

Abu Taleb's trade-business of his in this journey, the miraculous omens and signs, it is said by certain men named *deaux* to be other collected in the march, "There will be reached he appeared also, that the drove was covered with that the mystic seal in the form of a small and of a bright cloud mission was indicated prophetic light which according to the traditions of him, and from his descendants, who sustained radiance at length was divided into a shining upon Isaac and posterity. The light has been perpetuated in messengers and prophets only of Ishmael is said in through the whole Mohammed, in whom is printed out to Boheira. However intrinsically, it may, nevertheless, in its remoter sources, in the paintings or engraving on brows. caravan to Mecca, Benion, coupled with depart with this child hands of the Jews; for a person." The narrative of this is new to the true origin of this Boheira, a Christian, instructed in the Bible, and that they motley compound of a nation twenty years before Mohammed, is in the Koran. Others say that of thirteen show

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 connections 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 fortune 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, sur-