CHAPTER XXX

The Dynasty of Al-Muhallabids.

The greatness of Al-Muhallab does not lie only in his personal achievements. He is also remembered as the father of a galaxy of noble and eminent dignitaries and the progenitor of a numerous and illustrious dynasty which, despite the vicissitudes of its fortune, survived and upheld its traditions of honour and glory for many a century afterwards.

Al-Muhallab must have had an exceptionally large number of issues for according to one statement (1), exaggerated though it may be, his progeny was as numerous as three hundred. Anyhow, there can be little doubt that he must have had many more than the twelve sons and three daughters to whom our knowledge is confined.

It is indeed a pity that the Mahāliba should have remained a dry historical anecdote while their counterpart in later time, the Barāmika, should have become the kernel of popular legend and romance. As a matter of fact, the position of al-Mahāliba under the Umayyids was in many respects almost identical with that of al-Barāmika under the Abbasids. Even the scanty records that have survived to us contain ample evidence to show that in their own days the Mahāliba enjoyed the same popular and

(1) Mrf. 204; cf. also Ikh. 2/147.
universal reputation for deeds of glory, prowess, munificence and patronage of poetry and learning as is commonly associated with the Barāmika. As we have seen, most of the sons of al-Muhallab had already established their fame before the death of their worthy father. They had to their credit a glorious contribution to the astounding victories of al-Muhallab and their unrivalled claims to be the foremost warriors were acknowledged by all. Hence, they were most aptly described as 'the noble descendants of a family of fighters, if not of prophets' (1). Their deeds of gallantry, which were quite proverbial (2), were already on the tongue of contemporary bards when the death of al-Muhallab afforded them a greater opportunity of showing their bounty and munificence. Soon the poets thronged round them and spread the songs of their praise far and wide. Here are a few examples of verses testifying to the unrivalled eminence and the universal popularity enjoyed by 'ālu 'l-Muhallab:—

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\text{(Al-Tabrizī 4/147; Iqd. 2/9; Iqd. 1/232).}
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The odes of innumerable poets in encomium of individual al-Muhallabids as well as historical traditions are rich in examples of their glory and benevolence. Yazīd b. al-Muhallab in particular is renowned as one of the most munificent men

(1): Ikh. 2/306; Jah. 2/261,
(2): Cf. the words of al-Harīrī "ربيعة إلى إلى سمر" (Sh. 210).
in Islam. It is reported that the poets sought and received large bounties from him even when he was confined in the prison of al-Hajjāj and could only show liberality at the cost of prolonging his travail(1). Thus the analogy between the Mahālība and the Barāmīka was strong enough to strike the historians who are all agreed that under the Umayyids there was none more benevolent than the sons of al-Muhallab just as under the Abbasids there was none more benevolent than the Barāmīka(2).

The following is the list of al-Muhallab's sons and daughters so far as they can be traced in the annals:-

1. Ḥabīb, 'Abū Bistām. He was older than Yazīd in age(3).
2. Yazīd, 'Abū Khālid, born in 53 A.H.(4). His mother was called 'Dāhma' (5). Judai b. Saʿīd b. Qabīsa b. 'Abī ʿSufrā is mentioned as his maternal uncle (6). He was the most beautiful, the most sagacious and the most eloquent of all his brothers(7).
3. Al-Mughīra 'Abū Ḥātim.
4. Al-Mufaddal
5. 'Abd al-Malik

The two were full brothers. Their mother was called Bahla described as Hindiyya (8). Al-Mufaddal was next to Yazīd in the leadership of the family.

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(1) See Igd. 1/154-56; Uyun 1/32; Ikh. 2/255-6; Mat. 204; 221.
(2) Ikh. 2/266.
(3) Ikh. 2/266.
(4) Ikh. 2/276.
(5) Said to have been a captive from Kabul (Kam. 523 note a).
(6) Tab. 2/856.
(7) Dain. 239.
(8) Bahla or Buhalla or Bahula or Bahala (Tab. 2/1141; 1142; 1210). In Agh. 11/159 (cf. also Uyun 4/64), 'al-ʿAwag' of Yashkur are described as al-Mufaddal's relations on the mother's side.
6. Qabīṣa, said to have been regarded as one of the foolish men of al-‘Azm (1).
7. Marwān ‘Abū Qabīṣa. His generosity is also celebrated by al-Farazdaq (2).
8. ‘Abū ‘Uyaina. He was born of al-Muhallab’s best known wife, Khairah b. Dāmra al-Qushairiyya, who gave to a canal of al-Baṣra the name ‘Khairatān’. Similarly al-Muhallabān, obviously so called after al-Muhallab, is also said to have belonged to her (3).
10. Muḥammad.
11. Ziyād.
12. MūĀwiya.

N.B. Dā‘ūd b. al-Muhallab is also mentioned in Iqd. 1/129; Fat. 219 but his identity is not established elsewhere.
13. Hind bint al-Muhallab. She was married to al-Ḥajjāj and must have been of a very youthful and playful nature. Once al-Ḥajjāj is reported to have said that he enjoyed his company with Hind in the manner of a youth whiling away his time light-heartedly among his friends (4).
14. ‘Ummeh Malik. She was promised to Ma‘ān b. al-Mughīra b. ‘Abī Ṣufra as a prize for his deeds of gallantry in war (5).
15. Nafīsa. She was taken into marriage by Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. ‘Abbūlāb al-Bajalī after the massacre of the Mahāliba. The Diwān of al-Farazdaq contains a few verses on the occasion of her marriage (6).

(1) Uyun 2/45.
(2) Diw. 107; 192.
(3) Bal. 360; Yaq. 1/645. According to Agh. 3/20, Khairatān (Khairafān is obviously a misprint) was the name of an estate which was managed by Surd, father of the poet Bagshāh, who was a slave of Khairān from among the captives of Ṭukharistān. May be the land owed its name from the canal which passed through it.
Unfortunately, the services of the Mahāliba to the empire of the Umayyids were frequently interrupted due to personal and tribal jealousies and were eventually cut short by a tragedy which cannot fail to recall to mind the calamity that befell the Barāmika at a later date. As it happened, Yazīd succeeded his father as the head of the family and the governor of Khurāsān. The ambitious and imperious nature of Yazīd coupled with the fact that he had behind him the support of a powerful and numerous tribe, soon aroused apprehensions in the mind of al-Ḥajjāj who feared lest Yazīd should plan to overthrow him. He, therefore, deprived Yazīd of his office in the year 85 A.H., and as a matter of expediency appointed al-Mufaddal, Yazīd's half-brother, to act in his place. Al-Mufaddal's term, however, lasted only nine months for no sooner had he made the mistake of disposing of Mūsā b. ʿAbdullāh b. Khāzim than he was removed. The dismissal of al-Mufaddal inaugurated for the whole family a period of downfall and severe disgrace at the hands of al-Ḥajjāj. Yazīd and al-Mufaddal were thrown into prison; ʿAbd al-Malik and Ḥabīb were also dismissed from their offices of the Chief of Police and the governor of Kirmān respectively and even Hind bint al-Muhallab, who had been married to al-Ḥajjāj, was divorced. In the year 90 the three brothers, Yazīd, al-Mufaddal and ʿAbd al-Malik, managed to escape from al-Ḥajjāj and sought shelter with Sulaimān b. ʿAbd al-Malik who interceded on their behalf with the

(4). Iqd. 4/162.
(5). See supra p. 240-1.
(6). Diw. 181.
the fugitives were overtaken by Hilal b. ‘Ahwaz al-Mazini who had been dispatched in their pursuit by Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik. Hilal b. ‘Ahwaz subjected the Mahallabids to such wanton massacre that only a few could survive it. Al-Mufaddal, ‘Abd al-Malik, Ziyad and Marwan, the sons of al-Muhallab are expressly named as having been killed on that occasion. Al-Minhal b. ‘Abi ‘Uyaina b. al-Muhallab, ‘Amr and al-Mughira, sons of Qabisa b. al-Muhallab and Mu’awiya b. Yazid b. al-Muhallab are also reported among the victims. A number of them were also made prisoners and were later on ordered to be killed by Yazid b. ‘Abd al-Malik. The women and children were sold into slavery, from which they were only redeemed by the humanity of al-Jarrah b. ‘Abdulllah al-Hakami. ‘Abu ‘Uyaina b. al-Muhallab, ‘Umar b. Yazid b. al-Muhallab and ‘Uthman b. al-Mufaddal b. al-Muhallab are mentioned as the fortunate survivors who saved themselves by taking shelter with Zunbil(1).

The tragic end of the Mahaliba is noticed by most of the contemporary poets. Those attached to the Umayyids like Jarir(2) naturally rejoice in the successful crushing of a revolt. The diwan of al-Farazdaq is particularly rich in references to almost all the vicissitudes in the fortune of the Mahaliba right up to the tragic climax (3). On the other hand, those who had been devoted to the Mahaliba like Thabit Qu’ma (4) mourn the loss

(1) The above account is taken from I Ath. 5/37-42. According to Yaq. 2/373 Uthman was also killed.
(2) Vide Diw. pp. 219; 241; 320.
(3) Vide Diw. pp. 17; 46; 106; 123; 107; 266; 332; 424; 434; 507; 548; 699; 806.
(4) His elegy on Yazid b. al-Muhallab is preserved in Tab. 2/1414 et seq.
then sovereign, al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik till the latter granted them and their family protection against al-Hajjāj. On the accession of Sulaimān in 96 A.H. the family once again rose to power and prosperity for a short period. Yazīd was appointed governor of al-ʿIrāq and Khurāsān and he in turn distributed the high offices under his command among his brothers and kinsmen. Ḥabīb b. al-Muhallab was also appointed to al-Sind. In the year 99 Yazīd was again cast into prison by the Caliph ‘Umar II on account of his inability to deliver to the state the rich booty from Jurjān and Ṭabaristān which he was indiscreet enough to promise to Sulaimān in writing. When the Caliph ‘Umar II was about to die in the year 101 A.H. Yazīd dreaded lest he should fall into the hands of the succeeding Umayyid, Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik, who was avowedly antagonistic to him because of his cruel and revengeful treatment of the family of al-Hajjāj with whom the prince was related by matrimony. So Yazīd fled from the prison and reached al-Baṣra where he captured the governor Ḥadī b. ʿArtāt al-Fazarī and in a short time established his agents all over al-ʿIrāq, Fārs and Karmān. Later on he raised the banner of revolt against Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik who had in the meantime ascended the throne after the death of ‘Umar II. The new sovereign dispatched his brother Maslama b. ‘Abd al-Malik and his nephew al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik in order to crush the rebellion. A severe battle took place at al-ʿAqr (near Karbalāʾ) in the month of Ṣafar, 102 with the result that Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was killed along with his brothers Muḥammad and Ḥabīb. After the defeat at al-ʿAqr, al-Mufaḍḍal and his brothers fled to al-Sind with all their families in accordance with a predetermined plan. At Qandābīl, however,
of their patrons. It is, however, just possible that the poets of the latter category dared not express their genuine sentiments for fear of repercussions on the Umayyid authorities. Hence the volume of their verses is not so great as could be expected. Yazid b. <Abd al-Malik is reported to have expressly urged the poets to satirise the Mahāliba. Kuthayyir was the only poet who refused to do so(1). What may be regarded as an index to the popular feeling is the saying that 'Banū 'Umayya murdered religion at Karbalā' and generosity at al-'Aqr."(2).

After the tragedy at Qandābil, the small remnants of the Mahāliba multiplied so greatly and so quickly that they were often pointed out as an example of the saying that 'the remnants of sword grow the most'(3). It is reported that the issues born in their family for the next twenty years were all but males(4). The rapid increase in numbers is, however, not so remarkable as the recovery of their lost privilege and glory after a very brief period of obscurity. Within only a few years of the tragedy during the reign of Hishām b. <Abd al-Malik we

(1) Mas. 5/455. Cf. Agh. 4/52. The attitude of al-Farazdaq as described in the latter is contradicted by the verses included in his diwan.
(3) Jah. 2/223; Uyun 1/130.
(4) Mas. 5/457.
hear of Marwan, a son of Yazid b. al-Muhallab leading a revolt against the governor of al-Sind which eventually cost him his life (1). Under the Umayyids, however, the Mahalibids could make little headway in reasserting their former position and prestige. It was during the period of political ferment preceding the change of dynasty that the Muhallabids once again thrust themselves into prominence in state affairs. About this time we find Sulaiman b. Habib b. al-Muhallab and Sufyan b. Muawiya b. Yazid b. al-Muhallab (2) rising to high offices and seizing important positions for themselves which they maintained during the early days of the succeeding dynasty. A little later, the Mahalibids counted among themselves such able and famous administrators as Yazid b. Hatim (b. Qabisa b. al-Muhallab), the governor of Africa, and his brother, Rauh b. Hatim who held office on behalf of all the first five Abbasid Caliphs and was successively governor of al-Sind and Africa in which latter place he died in 174 A.H. (3). Da'ud b. Yazid, who had provisionally succeeded his father in the governorship of Africa, was later on transferred to al-Sind where he died and was succeeded by his son Bishr during the days of al-Mamun. Among other notables were Naqr b. Habib al-Muhallab and al-Fadl b. Rauh, both of whom successively held the governorship of Africa after the death of Rauh. ʿAbbād b. ʿAbbād was a

(1). Yqh. 2/339-90
(2). Yqbd. and Tab. Index.
(3). Ikh. 1/133
great jurist during the days of Ḥarūn while Muḥammad b. ʿAbbād al-Muhallabī was regarded as the chief of the Basrans(1). Poetry and scholarship also received their due share. Marwān b. ʿΑκīd b. ʿAbbād b. Ḥabīb b. al-Muhallab is recognised as a learned grammarian and poet (2) and his cousins ʿAbdullāh and ʿAbūʿUyaynā, (sons of Muḥammad b. ʿAbūʿUyaynā b. al-Muhallab who is also said to have been a poet, cf. Agh. 18/9), were reputed poets(3). Another notable poet of a later period was Yazīd b. Muḥammad al-Muhallābī whose elegy on the death of al-Mutawakkil is so well-known(4). In the middle of the third century ʿAlūʿl-Muhallābī were still a dominant force in the body politic of al-Baṣra. Prominent figures of this period were Ḥasan b. ʿUthmān, ʿIbrāhīm b. Yahya and ʿAlī b. ʿAbān who took a prominent part in the insurrection of the ʿAlavī(5). A very late but nevertheless the most illustrious scion of the Muhallābids was ʿAbū Muḥammad al-Muhallābī (291-352 A.H.), the famous vezier of Mīzāz al-Daula ʿĀḥmad b. Buwaih al-Dailamī. He is also remembered as a man of cultural tastes and bountiful disposition(6).

(1). See Yqb. and Tab. Index.
(4). Kam. 775; Iqd. 2/136.
(5). Tab. See index.
(6). 1Kh. 1/142.