

vulets were still there, the sky, the silver moon, all nature remained unchanged, the work of man alone had decayed. *Vanitas vanitatum.*

The expense of building the city of Zehra and this magnificent Palace was 60,000 Dinars of gold annually for twenty-five years; which is 250 millions of dollars per annum—a sum almost incredible to believe, but is confirmed by Moorish, Latin and French historians.—Nor is it so incredible when we take into consideration the vast resources of Spain at that period. Commerce was in a most prosperous condition, and extensively carried on in silks, oils, sugar, cochineal, iron, wool, ambergris, amber, rock crystal, sulphur, saffron, ginger, coral, and the pearl fisheries, most valuable and productive mines of gold and silver were worked. Two mines were owned by the Caliph, of rubies; he also governed Portugal, Andalusia, Grenada, Murcia and Valencia; he possessed eighty large cities and one hundred towns. Cordova contained 200,000 houses and 200 baths. A capitation tax was paid by every person, and the amount of the revenues have been estimated at 600 millions of dollars annually, and in the maintenance of his army, in the erection of Palaces and in the support of Seminaries of learning and other contingencies, no surplus was allowed to accumulate in his coffers.

No small portion of this amount was derived from the sale of offices, for a consideration for every appointment was expected then directly, as it now is, in Spain, indirectly; and he who aimed at the highest honors in the caliphate, had to pay for them. A very wealthy merchant and proprietor, called Abdel Malek, aspired to the office of Grand Vizier, for which he sent to Abdaramé the following presents:

Four hundred pounds weight of pure gold.

The value of 800,000 dollars, in bars of silver.

420 pounds of the wood of aloes; 500 ounces of ambergris; 300 ounces of camphor; 30 pieces of rich drapery of gold, of immense value; ten furs of sable and 100 of martins, then very valuable; 48 travelling housings of cloth of gold of Bagdad; 4000 pounds of silk; 30 Persian carpets of great magnificence; 800 armors of steel; 1000 bucklers and 100,000 arrows; 15 richly caparisoned and splendid Arabian horses; 20 mules, with rich housings; 40 young boys, as pages, superbly dressed; and 20 young girls of exquisite beauty; and in addition, to crown all, what we should deem of very little consequence but was then in high estimation, a copy of verses in honor of the Caliph.

With such qualifications for office, it was impossible for Abdel Malek to fail in his application.

Such were the days of the great Abdaramé. Never was an age so fruitful of great men. Geometry, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, and all the sciences, and every branch of mechanics, and the arts flourished to their utmost extent.

After a long and prosperous reign the Caliph died. Many no doubt, remember the great moral legacy he left to the world—to us—posterity. Many may not have heard it; cannot be too often repeated. Among the papers of Abdaramé, one was found in his own handwriting containing the following:—

“Fifty years have elapsed since I became Caliph. Riches, honors, and pleasures I have enjoyed in abundance, and have exhausted them all. The Kings, my rivals, esteemed me dreaded, and envied me. All those things coveted by mankind, were bestowed by heaven upon me with a prodigal hand. In this long space of apparent felicity, I have calculated the number of days in which I have found myself happy: the number amounts to FOURTEEN. Mortals! hence appreciate the value of splendor, of worldly enjoyments, and even life itself.”

It was reasonable to suppose that a man so illustrious for talents of the highest order, had not neglected the education of his children, and his eldest son Aboul Abbas El Hackem tranquilly succeeded his father under the title of Abdaramé third.

This Monarch had all the genius and bold outlines of his father's character—he found Spain tranquil and happy and he determined to venture upon no experiment which might endanger its prosperous condition. He was the first Caliph who established a code of laws. The doctrines of the Koran had been the common law since the time of Mahomet, but he deemed it necessary to reduce them to a specific form; to make them simple and comprehensible to all and to allow of no latitudinous construction, that any Cadi or Magistrate might give to those laws as they understood them;—he greatly increased the public Library, encouraged liberally the cultivation of literature and the sciences, established an excellent system of police, and was in fact a just and upright Prince and generally beloved. During his reign, which was only fifteen years, the Christian Kings gave him but little trouble.—His eldest son, Hackem, was too young to wear the Kaftan of the Caliph on the death of