recurs to the first method, already described, only when the different traditions are greatly at variance with one another. In yet a third type of history the old method is entirely forsaken and we have a continuous narrative only occasionally interrupted by citation of the authority for some particular point. But the principle still is that what has been well said once need not be told again in other words. The writer therefore keeps as close as he can to the letter of his sources, so that quite a late writer often reproduces the very words of the first narrator.

From very early times the Arabs had great delight in verses and tales, and the development of their language was certainly much influenced by this fact. In ancient times story-tellers and singers found their subjects in the doughty deeds of the tribe on its forays, in the merits of horse or camel, in hunting adventures and love complaints, and some­times in contests with foreign powers and in the impression produced by the wealth and might of the sovereigns of Persia and Constantinople. The appearance of the Prophet with the great changes that ensued, the conquests that made the Arabs—till then a despised race—lords of half the civilized world, supplied a vast store of new matter for relations which men were never weary of hearing and recounting. They wished to know everything about the apostle of God, whose influence on his own time was so enormous, who had accomplished all that seemed impossible and had inspired the Arabs with a courage and confidence that made them stronger than the legions of Byzantium and Ctesiphon. Every one who had known or seen him was questioned and was eager to answer. Moreover, the word of God in the Koran left many practical points undecided, and therefore it was of the highest importance to know exactly how the Prophet had spoken and acted in various circumstances. Where could this be better learned than at Medina, where he had lived so long and where the majority of his companions continued to live *Ί* So at Medina a school was gradually formed, where the chief part of the traditions about Mohammed and his first successors took a form more or less fixed. Soon divers fathers of Islam began to assist memory by making notes, and their disciples sought to take written jottings of what they had heard from them, which they could carry with them when they returned to their homes. Thus by the close of the 1st century many *dictata were* already in circu­lation. For example, Hasan of Basra (d. 110 a.h.; 728 a.d.) had a great mass of such notes, and he was accused of some­times passing off as oral tradition things he had really drawn from books ; for oral tradition was still the one recognized authority, and it is related of more than one old scholar, and even of Hasan of Basra himself, that he directed his books to be burned at his death. The books were mere helps, and what they knew these scholars had handed on by word of mouth. Long after this date, when all scholars drew mainly from books, the old forms were still kept up. Tabari, for example, when he cites a book expresses himself as if he had heard what he quotes from the master with whom he read the passage or from whose copy he tran­scribed it. He even expresses himself in this wise : “ 'Omar b. Shabba has related to me in his book on the history of Basra.”

*Historians before Tabari.*

Naturally, then, no independent book of the 1st century from the Flight has come down to us. But in the 2d cen­tury real books began to be composed. The materials were supplied in the first place by oral tradition, in the second by the *dictata* of older scholars, and finally by various kinds of documents, such as treaties, letters, collec­tions of poetry, and genealogical lists. Genealogical studies had become necessary through 'Omar’s system of assigning state pensions to certain classes of persons according to their kinship with the Prophet, or their deserts during his lifetime. This subject received much attention even in the 1st century, but books about it were first written in the 2d, the most famous being those of Ibn al-Kalbí (d. 146 a.h.), of his son Hishám@@1 (d. 204), and of Al-Sharkí ibn al-Kotámí. Genealogy, which often called for elucidations, led on to history. Beládhorí’s excellent *Ansáb al-Ashráf* (Genealogies of the Nobles) is a history of the Arabs on a genealogical plan.

The oldest extant history is the biography of the Prophet by Ibn Ishak (d. 150).@@2 This work is generally trustworthy. Mohammed’s life before he appeared as a prophet and the story of his ancestors are indeed mixed with many fables illustrated by spurious verses. But in Ibn Ishák’s day these fables were generally accepted as history—for many of them had been first related by contemporaries of Mohammed— and no one certainly thought it blameworthy to put pious verses in the mouth of the Prophet’s forefathers, though, according to the *Fihrist* (p. 92), Ibn Ishák was duped by others with regard to the poems he quotes.

The *Life* of the Prophet by Ibn 'Okba (d. 141), based on the statements of two very trustworthy men, 'Orwa ibn az-Zobair (d. 94) and Az-Zohrí (d.124), seems to be quite lost, Sprenger having vainly made every effort to find a copy. It was still much read in Syria in the 14th century. But we fortunately possess the *Book of the Campaigns* of the Prophet by Al-Wákidí (d. 207) and the important *Book of Classes* of his disciple Ibn Sa'd.@@3 Wákidí had much more copious materials than Ibn IshAk, but gives way much more to a popular and sometimes romancing style of treatment. Nevertheless he sometimes helps us to re­cognize in Ibn Ishák’s narrative modifications of the genuine tradition made for a purpose, and the additional details he supplies set various events before us in a clearer light. Apart from this his chief merits lie in his studies on the subject of the traditional authorities, the results of which are given by Ibn Sa'd, and in his chronology, which is often excellent. A special study of the traditions about the conquest of Syria made by De Goeje in 1864 led to the conclusion that Wákidí’s chronology is sound as regards the main events, and that later historians have gone astray by forsaking his guidance. This result has been confirmed by certain contemporary notices found by Nöldeke in 1874 in a Syriac MS. of the British Museum. And that Ibn Ishák agrees with Wákidí in certain main dates is import­ant evidence for the trustworthiness of the former also. For the chronology before the year 10 of the Flight Wákidi did his best, but here, the material being defective, many of his conclusions are precarious. Yet, though we have good ground for doubts, we are seldom able to construct a better chronology. Wákidi had already a great library at his disposal. He is said to have had 600 chests of books, chiefly *dictata* written by or for himself, but in part real books by Abù Mikhnaf (d. 130), Ibn Ishák (whom he uses but does not name), 'Awína (d. 147), and other authors. Abù Mikhnaf left a great number of monographs on the chief events from the death of the Prophet to the caliphate of Walid II. These were much used by later writers, and we have many extracts from them, but none of the works themselves, except a sort of romance based on his account of the death of Hosain, of which Wüstenfeld has given a

@@@1 Of Hisham b. al-Kalbí’s book there are copies in the British Museum and in the Escorial.

@@@2 Ibn Ishák’s original work seems to be still extant in the Köprülü library at Constantinople ; the edition of it by Ibn Hisham has been edited by Wüstenfeld (Gottingen, 1858-60) and translated into German by Weil (Stuttgart, 1864).

@@@3 Wákidi has been edited from an imperfect MS. by Kremer (Cal­cutta, 1856). A condensed translation by Wellhausen appeared in 1882. The great book of Ibn Sa'd is unpublished, but there are some useful papers on it. by Loth.