ. In a more enlarged view, the Saracens and Turks themselves composed the antagonist host or priesthood. For in Mohammedanism, the sword being the grand engine of conversion, the whole Mussulman people became virtually a priesthood; and each individual Saracen and Turkish soldier a missionary and maker of proselytes.

Ver. 23. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance and understanding (teaching) dark sentences, shall stand up. We are here furnished with a chronological clew to the period of the commencement of this disastrous power.—The first three empires, forming a part of the symbolic image which appeared in vision to Nebuchadnezzar, were indeed stripped of their dominions by the conquests of the fourth, or Roman empire; but still, in the view of prophecy, their lives are considered as being nevertheless prolonged; Dan. vii. 12. Hence it is an indisputable fact that the little horn of Mohammedanism rose up in the latter time of the Greek empire.—Another striking note of the time of the rise of this power is contained in the words, “When the transgressors are come to the full,” or, “when the apostacy shall be completed.” By the transgressors or apostates here mentioned, we must understand the corrupt Christian Church, with its degenerate pastors, the smitten ecclesiastical stars, spoken of in a former verse. We learn both from the civil and sacred history of the time when Mohammed arose, that the Christian Church had then arrived at the height of those corruptions in doctrine

and practice, which had been so clearly foretold by the Apostle Paul in his prediction of the Man of Sin. The extraordinary success of the Mohammedan imposture was permitted as a punishment of this great defection. The allegorical host, by reason of their apostacy from the truth, were subjected to the tyranny of the little horn. But this apostacy, which had long previously infected both the East and the West, was completed, or had reached its acme, about the commencement of the seventh century, when the prophet of Islam first appeared. Gibbon, the historian, introduces his account of Mohammedanism by observing, that "the Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism." From this time, therefore, the stars were given into the hand of the little horn, as the appointed rod of God's anger: they were penally consigned to its tyranny by reason of their previous apostacy into the idolatrous superstitions of the Gentiles. Again, as far as the aspect of Mohammedanism is concerned, that wonderful ecclesiastical domination may well be described as a "kingdom of fierce countenance," when the avowed maxim of its founder was to employ the sword as the grand engine of conversion. Of this ferocious spirit its proselytes have in all ages largely partaken. Some, however, suppose the words should be translated "of a firm countenance," denoting the bold effrontery of the barefaced, impudent liar; and such were Mohammed and his successors: their religion is, in truth, the most glaring imposition that was ever palmed upon the credulity of mankind.—As to the remaining character of this desolating power—that he should "understand dark sentences"—the expression, "dark sentences," is equivalent to the familiar scriptural phrases, "dark sayings," and "dark sayings of old." These phrases, in the language of the sacred writers, will be found uniformly to convey a spiritual signification. Thus the Psalmist,

‘I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter *dark sayings of old.*’ It seems probable, therefore, that the equivalent expression, “dark sentences,” relates, in one shape or other, to religion; and the ‘understanding dark sentences,” to real or pretended skill in the interpretation of things spiritual. The Koran, so celebrated in the Mohammedan religion, the book containing their spiritual mysteries, exactly answers to this description. And it is not a little remarkable, that the author of the Koran should have been unconsciously led to appropriate the language of this very prediction to himself “O Lord, thou hast given me a part of the kingdom, and hast taught me the interpretation of *dark sayings.*” “We taught him the interpretation of *dark sayings,* but the greater part of them men do not understand.” ‘This is a secret history which we reveal unto thee, O Mohammed.’* As the fabricator, therefore, of the Koran, Mohammed has himself confirmed his claim to the prophetic distinction of “understanding dark sentences;” for it is the declared object of this pretended revelation to revive the traditions of ancient times concerning God and religion; and it professes farther to unfold the history of futurity, and the secrets of the invisible world.

Ver. 24. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power.—Of this language a twofold interpretation may be suggested, either of which is satisfactory, though it be not easy to decide which of them is the true one. By “his power being mighty, but not by his own power,” may be meant, that the *temporal* power of Mohammed and his successors was to owe its greatness and perpetuity to his *spiritual* dominion; or, in other words, that the *empire* which he founded was to be upheld by the *importure* which he established. To this purpose the following passage from Demetrius Cantemir, the

* Koran, ch. xii.

historian of the Ottoman empire, will be found very striking. "The Turks," says he, "ascribe the fortunate successes of the empire, not so much to human prudence, policy, and valour, as that their first emperors waged war, *not* through ambition and a desire of dominion, *but through the zeal of propagating the Mohammedan religion*; and by that means they procured the divine assistance to their undertakings." The *temporal* power of Mohammedanism, accordingly, has repeatedly risen and declined; the Mohammedan world has again and again changed masters, but its *spiritual* tyranny has subsisted in undiminished vigour; it has lived and reigned unaltered, through the whole of its period thus far fulfilled. It is mighty, therefore, *by the power of the host given unto it*. According to another interpretation, the passage may be simply designed to teach, that the remarkable success of the Mohammedan power is to be referred directly to the special providence of God, that the results attained were so entirely to transcend all that could be anticipated from the ordinary operation of human causes, that the hand of God was to be clearly recognised in every stage of its progress. Viewed in this light, the language of the Most High respecting Nebuchadnezzar may afford a commentary of most striking pertinency upon this prediction: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, by the strength of mine hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent. Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod

should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were no wood.”*

And he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.—It should be borne in mind that the verses we are now considering contain the angel’s interpretation of the symbolic actions performed by the little horn in the vision. Of these the principal was his rudely invading the emblematic “host,” or the hierarchy, violently casting them to the ground, and stamping upon them with his feet. The language before us is unquestionably exegetical of this figurative scenery, and the phrases, “shall destroy wonderfully,” and “shall destroy the mighty and the holy people,” are equivalent to saying, he shall succeed to a surprising degree in causing multitudes to apostatize from the Christian profession. This was to be done by spreading the poison of a false religion. For the original word rendered “destroy” is a term implying not merely *physical destruction*, but *moral corruption*, or the vitiating influence of false doctrines and principles upon human conduct. It is the term employed in the following passages:—“For all flesh had *corrupted* his way upon the earth;” “Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest ye *corrupt* yourselves, and make you a graven image, &c. ;” “They are *corrupt*; they have done abominable works.” In allusion to these expressions, it is said in the annunciation of divine judgments in the Apocalypse, “Thy wrath is come, that thou shouldst destroy them that *destroy* the earth;” i. e. those that *corrupt* the earth. In affixing this sense to the *destruction* to be achieved by the little horn, or the Mohammedan power, it is not necessary to exclude the idea of the bloodshed and desolation which have marked the progress of the Saracen and Turkish arms in planting and de-

* Isaiah, ch. x. 5—15.

fending their dominion. Yet we think the sense of a *moral depravation*, brought about by the introduction of a spurious and pestilent faith, and accomplishing a sad defection among the professors of the true religion, answers better to the nature of the symbol employed, and is equally accordant with the truth of history.

Ver. 25. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand: and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes.— The institution of the religion of the Koran with its “host,” or orders of teachers, and its system of worship, was Mohammed’s masterpiece of “policy.” It was by this means that his followers supplanted the preachers of the Gospel, and converted to the faith multitudes of those over whom the temporal authority had been extended by the power of the sword. “Policy” here is probably to be understood in the sense of *unprincipled shrewdness*, the working of a keen but depraved intellect, laying its plans with a serpentine subtlety, and executing them with an entire recklessness of the moral character of the means employed. In this manner success has crowned the Mohammedan power; their vile arts, their “craft,” their perfidy, have stangely prospered. No more striking characteristic of the founder or the followers of Islam could be designated. “In the exercise of political government,” says Gibbon, “Mohammed was compelled to abate of the stern rigour of fanaticism, to comply in some measure with the prejudices and passions of his followers, and to employ even the vices of mankind as the instrument of their salvation. The use of *fraud and perfidy*, of cruelty and injustice, was often subservient to the propagation of the faith.” “In the support of truth, *the arts of fraud and fiction* may be deemed less criminal; and he would have started at the foulness of the means, had he not been satis-

fied of the importance and justice of the end." The recent Travels in the East of Mr. Madden, an English gentleman, furnish some very graphic sketches of Mohammedan character, which may be adduced to fill up the prophetic portraiture we are now considering. "His (the Turk's) inherent hostility to Christianity is the first principle of his law; *and the perfidy it is supposed to enjoin* is the most prominent feature in his character."* "The most striking qualities of the Moslem are his profound ignorance, his insuperable arrogance, his habitual indolence, and the *perfidy* which directs his policy in the divan, and regulates his ferocity in the field."† "As to the outward man, the Turk is, physically speaking, the finest animal, and, indeed, excels all Europeans in bodily vigour as well as beauty. As to their moral qualities, I found them charitable to the poor, attentive to the sick, and kind to their domestics; but I also found them *perfidious* to their friends, treacherous to their enemies, and thankless to their benefactors."‡ "I never found a Turk who kept his word when it was his interest to break it."§

As to the expression, "by peace he shall destroy many," it has been interpreted by some as implying, that the kingdom represented by the little horn should destroy many by wasting invasions while their victims were slumbering in a state of negligent security; a peculiarity said to have been exemplified in the whole progress of the Saracen arms. Such may have been the case; but we incline to attribute another import to the words. Adhering to the sense before given to the word "destroy," as implying the same as to *corrupt, seduce, lead into destructive error*, we suppose the allusion to be to the fact, that thousands during the victorious progress of the Moslem arms accepted of life, safety, and "peace," on condition of their embracing the foul imposture of the

* Madden's Travels, vol. i. p. 18

† *Ib.* p. 29.

‡ *Ib.* p. 19.

§ *Ib.* p. 31.

conquerors. Thus it was that "by peace he destroyed many;" i. e. he corrupted them by the terms on which he granted peace. It is notorious that these were "death, tribute, or the Koran," and where the subject nations escaped the point of the sword, they were *destroyed* by the corrupting and deadly influence of the superstition which they embraced.

But he shall be broken without hand.—That is to say, not by human hands, or by the instrumentality of man, as empires are usually overthrown; but this spiritual dominion is to meet its fate when the stone cut out "without hands" is dashed against the image, and reduces all the power of despotism and delusion to the dust. Expositors of prophecy are many of them confident in the belief that the Mohammedan imposture will begin to be broken, without hand, at the time when the great antichristian confederacy of the Roman beast is destroyed; and at the epoch when the Millennium is on the point of commencing. At this period the Gospel will begin to be successfully preached throughout the whole world; and the issue, it is supposed, will be the universal gathering of the Gentiles into the pale of the Christian Church. During this period, the Mohammedans will be converted to the true faith; and when their conversion shall have become general, the spiritual kingdom of the Eastern little horn will, no doubt, be broken. But in that case, it will plainly have been broken without hand; for it will not have been broken by the sword of violence, in the hand of an earthly conqueror; but by the invisible agency of the Holy Spirit, inclining the hearts of its long-deluded votaries to renounce their errors, and to embrace the faith of the true Prophet of God.

Thus we have seen, that the little horn of the symbolical he-goat answers in every important particular, however circumstantial, which has hitherto been accomplished, to the successful imposture of Mohammed. The result, therefore, of the whole in-

quiry must be, that by the little horn, described in this chapter of Daniel, is symbolized the spiritual kingdom of Mohammedanism.

Another parallel prophecy is now to be traced in the Apocalypse of John, who has confirmed and illustrated the most important predictions of Daniel.

REVELATION, CH. IX. 1—19.

1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit
2. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air
3. were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given
4. power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men
5. which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men
6. seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were
7. crowns, like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the
8. teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots
9. of many horses, running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions; and there were stings in their tails: and their power was
10. to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit; whose name, in the Hebrew tongue, is Abaddon; but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One wo is past; and behold there came two more woes
11. hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God; saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which
12. are bound in the river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed which were prepared for an hour and a day, and a month
13. and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand:
14. and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were
15. as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men
16. killed; by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which

19. issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

“In the prediction of Daniel,” observes Mr. Faber, “Mohammedanism alone is spoken of: its two principal supporters, the Saracens and the Turks, are not discriminated from each other: a general history of the superstition from its commencement to its termination is given, without descending to particularize the nations by which it should be successively patronised. In the Revelation of John, this deficiency is supplied; and we are furnished with two distinct and accurate paintings, both of the Saracenic locusts under their exterminating leader, and of the Euphratæan horsemen of the four Turkish Sultanies.” These two departments of the prophecy we shall now endeavour to explain in their minute particulars.

Ver. 1. And I saw a star fall (Gr. “having fallen”) *from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.*—Commentators at the present day are almost universally agreed in regarding the fifth trumpet as symbolizing and predicting the appearance of the Arabian impostor, his spurious religion, and his Saracen followers. But, as it is by no means evident, how Mohammed himself can properly be represented as “a star falling from heaven,” the usual symbol of an apostate Christian teacher, or of a number of them, we apprehend the design of the Holy Spirit in this imagery to be, to teach us, that *Mohammedanism is to be considered as the fruit or product of a Christian heresy.* The star had fallen before the time of the false prophet, in the person of Arius, and other gross heretics; and as the consequence of their apostacy from the truth, he providence of God so ordered it, that the deso-

laugh delusion of Mohammedanism should arise and overspread some of the fairest portions of the Church. This view of the arch-imposture of Islamism has been taken by some very able writers of modern times; particularly by Mr. Whitaker in his "Origin of Arianism." The grand heresies, therefore, of the Christian Church, previous to the time of Mohammed, seem to be here personified in the fallen star, and represented as being instrumental in introducing this master-plague of error and superstition into the world. The poetical machinery of the vision is supposed to be taken from the sacred oracular caves of the ancient Pagans, which were often thought to communicate with the sea, or the great abyss, and which were specially valued, when (like that at Delphi) they emitted an intoxicating vapour: it is used, therefore, with singular propriety in foretelling the rise of a religious imposture. There may possibly be an allusion also to the cave of Hera, whither the prophet was wont to retire for the purpose of excogitating his system, and from which it really emanated. The opening of the bottomless pit, therefore, and the letting out the vapour and smoke of the infernal regions, aptly represents the wicked and diabolical system of religion, the dense and noxious fumes of the corrupt theology which he broached, and by means of which so large a portion of Christendom was finally obscured and involved in darkness. The preternatural darkening of the sun fore-shows the eclipse of the true religion; and that of the air prefigures the uncontrolled dominion of the powers of darkness. As a striking coincidence with the signs here predicted, it is worthy of note, that a remarkable comet immediately preceded the birth of Mohammed; and that an eclipse of the sun, of extraordinary degree and duration, attended the first announcement of his pretended mission.

Ver. 2. And there came out of the pit locusts upon the earth.—Arabia has long been noted for giving

birth to prodigious swarms of locusts, which often overspread and lay waste the neighbouring countries; and it is remarkable, that in a genuine Arabian romance, the locust is introduced as the national emblem of the Ishmaelites. The symbol, therefore, of the locusts issuing out of the smoke strikingly represents the armies of the Saracens, the martial followers of the prophet, first engendered, as it were, amid the fumes of his religion, and then marching forth, at his command, to conquer and to proselyte the world. The pages of history must be consulted to learn the devastations of those hosts of destructive Saracens, which, under the guidance of Mohammed and his successors, alighted upon and wasted the apocalyptic earth. Yet, notwithstanding the phantasms that came forth from the pit of the abyss bore a general resemblance to locusts, they were marked by several peculiarities, by which they were more perfectly adapted to typify the people designed to be thus shadowed out. These we shall consider as we proceed.

Ver. 4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.—By the command that they should not hurt the grass, nor the trees, but *men* only, it is evident that these were not natural, but symbolical locusts; and also that they were under providential control. The same thing appears from other attributes assigned them, which plainly belong to the *objects signified*, and not to the *sign*; as the human face, the woman's hair, the golden crowns, the iron breastplates. But it is very common in the symbolic diction of prophecy, to find the *literal* and the *allegorical* sense internixed, and that even in the same passage. We are thus furnished with a clew to the real meaning of the symbols. By the precept here given, the emblematic locusts were required to act in a manner perfectly

dissimilar to the ravages of natural locusts: and yet how faithfully the command was obeyed, may be inferred from the following very remarkable injunction of the Caliph Abubeker to Yezid, upon setting out on the expedition against Syria, the *first* undertaking of the Saracens in the way of foreign conquest. It can scarcely be doubted, that these instructions have been preserved, under the providence of God, for the express purpose of furnishing an illustration of this prophetic text. "Remember," said Abubeker, "that you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment, and the hope of paradise. When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. *Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees; nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat.* When you make any covenant, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons, who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone, and neither kill them, nor destroy their monasteries. And you will find another sort of people, that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns: be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mahometans, or pay tribute."* It has accordingly been noticed, that those parts of the Roman empire which were left untouched by these Saracen hordes, were those in which it appears from history the remnant of the true church of God was still found residing: they were only to hurt the men who had not the mark of God on their foreheads.

Ver. 5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months, and their torment was as the torment of a

* Ockley's History of the Saracens, vol. I.

scorpion, when he striketh a man.—Mr. Gibbon's un-
 designed commentary on these words will show how
 the commission was fulfilled. "The fair option of
 friendship or submission, a battle was proposed to the
 enemies of Mahomet. If they professed the creed
 of Islam, they were admitted to all the temporal and
 spiritual benefits of his primitive disciples, and
 marched under the same banners, to extend the re-
 ligion they had embraced. The clemency of the
 prophet was decided by his interests; yet he seldom
 trampled on a prostrate enemy, and he seemed to
 promise, that on the payment of a tribute, the least
 guilty of his unbelieving subjects might be indulged
 in their worship."—The period assigned for the
 power of the locusts, in this prediction, is "five
 months." Prophecy has its peculiar mode of com-
 puting time. A day for the most part stands for a
 year. Five months, therefore, of thirty days each,
 amount, in the computation of prophecy, to one hun-
 dred and fifty years. As five literal months is the
 utmost term of the duration of the natural plague of
 the locusts, so the prophetic five months accurately
 denote the period of the main conquests of the Sa-
 racen empire, computing from the appearance of
 Mohammed to the foundation of Bagdad. "Read,"
 says Bishop Newton, "the history of the Saracens,
 and you will find, that their greatest exploits were
 performed, and their greatest conquests made, within
 the space of five prophetic months, or one hundred
 and fifty years,—between the year 612, when Ma-
 homet opened the bottomless pit, and began publicly
 to teach and propagate his imposture; and the year
 762, when Aïmansor built Bagdad, and called it the
 city of peace." The comparison of the locusts' tor-
 ments to that of the scorpion will be considered sub-
 sequently.

*Ver. 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and
 shall not find it; and shall desire to die, but death shall
 flee from them.*—This prediction has usually been

considered as awfully expressive of the hopeless sufferings and despair of Eastern Christendom, under the lawless insults, violences, and oppressions systematically practised by their Saracen masters. We would not deny that this may have been alluded to; yet, as it would seem that men desirous of escaping suffering by death, might easily, in a thousand ways, have accomplished their object, it may be suggested, whether the Saracens themselves are not the persons here referred to, as coveting death in battle, from a view to the honour, and the rewards of such a decease. The following passage from the Koran, is worthy of special note in this connexion. "Moreover, ye did sometimes wish for death, before that ye met it."* On these words Sale remarks, in a note, "that several of Mohammed's followers, who were not present at Beder, wished for an opportunity of obtaining, in another action, the like honour as those had gained who fell martyrs in that event." The import of the language, therefore, may be, that God should give to the Moslem hosts such an uninterrupted tide of conquests, they should so uniformly come off victorious in their engagements, and that with such inconsiderable losses, that numbers, in the height of their enthusiasm, should pant in vain for the glorious privilege of dying in the field of battle.

Ver. 7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle.—"Arabia," says Gibbon, "is, in the opinion of naturalists, the native country of the horse." The horsemanship of the Arabs has ever been an object of admiration. "The martial youth, under the banner of the Emir, is ever on horseback and in the field, to practise the exercise of the bow, the javelin, and the scimitar." In correspondence, therefore, with the hieroglyphic of the prophet, the strength of the Saracens consisted very

* Koran. ch. iii

much in their numerous cavalry, and the unrivalled speed of the Arabian coursers forms the most striking possible emblem of the rapid career of the Saracen armies.

And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.—"Make a point," says a precept of Mohammed, "of wearing turbans; because it is the way of angels." The turban, accordingly, has ever been the distinctive head-dress of the Arabs, and their boast has been, that they wore, as their common attire, those ornaments, which among other people are the peculiar badges of royalty. The notice of the "faces of men" seems to be intended merely to afford a clew to the meaning of the emblem; to intimate, that not natural locusts, but human beings, were depicted under this symbol.

Ver. 8. And they had hair, as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.—The Arabs, as Pliny testifies, wore their beards, or rather mustachios, as men, while their hair, like that of women, was flowing or plaited. The "teeth like those of lions," has reference to the weapons and implements of war; and the "breastplates of iron" to the armour made use of by the Saracen troops in their expeditions. The "sound of their wings as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle," is but a part of the same expressive imagery denoting warlike scenes and preparations.

Ver. 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions: and there were stings in their tails. The interpretation of the symbols of the Apocalypse must be sought for in the Old Testament. From the following words of Isaiah (ch. ix. 14, 15) it appears that the tail of a beast denotes the false doctrines or the superstition which he maintains:—"Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he

is the tail." The emblem, therefore, strikingly represents the infliction of spiritual wounds by the propagation of poisonous and deadly errors and heresies. And nothing is more evident from the page of history than that the Moslem followers of Mohammed have scattered, like scorpions, the venom of their doctrines behind them; and whether conquering or conquered, have succeeded in palming a new creed upon those with whom they have had to do. By this symbol, then, we are plainly taught, that the plague of the allegorical locusts consisted not only in the ravages of war, but in the successful propagation of a false religion, of which the doctrines should be as deleterious in a spiritual point of view, as the sting of a scorpion in a natural. In like manner, when it is said (ch. xii. 3, 4) of the "great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, that his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth," the explication is, that the Anti-christian power shadowed out by this formidable monster should be permitted to instil the most pernicious errors into the minds of the professed ministers of the truth, and thus bring about their entire defection from Christianity.

Ver. 11. *And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.*—Both these terms signify *destroyer*. Since the locusts are at once secular conquerors and the propagators of a false religion, their king must stand to them in the double relation of a temporal and spiritual head. Such accordingly were Mohammed and the Caliphs his successors, who must be viewed as jointly constituting the locust-king Abaddon; for in the usual language of prophecy, a king denotes, not any single individual, but a dynasty or kingdom. The chief of the locusts, when they first issued from the pit of the abyss, was Mohammed himself; but during the allotted period of the wo which they occasioned, the reigning de

stroyer was, of course, the reigning Caliph. If therefore, we were to suppose *the genius of Moham-medanism* under the Caliphs to be personified, and this symbolical personage to be designated by the most appropriate title, Abaddon, the destroyer, would be the appellation.

As the portion of the prophecy thus far considered has reference to the origin of Mohammed's imposture, and to the rise, progress, and conquests of the Saracens, its earliest abettors and propagators, so the remaining part announces the commencement and career of the Turkish power, the principal of its later supporters.

Ver. 13. *And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in (rather at, by, in the vicinity of) the great river Euphrates, and the four angels were loosed.*—It is impossible, from the train of events, and from the quarter of the world in which we are directed to look for the irruption of these prodigious multitudes of horsemen, to mistake to whom the prophecy refers. The four angels who are described as bound in the regions bordering on the river Euphrates, not *in* the river itself, are the four contemporary sultanies or dynasties, into which the empire of the Seljukian Turks was divided towards the close of the eleventh century: PERSIA, KERMÁN, SYRIA, and RHOUM. These sultanies, from different causes, were long restrained from extending their conquests beyond what may be geographically termed the Euphratèan regions, but towards the close of the thirteenth century, the four angels on the river Euphrates were loosed in the persons of their existing representatives, the united Ottoman and Seljukian Turks. The historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire must of necessity be the guide to any English commentator on this part of the prophetic history. The following is his testimony as to the immense number of the

Turkish cavalry. "As the subject nations marched under the standard of the Turks, *their cavalry, both men and horses, were proudly computed by millions.*" "On this occasion, *the myriads of the Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Taurus to Erzeroum.*"

Ver. 17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and those that sat on them, having breastplates of fire and of jacinth, and brimstone.—These prophetic characteristics of the Euphratèan warriors accord in the most perfect manner with the description which history gives of the Turks. They brought immense armies into the field, chiefly composed of horse, and from their first appearance on the great political stage of nations their costume has been peculiarly distinguished by the colours of scarlet, blue, and yellow, which are here denoted by the terms "fire," "jacinth," and "brimstone." Rycaut's "Present State of the Ottoman Empire," published towards the close of the seventeenth century, will satisfy the reader on this point.

And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. We have here a symbol which is not elsewhere to be met with in the Scriptures. The prophetic horses are represented as vomiting out of their mouths "fire, and smoke, and brimstone," by which it is added, "the third part of men was killed." Mede, Newton, Faber, and most other eminent expositors of the Revelation, agree in supposing that the flashes of fire attended by smoke and brimstone, which seemed to proceed from the mouths of the horses, were in reality *the flashes of artillery.* The Turks were among the first who turned to account the European invention of gunpowder in carrying on their wars. Cannon, the most deadly engine of modern warfare, were employed by Mohammed II. in his wars against the Greek empire; and it is said that he was indebted to his heavy ordnance for the

reduction of Constantinople. The prophet, therefore, is to be considered as depicting the visionary scene of a field of battle, in which the cavalry and artillery are so mingled together, that while flashes of fire and dense clouds of smoke issued from the cannon, the horses' heads alone would be dimly discerned through the sulphureous mist, and would seem to the eye of the spectator to belch forth the smoky flames from their own mouths. As the design of this striking imagery is to describe the *appearances* rather than the *reality* of things, the prophet employs an expression,* "in the vision," or rather "in vision," i. e. *apparently, as it seemed*, which evidently conveys the idea that the phantasm of a battle scene was presented to the imagination. We may now see how far history confirms this interpretation. "Among the implements of destruction," says Mr. Gibbon, "he (Mohammed II.) studied with peculiar care the recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his *artillery* surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world." "The Ottoman *artillery* thundered on all sides, and the camp and city, the Greeks and Turks, *were involved in a cloud of smoke* which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman empire." "The great cannon of Mohammed *has been separately an important and visible object in the history of the times*. But that enormous engine, which required, it is said, seventy yoke of oxen and two thousand men to draw it, was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude: the long order of *Turkish artillery* was pointed against the wall; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these it is ambiguously expressed, that it was mounted with a hundred and thirty guns, or that it discharged a hundred and thirty bullets."

Ver. 19. For their power is in their mouth, and in

* Ἐν δόξει

their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.—The emblematic import of the tail of a beast we have already considered. The imagery in the present symbol is slightly different from that of the Saracen locusts, which had the tails of scorpions; but the import is the same. Here the tails of the horses terminated in a serpent's head; and it is not a little remarkable, that the Turks have been in the habit, from the earliest periods of their history, of tying a knot in the extremity of the long flowing tails of their horses, when preparing for war; so that their resemblance to serpents with swelling heads must have been singularly striking. Striking too is the fact, that so slight a circumstance should have been adverted to by the historian so often quoted, who thought as little of being an organ to illustrate the predictions of Scripture, as the Turks themselves did of being the agents to fulfil them. Speaking of Alp Arslan, the first Turkish invader of the Roman empire, he says, "With his own hands *he tied up his horse's tail*, and declared that if he were vanquished, that spot should be the place of his burial." The scope of the hieroglyphic here employed is to predict the propagation of a deadly imposture by the instrumentality of the same warlike power which should achieve such prodigious conquests. The event has corresponded with the prophecy. Like the Saracens of the first wo, the Turks were not merely secular conquerors. They were animated with all the wild fanaticism of a false religion; they professed and propagated the same theological system as their Arabian predecessors; they injured by their doctrines no less than by their conquests; and wherever they established their dominion, the Koran triumphed over the Gospel. Thus writes Mr. Gibbon: "The whole body of the nation embraced the religion of Mohammed." "Twenty-five years after the death of Basil, his successors were suddenly

assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the *Scythian valour* with the *fanaticism of new converts*.”

Sufficient proof has now been afforded, if we mistake not, that the appearance of the Arabian prophet in the world, and the rise, progress, and results of his imposture, are clearly foretold in the Sacred volume. Indeed, it would not be easy to specify any admitted subject of prophecy, upon which history and Providence have thrown a stronger or clearer light, than that which we have considered in the preceding pages. Interpreters have been justly struck at the surprising exactness of the delineations, and their perfect accordance with the details of history. “The prophetic truths,” says Dr. Zouch, “comprised in the ninth chapter of the Apocalypse are, of themselves, sufficient to stamp the mark of divinity upon that book. When I compare them with the page of history, I am filled with amazement. The Saracens, a people which did not exist in the time of John, and the Turks, a nation then utterly unknown, are there described in language the most appropriate and distinct.” If then the considerations commonly adduced to account for the rise, progress, and reign of Mohammedanism appear to be inadequate,—if the human causes usually quoted to explain the astonishing success of Mohammedan imposture still seem to us to leave many of the phenomena inexplicable, and the greatest revolution in the world connected with the history of the Church stands forth an unsolved problem,—why should we hesitate to ascribe it directly to the determinate will and counsel of the Most High, and thus find a clew to all the mysteries connected with it? Why should we be anxious to escape the recognition of a Divine interference in the rise of this arch-heresy? If we have been correct in our interpretation of the preceding predictions of Daniel and John, the Mohammedan delusion is as real and as prominent a subject of prophecy as

any in the whole compass of the Bible. Now, to insist upon the operation of merely human causes in the production of an event which is truly a subject of prophecy, is in fact to take the government of the world out of the hands of God. And this principle pushed to the extreme will inevitably lower and impugn the sure word of prophecy; for it makes God the predictor of events over which, at the same time, he has no special superintendence or control. Such a principle cannot stand the least examination. When Daniel foretels the fortunes of the four great empires; or when Isaiah speaks of Cyrus by name, as one who should accomplish certain great purposes of the Infinite Mind, is it to be supposed, that the events predicted were to happen exclusive of Providential agency? As easily and as justly then may we acknowledge a special pre-ordination in the case of Mohammed, whose still more formidable dominion and more lasting and more fatal agency in the affairs of men, are equally the theme of unquestionable predictions. No admission of this nature militates with the free agency of man, or at all affects the moral character of his actions. The mere fact that an event is foreknown or foretold by the Deity, neither takes away nor weakens the accountability of the agents concerned. Of this, the whole Scripture is full of proofs. But the reflecting reader will desire no farther confirmation of so plain a position.

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THE CAABA.

CAABA is the name given to a very ancient temple, in the city of Mecca, the origin of which is lost in the darkness of remote ages. Centuries before Mohammed was born, and while the Arabs were yet pagans, this building was held to possess a peculiar sanctity: pilgrimages were made to it from distant regions; and that tribe or family was accounted the most honourable, who were the keepers of its keys. It is an oblong, massive structure, built of large blocks of different sized stones, joined rudely together, and is about eighteen paces in length, fourteen in breadth, and from thirty-five to forty feet in height. It has but one door, on the north side, seven feet above the ground, wholly plated with silver, and embellished with gilt ornaments. From the door's being placed, not in the centre, but near to one corner of the building, it appears not to have been originally designed for a sacred use; but at what time, or for what reasons, it became thus appropriated, it is not possible now to determine. Near the door, in the angle of the wall of the north-east corner of the Caaba, about seven spans from the ground, is the celebrated "black stone," so devoutly kissed by every pilgrim visiting the sacred city. It is of an oval shape, about seven inches in diameter, composed of about seven small stones, of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with cement, and perfectly smooth; appearing as if the original stone had been broken into many pieces by a violent blow, and then united again, which indeed is reported to have been the fact. A border of some kind of cement, rising a little above the surface of

the stone, surrounds it, and both this and the stone are encircled by a silver band.

According to the fabulous legends of the Mussulmans, the "black stone" was brought down from heaven by Gabriel, at the creation of the world; and was then of a pure white, but has contracted its present sable hue from the guilt of the sins committed by the sons of men. If a conjecture, however, may be hazarded, we should not hesitate to refer its origin to that peculiar trait in the character of the Ishmaelites, which has ever led them to imitate the Israelites. Scarcely a feature in the religious institutions, usages, or traditions of the Jews, but has its spurious counterpart in those of the seed of Hagar. Jacob's pillar of stone, at Bethel, would of course become celebrated among his descendants. In like manner, from causes now unknown, we may imagine this stone to have received a similar sanctity among the Arabs. This is rendered more probable from the circumstance, that one of the names given to the Caaba, in the Arabic language, is *Beit-Allah*, *house of God*; a word of the same import and similar sound with Beth-el, from which the Greek term *Baitulia* was frequently applied to sacred stones or memorial-pillars, like that of Jacob.

The double roof of the Caaba is supported within by three octangular pillars of aloes-wood, between which, on a bar of iron, hang a number of silver lamps. The four sides without are covered with a rich black silk stuff hanging down to the ground, and encircled near the top with an embroidered band of gold, which compasses the whole building. This covering, which is renewed every year, was formerly supplied by the Caliphs, afterward by the Sultans of Egypt; but is now sent from Cairo, at the expense of the Grand Seignior, at the time of the Hadj, when the old one is cut into small pieces and sold to the pilgrims for nearly as much money as the new one costs. This curtain or veil, called

Kesoua, is blazoned all over with the words, "There is no God, but God," &c. in gold letters of great size; and such a sacredness attaches to it, that the camel which transports it to Mecca is ever after exempted from labour. This circumstance of the Caaba being covered in the manner described suggests the probability, that the structure was intended as a rude imitation of the Jewish Tabernacle, which was also enveloped in embroidered curtains without, while within was a golden candlestick, with seven branches, kept constantly burning.

The Caaba, at a slight distance, is surrounded with a circular enclosure of thirty-two slender gilt pillars, between every two of which are suspended seven lamps, upon small bars of silver connecting the pillars towards the top. These lamps are always lighted after sunset. This sacred paling reminds us again of the Tabernacle; the court of which, though of an oblong instead of a circular form, was constructed of pillars, and hung with curtains, with only a single place of entrance. Within this enclosure of the Caaba, and almost contiguous to its base, lies the "white stone," said to be the sepulchre of Ishmael, which receives the rain-water falling off the flat roof of the edifice through a spout, formerly of wood, but now of gold. According to the account of Burckhardt, the effect of the whole scene, the mysterious drapery, the profusion of gold and silver, the blaze of lamps, and the kneeling multitudes, surpasses any thing the imagination could have pictured.

At a small distance from the Caaba, on the east side, is the station or place of Abraham, whom the Arabs affirm to have been the builder of the temple, where there is another stone much respected by the Moslems, as they pretend that the patriarch stood upon it while employed about the building, and profess to show the prints of his footsteps to this day. Just without the circular court, on its south, north,

and west sides, are three buildings designed as oratories, or places of prayer, where the pilgrim worshippers perform their devotions. Besides these there are several small buildings near to the main structure, in one of which is the famous well of Zemzem, said by the Mussulmans to be the very spring which the angel discovered to Hagar in the wilderness, and whose waters of course possess the most miraculous virtues. They cure all diseases, both of body and spirit, and supply the whole town for drinking and oblation. It is said to be the only sweet water in the whole valley; but Pitts, an English traveller, found it brackish, and says, the pilgrims drink it so inordinately, that "they are not only much purged, but their flesh breaks out all in pimples; and this they called the purging of their spiritual corruption." They not only drink, but have buckets of water poured over them, and then think their sins are washed into the well. One of the miracles of Mecca is, that the water of this well never diminishes; but this is not surprising to the true believers, who regard it as having been miraculously created to save the infant Ishmael when dying of thirst in the wilderness. Burckhardt, however, explains it without a miracle, by supposing that the water flows through the bottom, being supplied by a subterraneous rivulet. The water, he says, is perfectly sweet, but heavy to the taste, slightly tepid, and sometimes in its colour resembles milk. The pilgrims frequently destroy the ropes, buckets, and other appendages of the well in their eagerness to quaff its holy water.

Surrounding all the objects now described, which occupy the centre of an open space, is the square colonnade or grand piazza, consisting of a quadruple row of columns on one side, and a triple row on the other three sides, united by pointed or Gothic arches, every four of which support a dome, plastered white—the number of these domes amounting

to one hundred and fifty-two, and the pillars to four hundred and forty-eight. From the arches of these colonnades are suspended lamps, some of which are lighted every night, and the whole of them during the nights of the Ramadan. The columns are upwards of twenty feet high, and somewhat more than a foot and a half in diameter; some are of a reddish-gray granite, some of red porphyry, and others of white marble. No two capitals or bases are exactly alike; in some cases, by the ignorance of the workmen, the former have been placed upside down on the shafts. The arches and some parts of the walls are gaudily painted in stripes of yellow, red, and blue, which, as we have already seen, are colours peculiar to Mohammedanism. At each of the four corners of this immense quadrangular court, towering above the pillared domes, rises a lofty minaret, surmounted with a gilded crescent, the invariable accompaniment of the Moslem temple.

“The high antiquity of the Caaba,” says Mr. Forster,* “is undisputed. The permanent character of its rites is certified by our knowledge of the adherence of the Arabs, in every age, to their ancient customs. But, from the uniform consent of Mahometan writers, it farther appears that the statues of Abraham and Ishmael, which from remote antiquity had held a conspicuous place in the Caaba, and constituted the principal object of its idol worship, remained to the time of Mahomet, and were there found by the Mussulmans after the capture of Mecca. Mahomet, Abulfeda tells us, when he took Mecca in the eighth year of the Hejira, found and destroyed in the Caaba, on his entering the temple, the image of Abraham holding in his hand seven arrows without heads or feathers, such as the Arabs use in divination, and surrounded with a great number of angels and prophets, as inferior deities, among

* *Mahometanism Unveiled*, vol. ii. p. 404.

whom, as Al Janabi and other writers add, was Ishmael with divining arrows also in his hand.

“Various external signs, betokening its patriarchal origin, may be traced in the Ante-Mahometan worship of the Caaba. Among these one custom is sufficiently remarkable to claim distinct notice in this place, inasmuch as it has been alluded to and censured in the Koran.* The pagan Arabs were used to compass the Caaba naked, because clothes, they said, were the signs of their disobedience to God. The celebrated black stone of the Caaba also, the primitive source and object of Arabian idolatry, strongly indicates the origin to which it has been uniformly referred. The Arabs attribute its introduction into the temple of Mecca to the immediate posterity of Ishmael. The peculiar kind of superstition is just what might be expected to arise from the abuse of an early patriarchal custom—that of setting up stones on particular spots in honour of the true God. While the connexion is farther made out by the exact correspondence in this particular between the idolatry of the ancient Israelites and that of the Ante-Mahometan Arabians, their identity might be largely shown from the Old Testament; but a passage from the prophecy of Isaiah will suffice. The prophet thus indignantly reproves the Jews for their idolatry:—‘Among *the smooth stones* of the stream is thy portion: they, they are thy lot: even to them thou hast poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering.’”

IN connexion with the preceding account of the Caaba, the place of the Moslem solemnities, the reader may be interested by the following animated sketch of the pilgrimage to Mecca, from the

* Koran, ch. vii.

Review (in the London Quarterly) of Burckhardt's Travels in Arabia.

“At a certain distance from the Holy City, all pilgrims are required to strip themselves naked, throw away their garments, and put on the *ihram*, or *ehram*, two pieces of linen or cotton cloth, generally white, one of them wrapped round the loins, the other thrown loosely over the neck and shoulders, while the head remains wholly uncovered. Burckhardt at once complied with this custom, which has occasioned the death of many; for when the pilgrimage happens in winter, the assumption of the *ihram* is extremely prejudicial to the most robust constitution,—more especially to that of the northern Mussulmans, who have been accustomed to thick woollen clothes; ‘yet,’ says Burckhardt, ‘the religious zeal of some who visit the Hedjaz is so ardent, that if they arrive even several months previous to the Hadj, they vow, on taking the *ihram*, not to throw it off till after the completion of their pilgrimage to Arafat.’ It is said, that Haroun Al Raschid and his wife Zobeyda once performed the pilgrimage on foot from Bagdad to Mekka, clothed only with the *ihram*; but indulged in the luxury of walking on splendid carpets the whole way.

“The ancient Arabs, who reckoned time by lunar months, and intercalated a month every three years, had the pilgrimage fixed to a certain season, for the Hadj is not a Mussulman invention; but when Mahomet ordained that the same pilgrimage should be continued, in honour of the living God, which, for ages before him, had been, in forgetfulness of the original patriarchal faith of the race, performed in honour of senseless idols, he prescribed the ceremony to a particular lunar month; and as the modern Arabs do not intercalate, its periodical returns became irregular, and in thirty-three years shifted through all the months of the year, from the height of summer to the depth of winter.

“On entering Mekka, the temple or mosque must be immediately visited, whether the stranger be pilgrim or not. The prescribed ceremonies are, first, to repeat certain prayers, in different parts of the temple; then to begin the *towaf*, or walk round the Kaaba seven times, kissing the black stone at each circuit; then to proceed to the well of Zemzem, and drink as much water as they wish or can get. The second ceremony which the pilgrim has to perform is, to proceed to the hill of Szafa, and there repeat certain prescribed prayers before he sets out on the holy walk, or *say*, which is along a level spot, about six hundred paces in length, terminating at a stone platform, called Meroua. This walk, which in certain places must be a run, is to be repeated seven times, the pilgrims reciting prayers uninterruptedly, with a loud voice the whole time. The third ceremony is that of shaving the head and walking to the Omra, about one hour and a half from Mekka, chanting pious ejaculations all the way. The two former ceremonies must, after this, be again repeated. The walk round the Kaaba seven times, may be repeated as oft as the pilgrim thinks fit, and the more frequently the more meritorious.

“About seventy thousand persons assembled at Mekka, when Burekhardt made his pilgrimage, and submitted to the performance of these ceremonies. This is the least number which the Mussulmans told Ali Bey there must necessarily be assembled at every pilgrimage, on Mount Arafat; and that in case any deficiency should occur, angels are sent down from heaven to complete the number. Pitts says precisely the same thing. When Ali Bey went through this part of the ceremony, he tells us, an assemblage of eighty thousand men, two thousand women, and one thousand little children, with sixty or seventy thousand camels, asses, and horses, marched through the narrow valley leading from Arafat, in a cloud of dust, carrying a forest of lances, guns, swivels, &c.

and yet no accident occurred that he knew of, except to himself,—he received, it seems, a couple of wounds in his leg. One would have thought that Burckhardt's seventy thousand was a prodigious number; yet he tells us, that two only of the five or six regular caravans made their appearance this year,—the Syrian and the Egyptian. About four thousand pilgrims from Turkey came by sea; and perhaps half as many from other distant quarters of the Mahomedan world. The Syrian was always considered the most numerous. It is stated, that when the mother of Motessem b'illah, the last of the Abbassides, performed the pilgrimage in the year of the Hejira 631, her caravan was composed of one hundred and twenty thousand camels—that in 1814 consisted of not more than four or five thousand persons, and fifteen thousand camels. Barthema states the Cairo caravan, when he was at Mekka, to have amounted to sixty-four thousand camels;—in 1814 the same caravan consisted mostly of Mahomet Ali's troops, with very few pilgrims. But Burckhardt says, that in 1816, a single grandee of Cairo joined the Hadj with one hundred and ten camels, for the transport of his baggage and retinue, whose travelling expenses alone, he supposes, could not have been less than ten thousand pounds. The tents and equipage of the public women and dancing girls were among the most splendid in this caravan. The Moggrebyn (i. e. *Western*, or *Barbary*) caravan, comprised, of late years, altogether from six to eight thousand men (it has been forty thousand); in the year 1814 very few joined it. The Eastern caravan of this year consisted chiefly of a large party of Malays from Java, Sumatra, and the Malabar coast. A solitary Afghan pilgrim, an old man of extraordinary strength, had walked all the way from Caubul to Mekka, and intended to return in the same manner. Vast numbers of Bedouins flock to Mekka at the time of the pilgrimage; and others from every part

of Arabia. Many of these pilgrims depend entirely for subsistence, both on the journey and at Mekka, on begging; others bring some small productions from their respective countries for sale.

“The Moggrebys, for example, bring their red bonnets and woollen cloaks; the European Turks, shoes and slippers, hardware, embroidered stuffs, sweetmeats, amber, trinkets of European manufacture, knit silk purses, &c.; the Turks of Anatolia bring carpets, silks, and Angora shawls; the Persians, Cashmere shawls and large silk handkerchiefs; the Afghans, tooth-brushes, made of the spongy boughs of a tree growing in Bokhara, beads of a yellow soapstone, and plain coarse shawls, manufactured in their own country; the Indians, the numerous productions of their rich and extensive region; the people of Yemen, snakes for the Persian pipes, sandals, and various other works in leather; and the Africans bring various articles adapted to the slave trade.

“When all the required ceremonies have been gone through at Mekka, the whole concourse of pilgrims repair together on a certain day to Mount Arafat, some on camels, some on mules, or asses, and the greater number barefooted, this being the most meritorious way of performing a journey of eighteen or twenty miles. ‘We were several hours,’ says Burckhardt, ‘before we could reach the outskirts of the town, so great was the crowd of camels. Of the half-naked Hadjis, all dressed in the white *ihram*—some sat on their camels, mules, or asses, reading the Koran,—some ejaculated loud prayers, while others cursed their drivers, and quarrelled with those near them, who were choking up the passages.’ Having cleared a narrow pass in the mountains, the plain of Arafat opened out. Here the different caravans began to disperse in search of places to pitch their tents. Hadjis were seen in every direction wandering among the tents in search of their

companions, whom they had lost in the confusion along the road; and it was several hours before the noise and clamour had subsided.

“In the morning, Burckhardt ascended the summit of Mount Arafat, from whence he counted about three thousand tents, dispersed over the plain, of which two-thirds belonged to the two Hadj caravans, and to the suite and soldiers of Mohammed Ali; but the greatest number of the assembled multitudes ‘were,’ says our traveller, ‘like myself, without tents.’ Those of the wife of Mohammed Ali, the mother of Tousoun and Ibrahim Pasha, were magnificent,—the transport of her baggage alone, from Djidda to Mekka, having required five hundred camels.

“‘Her tent was in fact an encampment, consisting of a dozen tents of different sizes, inhabited by her women; the whole enclosed by a wall of linen cloth, eight hundred paces in circuit, the single entrance of which was guarded by eunuchs in splendid dresses. Around this enclosure were pitched the tents of the men who formed her numerous suite. The beautiful embroidery on the exterior of this linen palace, with the various colours displayed in every part of it, constituted an object which reminded me of some descriptions in the Arabian Tales of a Thousand and One Nights.’

“Mr. Burckhardt says, he estimated the number of persons assembled on the plain at seventy thousand; but whether any, or how many of them, were supplied by ‘angels,’ he does not say: it is, however, deserving of remark, that he is the *third* traveller who mentions the same number. This enormous mass, after washing and purifying the body according to law, or going through the motions where water was not to be had, now pressed forwards towards the mountain of Arafat, and covered its sides from top to bottom. At the appointed hour, the Cadi of Mekka took his stand on a stone plat-

form on the top of the mountain, and began his sermon, to which the multitude appeared to listen in solemn and respectful silence. At every pause, however, the assembled multitudes waved the skirts of their *ihrams* over their heads and rent the air with shouts of 'Lebeyk, allahuma lebeyk!'—'Here we are, at thy commands, O God!' 'During the wavings of the *ihrams*,' says Burckhardt, 'the side of the mountain, thickly crowded as it was by the people in their white garments, had the appearance of a cataract of water; when the green umbrellas, with which several thousand hadjis, sitting on their camels below, were provided, bore some resemblance to a verdant plain.' The assemblage of such a multitude,—to every outward appearance humbling themselves in prayer and adoration before God,—must be an imposing and impressive spectacle to him who first observes it, whether Mahomedan, Christian, Jew, or Pagan. 'It was a sight, indeed,' says Pitts, 'able to pierce one's heart, to behold so many in their garments of humility and mortification, with their naked heads and cheeks watered with tears, and to hear their grievous sighs and sobs, begging earnestly for the remission of their sins.' Burckhardt mentions the first arrival of a black Darfoor pilgrim at the temple, at the time when it was illuminated; and from eight to ten thousand persons in the act of adoration, who was so overawed, that, after remaining prostrate for some time, 'he burst into a flood of tears; and in the height of his emotion, instead of reciting the usual prayers of the visiter, only exclaimed—"O God! now take my soul, for this is paradise!"'

"As the sun descended behind the western mountains, the Cadi shut his book: instantly the crowds rushed down the mountains: the tents were struck, and the whole mass of pilgrims moved forward across the plain on their return. Thousands of torches were now lighted: volleys of artillery and

of musketry were fired: sky-rockets innumerable were let off; the Pasha's band of music were played till they arrived at a place called Mezdelfé, when every one lay down on the bare ground where he could find a spot. Here another sermon was preached, commencing with the first dawn, and continuing till the first rays of the sun appear, when the multitude again move forward, with a slow pace, to Wady Muna, about three miles off. This is the scene for the ceremony of 'throwing stones at the Devil;' every pilgrim must throw seven little stones at three several spots in the valley of Muna, or twenty-one in the whole; and at each throw repeat the words, 'In the name of God; God is great; we do this to secure ourselves from the Devil and his troops.' Joseph Pitts says, 'as I was going to throw the stones, a facetious hadji met me; saith he, "You may save your labour at present, if you please, for I have hit out the Devil's eyes already."' The pilgrims are here shown a rock with a deep split in the middle, which was made by the angel turning aside the knife of Abraham, when he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac. Pitts, on being told this, observes, 'it must have been a good stroke indeed.' The pilgrims are taught also to believe, that the custom of 'stoning the Devil' is to commemorate the endeavour of his satanic majesty to dissuade Isaac from following his father, and whispering in his ear that he was going to slay him.

"This 'stoning' in the valley of Muna occupies a day or two, after which comes the grand sacrifice of animals, some brought by the several hadjis, others purchased from the Bedouins for the occasion; the throats of which must always be cut with their faces towards the Kaaba. At the pilgrimage in question, the number of sheep thus slaughtered 'in the name of the most merciful God,' is represented as small, amounting only to between six and eight thousand. The historian Kotobeddyn, quoted by

Burckhardt, relates, that when the Caliph Mokteda performed the pilgrimage, in the year of the Hejira 350, he sacrificed on this occasion forty thousand camels and cows, and fifty thousand sheep. Barthema talks of thirty thousand oxen being slain, and their carcasses given to the poor, who appeared to him 'more anxious to have their bellies filled than their sins remitted.' One is at a loss to imagine where, in such a miserable country, all these thousands and tens of thousands of camels, cows, and sheep can possibly be subsisted; the numbers may be exaggerated, but there is no question of their being very great. The feast being ended, all the pilgrims had their heads shaved, threw off the *ihram*, and resumed their ordinary clothing; a larger fair was now held, the valley blazed all night with illuminations, bonfires, the discharge of artillery, and fireworks; and the hadjis then returned to Mekka. Many of the poorer pilgrims, however, remained to feast on the offals of the slaughtered sheep. At Mecca the ceremonies of the Kaaba and the Drura were again to be repeated, and then the hadj was truly perfumed. Burckhardt makes no mention of any females becoming hadjis by a visit to Arafat, though Ali Bey talks of two thousand. There is no absolute prohibition; but from what follows, no great encouragement for the fair sex to go through the ceremonies.

“The Mohammedan law prescribes, that no unmarried woman shall perform the pilgrimage; and that even every married woman must be accompanied by her husband, or at least by a very near relation (the Shaffay sect does not even allow the latter). Female hadjis sometimes arrive from Turkey for the hadj; rich old widows who wish to see Mekka before they die; or women who set out with their husbands, and lose them on the road by disease. In such cases the female finds at Djidda delyls (or, as this class is called, Muhallil) ready to

facilitate their progress through the sacred territory in the character of husbands. The marriage contract is written out before the Kadhy; and the lady, accompanied by her delyl, performs the pilgrimage to Mekka, Arafat, and all the sacred places. This, however, is understood to be merely a nominal marriage; and the delyl must divorce the woman on his return to Djidda: if he were to refuse a divorce, the law cannot compel him to it, and the marriage would be considered binding: but he could no longer exercise the lucrative profession of delyl; and my informant could only recollect two examples of the delyl continuing to be the woman's husband. I believe there is not any exaggeration of the number, in stating that there are eight hundred full-grown delyls, besides boys who are learning the profession. Whenever a shop-keeper loses his customers, or a poor man of letters wishes to procure as much money as will purchase an Abyssinian slave, he turns delyl. The profession is one of little repute; but many a prosperous Mekkawy has, at some period of his life, been a member of it.'

"Burckhardt remained at Mekka a whole month after the conclusion of the hadj, at which time it appeared like a deserted town.

"Of its brilliant shops one-fourth only remained; and in the streets, where a few weeks before it was necessary to force one's way through the crowd, not a single hadji was seen, except solitary beggars who raised their plaintive voices towards the windows of the houses which they supposed to be still inhabited. Rubbish and filth covered all the streets, and nobody appeared disposed to remove it. The skirts of the town were crowded with the dead carcasses of camels, the smell from which rendered the air, even in the midst of the town, offensive, and certainly contributed to the many diseases now prevalent.'

"Disease and mortality, which succeed to the

fatigues endured on the journey, or are caused by the light covering of the ihram, the unhealthy lodgings at Mekka, the bad fare, and sometimes absolute want, fill the mosque with dead bodies carried thither to receive the Imam's prayer, or with sick persons, many of whom when their dissolution approaches, are brought to the colonnades, that they may either be cured by the sight of the Kaaba, or at least to have the satisfaction of expiring within the sacred enclosure. Poor hadjis, worn out with disease and hunger, are seen dragging their emaciated bodies along the columns; and when no longer able to stretch forth their hand to ask the passenger for charity, they place a bowl to receive alms near the mat on which they lay themselves. When they feel their last moments approaching, they cover themselves with their tattered garments; and often a whole day passes before it is discovered that they are dead. For a month subsequent to the conclusion of the hadj, I found, almost every morning, corpses of pilgrims lying in the mosque; myself and a Greek hadji, whom accident had brought to the spot, once closed the eyes of a poor Moggrebyn pilgrim, who had crawled into the neighbourhood of the Kaaba to breathe his last, as the Moslems say, 'in the arms of the prophet and of the guardian angels.' He intimated by signs his wish that we should sprinkle Zemzem water over him; and while we were doing so he expired: half an hour afterward he was buried.

"The situation of Mekka is singularly unhappy, and ill adapted for the accommodation of the numerous votaries of Islam that flock thither to perform the rites of the pilgrimage. The town is built in a narrow valley, hemmed in by barren mountains; the water of the wells is bitter or brackish; no pastures for cattle are near it; no land fit for agriculture; and the only resource from which its inhabitants derive their subsistence is a little traffic, and the visits of the hadjis. Mr. Burekhardt estimates

the population of the town and suburbs at twenty-five to thirty thousand stationary inhabitants, to which he adds three or four thousand Abyssinian and black slaves.

“On the whole, notwithstanding all that Burckhardt records as to certain symptoms of enthusiasm in the course of his hadj, it is sufficiently plain, that even in the original seat of Mahommedanism, the religious feelings of the people have cooled down considerably. The educated Moslems every where are mostly of the sect of Mahomet Ali of Egypt, nor can we have any doubt that all things are thus working together for the re-establishment of the true religion in the regions where man was first civilized, and where the oracles of God were uttered. In the mean time, the decline of the arch-heresy of the East will be regretted by no one who judges of the tree by the fruit. ‘A long residence,’ says Burckhardt, ‘among Turks, Syrians, and Egyptians’ (and no man knew them better) ‘justifies me in declaring that they are wholly deficient in virtue, honour, and justice; that they have little true piety, and still less charity or forbearance; and that honesty is only to be found in their paupers or idiots.’”

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THE KORAN.

THE word KORAN, derived from the verb KARA, *to read*, properly signifies *the reading, legend, or that which ought to be read*; by which name the Moham-medans denote not only the entire book or volume of the Koran, but also any particular chapter or section of it, just as the Jews, in their language, call the whole Scripture, or any part of it, by the name of *Karah*, or *Mikra*, words of precisely the same origin and import as Koran. This book must be regarded as the code of laws, religion, and morality, which Mohammed, in his character of legislator and prophet, promulgated to the people of Arabia. As it is therefore the only book of law among the Mus-sulmans, and comprehends also the religious doc-trines which they are taught to believe, it follows, that with them a doctor in the law is also a doctor in theology, which two professions are wholly inse-parable. This law, upon which is founded all their theology and jurisprudence, is comprised in the Koran, in the same manner as the civil code of the Jews is comprised in the five books of Moses.

The collection of moral traditions, composed of the sayings and actions of the prophet, and forming a kind of supplement to the Koran, the Moslems call the *Sonnah*; just as the Jews have denominated the book containing their oral traditions, the *Mishna*.

The entire Koran is divided into one hundred and fourteen portions, which are denominated *Suras*, or chapters; and these again into smaller divisions, called *Ayat*, answering nearly, though not exactly, to our verses.

There appears to be an entire absence of any thing like design or method in either the larger or the

smaller divisions. Neither the time at which they were delivered, nor the matter they contain, was the rule by which they were arranged. They were, in fact, apparently thrown together without order or meaning. One verse has seldom any connexion with the preceding; and the same subject, unless it be some narrative, such as that of Abraham, Joseph, or Pharaoh, distorted from the Sacred Scriptures, is in no case continued for a dozen verses in succession; each one appears an isolated precept or exclamation, the tendency and pertinence of which it is often difficult and frequently impossible to discover. The first nine titles will convey to the reader a fair conception of the arrangement, and something of the nature, of the subjects embraced in the whole.

1. The Preface.
2. The Cow.
3. The Family of Iram.
4. Women.
5. Table.
6. Cattle.
7. Al Araf.
8. The Spoils.
9. The Declaration of Imunity.

As to the plan or structure of this pseudo-revelation, it is remarkable that Mohammed makes God the speaker throughout. This should be borne in mind by the reader in perusing the extracts given in the preceding work. The addresses are for the most part made directly to the prophet, informing him what he is to communicate to his countrymen and the world; in other cases, the precepts, promises, or threatenings are addressed immediately to the unbelievers, or the faithful, according as the burden of them applies to the one or the other. The following citations may serve as a specimen of the whole book. "Now we know that what they speak grieveth thee: yet, they do not accuse thee of falsehood; but the ungodly contradict the signs of God. And apostles before thee have been accounted liars: but they patiently bore their being accounted liars, and their being vexed, until our help came unto them." "Say, Verily I am forbidden to worship the false deities which ye invoke besides God. Say, I

will not follow your desires; for then should I err, neither should I be one of those who are rightly directed. Say, I believe according to the plain declaration which I have received from my Lord; but ye have forged lies concerning him." The word "Say," which is almost of perpetual occurrence in the Koran, is generally prefixed to the sentences or paragraphs containing a message to the people; and the word "Answer" is employed wherever any hypothetical or foreseen objections are to be obviated, or any doubtful questions to be resolved. "They will ask thee also what they shall bestow in alms: answer, What ye have to spare. They will also ask thee concerning orphans: answer, To deal righteously with them is best; and if ye intermeddle with the management of what belongs to them, do them no wrong; they are your brethen: God knoweth the corrupt dealer from the righteous; and if God please he will surely distress you, for God is mighty and wise." To others the Divine mandates are usually couched in the following style: "O men, now is the apostle come unto you with truth from the Lord; believe, therefore; it will be better for you." "We have formerly destroyed the generations who were before you, O men of Mecca, when they had acted unjustly, and our apostles had come unto them with evident miracles, and they would not believe. Thus do we reward the wicked people." "O true believers, wage war against such of the infidels as are near you; and let them find severity in you: and know that God is with those that fear him." "O true believers, raise not your voices above the voice of the prophet; neither speak loud unto him in discourse, as ye speak loud unto one another, lest your works become vain, and ye perceive it not."

Immediately after the title, at the head of every chapter, with the single exception of the ninth, is prefixed the solemn form, "IN THE NAME OF THE

MOST MERCIFUL GOD." This form is called by the Mohammedans, *Bismillah*, and is invariably placed by them at the beginning of all their books and writings in general, as a peculiar mark or distinguishing characteristic of their religion: it being deemed a species of impiety to omit it. The Jews, for the same purpose, make use of the form, "In the name of the Lord," or, "In the name of the great God:" and the Eastern Christians that of, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

In its general outline of facts, the Koran corresponds with the Old Testament in the following historical details: the accounts of the creation of the world; of the fall of Adam; of the general deluge; of the deliverance of Noah and his family in the ark; the call of Abraham; the stories of Isaac and Ishmael; of Jacob and the patriarchs; the selection of the Jews as God's chosen people; the prophetic office, miracles, and administration of Moses; the inspiration and authority of the Hebrew historians, prophets, and psalmists, especially of David and Solomon; and, lastly, of the promise of the advent of the Messiah, with many of the accompanying predictions respecting it.

Again, with the New Testament the Koran concurs in the recognition of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah of the Jews; in his miraculous conception by the breath or Spirit of God; his immaculate nativity of the Virgin Mary; his title of Logos, or Word of God; in the miraculous birth of John the Baptist, son of Zecharias, as his forerunner; in his performance of many mighty signs and miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, and controlling and casting out devils; in his rejection and persecution by his own countrymen; his condemnation to the death of the cross; his bodily ascension into heaven; his officiating there as a Mediator and Intercessor between God and man, and

as Judge of all men at the last day. After the example, however, of some of the ancient heretics, Mohammed, as appears from the following passages, denied the reality of the Saviour's crucifixion:—
“And for that they have not believed in Jesus, and have spoken against Mary a grievous calumny; and have said, Verily we have slain Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of God; yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness. They did not really kill him; but God took him up to himself: and God is mighty and wise.” “And the Jews devised a stratagem against him; but God devised a stratagem against them; and God is the best deviser of stratagems.” This stratagem, according to the Moslems, was God's taking Jesus up into heaven, and stamping his likeness on another person, who was apprehended and crucified in his stead. Their constant tradition is, that it was not Jesus himself who underwent that ignominious death, but somebody else in his shape and resemblance.

These numerous coincidences of the Koran with the facts and doctrines of the Bible are strangely interspersed with matter the most incongruous; with extravagant fables, monstrous perversions of the truth, and ridiculous and endless puerilities. This is accounted for on the supposition, that while the authentic facts were derived immediately from the canonical Scriptures, the fictions and absurdities were deduced in part from the traditions of the Talmudic and Rabbinical writers; and in part from the apocryphal Gospels, or from the books of Adam, of Seth, of Enoch, of Noah, and other similar fabrications, well known in church history as having been extensively in use among the heretics of the first centuries.

A specimen or two of the manner in which some of the best-known narratives of the Old Testament appear in the Koran, may not be unsuitably adduced here

“Our messengers also came formerly unto Abraham with good tidings. They said, Peace be upon thee. And he answered, And on you be peace! and he tarried not, but brought a roasted calf. And his wife Sarah was standing by; and she laughed: and we promised her Isaac, and after Isaac, Jacob. She said, Alas! shall I bear a son, who am old: this my husband also being advanced in years? Verily, this would be a wonderful thing. The angels answered, Dost thou wonder at the effect of the command of God? The mercy of God and his blessings be upon you. And when his apprehension had departed from Abraham, and the good tidings of Isaac’s birth had come unto him, he disputed with us concerning the people of Lot; for Abraham was a pitiful, compassionate, and devout person. The angels said unto him, O Abraham, abstain from this; for now is the command of thy Lord come, to put their sentence in execution, and an inevitable punishment is ready to fall upon them. And when our messengers came unto Lot, he was troubled for them; and his arm was straitened concerning them; and he said, This is a grievous day. And his people came unto him, rushing upon him: and they had formerly been guilty of wickedness. Lot said unto them, O my people, these my daughters are more lawful for you: therefore fear God, and put me not to shame by wronging my guests. Is there not a man of prudence among you? They answered, Thou knowest that we have no need of thy daughters; and thou well knowest what we would have. He said, If I had strength sufficient to oppose thee, or I could have recourse unto a powerful support, I would certainly do it. The angels said, O Lot, verily we are the messengers of thy Lord; they shall by no means come in unto thee. Go forth, therefore, with thy family, in some part of the night, and let not any of you turn back: but as for thy wife, that shall happen unto her which shall happen unto them. Verily, the predic-

tion of their punishment shall be fulfilled in the morning.

“ And Abraham said, Verily, I am going unto my Lord who will direct me. O Lord, grant me a righteous issue! Wherefore we acquainted him that he should have a son, who should be a meek youth. And when he had attained to years of discretion, and could join in acts of religion with him, Abraham said unto him, O my son, verily I saw in a dream that I should offer thee in sacrifice: consider therefore what thou art of opinion I should do. He answered, O my father, do what thou art commanded: thou shalt find me, if God please, a patient person. And when they had submitted themselves to the divine will, and Abraham had laid his son prostrate on his face, we cried unto him, O Abraham, now hast thou verified the vision. Thus do we reward the righteous. Verily, this was a manifest trial. And we ransomed him with a noble victim.”

The following passage may serve to illustrate the correspondence of the Koran with the historical relations of the New Testament:—

“ Zacharias called on his Lord, and said, Lord, give me from thee a good offspring, for thou art the hearer of prayer. And the angels called to him, while he stood praying in the chamber, saying, Verily, God promiseth thee a son, named John, who shall bear witness to THE WORD which cometh from God; an honourable person, chaste, and one of the righteous prophets. He answered, Lord, how shall I have a son, when old age hath overtaken me, and my wife is barren? The angel said, So God doth that which he pleaseth. Zacharias answered, Lord, give me a sign. The angel said, Thy sign shall be, that thou shalt speak unto no man for three days, otherwise than by gesture. And when the angels said, O Mary, verily, God hath chosen thee, and hath purified thee, and hath chosen thee above all the women of the world: when the angels said, O Mary,

verily, God sendeth thee good tidings, that thou shalt bear **THE WORD**, proceeding from himself; his name shall be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary; honourable in this world and in the world to come, and one of those who approach near to the presence of God: She answered, Lord, how shall I have a son, since a man hath not touched me? The angel said, So God createth that which he pleaseth: when he decreeth a thing, he only saith unto it, Be, and it is: God shall teach him the Scripture, and wisdom, and the law, and the Gospel; and he shall appoint him his apostle to the children of Israel."

But besides agreements with the Old and New Testaments of this palpable kind, the Koran betrays its obligations to the sacred volume by numerous coincidences, more or less direct, with the sentiments, the imagery, and the phraseology of Scripture. Indeed, the most interesting light in which the Koran is to be viewed is as a spurious resemblance of the inspired oracles of Jews and Christians. The extent to which the Bible of Mohammedans is made up of plagiarisms from the true revelation can scarcely be conceived by one who has not instituted a special inquiry into the contents of each, with the express design of tracing the analogy between them. Of the fact, however, of the Koran being constructed, in great measure, from the materials furnished by the Old and New Testaments, no one can doubt, who is assured that the following is but a specimen of hundreds of similar correspondencies which might easily be made out between the two.

BIBLE.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders, and signs which God did by him.

KORAN.

Make not your alms of none effect, by reproaching or mischief; as he that layeth out what he hath, to appear unto men to give alms.

We gave unto Jesus, the son of Mary, manifest signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE.

Thou shalt give life for life, tooth for tooth, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament. But even unto this day when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

And when he (Moses) was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

For behold, I created new heavens and a new earth. We look for new heavens and a new earth. I will cause you to come up out of your graves. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Thus my heart was grieved.

If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?

KORAN.

We have therein commanded them that they should give life for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and that wounds should be punished by retaliation.

There is of them who hearkeneth unto thee when thou readest the Koran; but we have cast veils over their hearts, that they should not understand it, and deafness in their ears.

The infidels say, Unless some sign be sent down unto him from his Lord, we will not believe.

It is he who hath created the heavens and the earth: And whenever he sayeth unto a thing, Be, it is.

I have already dwelt among you to the age of forty years before I received it (the Koran). Do ye therefore not understand?

According to thy dream shall thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of dark sayings.

We taught him the interpretation of dark sayings, but the greater part of men do not understand.

O Lord, thou hast given me a part of the kingdom, and hast taught me the interpretation of dark sayings.

And his will be the kingdom on the day whereon the trumpet shall be sounded.

The day will come when the earth shall be changed into another earth, and the heavens into other heavens; and men shall come forth from their graves to appear before the only, the mighty God. That God may reward every soul according to what it shall have deserved.

Cast not thine eyes on the good things which we have bestowed on several of the unbelievers, so as to covet the same; neither be thou grieved on their account.

If God should punish men for their iniquity, he would not leave on the earth any moving thing

BIBLE.

Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The merciful doeth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

Not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing.

Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord. And they cried aloud. And it came to pass that there was neither voice nor any to answer.

All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. All nations shall be gathered before him.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Go to, now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year; and buy and sell and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father

KORAN.

Out of the ground have we created you, and to the same will we cause you to return.

If ye do well, ye will do well to your own souls; and if ye do evil, ye will do it unto the same.

Turn aside evil with that which is better.

And it shall be said unto the idolaters, call now upon those whom ye have associated with God: and they shall call upon them but they shall not answer.

And the trumpet shall be sounded again, and behold they shall come forth from their graves, and shall hasten unto the Lord.

But God will not fail to perform what he hath threatened: and verily one day with the Lord is as a thousand years of those which ye compute.

Say not of any matter, I will surely do this to-morrow; unless thou add, If God please.

They will ask thee concerning the last hour; at what time its coming is fixed? Answer, Verily, the knowledge thereof is with my Lord; none shall declare the fixed time thereof except he.

From the foregoing examples it will appear manifest, that the plagiarisms of the Koran are not limited to the leading facts and narratives of the Bible, but extend to many of its minuter peculiarities; to its modes of thought, its figures of speech, and even to its very forms of expression. Yet, in several instances, we meet with such egregious blunders, as to plain matters of fact, stated in the sacred volume, as must convict the copyist of the most arrant ignorance, or of downright falsification. Thus he makes the prophet Elijah (Al Kedr) contemporary with

Moses, Ishmael to have been offered in sacrifice instead of Isaac, Saul to have led the ten thousand down to the river's brink instead of Gideon, and, by the most monstrous anachronism represents Mary, the mother of Jesus, to have been the same person with Miriam, the sister of Moses!

The palpable obligations of this spurious revelation to Holy Writ, and the real or supposed incompetence of its nominal fabricator, have very naturally given birth to inquiries into the history of its composition. The great mass of writers on Mohammedanism, following the opinion of the Eastern Christians, have generally agreed in supposing that in the construction of the Koran, the Prophet was indebted to the assistance of one or more accomplices. It is certain, from the pages of the work itself, that this was objected to him at the outset of his career. "We also know that they say, Verily a certain man teacheth him to compose the Koran." "And the unbelievers say, This Koran is no other than a forgery, which he hath contrived: and other people have assisted him therein: but they utter an unjust thing and a falsehood." But this emphatic disclaimer of the Apostle has failed to produce conviction. The unbelievers of Christendom have continued to side with those of Mecca, and as many as eight or ten different persons have been designated as having been, some one or more of them, associated with the impostor in the promulgation of his counterfeit oracles. The more general belief has been, that Mohammed received his principal aid from a Nestorian monk, named Sergius, supposed to be the same person as the Boheira, with whom he became acquainted at an early period of his life, at Bosra, in Syria. On this, the learned Sale remarks: "If Boheira and Sergius were the same men, I find not the least intimation in the Mohammedan writers, that he ever quitted his monastery to go into Arabia, and his acquaintance with Mohammed at Bosra was

too early to favour the surmise of his assisting him in the Koran, though Mohammed might, from his discourse, gain some knowledge of Christianity and the Scriptures, which might be of some use to him therein." The same writer, however, admits with Prideaux and others, that while Mohammed is to be considered as the original projector and the real author of the Koran, he may have been assisted, in some measure, by others, though his successful precautions of secrecy make it impossible to determine, at this day, by what agents, or to what extent, this was done. After all, the assertions advanced in respect to the part borne by others in the composition of the Koran have never been authenticated by proofs, and the whole story has the air of an hypothesis framed to meet the difficulties of the case. And even were the popular belief on this question to be admitted, it would not do away all the difficulties which embarrass the subject. For who was capable, in that dark period, of producing such a work? This pretended revelation, independently of its plagiarisms from our Scriptures, contains passages as much superior to any remains, whether Jewish or Christian, of the literature of the seventh century, as they are utterly inferior to the contents of that sacred volume which the Koran blasphemously assumes to resemble and supplant. The whole subject, therefore, of the origin of this remarkable book, with the history of its composition, as well as the question how far Mohammed was acquainted with the Christian Scriptures, must doubtless remain an unsolved problem to the end of time.

Of the literary merits of the Koran, a fair estimate is not easily to be formed from a translation. By those who are acquainted with the original, it is universally acknowledged to possess distinguished excellences, which cannot be transfused into any other language. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue; is written, for the most part, in

a pure and elegant style, abounding with bold figures after the oriental manner; and aiming at a conciseness which often renders it obscure. Though written in prose, the sentences usually conclude in a long continued rhyme, for the sake of which, the sense is often interrupted, and unnecessary repetitions introduced. This feature of the composition, though a disadvantage and a deformity to a translation, is one of its superlative charms in the estimate of the native Arabs, whose ear is singularly susceptible to the harmony of the rhythmical cadences with which the periods conclude.

When we pass from the mere sound and diction which mark "the perspicuous book," it is indubitable that its finest passages are devoid of the merit of originality. Sir William Jones remarks; "The Koran indeed shines with a borrowed light, since most of its beauties are taken from our Scriptures; but it has great beauties, and the Mussulmans will not be convinced that they are borrowed." In describing the majesty and the attributes of God, and the variety and grandeur of the creation, it often rises to an impressive elevation; but in almost every instance of this kind, it is evident that some passage of inspiration of corresponding import was in the eye of the writer, and the copy is invariably inferior to the original. Yet the result of a candid examination of this pseudo-bible of Mohammedans, even in our English version, would probably be a more favourable impression of the book on the score of its composition, and a conviction that amid the multitude and heinousness of its defects, scarcely common justice had been done by Christian writers either to the character of its beauties, or the extent in which they obtain. Taken however as a whole, so far from supporting its arrogant claims to a superhuman origin and eloquence, it sinks below the level of many confessedly human productions, to be found in different languages and regions of the earth.

“With occasional passages of real beauty and power, it is, on the whole, a strange medley, in which the sublime is so nearly allied to the bombastic, the pathetic to the ludicrous, the terrible to the absurd, that each chapter, each page, almost each paragraph, is sure to give rise to the most opposite emotions. Respect, contempt, admiration, abhorrence, so rapidly succeed each other, in the perusal, as to leave no fixed or uniform impression on the mind.”*

* *Forster*

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MOHAMMEDAN CONFESSION OF FAITH ; TRANSLATED FROM
THE ARABIC.

(From Morgan's Mahometism Explained.)

The articles of our faith which every good Mussulman is bound to believe and to receive with an entire assurance are thirteen in number, whereof the first and principal is,

I.—*Of God's Existence.*

To believe from the heart, to confess with the tongue, and with a voluntary and steadfast mind to affirm, that there is but one only God, Lord and Governor of the universe, who produced all things from nothing, in whom there is neither image nor resemblance, who never begot any person whatsoever, as he himself was begotten by none ; who, as he never was a son, so he never hath been a father. It is this Lord and Sovereign Arbiter of all things whom we Mussulmans are bound to serve and adore so that none among us may deviate from this article, but every one must imprint it deeply in his heart ; for it is unquestionable.

II.—*Of the Prophet Mahomet and the Koran.*

We must believe from our hearts and confess with our mouths that the Most High God, after having revealed himself to mankind by his ancient prophets, sent us at length his Elected, the blessed Mahomet, with the sacred and divine law, which through his grace he had created, the which is contained in the venerable Koran, that hath been from him remitted unto us. By this holy law it is that God hath abolished all the preceding ones, and hath

withdrawn from their doubts and errors all nations and people in order to guide them to a firm and lasting state of happiness. Wherefore we are obliged exactly to follow the precepts, rites, and ceremonies thereof, and to abandon every other sect or religion whatsoever, whether instituted before or since this final revelation. By this article we are distinguished and separated from all sorts of idolatry, lying rhapsodies, and false prophecies, and from all those sects, societies, and religions different from ours, which are either erroneous, abrogated, or exaggerated, void of faith, and without truth.

III.—*Of Providence and Predestination.*

We must firmly believe and hold as a certainty that, except God himself who always was and always shall be, every thing shall one day be annihilated, and that the Angel of death shall take to himself the souls of mortals destined to a total and universal extinction,* by the command of God, our powerful Lord and Master, who was able and hath vouchsafed to produce out of nothing, and in fine to set in form this universal world, with all things therein contained, both good and evil, sweet and bitter; and hath been pleased to appoint two angels, the one on the right, and the other on the left, to register the actions of every one of us, as well the good as the bad, to the end that judicial cognizance may be taken thereof, and sentence pronounced thereupon, at the great day of judgment. It is therefore necessary to believe predestination: but it is not permitted to discourse thereof to any whomsoever, till after being perfectly well versed in the study of our written law, viz. the Koran, and of our Sonnah, which is our oral law. Seeing then all things are to have an end, let us do good works, and deport ourselves so that we may live for ever.

* Notwithstanding this annihilation, it is taught in the Koran that **all** intelligent creatures will be reproduced again at the resurrection.

IV.—*Of the Interrogation in the Grave.*

We must truly and firmly believe and hold as certain and assured, the Interrogation of the sepulchre, which will after death be administered to every one of us by two angels upon these four important questions:—1. Who was our Lord and our God? 2. Who was our Prophet? 3. Which was our religion? 4. On what side was our Keblah? He who shall be in a condition to make answer, that God was his only Lord, and Mahomet his Prophet, shall find a great illumination in his tomb, and shall himself rest in glory. But he who shall not make a proper answer to these questions shall be involved in darkness until the day of judgment.

V.—*Of the Future Dissolution.*

We must heartily believe and hold as certain, that not only shall all things one day perish and be annihilated, viz. angels, men, and devils, but likewise this shall come to pass at the end of the world, when the angel Israfil shall blow the trumpet in such sort that except the Sovereign God none of the universal creation shall remain alive immediately after the dreadful noise, which shall cause the mountains to tremble, the earth to sink, and the sea to be changed to the colour of blood. In this total extinction, the last who shall die will be Azarael, the Angel of death; and the power of the Most High God will be evidently manifested.

VI.—*Of the Future Resurrection.*

We are obliged cordially to believe and to hold for certain, that the first before all others whom God shall revive in heaven shall be the Angel of death; and that he will at that time recall all the souls in general, and reunite them to the respective bodies to

which each belonged ; some of which shall be destined to glory, and others to torment. But upon earth, the first whom God will raise shall be our blessed prophet Mahomet. As for the earth itself, it shall open on all sides, and shall be changed in a moment ; and by God's command fire shall be kindled in every part thereof, which shall be extended to its utmost extremities. God will then prepare a vast plain, perfectly level, and of sufficient extent to contain all creatures summoned to give an account of their past conduct. May this solemn, definite, and irrevocable judgment awaken us from our security ; for to nothing that hath been created shall favour be showed. Every soul shall be judged there by the same rule, and without exception of persons.

VII.—*Of the Day of Judgment.*

We must believe from our hearts and hold for certain, that there shall be a day of judgment, whereon God shall ordain all nations to appear in a place appointed for this great trial, of sufficient vastness that His Majesty may there be evident in splendour. It is in this magnificent and spacious station that the universal assembly of all creatures shall be made, about the middle of the day, and in the brightness of noon : and then it is, that accompanied by his prophet (Mohammed), and in the presence of all mankind, God shall with justice and equity judge all the nations of the earth in general, and every person in particular. To this effect, every one of us shall have a book or catalogue of our actions delivered to us ; that of the good in such wise that it shall be received and held in the right hand ; that of the wicked, so that it shall be received and held in the left hand. As to the duration of that day, it shall be as long as the continuance of the present age. This shall be a day of sighs and griefs, a day of tribulation and anguish, when the cup of sorrow

and misery must be drunk up, even the very dregs thereof. But this is what shall be particularly experienced by the ungodly and the perverse; every thing shall present to them ideas of sorrow and affliction. To them every thing shall become aloe and bitterness. They shall not obtain one moment of repose. They shall behold nothing that is agreeable, nor hear one voice that shall delight them: their eyes shall see nothing but the torments of hell; their ears shall hear nothing but the cries and howlings of devils; and their terrified imaginations shall represent unto them nothing but spectres and tortures.

VIII.—*Of Mahomet's Intercession.*

We are bound to believe, and hold as certain, that our venerable prophet Mahomet shall with success intercede for his people at the great day of examination. This will be the first intercession; but at the second, God will be entirely relented, and all the faithful Mussulmans shall be transported into a state of glory, while not one excuse or supplication in behalf of other nations shall be accepted. As to the greatness of pain which those among us are to undergo, who have been offenders by transgressing the precepts of the Koran, it is known to God alone, as there is none but Him who exactly knoweth how long the same is to continue, whether its duration shall be more or less than that of the examination or judgment. But to us it belongeth to shorten its continuance by good works, by our charity, and by all the endeavours we are capable of.

IX.—*Of the future Compensation at the last Judgment.*

We must sincerely believe, and hold as a certainty, that we must every one of us give up our accounts before God, concerning the good and evil we have transacted in this world. All who have been

followers of Mahomet shall be before all others summoned to this examination, because they it will be who shall bear witness against all other strange nations. It shall come to pass on that day, that God will take away out of the balance of him who has slandered his brother some of the good works, and put them unto that of him who hath been slandered; and if the slanderer is found to have no good works, he will then deduct from the punishment of the slandered, to include them in the list of those of the slanderer, insomuch that his great justice will be fully manifest. At least, then, that we not run the hazard of this terrible compensation, let us not think of wronging others, or of diminishing their substance, their honour, or their good name.

X.—*Of the Balance, and of Purgatory.*

We must believe from the heart, and confess with the mouth, that all our actions, good and bad, shall one day be weighed in the balance, the one against the other, insomuch that those whose good works outweigh their bad shall enter into Paradise; and that, on the contrary, they whose bad works shall outweigh their good shall be condemned to the flames of hell. And for those whose scales shall be equally poised, because the good they have done is equivalent to the evil, they shall be detained in a station situate in the middle, between Paradise and hell, where consideration will be made both of their merits and of their demerits, since besides their being confined in that place, they shall have no punishment inflicted on them, nor shall they enjoy any part of the glory ordained for the beatified righteous. It is true that all those among that number who are Mussulmans shall be at length released from their captivity, and shall be introduced into Paradise at the second intercession of our blessed prophet Mahomet, whose great compassion will

be signalized by his engaging, in order to our redemption, to supplicate the power and the mercy of the Most High, as well as his justice, already satisfied by the long captivity of the criminals. Wherefore let us from henceforward weigh our good works, to the end that we may assiduously strive to increase their weight, and that they may have the advantage over the bad.

XI.—Of the Sharp-edged Bridge, and the unavoidable passage thereof.

We are obliged to believe from our hearts and to hold as assured, that all mankind in the world must pass one day over the Sharp-edged Bridge, whose length shall be equal to that of this world, whose breadth shall not exceed that of one single thread of a spider's web, and whose height shall be proportionable to its extent. The righteous shall pass over it swifter than a flash of lightning; but the impious and the ungodly, shall not, in as much time as the present age shall endure, be able to surmount the difficulties thereof, and that through the want of good works. For which reason, they shall fall and precipitate themselves into hell-fire, in company with the infidels and blasphemers, with those of little faith and bad conscience, who have done few deeds of charity, because they were void of virtue. There shall be some among the good, notwithstanding, whose passage shall be lighter and swifter than that of many others, who shall therein meet with temptations and obstructions from every precept which they shall have ill-observed in this life. Good God! how dreadful to our sight will this formidable bridge appear! What virtue, what secret grace from the Most High shall we not need to be enabled to pass over it?

XII.—*Of Paradise.*

We are to believe and to hold for a certainty, that God did create a Paradise which he prepared for the blessed, from among the number of the faithful, by which are meant the followers of the true religion, and of our holy prophet, Mahomet; where with him they shall be placed in perpetual light, and in the enjoyment of heavenly delights; for ever beautiful in the vigour of their age, and brighter than the sun; and where they shall be found worthy to contemplate and adore the face of the Most High God. As for those who shall be detained in the tortures of hell, to wit, the sinners and transgressors, who have nevertheless believed in one only God, they shall be released at the second intercession of the prophet, by whom they shall immediately be washed in the sacred laver, from whence being come forth whiter than snow and more refulgent than the sun, they shall, with the rest of the blessed, behold themselves seated in paradise, there to enjoy all the glory they can desire. This is what shall befall the body composed of clay; and what then shall be the state of our souls? To the which it shall be granted eternally to behold the light and brightness of the divine majesty. Let us then endeavour to do works of such a character, that we may have no cause to fear hell-fire. Let us, I say, chiefly apply ourselves to good works, let us not refuse to exert our utmost strength in the exact observation thereof, and of the fast of our venerable month of Ramadan, and of the prayers and ceremonies which are ordained; and let us not defraud the poor of a tenth of all our goods.

XIII.—*Of Hell.*

We must sincerely believe and hold for certain, that there is a hell prepared for the unrighteous, the refractory transgressors of the divine law, accursed

of God for their evil works, and for whom it would have been better had they never have been born, and to have never seen the light of day. It is for such as those that a place of torment is appointed, or rather a fire which burneth without touching them, a fire of ice and north winds, where there shall be nothing but snakes and serpents, with other venomous and ravenous creatures, which shall bite them without destroying them, and shall cause them to feel grievous pains. That place shall be the abode of the impious and of the devils, where *these* shall, with all sorts of cruelty and rage, incessantly torture *those*; and lest the sense of their pain should cause them to relent, a new skin shall continually succeed in the stead of that which has been burned or mortified. It is for us Mussulmans to conceive and entertain a just horror of this detestable place, such reflections are the duty of all God's servants. As for those others who have declared war against our religion, they shall one day feel the torments of hell. Let us all dread this punishment and these frightful terrors. Let us confirm our faith by the sentiments of our hearts, and by the confession of our tongues, and let us engrave it in the bottom of our souls.

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPAL ARABIC, GREEK, AND LATIN
AUTHORS, WHO HAVE TREATED THE SUBJECT OF MO-
HAMMEDANISM AND ITS FOUNDER.

(Collected chiefly from Prideaux.)

ABUL FARAGIUS; a physician of Malatia, in Lesser Armenia, of the Christian religion, and of the sect of the Jacobites. He is a writer of distinguished note in the East, both among Mohammedans and Christians. His *Historia Dynastarum* embraces the period from the creation of the world to the year of our Lord 1284. He flourished near the close of the 13th century, about the time when his History ends. His work was published in 4to at Oxford, A. D. 1663, with a Latin Version by Dr. Pocock. His entire name is Gregorius Ebn Hakim Abul Faragii. He is thus spoken of by Gibbon. "Yet in that long period some strangers of merit have been converted to the Monophysite faith, and a Jew was the father of Abul Pharagius, primate of the East, so truly eminent in his life and death. In his life, he was an elegant writer of the Syriac and Arabic tongues, a poet, a physician, and historian, a subtle philosopher, and a moderate divine. In his death, his funeral was attended by his rival, the Nestorian patriarch, with a train of Greeks and Armenians who forgot their disputes, and mingled their tears over the grave of an enemy."*

ABUL FEDA; an author eminently distinguished among the oriental writers for two works well known among the learned; the one, a General Geography of the world, after the method of Ptolemy; the other

* Decline and Fall, vol. v. p. 508. Dublin edition, 1788

a **General History**, which he calls the *Epitome of the History of Nations*. He was born A. D. 1273, and finished his *Geography* A. D. 1321. Twenty years afterward he was advanced to the principality of Hamah, in Syria, from whence he is commonly called *Shahah Hamah*, i. e. *prince of Hamah*, when after a reign of three years and two months, he died A. D. 1345, aged seventy-two. He was by nation a Turk, of the noble family of the Jolidæ, from which also Saladin, the famous Sultan of Egypt was descended. Ecchelensis quotes him by the name of *Ishmael Shiahinshiah*.

ABUNAZAR; a legendary writer among the Mohammedans, often quoted by Hottinger.

AGAR; the name of a book of great authority among the Mussulmans, containing an account of the life and death of Mohammed. Johannes Andreas makes great use of it under the name of *Azaer* as does Bellonius in the third book of his *Observations*, under the name of *Asaer*. Guadagnl, who had a copy of the work, draws from it the most of the particulars which he objects against the life and actions of Mohammed.

AHMED EBN EDRIS; an author who wrote in the defence of the Mohammedan religion against the Christians and the Jews.

AHMED EBN YUSEPH; a historian who flourished A. D. 1599, when he completed his history.

AHMED EBN ZIN ALABEDIN; a nobleman of Ispahan, in Persia, of the sixteenth century, who wrote one of the acutest works against the Christian religion and in defence of the Mohammedan, ever published. Jernimo Xavier, a Jesuit Missionary to the court of Ecbar, Great Mogul, had written in the Persian language, two works in favour of Christianity, one entitled, *the History of Jesus Christ*, collected for the most part out of the legends of the church of Rome: the other called *A Looking-Glass of the Truth*, intended as a defence of the Gospel against

the Mohammedans. This latter work, unluckily for the author, soon after its publication, fell into the hands of the learned Persian Ahmed Ebn Zin, who immediately wrote an answer to it which he entitled, *The Brusier of the Looking-Glass*. The college of the Propaganda at Rome were so exceedingly nettled by the masterly manner in which their missionary's work had been answered, that two Franciscan Friars were ordered each of them to prepare a reply to the rude Brusher of the Jesuit's Mirror. But as their arguments in defence of Christianity were mostly drawn from the authorities of Popes and Councils, the palm of victory was fairly left in the hands of their Moslem opponent.

AL BOCHARI; an eminent Arabic writer, who has given the fullest account of the Traditionary Doctrines of the Mohammedan religion. He is enumerated, by Johannes Andreas and Bellonius, among the six Mohammedan Doctors who met by the appointment of one of the Caliphs at Damascus in order to make an authentic collection of all the traditions which compose their Sonnah. His work contains the Pandects of all that relates either to their Law or their Religion, digested under their several titles through twenty books, and from its antiquity and authenticity ranks among their sacred writings next to the Koran. He was born at Bochara, A. D. 809, and died, A. D. 869.

AL FRAGANI; an astronomer of Fragana in Persia, whence his name; which is at length Mohammed Ebn Katir Al Fragani. He wrote a book called *The Elements of Astronomy*, which has been several times republished in Europe, as at Nuremburgh, A. D. 1537; at Paris, 1546; at Frankfort, cum notis Christmanni, A. D. 1590, in Latin; and afterward by Golius in Arabic and Latin at Leyden, A. D. 1669, with copious notes extremely useful to a knowledge of the Geography of the East. He flourished under the Caliph Al Mamon, who died A. D. 833.

AL GAZAL ; a famous philosopher of Tusa in Persia. He wrote many works not only in the department of philosophy, but also in defence of the Mohammedan religion against Christians, Jews, Pagans, and every class of unbelievers. The most noted of his works is that entitled *The Destruction of Philosophers*, written against Avicenna and other philosophers, who, in order to solve the absurdities of Islamism, were for turning into figure and allegory numerous points of that religion which had all along been understood literally. These writers he violently opposes, accusing them, on account of these mystical interpretations, of heresy and infidelity, as corrupters of the faith and subverters of religion, for which reason he had the honorary appellation bestowed upon him of Hoghatol Islam Zainod-din, i. e. *The Demonstration of Mohammedanism, and the Honour of Religion*. He was born A. D. 1058, and died A. D. 1112. His name at length is Abu Hamed Ebn Mohammed Al Gazali Al Tusi.

AL JANNABI ; a historian born at Jannaba, a city of Persia, near Shiraz. His History extends down to the year of our Lord, 1588, and in the course of it he informs his reader that he took a pilgrimage to Mecca, and went from thence to Medina, to pay his devotions at the tomb of the Prophet, in that year of the Hejira which answers to A. D. 1556.

AL KAMUS ; i. e. The Ocean ; a noted Arabic Dictionary, so called from the ocean of words contained in it. It was written by Mohammed Al Shirazi Al Firauzabadi. He was a person of great esteem among the princes of his time, for his eminent learning and worth, particularly with Ismael Ebn Abbas, king of Yemen, Bajazet, king of the Turks, and Tamerlane the Tartar, the last of whom made him a present of five thousand pieces of gold at one time. He was by birth a Persian, born A. D. 1328, but lived mostly at Sanau in Yemen of Arabia. He finished his Dictionary at Mecca. and dedicate^d

it to Ismael Ebn Abbas, whose patronage he had long enjoyed, and died at Zibit, in Arabia, A. D. 1414, having attained nearly to the age of ninety years.

AL KODAI; an Arabic historian. He wrote his history about A. D. 1045, and died A. D. 1062.

AL MASUDI; an historian. He is the author of a history called the *Golden Meadows*, but his era it is not possible now to discover. His name at length is Ali Ebn Housain Al Masudi. He wrote another work also, with the professed design of exposing the base fraud practised by the Roman Christians in Jerusalem, in lighting the candles at the Holy Sepulchre on Easter Eve. A full account of this vile imposition may be seen in Thevenot's Travels, Book ii., chap. 43.

AL MOTAREZZI; the author of a book called *Mogrel*; he was born A. D. 1143, and died A. D. 1213. He was of the sect of the Motazali, and seems by his name, Al Motarezzi, to have been by occupation a tailor, as that is the signification of the word in Arabic.

BEDAWI; one of the most distinguished of the commentators on the Koran. He died A. D. 1293.

DIALOGUS MAHOMETIS CUM ABDOLLAH EBN SALEM; a book written in Arabic, containing a great many of the absurdities of the Mohammedan religion, in the form of a dialogue between the Impostor himself, and the Jew who was supposed to have been his assistant in forging the Koran. It was translated into Latin by Hermannus Dalmata, whose version will be found at the end of Bibliander's Latin translation of the Koran.

DISPUTATIO CHRISTIANI CONTRA SARACENUM DE LEGE MAHOMETIS. This work was written in Arabic by a Christian, who was an officer in the court of a king of the Saracens, to a Mohammedan friend of his, a fellow-officer with him in the same court; and contains a confutation of Islamism. Peter, the famous Abbot of Cluny, in Burgundy who flourished A. D.

1130, caused it to be translated into Latin, by Peter of Toledo. An epitome of the work occurs in Bibliander's Koran.

ELMACINUS, usually written ELMACIN; an Arabic author, who has written a history of the Christian religion, which extends from the creation of the world to A. D. 1118. The latter part of it, commencing from the rise of Mohammedanism, was published by Erpenius, under the title of *Historia Saracenica*, A. D. 1625. He was son to Yaser Al Amid, secretary of the council of war under the Sultans of Egypt, of the family of Jobidæ, and in the year 1238, Elmacin succeeded his father to the same office, by whom it had been occupied for forty-five years together. His whole name is Georgius Ebn Amid; but for his eminent learning, was styled Al Shaich Al Rais Al Macin, *i. e.* *The prime Doctor, solidly learned*. By the last of these titles, or Elmacin, he is generally called by Erpenius; but by others he is frequently cited by the name of Ebn Amid.

EBNOL ATHIR; a Mohammedan author, born A. D. 1149, and died A. D. 1209.

ALI EBNOL ATHIR; an historian, brother to the former, who died A. D. 1232. His history, which he calls *Camel*, extends from the beginning of the world to the year of our Lord 1230.

EBNOL KASSAI; author of the book called *Taarifat*, or an explication of the various Arabic terms used by philosophers, lawyers, divines, and other classes of the learned professions among them.

EUTYCHIUS; a Christian author, of the sect of the Melchites, whose name in Arabic is Said Ebn Batrik. He was born at Cairo in Egypt, A. D. 876, where he became eminently distinguished in the medical profession. But towards the latter part of his life, addicting himself more to the study of divinity, he was A. D. 923, chosen patriarch of Alexandria, when he first took the name of Eutychius.

He died seven years after, A. D. 940. His *Annals of the Church of Alexandria*, were published in Arabic and Latin at Oxford, by Dr. Pocock, A. D. 1656, at the charge of the learned Selden.

LIBER DE GENERATIONE ET NUTRITURA MAHOMETIS; a most silly and frivolous Tract, written originally in Arabic, from which it was translated into Latin by Hermannus Dalmata, and published with the Latin Koran of Bibliander.

GEOGRAPHIA NUBIENSIS; one of the most noted Oriental works on the subject of geography. This title was given it by Sionita and Hesronita, Maronite Christians, who published it in Latin with a geographical appendix, A. D. 1619. But the *Geographia Nubiensis* is in fact only an abridgment of a much larger and much better work, written by Sherif El Edrisi, at the command of Roger, king of Sicily, for the purpose of explaining a large terrestrial globe which that prince had constructed entirely of silver. He completed his work A. D. 1153, and entitled it *Ketab Roger*, i. e. *The Book of Roger*, from the name of his patron. The author was by extraction of the race of Mahomet, and therefore called *Sherif*, the title appropriated to all the descendants of the prophet. There was a beautiful copy of this work among the Arabic MSS. of Pocock.

GEORGIUS MONACHUS; Abbot of the monastery of St. Simeon. He wrote a tract in defence of the Christian religion against the Mohammedans, in the form of a disputation held by himself with several Mussulmans, of whom the principal speaker was Abu Salama Ebn Saar, of Mosul.

JAUHARI; the author of a noted Arabic Dictionary called *Al Sahah*. He was of Turkish origin, and died A. D. 1007. This dictionary is considered inferior only to the *Kamus*. Golius, in his Arabic Lexicon, has drawn largely from its resources.

JALALANI; i. e. *The two Jalals*. They were two individuals of the same name, who wrote a short

commentary on the Koran, which was began by the first, and finished by the second. The latter completed the work A. D. 1466, and was author also of a history called Mezhar.

SHARESTANI.—A scholastic writer of considerable repute among the Mohammedans. He was born at Sharestan, A. D. 1074, and died A. D. 1154.

ZAMACH-SHARI.—The author of a work called Al Keshaf; which is an extensive commentary on the Koran, the most highly esteemed among the Mohammedans of any work of this kind. He died A. D. 1143.

GREEK AUTHORS.

BARTHOLOMEI EDESSINI CONFUTATIO HAGARENI.—A treatise in the Greek language written against the Mohammedan religion, published by Le Moyne among his *Varia Sacra*. The author was a monk of Edessa in Mesopotamia, but in what age he lived is unknown.

CONTACUZENUS CONTRA SECTAM MAHOMETICAM.—This work contains four apologies for the Christian Religion, and four orations against the Mohammedan. The author had been emperor of Constantinople, but having resigned his empire to John Paleologus, his son-in-law, A. D. 1355, he retired into a monastery, accompanied by one Meletius, whom he had converted from the Mohammedan to the Christian faith. The work now mentioned was written for Meletius in answer to a letter addressed to him by Sampates, a Persian of Ispahan, with a view to reclaim him, if possible, again to the religion of Islam.

CEDRENI COMPENDIUM HISTORIARUM.—A work embracing a concise history of all ages from the creation of the world to the year of our Lord 1057

CONFUTATIO MAHOMETIS.—A Greek tract published by Le Moyne in his *Varia Sacra*; author unknown.

THEOPHANIS CHRONOGRAPHIA.—The work of one of the Byzantine historians, containing a chronological history of the Roman Empire, from the year of our Lord 285 to A. D. 813. The author was a nobleman of Constantinople, where he held an office of distinction in the imperial court, but afterward retiring from public life and secluding himself in a monastery, he wrote this history. He died A. D. 815 in prison, in the island of Samothrace, a martyr to his zeal for image-worship, for which he was a most strenuous advocate in the second council of Nice.

ZONARÆ COMPENDIUM HISTORIARUM.—Another of the series of the Byzantine historians. It contains a history reaching from the creation to the death of Alexius Comnenus, emperor of Constantinople, which happened A. D. 1118, when the author flourished. He was at first a person of distinguished rank in the court of Constantinople, but afterward becoming an ecclesiastic, he wrote the history now mentioned, and was author also of a celebrated Comment on the Greek Canons.

LATIN AUTHORS.

CLENARDI EPISTOLÆ.—The author of these epistles was the famous grammarian of his age. Urged by his high opinion of the literary treasures locked up in the Arabic language, he went to Fez, A. D. 1540, on purpose to make himself master of this invaluable tongue, and that at an advanced period of life. From this place he wrote the epistles above-mentioned, containing a minute account of the manners and religion of the Mohammedans. He died at Granada in Spain, immediately after his return.

CUSANI CRIBATIO ALCORANI.—The author of this book was the celebrated Nicolas de Cusa, the most eminent scholar of the age in which he lived. He was made Cardinal of Rome, A. D. 1448, with the title of *St. Peter's ad vincula*, and died A. D. 1464, about ten years after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. This event gave occasion to the work, in which he aimed to provide an antidote to that baneful religion which he saw was now likely to overspread a great part of Christendom.

ABRAHAMI ECCHELENSIS HISTORIA ARABUM.—This work is subjoined by the author to his *Chronicon Orientale*, collected out of the Arabic writers. Ecchelensis was a Maronite of Mount Libanus in Syria, and was employed as Professor of the Oriental Languages in the College *De Propaganda Fide*, at Rome, from whence, about the year 1640, he was called to Paris, to assist in the publication of the great Polyglot Bible, and was there made the king's Professor of Oriental Languages in the college of that city. His part, however, in the execution of that great work was said by some of the doctors of the Sorbonne to have done him little credit. His inaccuracies were almost infinite, and such as to evince that his judgment came far short of his erudition.

J. H. HOTTINGERI HISTORIA ORIENTALIS.—Of this valuable work there are two editions; the first of A. D. 1651; the second, much enlarged, of A. D. 1660. The author was Professor of Oriental Languages, first at Zurich in Switzerland, and afterward at Heidelburgh in Holland. From this place he was called to a similar Professorship at Leyden, but was unfortunately drowned in the Rhine during his removal thither. Hottinger was a man of amazing industry and of vast learning; but from having written so much in so short a compass of time, for he died young, his works want that accuracy which

the maturity of a few more years in the author would have given them. As it is, they are all useful.

JOHANNES ANDREAS DE CONFUSIONE SECTÆ MAHOMETANÆ.—The author of this work was formerly an *Alfaki*, or doctor of the Mohammedan Law; but in the year 1487, being at Valencia in Spain, he was converted to Christianity, and soon after received into holy orders; whereupon he wrote this treatise in Spanish against the religion which he had abandoned. From the Spanish, it was translated into Italian A. D. 1540; and again into Latin in 1595, and reprinted by Voetius at Utrecht in 1656. His thorough knowledge of the subject enables him to manage the controversy with a force and pertinency which has since been rarely equalled.

POCOCK.—The celebrated Professor of the Hebrew and Arabic tongues at Oxford; for piety and learning one of the brightest ornaments of his age. He was born A. D. 1604, and died A. D. 1691. For upwards of sixty years he was a constant editor of useful and learned works, connected for the most part with the history or literature of the East. His most valuable, though by no means his most extensive, work is the *Specimen Historiæ Arabicæ*, published A. D. 1650, which Mr. Gibbon thus significantly characterizes in one of his notes:—"Consult, peruse, and study the *Specimen Historiæ Arabicæ*. The three hundred and fifty-eight notes form a classic and original work on the Arabian antiquities."* Again, "the English scholar (Pocock) understood more Arabic than the Mufti of Aleppo."†

RICHARDI CONFUTATIO LEGIS SARACENICÆ.—The author of this very valuable tract was a Dominican friar, who in the year 1210 went to Bagdad with the sole purpose of studying the Mohammedan religion out of their own writings, in order the more successfully to confute it. This learned and judi-

* Decline and Fall, vol. v. p. 139

† Ib vol. v. p. 228.

mous treatise was the fruit of his foreign residence, which he published upon his return. It was translated from the Latin into Greek by Demetrius Cydonius for the ex-emperor Cantacuzene, who makes great use of it, deriving from it whatever is of most real value in his four Orations against the Mohammedan religion. From this Greek version of Cydonius it was re-translated into Latin by Picensus, and published in the Latin Koran of Bibliander. This is all we now have of it, the original being lost. This tract of Richard, and that of Johannes Andreas before mentioned, were the ablest which had been written by Europeans in the Mohammedan controversy previous to those of the Rev. Henry Martyn, which were originally published in Persian, and have since been translated into English by Prof. Lee of Cambridge.

RODERICI TOLETANI HISTORIA ARABUM.—Containing a history of the Saracens from the birth of Mohamed to the year of our Lord 1150. The author was Roderic, Archbishop of Toledo, in Spain, who was present at the Lateran Council in 1215. His history, from the tenth chapter, is mostly confined to the Saracens of Spain, where his accounts may be generally relied on; but little credit, it is said, is due to him wherever he follows them out of the bounds of the Peninsula. The work was published with Erpenius' *Historia Saracenicæ* at Leyden, A.D. 1625.