they would fight side by side with the Musalmans against the enemy. As the *Jizia* was nothing but the recompense for military service their request was granted.

Baghras was a town situated in the neighbourhood of Antioch contiguous to the frontier of Asia Minor. Many of the Arab clansmen such as the Ghassans, the Tanukhs and the Ayads were preparing at this place to accompany the Romans to the Emperor Heracleus. Habib ibn Maslama attacked them and a fierce conflict took place in which thousands were killed. In the meantime Khalid attacked Marash which capitulated on the condition that the Christians should evacuate the city.

JERUSALEM, 16 A.H./637 A.D.

IT has already been mentioned that in sending out the expedition against Syria Abu Bakr deputed separate generals to reduce the various provinces of that country. Thus the province of Palestine fell to the lot of Amr ibn al-As. Amr had reduced some of the towns even in Abu Bakr's time and the important cities of Nablas, Lud, Amwas, and Bait-Jarin had been captured by the time of Omar. Whenever any general conflict took place Amr hastened from Palestine to co-operate with Abu Obaida but as soon as it was over he returned to his own seat and took up the work entrusted to his special

care.* Having reduced the neighbouring towns he at last invested the holy city of Jerusalem itself. The Chirstians continued defending themselves while shut up within their fortifications. By this time Abu Obaida had completed the reduction of the furthermost districts of Syria such as Qansarin etc. Having settled everything to his satisfaction in that part of the country he proceeded in the direction of Jerusalem. The Christians loosing heart sued for peace and for better satisfaction laid it down as one of the conditions that Omar should come to Jerusalem in person and subscribe to the treaty of peace with his own hand. Abu Obaida in his despatch to Omar described all this saying that the fall of Jerusalem depended upon his arrival. Omar assembled all the distinguished companions and consulted them. Osman declared that the Christians had been struck with terror and lost heart and that if the Caliph were to reject their request they would be still more humiliated, and considering that the Musalmans regarded them with utter contempt, would lay down their arms unconditionally. Ali, however, dissented from the view and gave the contrary opinion. Omar shared the same opinion and commenced preparations for the journey. Appointing Ali† as his deputy he entrusted the duties of

* *Futuh al-Buldan*, p. 140.

† This is Tabari's statement. Yaqubi mentions Osman's name instead of Ali's.

the Caliphate to him and left Medina in the month of Rajab, 16 A.H.*

Our readers will be anxious to know the details of the pomp and splendour which might well be supposed to have characterized the march of Omar the great—the march which was calculated to inspire the enemies of Islam with an idea of its grandeur and might. But they are destined to disappointment on this score. No bands played, no gaudy trains and brilliant equipages moved, no imposing grenadiers and stately dragoons marched to announce the journey of the Great Caliph. No, not even an ordinary tent was provided for his accommodation. His sole retinue consisted of a horse which he bestrode and a few Muhajirin and Ansar, who accompained him. Still, wherever it was known that Omar the Great was marching from Medina to Syria everything fairly trembled with awe.

The Muslim generals had been advised to meet the Caliph at Jabia. So, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan, Khalid ibn Walid and others came and received him at this place. Long residence in Syria had robbed these officers of their Arabian simplicity. When they arrived in the presence of Omar he saw them arrayed in silk from the richest looms and their brilliant dresses and imposing appearances gave them the look of the Persians. Omar flew into a fit of

* *Yaqubi*, p. 167.

rage at the sight. Down he jumped off his horse and picking up a few pebbles that lay scattered about the ground he pelted them saying: "So soon have you fallen into Persian habits."

The officers replied that they had cuirasses beneath the silken tunics, implying that they had not lost the art of war and that their warlike spirit was as keen as ever. On hearing this the Caliph was appeased and said that if such was the case then there was no real harm done.* Approaching close to the city Omar got up on a hillock, and looked all around. The charming fields of Ghota with their verdure laden expense stretched and the stately and towering edifices of Damascus loomed in front of him. He was strangely moved and in a tone of deep pathos repeated the following verse from the Quran: "They have left many a garden, fountain, park, arbour and riches which they used to enjoy. Thus it is that We put a later generation in possession thereof."

He then recited a few heart-rending couplets of the poet Nabigha.

Omar sojourned for a long while at Jabia and the treaty of Jerusalem was drawn up there. The Christians of Jerusalem had already been informed of the journey of Omar and some of the nobles of that city proceeded to Damascus to see him. Omar

* *Tabari*, p. 2402.

was seated in the midst of the Muslim troops when suddenly a cloud of dust arose in the distance and a number of horsemen appeared at full gallop with swords glittering at their sides. The Musalmans, startled at the appearance, instinctively felt for their weapons. When Omar enquired the cause of the alarm they pointed towards the dashing cavalry. Quick of apprehension Omar guessed that the approaching horsemen were the Christians of Jerusalem and he accordingly reassured his men saying that they need not be alarmed as the strangers only came to sue for peace. In short the treaty of peace was drawn up and the elite of the Companions subscribed to it.*

After the ratification of the treaty Omar proceeded to Jerusalem. The hoofs of the horse which he rode were worn to tenderness and the animal limped painfully. Omar dismounted on seeing its sorry condition. His men brought him a fine courser of Turkish breed. The animal was high-mettled and fiery. As Omar mounted it, it began to prance on which he cried out: "Miserable thing! whence this vain and haughty amble?" Thus saying he alighted and pursued his way on foot. As he entered the environs of Jerusalem, Abu Obaida and other officers of the army came forth to bid him welcome. The

* This is Tabari's statement. Balazuri and Azdi on the other hand say that the treaty of peace was drawn up at Jerusalem. We have produced the covenant in its entire detail in the second part of this book.

poorness of Omar's shabby attire and the tattered condition of his scrubby equipage put the Muslims to shame and their sense of self-respect received a shock when the galling idea crossed their minds as to what the Christians would think of them on beholding their chief. So they brought for his use a gallant Turkish charger and a handsome dress of valuable materials. Omar, however, rejected the offer saying that the honour which God had conferred upon him was that of Islam and that that was enough for him. In short he entered Jerusalem in the same humble guise. First of all he repaired to the Mosque and approaching the arch of David he recited the verse from the Quran which speaks of the Apostle David as bowing down to God and then prostrated himself in humble obeisance. He then visited the church of the Christians and walked about the building for some time.

As a large number of military officers and provincial governors had gathered there Omar prolonged his sojourn in the holy city for many days and issued various necessary orders. One day Bilal, the Prophet's *Muazzin*, complained to the Commander of the Faithful that the officers treated themselves to such dainties as fowl's meat and white loaves while the men could not get even ordinary food. Omar glanced inquisitively at the officers who replied that edibles of all varieties were cheap in that country and that white loaves and fowls' meat cost

the same there as brown loaves and dates in Hijaz. Omar could not compel the officers to partake of a more frugal fare but he issued an order to the effect that in addition to their pay and their legitimate share of the war spoils the soldiers should also get free rations.

One day, at the time of prayers, Omar requested Bilal to say the *Azan*. Bilal rejoined that he had made up his mind never to say the *Azan* for any one after the Prophet, but that he would make an exception in his favour and obey him for that only once. So when in his well-known stentorian accents he began to summon the faithful to prayers, association wafted along the retrospective stream of memory, painfully reminded the Companions, one and all, of the blessed times of the Prophet and melted their hearts to tears. Abu Obaida and Muaz ibn Jabal wept most disconsolately while Omar fell into a fit of unbroken sobs. It was some time before this scene of deep emotion and pathos abated in its vehemence.

During his stay at Jerusalem Omar once visited the Mosque of Aqsa and sending for Kaab the Bishop asked him where to say the prayers. There lies a stone in this fane which the ancient prophets have left as a relic. It is called *Sakhrah* and the Jews hold it in the same veneration as the Musalmans do the *Hajar Aswad* (the Balck Stone). When Omar enquired from Kaab the direction in which the

prayers were to be offered, the latter pointed out *Sakhrah* as the *Qiblah*. On this Omar told him that the Jewish faith had still a hold over his mind which had led him, instinctively, as it were, to put off his shoes near *Sakhrah*. This event shows in what light Omar regarded such ancient monuments.

SECOND ATTEMPT OF THE CHRISTIANS TO REGAIN AMASIA, 17 A.H./638 A.D.

THE second battle of Amasia is memorable because it led to the conquest of Jazira and Armenia. We have already set forth the causes which operated in behalf of the expeditions against Persia and Rome but no *casus belli* had hitherto presented itself to justify the despatch of an armed force against Armenia. The sphere of the conquest of Islam was rapidly widening and Islamic dominions were continually expanding. The neighbouring kingdoms were simultaneously struck with fear as they grimly felt that the onward and irresistible march of the forces of Islam was one day calculated to merge their individualities in its overwhelming and absorbing entity. Accordingly the people of Jazira prevailed upon the Emperor to make one more effort to recover what he had lost giving him at the same time to understand that they were ready to co-operate with him. Heracleus hailed the opportunity and despatched a large force to Amasia. The people