C H A P T E R XXIV.

C E L E B R A T I O N  O F  V I C T O R Y.

Al-Muhallab's keen sense of propriety and his fine appreciation of the true worth of each individual were amply proved when he took particular care to select a 'learned, intelligent, and eloquent man' to carry the news of victory to al-Ḥajjāj(1). The happy choice fell on Ka'b b. Maḍān al-ʿAshqari, the notable poet and warrior, and Murra b. Talīd al-ʿAzdī, a well known orator(2). When the two entered the presence of al-Ḥajjāj Ka'b stepped forward and recited the opening verse of an Ode composed by him in eulogy of al-Muhallab:

Al-Ḥajjāj exclaimed: "Are you a poet or an orator?"

Ka'b replied that he was both and then went ahead with the recital of the rest of the Ode. The Ode consisting of 83 verses is preserved in Tab.(2/1008 seq) and fragments of it are also to be found in Agh.(13/55). Yaq. also quotes it at various places. It is a beautiful Ode as

(1). Mas. 5/350.
(2). Thus in Kam. 694 and Agh. 13/54-55. The name of Ka'b al-ʿAshqari is also confirmed in Tab. 2/1007. In Iqd. 1/201; 297 and IKh. 2/149, however, these two names are substituted by the name of al-Ḥajjāj drew a good augury from it as presaging .Mas.(5/350) gives the name as
regards literary excellence and eloquent eulogy of al-Muhallab's qualities of generosity and leadership but the most remarkable thing about it is that it contains vivid allusions to the whole course of the campaign during the fourth and the last period of al-Muhallab's command. It was well-suited for being recited on the occasion, the more especially so because a few verses in it are also devoted to a vindication of al-Muhallab's cautious and restrained policy.

The passages referring to the course of war and al-Muhallab's strategy are important enough to deserve a mention here.

Having devoted the first nineteen verses to the conventional erotic prelude and a panegyric of al-Muhallab, with particular reference to his quality of generosity, the poet comes to a description of the panic-stricken town of al-Basra at the time of al-Muhallab's assumption of command:-

[The text is not legible, but it seems to continue discussing the campaign and strategies used during the fourth and last period of al-Muhallab's command, possibly delving into the specifics of war strategy and leadership qualities.]
Further, the poet continues to trace the progress of the campaign and refers in order of occurrence to the salient events, namely, the camp at Fāmahūrmüz, the death of Bishr and the mutiny of the troops consequent upon it, the frequent engagements in Sābūr where the contending parties skirmished for three years and then the final encounter in Karman:-

دِخِيْا خَلْفَ اَلْأَهْلِاءَ وَالْجِمَاعَ
لَجِئِيْتُ نَشْيِرُ عِنْبِيْلِ الْقُرْمِ وَالْفَالَاخْرَ
ذَقْتُ وَإِنْ يَأْسَرْتُ بِسِبْيَاتِهَا
حَتَّى اجْتَنَّا بِلَأْدَمْ وَالْقُوَّةِ
لَسْقَيْتُ وَتَسْقَيْتُ سَمَا مَا كَتَبْتُ
قَتَلْتُ هَذَا كَلِمَتُ وَلاْقَوْدُ
حَتَّى نَحْيَتْ نَا سُوْا لَسْتُ قَرْمُ
لَيْغْنِهِ مَسْحُ شَفَا اِلْيَلَّةِ كَأَلْيَمُ
بَيْنَ كَتَابِيْنِ تُرْبَ مُسْرِيْمَةً
صَلَّا وَلَا خَازِمْنَا بَعْدَا تُزَرَ خَرَّ
عَبْضَيْا جَهَرَيْمِ بِالْقُرْمِ إِذْ نُرَأٍ
وَبَيْنَ لَمْ يُحَقَّنَا نَا بِذَلِكَ
بِدْسَتُ بَيْنَمَّا لَمْ يَشْكُلَ لَعَفَدُ
لَا نُرَا كَاتِبِ لَا يَكُونُ لَعَفَدُ
الْمُقَدِّمِينِ إِذْ مَا خَيِّرْتُ وَمَرَتُ
وَنْيَانٍ إِذْ شَقَّا بِرَحْمٍ
Referring to al-Muhallab's watchful waiting game, the poet says:

Then the poet turns to the final encounter in Karmān and also refers to the serious disaster at Jarūz which had roused in the troops of al-Muhallab a keen passion for vengeance:

The rest of the verses are devoted to a description of the grim and virulent nature of the final struggle. The poet also takes the opportunity of exulting in the glory of al-Asd, his own tribe as well as that of al-Muhallab and in conclusion sums up the achievement of al-Muhallab thus:

When Ka'b had recited the Ode al-Hajjāj turned to him for a talk and put him a series of questions about al-Muhallab and his conduct of the war. In his replies Ka'b testified that the people were quite happy and contented under the just and efficient leadership of al-Muhallab which had brought them victory and rich booty. The people always received from al-Muhallab the kindness of a father
and in return gave him the filial love and obedience of a son. Further he described the ruse employed against Qatari as a result of which the Azraqite chief departed from Karmān believing all the time that he was playing a trick upon his enemies thereby. In conclusion he bore witness to the important role of the sons of al-Muhallab in the achievement of victory and bestowed the highest praise on everyone of them for bravery and generosity. He described them all as gallant heroes both in defensive and offensive operations and asserted that they were all of equal merit like a solid ring of which the two ends were imperceptible.(1)

Al-Ḥajjāj was so much impressed with the impromptu answers of Kaʿb that he complimented him as a 'perfect man' and even praised al-Mihallab for having chosen him as his messenger.

Al-Muhallab had also written a letter to al-Ḥajjāj in which he expressed gratefulness to ʿAllāh for the successful conclusion of the campaign and mentioned how he had patiently waited for a long time till he could see a seasonable opportunity of gaining the upper hand of the Azāriqa despite their immense might which had almost become a nightmare(2).

In reply al-Ḥajjāj wrote to al-Muhallab expressing his joy at the happy event and implicitly acknowledging the rectitude of al-Muhallab's strategy of war, saying 'You knew your circumstances better.' Further, he asked al-Muhallab on the receipt of the letter to distribute the 'fay' among the

(1). Azh. 13/55-56; Kam. 694-5; Mas. 5/350-1; Iqd. 1/201; IKh. 2/149.
(2). For Arabic text see Appendix F. ✓
warriors, making awards proportionately with their merits in his own judgment; to leave a force to stand against the remnants of the enemy, if there were any; to appoint a man of his choice as the Prefect of Karman and then to proceed to him with all speed accompanied by the members of the army who were expressly prohibited from visiting their homes before they were presented to him (al-Hajjaj)(1).

Acting upon this letter, al-Muhallab appointed his son Yazid to administer Karman and himself proceeded to respond to the call of al-Hajjaj. While conferring this new appointment on Yazid, al-Muhallab reminded him that his position had changed from what it had been in the past; thenceforward he was to have only such amount out of the revenue of Karman as al-Hajjaj allowed him. He also warned him that he could maintain his position only if he adopted the ways of his father and instructed him to behave gently and kindly towards his people and to send to him any one who may incur his disfavour.

Al-Muhallab's visit to al-Hajjaj was the occasion of a great ceremony such as befitted the reception of a victorious general. Al-Hajjaj received him with every mark of honour and respect and seated him beside himself. He

(1). Kam. 695-6.
referred to the soldiers of al-Muhallab's army as 'men of great deeds' and 'defenders of the frontiers' and declared that the people of al-‘Iraq were 'the slaves of al-Muhallab! Then turning to al-Muhallab he said, "By Allah, you are as Laqit al-Iyādī has said:

(Qubbat al-dinay ba‘a ma‘rūf yathannā 'ilm kāma rashia fī akf al-qāli‘a, wa‘l-‘azā‘a wa‘l-mukthara bī khasā‘a, kabūn munti‘a tānā‘ā, wa‘l-mutī‘a, has‘a astari‘tum ‘alā shuruhrī‘a.)

(Kam. 696).

Thereupon a man stood up from the audience and recalled that he had heard Qatari mentioning the same verses as a true description of al-Muhallab. Al-Hajjāj was much delighted at this concidence that his loving and grateful tribute to al-Muhallab should be confirmed by the testimony of his enemy as well.

Naturally, after being so long reproached and persistently pricked by al-Hajjāj, al-Muhallab's first care was to justify his tactical policy by its results. But he did so with due regard to politeness and decorum and without the least sign of resentment at the irritating reproaches and distrustful accusations hurled at him in the past. Speaking on this occasion, he remarked that their victory was due not to their superior strength but to the righteousness of their cause inasmuch as it was a triumph of community over the forces of discord. Then he added, "And that which we disliked of procrastination has turned out to
"Better than that which we liked of rashness." (1) "True, indeed", exclaimed al-Ḥaḍjaḥ promptly because the logic of accomplished facts was stronger than the logic of reason and argument.

Al-Ḥaḍjaḥ then requested al-Muḥallab to acquaint him with the distinguished warriors and their heroic deeds. Al-Muḥallab asked the people to record an account of the deeds of gallantry to be presented to al-Ḥaḍjaḥ and when the people had prepared it he did not fail to remind them that the reward which Allāh had in store for them was far better than that which they may get in the present world. Then he presented the warriors to al-Ḥaḍjaḥ in order of their merit and precedence as regards gallantry and services in war. Foremost among them he placed his own sons, al-Muḥṣira, Yazīd, Muḥrik, Ḥabīb, Qabīs, al-Muḍāqṭal, ʿAbd al-Malik and Muḥammad, and, in order to clear all suspicion of nepotism, added the remark that he would never have given them the first place of honour had they not really deserved it and were it not a grave injustice to give them a place lower than that. Al-Ḥaḍjaḥ emphatically approved of al-Muḥallab's judgement and said that his sons were indeed the 'swords of Allāh' and that he, though not an eye-witness to their deeds, knew them no less than al-Muḥallab himself. Next al-Muḥallab mentioned Ḥālan b. al-Muḥṣira b. Ṭabī Ṣufra, al-Ruqād and their likes. Al-Ḥaḍjaḥ called al-Ruqād to his presence. When al-Ruqād, a tall and humpbacked man, was ushered in al-Muḥallab introduced him with the words "This is the

(1). See Arabic text see Appendix P. 11
great warrior of the Arabs." Al-Ruqād thereupon gave the credit for his own deeds to the leadership of al-Muhallab. He said to al-Ḥajjāj that when he fought under commanders other than al-Muhallab he failed to rise above the common soldiers. But when he was placed under one who imposed perseverance on him, treated him on an equal footing with himself and his sons and rewarded him for gallantry' he as well as his companions could not but become prominent horsemen. We cannot doubt the sincerity of this fine and glowing tribute because it was well-supported by reasons the truth of which is established by what we have known of al-Muhallab during the past.

Having heard from al-Muhallab, al-Ḥajjāj passed orders that the people be given precedence according to their deeds and that the sons of al-Muhallab, the top-most warriors, be granted an increase of 2000 while al-Ruqād and his associates who came next in order of merit, should be given a somewhat similar amount.\(^{(1)}\)

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\(^{(1)}\)  Kam. 698-99; cf. also Sh. 2/211.