

maturity in body and mind much earlier than colder climates. Mahomet and Ali commenced to preach, and finally succeeded in gathering around them a considerable number of adherents.

Mahomet descended from one of the most noble families of the Koreish; he came direct in descent from Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

He was set upon by that powerful and popular tribe, the Koreish, who were determined to destroy him, as he proclaimed that their idol gods were all a humbug, and setting forth but one true and living God for them to worship. The persecution continued to increase until he was obliged to leave Mecca, and flee for his life to Medina, on 15th July, 622, which is the great Hegira or Mahometan era. On leaving his native city, Al Abbas, his uncle, one of the most powerful chiefs of the Koreish, made the Ansars, as his friends in Medina were called, promise and swear that they would not deceive, but would protect his nephew at the expense of their lives, though Al Abbas himself did not then believe in his divine mission.

Mahomet continued preaching; there was nothing in his religion to license iniquity or corruption; he preached the moral doctrines which the Savior taught; viz., to do as they would be done by; and not to do violence to any man, nor to render evil for evil; and to worship one God.

He continued so to preach until he was driven from his home. After he had commenced preaching his doctrine extensively in different parts of Arabia, and many had believed it, his persecutors at Mecca gathered a large force, and, followed him, with a determination to exterminate him and his friends. They followed him up with their persecutions until he got so mad, that he could not stand it any longer; his religion caved in, he drew his sword, gathered his followers, and gave

his enemies such a drubbing that they went off ashamed. This was the battle of Bedr.

They raised a superior force of 3,000 men, and had a second fight with the prophet (in 626) who could scarcely muster 1,200 men; his orders not being obeyed, his followers left the field, but the prophet was determined not to be beat from the track, and concluded to fight the battle alone; his intrepidity and boldness on the occasion converted a leader of the infidel army, named Khaled, and he subsequently made him his general, and surnamed him the sword of God. This is called the battle of Ohud.

One hundred years extended the Mahometan power over more territory than the Romans gained in eight hundred years; in a very short time all Arabia bowed to his scepter, and he was confirmed in his kingly power, and assumed the ensigns of royalty in 628.

He then sends his ambassadors to visit the neighboring nations, for he was now the monarch of Arabia, and asked them to receive his religion. They visited Khosroes the Great, king of the Persians, one of the most warlike sovereigns of his time. Mahomet's ministers presented his letters, but the Persian king haughtily tore them in pieces, ordered the ambassadors to be scourged, and sent them home in disgrace. They returned to Medina and found Mahomet mending his shoes, and reported their treatment; with tears he replied, "You need not be alarmed, boys, for many of you will live to riot in the white palace of Khosroes."

It was thought that Mahomet's death would put a final stop to the progress of his religion; some persons gave him poison to see whether he was a prophet or not, and it was his belief that poison was the cause of his death. He died at the age of sixty-three, in 632, and was succeeded by