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THE MOORS IN SPAIN

I HAVE taken this subject of "The Moors in Spain," because in two visits to Spain I had noted the beautiful architecture which had been left by them. I knew very little of the history of the Moors when I was in Spain, and I found that others were as little informed. In India little attention seems to have been given to a phase of Muslim culture which developed in Spain. Of course every one who has read the history of the Middle Ages has known that a part of the magnificent body of knowledge of Greece and Rome came to Europe by way of Spain, where the Moorish universities were centres of culture.

When I offered to read a paper on this subject, I had not calculated on the length of the period of history which is covered by the Moorish occupation in Spain. Eight centuries are covered by the records of Moorish influence, and therefore my task to condense them all into one hour is a difficult one. I shall not attempt to give any comprehensive idea of the events which enter into this period. I shall confine myself to touching upon the personalities of certain individuals who stand out in an

especial way, and who are representative of the events of the time.

The entry of the Moors into Spain was primarily due to a Christian who invited them. In the opening of the 8th century, a certain Gothic king Roderick was reigning in Spain. One of his nobles was Count Julian, who held for him the fortress of Ceuta, on the African coast. A daughter of Julian, by name Florinda, had been sent to Roderick's court to be educated and trained in courtly accomplishments. Roderick, breaking his obligations of honour, secretly ravished her. She appealed to her father for help. At first Julian said nothing to Roderick and feigned friendship, but after carefully informing himself of his master's plans, he offered to the Khalīfa's viceroy in Africa, Mūsa Aben Nosair, to lead him to Spain. This act of revenge on Julian's part opened the conquest of Spain to the Moors.[1]

The first expedition of the Moors was in 710, when Tarīf, with 400 men and 100 horses, was sent by Mūsa. It is noteworthy that nearly all of these raiders were descendants of the "defenders" of the Prophet at Medina, who had been forced into exile after the triumph of the Meccans. Tarīf returned after a few months. Next year, however, when in

[1] Some hold that Julian invited the Moors not as an act of revenge but to recover with their help territory in Spain which had been lost by his compatriots. This makes Julian not a Visigoth but a Byzantine.

711 Roderick was called to the north of Spain to put down some rebellion, the Berbers took advantage of his absence to send a brilliant captain, by name Tārik Aben Ziyad, with 7,000 men. Tārik was accompanied by Count Julian, and landed at a place called by his name since that time the "Rock of Tārik," or Gebal-tārik or Gibraltar.

The conditions of the masses in Spain made them sympathetic to the Arabs on their arrival, for these masses had suffered much at the hands of the Goths, and had received very little benefit. Many were serfs tied to the land, and even the small free proprietors were unable, under the Gothic law, to alienate their goods. Nominally they were all Christians, but the clergy had done very little for them to instruct them in their religion. Furthermore, there was a large Jewish element in the population, and these had been badly persecuted by the Goths with their narrow form of Christianity. Indeed, it has been said that the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition in the 16th century were only a replica of the tortures invented against the Jews by the bishops of the 7th century. Therefore, when the Moors came, the Jews helped them at once, and it was they who delivered Toledo, the chief city of Spain, into Tārik's hands.

It must here be noted that the term "Moors" is used very generically for the Arabs of Arabia and of Syria, and for the Berbers or Bedouins of North Africa. Many of these Bedouins were the followers

of the Prophet in name only, and cared very little really for religion. One noteworthy fact about all these followers of the Prophet, from whatever part they came, was their intense clannishness. They were loyal to their tribes and tribal traditions, but had very little inclination to mingle with other tribes, except when they went together on Razzias or forays. Long before the time of the Prophet, acrimonious feelings had existed between the peoples of Mecca and Medina. These feelings were perpetuated in Spain, to which were added the feelings of the Berbers, who cared little for the pure Arabian tradition. When all these tribes, after their conquest of Spain, lived in cities, each tribe had its particular quarter and caravanserai, and its own cemetery.

There is one element which comes in as a factor in the growth of the political consciousness of the Moors which we do not find elsewhere. That is the rôle played by poets. Each tribal chieftain had his poet, and one of the great accomplishments of the Moors was to be expert in poetry and particularly in satire. After tribal warfare, when some kind of a peace was patched up, that warfare usually continued in the form of satires in poetical form, full of libellous insinuations. The poets were an appreciable influence at times in the politics of Spain; it was as well for a ruler to be on the right side of them. Most striking too is the way that statesmen and rulers unburden

themselves of their troubles by describing them in poetry. "A warrior and a poet" describes the typical Moor in the best days of Moorish culture.

Let me here mention that the Arabs once tried to pass on from Spain to conquest northwards. They had for a while possession of various towns in the south of France, but in the year 732 a great battle was fought between them and the French. The French were led by the famous Charles Martel, or Charles of the Hammer. The Arabs suffered a severe defeat, and from that time the dream of conquest northwards was given up. The Moors soon accepted as the most northerly line of their rule the northern mountains of Spain, the foothills of the Pyrenees and the Cantabrian range. In this northern part of Spain, there is a tract of mountainous land, very unproductive and swept by bleak winds. This northerly part became the territory where the Christian Princes took refuge during the years of the Moorish conquest; it is from these districts they descended upon the Moors, and finally won back their land.

In the year 1150, the Omeyyad Khalīfas of Baghdad had been driven out by the Abbaside party. A grandson of the last Khalīfa, by name Abderrahman ben Moavia, escaped the general massacre of his family, and fled to Africa. He was then about twenty-five and full of ambition. After five years of wandering among the Berber tribes, he sent a messenger to Spain to get in

touch with the clients or retainers of his family, who had settled there. Finally Abderrahman was invited by them to come, and as the result of many tribal plottings and skirmishes, involving several years of bloodshed, he became at last the principal ruler. His supremacy was in the beginning challenged by various Moorish chieftains, but he suppressed one by one each challenge to his authority. Though he became the supreme ruler of the Moors and reigned thirty-two years, it was only as the result of constant fighting and with the exercise of much cruelty. Treachery and assassination were also his means in gaining his end. He was, however, a very strong character; in the beginning he was greatly beloved, but naturally towards the end of his reign of cruelty and bloodshed he had lost all his popularity.

There is one incident told of him which has captured the imagination of the historians. The enemy of his family, the Abbaside Khalīfa Al Mansur sent Ala, one of his chieftains, with a force to invade Spain and to subdue Abderrahman. The latter was hard pressed and besieged in Carmona. He determined on one stroke for victory or death. He ordered a great fire to be lit, and then drawing his sword out of his scabbard, invited 700 of his men to throw their scabbards into the fire and make a sortie to conquer or die. Their furious onslaught gave them the victory, and Ala was routed and all his army annihilated. Then

Abderrahman had the heads of Ala and his captains washed and steeped in salt and camphor, and their several names and ranks inscribed on labels affixed to the ear. Then the heads, with the black flag of the Abbasides, and also the document appointing Ala as governor, and a description of the slaughter, were all put in a sack and sent by means of a Jewish merchant who was travelling east to Cairuan. The merchant was instructed to deposit the sack at night in the market place, and this was done. When the sack was found and its contents carried to the Khalīfa, he is reported to have exclaimed: "Thank God there is a sea between such an enemy and me!"

An incident famous in mediæval annals, the death of Roland, comes into this period of Abderrahman I. Certain of the Moorish chieftains in the north, who were restive under the rule of the Emir, requested help from the great Charlemagne, the King of the Franks. He came invading Spain; but soon after his arrival a rebellion of the Saxons necessitated his return. His rear-guard was led by the most famous of his knights, Roland, who was accompanied by another famous knight, Oliver. The rear-guard got separated from Charlemagne, in the pass of Roncevalles, but no danger was expected. However, the Basques, who were hostile to the French, descended from their mountains upon Roland, and a certain number of Moors also took part in the attack. Roland's

companions were utterly defeated and he himself wounded to death. As he lay on the ground, he broke his famous sword Durenda on a rock, then took his horn and blew upon it a despairing call to his King. Though several leagues must have separated Roland from Charlemagne, yet legend says that the Emperor heard the horn. Somewhat inquieted, he asked what was the significance of Roland's horn, for only one horn had that sound; he was assured that Roland had gone out hunting and the horn was nothing more than a hunting call. But immediately afterwards news was brought of the terrible defeat. Charlemagne at once returned to Roncevalles and there found Roland dead on the ground, with the broken Durenda by his side, and the horn in his hand. The lament of the Emperor over Roland's body is one of the great episodes of the mediæval poets.

Abderrahman was succeeded by Hishām. He was very pious and charitable, and during his short reign the Faquis or theologians gained considerable influence. He was succeeded by Hakām, who also gave much respect to the priesthood. He was, however, much given to hunting, and what was worse, to wine. The priests declaimed against the sovereign, and created much trouble for him. The centre of the trouble was Toledo. With much craft and diplomacy, instigated by one of his generals, Hakām crushed Toledo for a while in the holocaust of what is known as the "Day of the

Foss" or Ditch. The general, Amrus, sent out invitations to all the principal men to a special feast in honour of the King's eldest son Abderrahman, who had arrived in Toledo. A great crowd of guests arrived at the gate of the fortress ; they were admitted one at a time, while their horses were sent to await their return at another door. As they went through, one by one, each was beheaded, and all the bodies thrown into a ditch. The number so treacherously killed is quoted at 700 by some, and more than 5,000 by others ; the former is probably nearer the truth.

A beautiful episode in the life of Hakām is when he had before him a fanatical priest Talut, whom he had loaded with favours and yet who had plotted against him. As the Emir remonstrated against such ingratitude, Talut replied viciously : "I can do nothing better than tell you the truth ; in hating you I have obeyed God ; from now on, all your kindnesses mean nothing to me." Hakām replied : "When I had you brought here, I was reviewing in my mind what was the most cruel torture I could order you. But now I say to you : He, who you claim has ordered you to hate me, bids me pardon you. Go in liberty and God guard you. While you live, I swear by the Omnipotent God you shall be surrounded by honours and benefits. Would to God" —he added sighing—"I could blot out the past."

Abderrahman II was the next ruler. He was a great lover of poetry, and also a poet, though

rumour said that some of his poems had been written for him by others. At any rate, he recompensed his poets well. He was benignant even to weakness. He had forty-five sons, and how many daughters it is not narrated.

Abderrahman earned the reputation of living all his life under the influence of four people: a theologian, a musician, an eunuch and a woman. The musician was a striking personality, by name Ziryab. Not only was he an excellent musician and entertainer—he is said to have known by memory the words and music of 10,000 songs—but he became also the arbiter of the fashions. He introduced asparagus as an edible, and also "forced meat" as a dish. He introduced the fashion of drinking out of glass instead of metal cups, and the cutting of the hair in a particular way. His influence over the aristocracy of the land was very great, and he established a standard of good taste; it is an indication of the way that matters were settling down and that a real culture had been already established by the Moors in Spain.

It was during the reign of Abderrahman II that there arose the curious episode of the Christians seeking martyrdom. In the main, the Moors had let the Christians retain their religion, and except here and there there was very little persecution. There had been few attempts at conversion, for one simple reason. Every non-Muslim paid a poll-tax, and each who became a Muslim meant so much

loss in revenue. In Egypt, after the conversion of the Copts, the revenue fell from eleven millions to five, and the Khalīfa's representative wrote: "If this condition of things continues in Egypt, all the *dhimis* will become Musalmans, and the State will lose all the revenue now obtained from them." Omar II, the Khalīfa, replied: "I shall be very happy if all the *dhimis* will turn Musalmans; for God sent His prophet as an apostle, and not as a tax-collector." In Spain, the Moors did not usually proselytize. When the ruler was broad-minded, he let the Christians go their own way, provided they paid their taxes, and he even ignored their building new churches. But whenever the priests' power grew, persecution began. By turns in Spain these two influences predominated, and so we find certain periods when the arts and the sciences and mystical studies flourished in freedom, and at other times when libraries were destroyed and all who cared for philosophy and mysticism were persecuted.

There was not much persecution at this time, though much resentment existed against the imposition upon the Christians of the rite of circumcision. In some unaccountable way there arose in 851 a wave of violent craving for Christian martyrdom. This was primarily due to the priest Eulogius, who denounced the lukewarmness of his co-religionists:

> My co-religionists take delight in reading Arabic poems and romances; they study the doctrines of Muslim

theologians and philosophers, not in order to refute them, but in order to acquire an elegant and correct style in Arabic. Where today do we meet a layman who reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures? What "secular" studies the Evangelists or the Prophets or the Apostles? Alas, the Christian youth who shine with any talent know only the Arabic tongue and Arabic literature; they read and study Arabic books with the greatest ardour, and they spend huge sums in collecting large libraries, and then proclaim on all sides how admirable is Arabic literature. Speak to them, in answer, of Christian books, and they will answer you with disdain that they are unworthy of claiming their attention. O pitiful! the Christians have even forgotten their language, and among a thousand you will scarce find one who can write correctly in Latin a letter to a friend. Yet if it is a matter of writing in Arabic, you will find a crowd who are elegant in expression and who write poems which artistically are better than those of the Arabs themselves.

All this preaching particularly affected a young woman, Flora by name. This lady's father was a Moor but the mother a Christian. Though brought up as a Moor, she had been secretly taught her mother's religion, and so when she grew to womanhood, and under the influence of the propaganda for martyrdom, she declared herself a Christian. Her brother, who was a Muslim, took her to the Cadi, for apostasy meant death—that was the strict law of Islam. She calmly stated to him that she had always been a Christian, though she had outwardly observed the Muslim rites. The Cadi, being kindly disposed, tried his utmost to bring her back into the faith, but finally found it necessary to send her to prison. Every inducement was made to make her recant, but she refused.

In the meantime a monk, by name Perfectus, had arisen, and had openly blasphemed the name of the Prophet—an action which was of course punishable with death. While he was in prison awaiting the day of his execution, which was to be the feast day after Ramadan, he stated that the chief eunuch Nasr would die within the year, and that all kinds of calamities would happen on account of his persecution. He was beheaded in the sight of the people. As it happened, the second night after, a boat with eight Muslims was upset in the river, and two drowned ; and within a year Nasr died. The eunuch tried to poison his master, and a drink was to be given to the Emir as a medicine. But the Emir, privately warned, asked Nasr to drink from the cup, which of course he could not refuse, and so he perished by his own treachery.

Flora and another woman Mary, a fellow-prisoner, were threatened with being sent to prostitution, but both stood firm. Eventually they were executed. In the course of less than two months eleven Christians had blasphemed the Prophet, and had been executed. Of course they became to the Christians martyrs of Christianity. The Emir tried to get the Christian Bishops to put a stop to this wave of fanaticism, which was distinctly opposed by the majority of the Christians. However, it ended only after the execution of Eulogius himself. We have the full record of all these events in the

writings of Eulogius, up to the time of his execution. He wrote many works and was a very learned man, but a fanatic. It is a very strange episode which stands out at this period.

The next Ruler was somewhat of a miser, and particularly narrow and bigoted. The orthodox priests had great power during his reign, and there began violent persecutions of the Christians, and many churches were demolished. He reigned twenty-four years, and it was during this reign that the native-born Muslims of Spain developed a sense of patriotism. There were continuous rebellions.

The leader in this patriotic movement was Omar ibn Hafsun. He was a descendant of the old Gothic noble families and his father had been converted to Islam. From the commencement of the Moorish invasion, the Arabs had drawn a sharp line of demarcation between themselves and the Spaniards converted to Islam. The latter were not allowed to rise up to any of the higher posts in the Government of the time, and since the ancestors of many of them had been slaves in Gothic times, many insults were levelled at them, because of their origin. They were called "slaves" and "sons of slaves"—epithets which were never used towards the Christians. Probably many of these "renegades" were half-hearted in their Islamic professions, since to be Muslim meant to accept a foreign yoke. All these bitternesses which

had been smouldering for generations were intensified by the Emir placing in positions of power certain of his foreign mercenaries, because they were loyal to him when his own compatriots were not. Ibn Hafsun was the leader of this movement of Spain for the Spaniards. He was a brave man and a great leader, and during all his life-time the insurrectionary movement was a thorn in the side of the Emir.

An attractive personality was a certain warrior and poet, Saïd-ben-Chudi, who was considered not only valiant but also tender-hearted, and most susceptible to a subtle tone of the voice or to the seduction of a delicate hand. Once in Cordoba, as he was passing, he heard an exquisite voice issuing from an upper chamber of a palace. Saïd promptly settled himself in a corner on the other side of the door to listen, regardless of the passers-by. He gained after a while just the glimpse of a small white hand of the singer. She belonged to one of the princes. Saïd promptly fell in love, but as he could not possess her, he spent an enormous sum to purchase the most beautiful slave he could find, and gave her the name Chehane, that of the invisible singer. He has written a poem on Chehane.

Saïd was considered the perfect cavalier of his time, and such a cavalier was to possess ten attributes: generosity, valour, horsemanship, beauty of person, poetic talent, eloquence, physical

prowess, dexterity with the lance, ability to make weapons, and excellence in archery.

Once Saïd was captured, and this is the poem which he wrote in his captivity:

Hope, courage, my friends! Be sure that joy will succeed sorrow, misfortune shall be bartered for happiness and you shall be at liberty. Others have passed years in this cell, and to-day are running in the fields in the light of day. Ah! if we are prisoners now, it is not because we surrendered, but only because we allowed ourselves to be surprised. Had I but had the least presentiment of what was to happen, the point of my lance would have protected me, for all men know my bravery and my valour in front of danger.

And you, O traveller, take my greeting to my noble father and my tender mother, who will listen with anger when you tell them that you have seen me thus.

Greet also my dear wife and repeat to her these words: "Ever I shall think of thee till the day of the last Judgment, when I shall present myself before my Creator with thy image graven in my heart. The sorrow that now overwhelms thee is more bitter to me than my prison or the death that faces me."

We have to remember that the movement of Chivalry, which was to play such an important part in the development of Christian Nations, is largely due to such warriors as Saïd. There were horrible massacres when cities were sacked, and a battlefield was a scene of terrible carnage. But at least among the fighters who were of the Arab aristocracy, it was a tradition that a brave enemy was to be treated chivalrously. These ideas penetrated over the borders to the Christian knights, and gave rise to one part of the ideals of knightly

conduct known as Chivalry. Of course, another element inseparable from Chivalry was the extraordinary position given to womanhood. To many a knight his "lady," the maiden of his devotion, was more of an inspiration than the Deity of his worship. Many of the songs of the Troubadours reveal an enthronement of woman almost on the seat of the Virgin Mary herself. This idealization of woman is largely due to the Teutonic stream of racial influence in the peoples of Europe; it certainly is not derived from Arab traditions. But to what other heights Arab culture might have reached, had woman's rôle among the Arabs been different, is shown by Saïd's exquisite words about his wife.

Of all the rulers in Spain, the most distinguished and most brilliant was Abderrahman III, the grandson of the previous ruler. He succeeded when he was twenty-one years old, and reigned for forty-nine years. When he came to the throne the country was divided under various Moorish chieftains, and in the north the Christian princes were slowly expanding their spheres of influence southward. The early part of the reign consisted of campaign after campaign against the Christians to drive them beyond the frontier, and constant warfare within his own dominions to suppress various rebel chieftains. At last he succeeded and imposed on all Spain that was Moorish a sense of law and order.

There are several incidents in his life which stand out as illustrating the character of this remarkable man. Once Toledo rebelled and put up a very strong resistance. He besieged the city, and to show that he meant to conquer in the end, built opposite to Toledo a city called "El Fath," or "The Faith," which he made his camp whence to attack the city. Another striking and dramatic incident was when he intervened successfully among the warring Christian princes of the north and made several of them his vassals. One prince, by name Sancho, had been proclaimed King of Leon, but had been ousted by a brother who had usurped the throne. Sancho took refuge with his grandmother, the Queen Theuda. These two at last turned to Abderrahman and begged for his aid. The Emir was only too glad to show his people that Christian rulers were appealing to him for his assistance.

Sancho had, owing to some malady, become extraordinarily corpulent, so much so that he could not ride a horse and when he walked he had to be assisted. He was the laughing stock of his people because of his unwieldy size, and this stood in his way as the claimant to the throne. Queen Theuda begged the assistance of the Emir's Chief Physician, the famous Jew Chasdai. This diplomat was sent to the Queen with the mission of arranging for both the Queen and Sancho to come to Cordoba, which was

the capital. Here they were received in great state and with much courtesy by the Emir, who, however, exacted a number of fortresses on the frontier from Sancho in return for his aid. But more remarkable is the fact that the famous physician actually managed to get Sancho into his normal shape, so that when Sancho began his campaign against his brother, with the assistance of the Moorish forces, he was once again able to ride and to command the respect of his followers. Sancho did not give up the fortresses, and behaved in a way that was characteristic of the rulers, both Christian and Muslim, of the time. The pledged word was rarely observed, and the breaking of treaties was not considered such a heinous crime when self-interest necessitated such action.

In 929 on Friday, January 6th, Abderrahman proclaimed himself the Khalīfa. He knew that the term was hitherto given to the head of the Muslim world, who, however, was supposed to possess the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. At this time the Khalīfa of Baghdad had practically lost all his influence, and his authority did not extend to more than a few miles from the city. When, therefore, Abderrahman proclaimed himself En-Nāsir li-dīni-llah, the Defender of the Faith of God, no one particularly denounced him. On the other hand, the brilliance of his capital, and the magnificence which surrounded him, made

the Muslim world look upon him as their leader in the face of the Western Nations.

Another striking incident in his reign was the building of a beautiful city in one of the suburbs of Cordoba, along the river bank. A lady of his harīm, who was his favourite, was named Zahra, the Beautiful. Once the Khalīfa received a very large sum as a legacy, and he ordered his officers to ransom any Moors who might be in captivity in Leon or Navarre out of this sum; this was of course a most pious action, enjoined by the Scriptures. However, as it happened there were no captives to ransom, and so Zahra said to him: "Use the sum in building a City, and give it my name." Most of the Moorish princes were great lovers of beautiful buildings, and so this request was particularly agreeable to the Khalīfa. A beautiful city, one league to the north of Cordoba, called Zahra, "the Beautiful," was built; the building of it took twenty-five years. The palace in it is thus described:

There were 15,000 doors, coated with iron or polished brass. The Hall of the Khalifs at the new City had a roof and walls of marble and gold, and in it was a wonderful sculptured fountain, a present from the Greek Emperor, who also sent the Khalif a unique pearl. In the midst of the Hall was a basin of quicksilver; at either side were eight doors set in ivory and ebony, and adorned with precious stones. When the sun shone through these doors, and the quicksilver lake was set quivering, the whole room was filled with flashes like lightning, and the courtiers would cover their dazzled eyes.

The size of the palace can be guaged by the statement that the harīm contained 6,000 women.

But Cordoba itself was a wonder in those dark times of the Middle Ages. Lane-Poole quotes Arab writers as thus describing it:

> The banks of the Guadalquivir [Wadi-al-Kabir—the Great River] were bright with marble houses, mosques, and gardens, in which the rarest flowers and trees of other countries were carefully cultivated, and the Arabs introduced their system of irrigation, which the Spaniards, both before and since, have never equalled. The first Omeyyad Sultan imported a date tree from Syria, to remind him of his old home: and to it he dedicated a sad little poem to bewail his exile. It was planted in the garden which he had laid out in imitation of that of his grandfather Hishām at Damascus, where he had played as a child. He sent agents all over the world to bring him the rarest exotics, trees, plants, and seeds; and so skilful were the Sultan's gardeners that these foreign importations were speedily naturalized, and spread from the palace over all the land. The pomegranate was thus introduced by means of a specimen brought from Damascus. The water by which these numerous gardens were supplied was brought from the mountains (where vestiges of hydraulic works may still be seen) by means of leaden pipes, through which it was conducted to numerous basins, some of gold or silver, others of inlaid brass, and to lakes, reservoirs, tanks, and fountains of Grecian marble.

No wonder that with such a sense of the refinements of life, Cordoba became a great centre of learning. The Arab mind was, in the main, non-mystical, and therefore it was drawn very readily to the exact sciences like Mathematics, Algebra (the very name is Arabic), Astronomy and Medicine. More remarkable is the Arab's craving for poetry; poetic expression seemed to him the most adequate

method of expressing his feelings. He commented on public events in poetry, and particularly he denounced his enemies in poetry. The following is the description by an Arab writer of Cordoba as a seat of learning:

The inhabitants are famous for their courteous and polished manners, their superior intelligence, their exquisite taste and magnificence in their meals, dress, and horses. There thou wouldst see doctors shining with all sorts of learning, lords distinguished by their virtues and generosity, warriors renowned for their expeditions into the country of the infidels, and officers experienced in all kinds of warfare. To Cordoba came from all parts of the world students eager to cultivate poetry, to study the sciences, or to be instructed in divinity or law; so that it became the meeting-place of the eminent in all matters, the abode of the learned, and the place of resort for the studious; its interior wall always filled with the eminent and the noble of all countries, its literary men and soldiers were continually vying with each other to gain renown, and its precincts never ceased to be the arena of the distinguished, the race-course of readers, the halting-place of the noble, and the repository of the true and virtuous. Cordoba was to Andalûs what the head is to the body, or what the breast is to the lion.

Dozy thus describes the character of Abderrahman:

Abderrahman's power was formidable. A powerful navy permitted him to challenge the control of the Mediterranean by the Fatimites, and secured to him the possession of Ceuta, the key to Mauritania. A large and well-disciplined army, perhaps the best in the world, gave him the advantage over the Christians in the north. The haughtiest rulers craved alliance with him. The Emperors of Constantinople and Germany, the Kings of Italy and France sent him embassies.

The results of his rule were magnificent. But what especially causes wonder and admiration, when we study

his glorious reign, is less the work and more the workman : the strength of this all-embracing mind from which nothing escaped, which was as admirable in dealing with little details as with the most sublime concepts. This man, subtle and wise, who centralizes and unifies the Nation and personal power, who with his alliances establishes a kind of political equilibrium, and who in a wide tolerance calls to his counsels men of other religions, is far more a king of our modern times than a mediaeval Khalif.

Abderrahman died in 961. He has left on record in a paper found after his death how many were the days in his long reign which were free from sorrow. They numbered *only fourteen*. The historian adds : " O man of understanding, wonder and observe how small a portion of unclouded happiness the world can give even to the most fortunate."

Abderrahman was succeeded by Hakām II, who was more of a scholar and administrator than a fighter. Not that he was not capable of leading his army, when necessary, but that his real interests were along lines of scholarship. He amassed an enormous library—400,000 books, it is reported—and more than that, he annotated the major part of the books himself. He encouraged and supported all scholars, even the philosophers, who could now indulge themselves in their studies without fear of persecution from the orthodox theologians. Like a true bibliophile, he had a large army of agents collecting books for him. If he could not buy a book, he had it copied ; and if a distinguished author were only planning a book,

the Khalīfa sent handsome presents to him, with a request for the first copy of the book. He reigned fourteen years, and was succeeded by a son, Hishām, who was only twelve. The Sultana Aurora—by her name she must have been native-born—dominated matters and became regent.

It was during the reign of this Hishām II that there came into greater prominence than the Khalīfa (who all throughout his reign persisted in being deeply religious, but politically a non-entity) a man who steadily made his way to be Prime Minister and the virtual ruler of the country. This was Abu-Amir-Muhammad, later called Almanzor-billah, "victorious by the power of God". The histories are full of incidents concerning his life, narrating the ambitious young man's doings as he made his way step by step from a scribe to the post of Prime Minister. He had remarkably charming manners and knew how to please the princesses with choice gifts, and particularly the Sultana. Indeed, gossip said later that he was one of her two lovers. He was an astute financier, and a dexterous diplomat. As may well be imagined, there were many deplorable deeds in his career before he gained full power, for he did not allow scruples to stand in his way. He had to placate enemies on all sides, for he was not of royal blood though of ancient lineage.

Once he had to bow down to the fury of the orthodox priests, who objected to his patronage of literature and philosophy. For Almanzor, like other cultured nobles of the day, managed easily to combine his orthodoxy with the highest culture of Greek tradition. He travelled on his campaigns with a small library of the poets as part of his baggage. However, Almanzor silenced all clamour against his orthodoxy by arranging for the priests to go through his library, with complete freedom to take from the shelves any book of which they disapproved, and to burn it. This barbarity was actually accomplished, in the presence of this very distinguished man, who himself set fire to the huge heap.

The punishment which Almanzor once meted out to an enemy who was a poet is worth recording. This man, Ramadī by name, had published violent satires against the Prime Minister; at last with others he plotted the latter's overthrow. The plot was discovered. Two of the leaders were crucified, and a third condemned to death. But the penalty decreed to Ramadī was to proclaim by heralds that any person who spoke even a single word to him should be severely punished. The poet was thus thrust into a perpetually deaf world. It is said that he was later pardoned.

As Abderrahman III had built the beautiful city of Zahra at Cordoba, so Almanzor built to the east of Cordoba palaces for himself and his

administrative officers. Soon the courtiers and others left Cordoba and Zahra to settle in the new suburb, which bore the name Zahira, "the Beautiful".

If Abderrahman III was great as a king, not less kingly, so far as vision and capacity went, was Almanzor. He conducted fifty campaigns—two in each year, in spring and in autumn—and was idolized by his soldiers. He had fortitude of a high order, in the face of both physical and mental suffering. He was an assiduous guardian of the people's welfare. Once when going on a campaign he took forty poets with him to sing the heroic deeds of the campaign, and he had a paid staff of poets always at the court. Necessarily, to keep the power in his hands, he kept the weak Khalīfa under complete domination. As a result he was surrounded by conspiracies against his life all the time. Dozy well sums up his character in the following words:

> In all affairs small or great, his vision had the flash of genius . . . If the means which Almanzor employed to gain power are to be condemned, yet it must be confessed that, once having obtained it, he used it nobly . . . In many ways he was a great man; yet even if we pay little regard to the eternal principles of morality, it is impossible to love him, and even to admire him is difficult.

How utterly Almanzor and his very successful politics were detested by the Christians may be judged by the statement of one of the monks mentioning his death with the words: "Almanzor died in 1002 and was buried in hell."

Then followed a succession of rulers who were mere nominees of various political factions. Now ensues a period when restlessness prevails, affairs lacking a strong hand. Spain reverts to a condition where party factions are struggling among themselves to gain the upper hand. Leaders of the aristocratic families and the captains and generals of the mercenaries try to capture the control of affairs, using where possible some descendant of Abderrahman III as a cat's paw. So decade passes after decade, with hardly a truly great man who stands out either for his patriotism or for his ability to bring order out of chaos. In the meantime, the strength of the Christian princes increases, and the waning has begun of Moorish rule in Spain.

New events were fashioning, and in 1086 a new wave of Moorish influence descended on Spain. These were the rulers known as the Marabouts or Almoravids, "consecrated to God". Their orthodoxy was particularly rigid and narrow, and under them the influence of the priests increased. The growth of learning received a setback. During the years of their rule, once again the persecution of Christians was begun, and the slumbering bitterness among the two peoples intensified. They ruled Spain from Africa, and therefore the administration of the country slowly receded from the remarkable system which had been developed under the great Abderrahman. Then another wave of Arabs, the Muwahhiddins—

in Spanish, Almohades—who were fanatical "unitarians" dispossessed the Almoravids.

Here now enters on the scene a character who impressed himself on the imagination both of the Spanish and the Moorish peoples in Spain. This was a Christian leader, by name Ruy Diez, a knight of Castile. He is, however, not known by this name but by the far more dramatic name, "The Cid". The word "Cid" is only another form of the word "Sayed," or "Master," and it was given to him by the Moors. The Cid was really a subject of the Christian King Alfonzo of Castile, but owing to various machinations he was banished in 1081. He then offered his services to the Moorish ruler of Zaragoza, who gladly accepted them. It is during this time, while he was one of the leaders of the Moorish Army, that he was called "The Cid". He was a man of extraordinary valour and was also called "Campeador," or the Challenger. For it was customary in those days, when two armies met, that the preliminary skirmish should be between knights who went out individually and challenged their opponents to come forward to meet them in single combat. The Cid had earned a great reputation as the "Challenger". For several years he fought against the Christians. This kind of fighting against one's own people was not uncommon, and we find Muslim contingents sometimes in the Christian Armies. In 1089 Alfonzo received him back, and thenceforth he fought against the Moors.

It is worth narrating here the dramatic event that followed upon his defeat at last by the Moors in 1099. He died of grief. What followed is thus described by Lane-Poole:

They took his body and embalmed it, and kept vigil by its side; then, in the legend of the poets, they did as the Cid had bidden them; they set him upon his good horse Bavieca and fastened the saddle well, so that he sat erect, with his countenance unchanged, his eyes bright and fair and his beard flowing down his breast, and his trusty sword Tizona in his hand. No one would have known that he was dead. And they led Bavieca out of the city; Pero Bermudez in front with the banner of the Cid and five hundred knights to guard it and Doña Ximena behind with her company and escort. Slowly they cut a path through the besiegers, and took the road to Castile, leaving the Moors in sore amazement at their strange departure; for they did not know that the Cid was dead. But the body of the hero was set in an ivory chair beside the great altar of San Pedro de Cardena, under the canopy whereon were blazoned the arms of Castile and Leon, Navarre and Aragon, and of the Cid Campeador. Ten years the Cid sat upright beside the altar, his face still noble and comely, when the signs of death at last began to appear; so they buried him before the altar where Doña Ximena already lay; and they left him in the vault still upright in the ivory chair, still in his princely robes with the sword Tizona in his hand,—still the great Campeador whose dinted shield and banner of victory hung desolate over his tomb.

By 1235 the Christian Princes had once again become strong and steadily pressed back the Moors southwards. The Moors were now restricted to the district of Granāda, in the south. Though they held this part of the country, they were forced to pay tribute to the Christian King. For two and a

half centuries, however, they continued as a subsidiary Moorish Kingdom, and once again the arts and sciences flourished, in Granāda now. The beauty that remains of the palace of Alcāzar in Seville bears eloquent testimony that the light of culture was not yet extinguished.

The complete eclipse of the Moors in Spain began when the two Kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, that is, practically Spain and Portugal, were united with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella. The last of the Moorish rulers were Muley Abul Hasan and his son Abdallah, called by the Christians "Boabdil". There was bitter strife between father and son, and the son was nicknamed "Ez Zogoiby," the Unlucky.

First, the city of Alhāma was lost—an incident which became the theme of a famous Spanish ballad—and finally Granāda itself in 1491. Just as Abderrahman III had done once upon a time, so Ferdinand when besieging Granāda built opposite to it a city called "Santa Fé"—Holy Faith—for his besieging army. Moorish Spain now was hardly larger than a small county, and even then it had to pay tribute to Ferdinand.

After a few years Boabdil gave up his tiny Kingdom and withdrew to Africa. This was practically the end, though for a few years more the Moors lived on, terribly persecuted by the Inquisition just then established. Lane-Poole thus describes what happened:

The "infidels" were ordered to abandon their native and picturesque costume, and to assume the hats and breeches of the Christians; to give up bathing, and adopt the dirt of their conquerors; to renounce their language, their customs and ceremonies, even their very names, and to speak Spanish, behave Spanishly and rename themselves Spaniards. The great Emperor Charles V sanctioned this monstrous decree in 1526, but he had the sense not to enforce it; and his agents used it only as a means of extorting bribes from the richer Moors as the price of official blindness. The Inquisition was satisfied for the time with a "traffic intoleration," which filled the treasury in a highly satisfactory way. It was reserved for Philip II to carry into practical effect the tyrannical law which his father had prudently left alone. In 1567 he enforced the odious regulations about language, customs, and the like, and, to secure the validity of the prohibition of cleanliness, began by pulling down the beautiful baths of the Alhambra. The wholesale de-nationalization of the people was more than any folk—much less the descendants of the Almanzors, the Abd-er-Rahmans, and the Abencerrages—could stomach.

The mosques were closed, the countless manuscripts that contained the results of ages of Moorish learning were burnt by the ruthless Cardinal, and the unhappy "infidels" were threatened and beaten into the gospel of peace and good-will after the manner already approved by their Catholic Majesties in respect of the no less miserable Jews. The majority of course yielded, finding it easier to spare their religion than their homes; but a spark of the old Moorish spirit remained burning bright among the hillmen of the Alpuharras, who for some time held their snowy fastnesses against their persecutors.

But the end was inevitable, though the rebellion was kept up for two years. The Moors in the end accepted banishment in 1570, and it is said that nearly half a million thus left what had become for them their ancestral home. A similar tragic event occurred in 1126; only, it was the Almoravides

who forced into exile into Africa the Arabic-speaking Christians called the "Mozārabes".

I must not omit to mention the distinguished part which the Jews took in disseminating the ancient knowledge of Greece and Rome. Many of them were excellent Arabic scholars, and in addition they knew both Latin and Greek, which the Arabs did not care to learn. It is they who translated the principal works into Arabic for their masters. And during those periods of persecution of the old culture by the fanatical Faquis or theologians, when the Moorish aristocracy dare not be seen in possession of the heretical books, it was largely the Jews who made the bridge of knowledge between such periods of persecution and the saner day when knowledge was cherished again.

Europe owes much to the Moors for their part in preserving the old knowledge. But they did not add much to it, because they were largely mental in outlook and not sufficiently intuitional. Dozy has pointed out that they gave the title "perfect" to those excelling in poetic inspiration, valour, liberality, caligraphy, swimming and archery. But their poetry was not "creative" but descriptive, and there was little inventiveness in their literature. It was lyrical, or it described what was actually going on; whenever a poet dared to be imaginative, he was accused of lying. Exactness and elegance of expression—in fact what is called

"style" in France—was greatly admired. Dozy further remarks that when

> the Arabs cultivated the sciences, they showed a similar want of creative faculty, after they had established themselves in the immense territories which they had conquered by arms. They translated and they commented upon the works of the ancients; they enriched certain special subjects with observations which were patient, exact and meticulous; but they invented nothing and they conceived no grand or fecund idea.

Yet always Western culture will feel a deep debt of gratitude because they maintained the bridge between Greece and Rome and Modern Europe. While under Christian inspiration darkness became the symbol of Europe, the Moors lit a light whose gleams inspired the rebels and the dreamers who loved "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," and dreamed of a new world and a new humanity. A glorious page in the history both of Europe and of Islam is the record of Moorish culture in Spain.

I must confess that in reading all this history of the Moors in Spain, I have had one great disappointment. I have for long years been a profound admirer of Islam, both for its pure Monotheism and for its gospel of Brotherhood. But as I read volume after volume, to prepare this paper, I began to find that the early history of Islam, particularly in the years which succeeded the Prophet's ministry, was full of the most bitter struggles between His followers for power. The Pagans in the early days of Christianity used to

mock the Christians, who wrangled among themselves, by taunting them with the words, "Look how these Christians love one another." But I doubt whether any cruelty inflicted by Christians upon each other in the past can equal the terrible things done by the descendants of the Prophet on their fellow-worshippers in the first centuries of the faith. Similarly, during the period of the Moorish occupation, the most awful cruelties and massacres were committed in Spain, without the rulers or the priests particularly considering that such actions were incompatible with their profession of faith in Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. We know that the Middle Ages were cruel ages, and that there were no rules of warfare. I have had no illusions concerning the actions of the Christians when at war with each other; for I have read enough history for that. But it has been a great disillusionment to me to find that the followers of the Prophet of Arabia, who proclaimed Brotherhood as the law *at least among those who believed Him to be the Prophet of God*, were in no way different from the Christians who professed to worship a Prince of Peace, and slew each other for the glory of God. I sometimes wish that I had not prepared this paper.

APPENDIX

AT the discussion which took place after this paper was read, several Muhammadan scholars present remarked that I had relied for my facts too much on Dozy and Lane-Poole. The criticism was to the point, but I did not offer my paper as a serious and scholarly contribution to the learned, but as a most fascinating topic to interest the members of the Islamic Culture Society of Madras.

I do feel however that R. Dozy (1820—1883) is reliable so far as his facts are concerned, even if Muhammadan scholars challenge some of his conclusions. Dozy's *History of the Musalmans in Spain, to the Time of the Conquest of the Almoravides* is fully documented, for he was an Arabic scholar of great repute. I have not read Dozy in the original French, nor in its English translation, but only in a Spanish rendering. It is wonderfully well-written, not a dry-as-dust history, but fascinating as a great historical romance.

C. J.

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