Hitherto, al-Muhallab had been singularly fortunate not to encounter jealousy from any quarter, high or low. His spectacular successes against the baffling 'Azariqa had only been a source of immense gratification to the successive governors, chiefs and the common people of al-Asra, all of whom showed themselves under a deep debt of gratitude to him. No doubt, Malik b. Mismaa grudged him a few terms in his agreement with al-Qubā and the Basran chiefs which, he feared, were designed by al-Muhallab to exalt his own position and to secure a personal advantage for himself. But the unworthy behaviour of Malik had no practical effect whatsoever; it only served to throw into clear relief the deep affection and the high regard which the general body of the Basrans bore towards al-Muhallab. Al-Qubā throughout held him in great awe and lavished the highest compliments upon him. Al-Ahnaf, the famous chief of Tamīm, was generous enough to concede that 'al-Asra was al-Muhallab's.' Maṣḥab was unstinting in his recognition of al-Muhallab's indispensability for success in any major campaign. Even Ḥamza showed himself too ready to comply with the persistent request of the people to reappoint al-Muhallab to lead the campaign against the 'Azariqa. The general population of al-Asra hailed him as their protector who had given them safety and security and they looked to him alone to defend the city every time it was threatened
by the ‘Azāriqa.

For the next three years (72-75), however, the path of al-Muhallab was beset with jealousy on the part of no less a person than the governor of al- Başra. No doubt, ‘Abd al-Malik from the very beginning valued al-Muhallab as much as he deserved. Soon after the fall of Muṣ‘ab he took early opportunity of sending the patent of commission to him in anticipation of his submission to the new authority. But it was this ardent recognition of al-Muhallab's worth on the part of both the Baṣrans and ‘Abd al-Malik which, to the exclusion of any other thing, excited the displeasure of the two governors whom ‘Abd al-Malik successively appointed to al- Başra during the first three years of the establishment of his sway over al-‘Iraq. The first of them, Khālid b. ‘Abdullāh b. Khālid b. ‘Asīd, took charge of the governorship shortly after ‘Abd al-Malik's victory at Maskin. Although Khālid does not appear to have had any previous grudge against al-Muhallab, yet he took strong umbrage against him soon after his assumption of duties on the only ground that the people of al- Başra should believe him to be the only general capable of defending the city against the inveterate ‘Azāriqa. He was determined to prove that others, besides al-Muhallab, could also score a victory over them. The inhabitants of al- Başra tried their best to make Khālid desist from effecting the change contemplated by him because, they pointed out, it endangered the safety of the town. But these pressing requests only proved their faith in al-Muhallab and as such they only served to
harden Khalid in his prejudice against him. He could not brook that al-Muhallab should exercise such a powerful hold upon the minds of the people and, therefore, flatly rejected their representations(1).

Khalid did not even care to consult <Abd al-Malik in the matter (2) who himself had previously confirmed al-Muhallab in the command. He on his own initiative issued orders deposing al-Muhallab from the leadership of the campaign and appointing him instead as his agent to administer, and to collect the taxes of al-Ahwâz(3).

Khalid chose for the command of the campaign his own brother <Abd al-<Azîz (4) whom he reinforced with a powerful detachment headed by Muqātil b. Nisma. About the same time, the 'Azraqites, who had fallen back to Karmân, again made an incursion and advanced as far as Darâbājd in Fârs. <Abd al-<Azîz set out to meet them with an army 30,000 strong. On his way towards the 'Azûriqa, <Abd al-<Azîz showed himself actuated by the same uncharitable feelings towards al-Muhallab as had prompted

(1). Kam. 656.
(2). This is proved by <Abd al-Malik's letter to Khalid (Tab. 2/625,9) where he says that he learnt of al-Muhallab's deposition only from the messenger who brought him the news of <Abd al-<Azîz's defeat.
(3). Thus in Tab. 2/822,15. According to Kam. 654, al-Muhallab was recalled to al-Haṣra whence he proceeded again to al-Ahwâz in the company of Khalid whose campaign against qaṭarî is placed before that of <Abd al-<Azîz.
(4). Tab. 2/822,15 seq.
his brother to bring about his deposition. He openly indulged in sweet dreams of shattering the belief of the people in the indispensability of al-Mahallab. Arrogantly he said to his soldiers: "The Basrans think that al-Mahallab alone can accomplish this task. Very soon they will be disillusioned." (1) The disillusionment, no doubt, came very soon not to the Basrans but to the vainglorious <Abd al-'Azīz himself.

Qatarī dispatched one of his generals, Sāliḥ b. Mikhrāq (2) or Saʿd al-Ṭalāʾī (3) with barely 500 or 900 soldiers to face <Abd al-'Azīz and his army of 30,000. The two armies met at Jarūz (4), a place in Fārs. <Abd al-'Azīz proved himself rash enough to be inveigled into a valley where the cunning Azraqites ambushed his army and inflicted a disastrous defeat upon him. Muṣāṭil b. Mismā was killed and a wife of <Abd al-'Azīz, 'Umme Ḥafs, by name, was taken prisoner. (5)

Al-Mahallab knew full well that <Abd al-'Azīz was no match for the Azāriqa. To him the outcome of the battle at Jarūz was already a foregone conclusion. His unfailing foresight, therefore, made him anxious about his own defence because he felt that in case <Abd al-'Azīz were worsted, the Azāriqa were sure to march straight upon al-'Ahwāz. Now his position at al-'Ahwāz was untenable even

(1). Kam. 656, 11-12.
(2). Thus Tab. 2/323, 1.
(3). Thus Kam. 657.
(4). Yaq. 2/66.
(5). Tab. 2/823; Kam. 657.
for a moment because Khalid had left him there as a mere tax-collector with barely three hundred soldiers. He, therefore, set about taking precautions so that he may not be taken unawares by the onrushing 'Azārīqa.

No sooner did 'Abd al-'Azīz depart from al-Ḥawāz than al-Muhallab sent his chamberlain, Kurdūs, to bring al-Ṣaʿb b. Zaid to him. As al-Ṣaʿb entered his presence, he said to him, "O Ṣaʿb, I am lost. I see, as if it were, the defeat of 'Abd al-'Azīz and am afraid lest the 'Azārīqa should overtake me while I have no army with me. So, send a man on your behalf who should bring to me their news beforehand." Al-Ṣaʿb accordingly deputed a man, 'Imrān by name, to accompany the army of 'Abd al-'Azīz and to write to him about the day-to-day developments which information he used to pass on to al-Muhallab.

There can be no doubt that al-Muhallab was fully aware of the malignant motives that lay behind his deposition. He must also have known that 'Abd al-'Azīz too shared the ill-will of his brother towards him. Yet he was too noble to harbour any rancour in his own gentle heart. 'Abd al-'Azīz had arrived at Hāmahurūmūz after his shameful defeat of which al-Muhallab was yet unawares. He dispatched al-Ṣaʿb b. Zaid to find out the news but at the same time took particular care to instruct him that in case 'Abd al-'Azīz were defeated, he should also convey his message of sympathy and consolation to him.

(1) Kam. 656, 10.
(2) Kam. 656.
Accordingly al-Ṣa'b started on his errand till he reached near ḌamaHuruz where he met <Abd al-ʿAzīz who looked dejected and sorrowful. Introducing himself as the emissary of al-Muhallab, he consoled <Abd al-ʿAzīz and then hastened back to break the news to al-Muhallab. "What news?" asked al-Muhallab as soon as al-Ṣa'b appeared before him. Al-Ṣa'b had, not without obvious reason, calculated that the news of <Abd al-ʿAzīz's defeat would cause immense satisfaction and joy to a grieving al-Muhallab. So he replied, "It is all good news for you. He has been defeated and his army routed. "No doubt, the defeat of <Abd al-ʿAzīz represented the failure of a malicious attempt to undermine the glory and injure the reputation of al-Muhallab. But al-Muhallab proved selfless enough to subordinate his personal interests to the larger interests of his community. He said to al-Ṣa'b, "Woe to you. How can I rejoice in the defeat of a chief of Quraish and an army of Muslims?" Contrary to his fond expectations as the reaction of al-Muhallab was, al-Ṣa'b said rather languidly, "The fact is all the same, whether it pleased you or hurt you." (1)

Noble and dignified as the attitude of al-Muhallab towards his rivals was, his relations with his loyal followers were also based on love for his awe-inspiring personality rather than on fear and coercion. This was amply revealed in the latter part (2) of al-Muhallab's

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(1). Kam. 660.
(2). This latter part is omitted in Kam. but supplied in Tab. 2/824.
discourse with the same al-Ṣaḥb. Al-Muhallab wanted him to carry the news of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's defeat to Khalīd at al-Baṣra. Al-Ṣaḥb was afraid lest he should incur the wrath of Khalīd by breaking this sad news to him. Al-Muhallab insisted that al-Ṣaḥb was the man best fitted for the task; but al-Ṣaḥb was still reluctant. Thereupon al-Muhallab felt a bit irritated and said, 'No doubt you are assured of impunity on my part. But remember that if you were placed under some one other than me and if he were to order you to go on foot you would have gone without sparing any exertion.' The remark cut al-Ṣaḥb to the quick who replied rather impatiently, 'Do you mean to recall to us the consideration and forbearance that you have shown us? Well, we repay it to you fully, rather even more than that. Don't you realise that we endanger our lives for your sake and defend you from your adversary. By 'Allah, if we were placed under one who is harsh upon us and who makes us go on foot for his own ends, then, were such a man to require our help and sacrifice, we would only put him forward between ourselves and our enemy and would save ourselves at his expense.' These words went home to al-Muhallab who had no false notions of honour and prestige to prevent him from acknowledging, with an air of gratefulness, that al-Ṣaḥb was perfectly right. He then summoned another man and dispatched him to Khalīd with the news of his brother's defeat.

Thus, it is noteworthy that al-Muhallab's solicitude for his soldiers was only a source of strength to him. He
never allowed the virtue of kindness to degenerate into the vice of weakness. Far from tending to make them remiss in the discharge of their duties, it only urged his subordinates to give him their willing and unquestioning obedience and to hold his cause as dear to them as their own personal cause.

Al-Mu‘alāb’s generosity towards those who grudged him his glory reached a crescendo when ‘Abd al-‘Azīz arrived at Sūq al-‘Awāz(1). Al-Mu‘alāb treated him with every respect and even presented robes to him. He also accompanied him to al-Baṣra, leaving his son Ḥabīb behind as his deputy. As an attack by the ‘Azāriqā, which al-Mu‘alāb had long foreseen, was still feared, he instructed Ḥabīb to keep himself informed of their movements and to retire to al-Baṣra on their approach. Accordingly, when the ‘Azraqītes reached so near as the Bridge of ‘Arbuk (near Šamaḫurμāz), Ḥabīb withdrew. Khālid, however, failed to realise the expediency of this action which he disapproved so strongly that Ḥabīb dared not face him and was compelled to hide among the Banū Hīlāl.

The defeat of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was such a serious affair that Khālid could not keep it from ‘Abd al-Malik. He wrote to him but not without mincing words, saying that ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was put to rout when the people deserted him.(2)

This veiled attempt to minimise the responsibility of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz for the shameful defeat and to shift the blame to his army, however, failed to have any effect on ‘Abd al-Malik.

(1). Kam. 660.
(2). Tab. 2/825, 5.
He could at once know where the fault lay. 'Abd al-Malik had not yet known of the deposition of al-Mahallab. Khalid in his letter had avoided, deliberately we may assume, any mention of his arbitrary action. It was, therefore, quite natural that his first thought should turn to the commander whom he himself had commissioned. He said in his reply to Khalid, "I asked your messenger as to the position of al-Mihallab and was told that he was acting as your agent in al-Ahwaz. That was a bad decision it was on your part that you appointed your own brother, a rough, inexperienced and raw Bedouin from Mecca, to conduct the campaign, preferring him to al-Mihallab whom you left nearby to collect the taxes whereas he is endowed with fortunate judgment and excellent statesmanship and possesses a very long experience in and an expert knowledge of warfare."(1)

Condemnation of Khalid's arbitrary choice of 'Abd al-'Aziz was not confined to 'Abd al-Malik alone. It seems to have been as widespread and universal as the demand for the appointment of al-Mahallab. A poet denounces Khalid in the following verses:

(1). Tab. 2/925, 8seq.
In obedience to 'Abd al-Malik, Khalid, along with the Baṣran army, set out for al-ʿAhwāz where he was joined by the promised contingent from al-Kufa, five thousand strong and commanded by 'Abdur Rahman b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿAsh-ath. (1) The ʿAraqītes came forward to meet them and the first trial of strength took place at Kurbaḏinār (2) near al-ʿAhwāz. Qatari was resolved to make a long and determined stand and when the battle had lasted for thirty days he set about fortifying himself with a ditch. Who combined in himself the necessary prudence and experience to foresee the immense advantages that accrued to an enemy from a ditch? Al-Muḥallab came forward and pointed out to the unwary Khalid that Qatari should not be allowed to have the advantage of a ditch. Khalid, thereupon, crossed the Dujail and moved westwards to the region of Nahr Tīrā. Qatari, however, was not slow to follow them. He established himself in the city of Nahr Tīrā which he doubly fortified with a wall and a ditch. Al-Muḥallab again tried to rouse Khalid into activity pointing out to him the imperative necessity of having a ditch for himself as well, because without it his camp was

(1). Tab. 2/326.
(2). Kam. 654 seq. Tab.’s account (2/326-27) of Khalid’s engagement with Qatari is very short. It only says that when the contending armies had stood opposite each other for 20 days, Khalid advanced towards the enemy with al-Muḥallab on his right and ʿAbd b. Ṣaḥḥām on his left wings. The ʿAraqītes were so over-awed by Khalid’s superiority in numbers and equipment that they at once turned tail.
and in conjunction with him to proceed himself to al-^Jbwaz in order to conduct the war against the 'Azariqa. He also promised him reinforcements from al-Kufa which Bishr b. Marwan, the governor of that town, had already been directed to dispatch. But ^Abd al-Malik had lost trust in the wisdom of Khalid. Although he retained him as the nominal head of the expedition yet he concluded his letter with this unpalatable restriction on his authority. He said, "When you meet the enemy you are not to decide on any step until you place it first before al-Muhallab and have his views on it."

Khalid, no doubt, very keenly felt the chastisement administered to him for his blunder in preferring his brother to al-Muhallab. But what offended him still more was that ^Abd al-Malik should not leave the direction of the expedition to his unfettered discretion and oblige him to obtain the concurrence of al-Muhallab on every important issue(1). This virtual power of veto in the hands of one whom he had neglected and provoked so much in the past, was a slight too hard for him to swallow. No doubt, this must have added to his spite against al-Muhallab whose only fault was that he possessed those superb qualities which marked him out for glory, but for the time being it was obvious that he had no alternative but to submit quietly.

(1). Taf. 2/325, 17-18.
constantly exposed to night-attacks by the enemy. Khalid, who was only fit for a sinecure, replied with foolish indifference. "O 'Abū Sa'īd, it is sooner said than done." Seized with despair, al-Mihallab remarked to one of his sons that it appeared to him as if the whole affair were doomed. But soon he took courage in his both hands and started hastily taking such defensive measures as he could on his own account. First, he somehow managed to improvise a ditch with the assistance of Ziyād b. 'Amr. He also warned the leader of the Kūfan auxiliary corps, 'Abdur Rahmān b. Muḥammad b. al-'Ash'ath, against overdrawn self-confidence in his mere valour which was the besetting weakness of most of the generals of the time. Imprudently enough 'Abdur Rahmān expostulated that he did not care a fig for the Azārīqa but was ultimately prevailed upon by al-Mihallab to fortify his camp with a ditch (1).

Secondly, realising that the boats presented a tempting target for an enemy attack, al-Mihallab suggested to Khalid that the boats lying scattered about should be drawn together and concentrated at one point around him; otherwise they were most likely to be burnt by the enemy.

Even before the slow-moving Khalid could make up his mind, an enemy column rose and burnt the boats exactly as

(1). Tab. 2/826. The statement in Igd(1/74) that 'Abdur Rahmān remained without a ditch despite al-Mihallab's advice and was put to flight by the Azārīqa is unconfirmed. It may be a distortion of the incident with 'Abdur Rahmān b. Mīkhnaf at a later date.
al-Muhallab had anticipated and warned. (1) Al-Muhallab was still very apprehensive about the safety of boats. He, therefore, ordered that the boats be abandoned and that the men should entrench themselves on land. Khalid refused to fall in with this wise expedient and refused to evacuate the boats under his immediate command (2). Al-Muhallab still pushed forward with his own defensive measures as far he could independently of Khalid. Fortunately enough, his lead found favour with many a prominent warrior. For instance, Firuz Husain, a prominent Persian chief with a large following of mawalī archers, acknowledged the wisdom of his efforts and favourably responded to his request for help and co-operation.

Forty days were spent in mere skirmishing. Then it became clear that a major assault on the part of Qaṣīrī was imminent. Al-Muhallab braced himself for the event. He deputed a 'mawla' of 'Abū 'Uyaina to keep a nightly vigil from a funeral crypt in the neighbourhood and to hasten to him with the news of the slightest movement or the neighing of horses from the direction of the enemy. So, he was not to be taken unawares. One night the same scout came to him and informed him in good time that the enemy had moved. Al-Muhallab personally organised the defence and himself took up a position at the very entrance of the

(1) Tab. 2/826.
(2) Kam. 654.9.
ditch. Soon Qatari launched a major attack which was heralded by a novel and confounding device. With remarkable dexterity, Qatari prepared a number of boats filled with burning wood and sent them down upon the boats of Khalid who was foolhardy enough to reject the advice of al-Muhallab and to persist in occupying them. He now had to pay dearly for this indiscretion. In the wake of these fire-bearing boats came Qatari himself who effectively penetrated the ranks of the defending army and started wanton destruction of all life, human as well as animal, and property that fell in his way. Al-Muhallab directed his own son, Yazid, to meet the enemy which he did with the help of a hundred horsemen and acquitted himself well of the task. Abdur Rahman b. Muhammad b. al-Ashath also gave ample proof of his valour and made a worthy contribution to the defence. True to his undertaking, Firoz Husain also came forward with a body of clients who achieved very great results with their skilful archery.

The attack was repulsed no doubt but not without huge losses. The next morning, the camp of Khalid presented the appearance of a black stony ground, strewn all over as it was with the corpses of the slain. Moved by this evidence of the vehemence of the attack, Khalid remarked to al-Muhallab with a sense of satisfaction that ill-became his ignominious part, "We were just on the brink of being put to shame." (1) Al-Muhallab again shook him out of his

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(1) Kam. 655.
complacency. He warned him that if he did not even then care to provide himself with a ditch the enemy was bound to attempt another raid. After all that he had seen and suffered it was now impossible for Khalid to dismiss the advice of al-Muhallab as summarily as he had done on previous occasions. But even if he were to adopt a suggestion he lacked the ability and resource to execute it. So he requested al-Muhallab to oblige him by taking the work of the ditch in his own hands. Al-Muhallab who was possessed of an inexhaustible fund of energy, readily agreed and set himself to the task with his characteristic ability. He completed it soon with the labour of all the prominent warriors who were engaged on it without any distinction of high and low.

The timely and energetic measures of al-Muhallab proved the ruin of the hopes of the 'Azraqites. Despairing of the possibility of gaining any advantage, they at last decided to retreat to their stronghold in Karrāh. But before they departed they felt constrained to pay what may be called the greatest compliment to the genius of al-Muhallab in the words: "But for the presence of this Sorcerer of Muzūn, you would have been completely destroyed by 'Allah." (1) The Sorcerer of Muzūn was no other than al-Muhallab whose brilliant foresight and effective counter-measures could only be explained, according to the thwarted and bewildered 'Azraqites, as magic and sorcery.

(1). Kam. 655.
This successful repulse of Qatari is well entitled to a place among the brightest laurels of al-Muhallab. The peculiar significance of this event lay in the fact that al-Muhallab defeated not only the intentions of the Azraqites but also the unwisdom and the inert complacency of Khalid who also happened to nurse an ill-will against him. At every step al-Muhallab was opposed or at least hampered by Khalid, so much so that he was driven to remark that the whole affair seemed to be lost. But, let Khalid do whatever he may, al-Muhallab was determined not to let his fair name be soiled by a shameful defeat. Although Khalid was the nominal head of the whole expedition yet al-Muhallab acted almost independently with the troops under his immediate command and saved an impossible and hopeless situation. He well deserved the tribute that the retreating 'Azraqites paid him. Also he fully justified the hopes and the confidence reposed in him by 'Abd al-Malik. It is, however, doubtful whether 'Abd al-Malik was ever apprised of the true facts about this engagement. Of course, it could not be expected from Khalid that he should deal fairly with al-Muhallab's brilliant part in this victory. In his letter to 'Abd al-Malik informing him of the repulse of the 'Azraqites (Tab. 2/828), he fully brings out the fierceness of the struggle but makes no mention at all of al-Muhallab or of any other general and claims the victory wholly for his own leadership.

Qatari having retired, Khalid returned to al-Basra while al-Muhallab is reported to have stayed in al-'Ahwāz.

The reports of Khalid's regime in Tab. and in Kam. (654-662), although they agree very strongly on the essential
features of the two campaigns, (the one led by ʿAbd al-
ʿAzīz and the other led by Khalid in conjunction with al-
Muhallab), differ as to the order of their occurrence. The
order mentioned in Tab., which has been followed above, is
just the reverse of that given in Kam. According to the latter,
Khalid first took the command of the campaign in his own hands
and then, in the second place, placed it in the hands of ʿAbd
al-ʿAzīz (1). Further, it is added in Kam. that it was the
news of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz’s defeat which caused ʿAbd al-Malik to
dismiss Khalid from the governorship of al-Basra. The text
of ʿAbd al-Malik’s letter in reply to Khalid’s note conveying
the news of the defeat as given in Kam. (662) ends thus,
‘Were I to punish you in proportion to the magnitude of
your sin, it would have been impossible for you to outlive
it. But I was reminded of your relationship with me which
diverted me from you. I order that your punishment be your
dismissal.’

Al-Muhallab is also reported (Kam. 661-2) to have
foretold to Khalid that, despite his relationship, ʿAbd al-
Malik was most likely to dismiss him when he learnt of ʿAbd
al-ʿAzīz’s defeat following closely upon the defeat of
ʿUmayya, another brother of Khalid, by ʿAbū Fudaiḥ in al-Bahrain.

Whether or not the defeat of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was the
immediate cause, it is almost certain that it was the

(1). Wellhausen (p. 227) has adopted the version of Kam. It
is difficult to find an argument for the adoption of
one or the rejection of the other version.
principal cause of Khalid's dismissal. ‘Abd al-Malik long remembered it against him that he should have deposed al-Muhallab from the leadership of the campaign against the ‘Azāriqa(1). He was most anxious to curb the menace which had caused him a good deal of uneasiness and he knew that none but al-Muhallab was equal to the task. As Khalid would not co-operate with al-Muhallab it was thought necessary that he should be dismissed and supplanted by one who should be more favourably disposed towards the leader of the campaign.

(1). Vide ‘Abd al-Malik's remark (Kam. 663,6) to ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥakīm al-Mujāshi‘ī that Bishr was proving no better than Khalid (in putting off the appointment of al-Muhallab).