the law which punished a perverted Mussulman with death. At the same time their social position was intoler­able, and they were excluded from all lucrative offices and from all share in the government. Their discontent led to numerous and stubborn rebellions, but they belong to a later period, and in the 8th century the chroniclers record only a single rising, that of the Christians of Beja, and they seem to have been merely the tools of an ambitious Arab chieftain.

It was fortunate for the Arabs that they succeeded at first in conciliating the natives, as otherwise their rule in the Peninsula would have been short-lived. Internal discord offered the Christians an easy opportunity for suc­cessful revolt if they had chosen to avail themselves of it. The conquerors were united by religion but not by race. When the task of conquest was achieved, and the need for unity was removed by the submission of the vast majority of the natives, quarrels arose between the various races which had taken part in the invasion. Besides the Arabs proper, who regarded themselves as the true conquering race, there were Berbers or Moors, Egyptians, and Syrians. So difficult was it to prevent their quarrels that it was found necessary to subdivide the conquered territory and to allot separate settlements to the different tribes, a measure which only tended to perpetuate their differences. Matters were made worse by the constant efforts of ambitious chieftains to raise themselves to power or to ruin their more successful equals. The first forty years of Arab rule in Spain are a period of woeful confusion, and it is difficult even to enumerate the names of the emirs who followed each other in rapid succession. The great empire of the Arabs began to fall to pieces as soon as it had reached its greatest extent. A movement whose end was conquest began to fail directly it ceased to conquer. The overthrow of the Omayyad dynasty by the Abbasids was a proof that disorder prevailed at the centre. The extremities inevitably displayed the same symptoms. Each new caliph sent a fresh emir to Spain ; the governor of Africa claimed to interfere in the affairs of a province which had been conquered by one of his predecessors ; and the native chiefs were often unwilling to submit to a new ruler whose arrival was the result of a revolution in which they had no share and which they would have prevented if they could. A capable and energetic governor, con­fronted with internal dissension and always dreading the arrival of a successor to supersede him, could only devise one way of solving the problem. The Arabs were unable to live at peace, and the one means of preventing them from warring with each other was to find them new lands to conquer. Hence came the frequent invasions of Gaul, now ruled by the degenerate Merwings, which resulted in the conquest of the provinces of Septimania and Nar­bonne, and at one time threatened to subject the whole of western Europe to the successor of Mohammed. But the battles of Toulouse (721) and of Tours (732) checked the advance of the Moslems, and by 759 they had been com­pelled to retire from all possessions beyond the Pyrenees. Thus thrown back upon the peninsula, it seemed probable that their empire in Spain would speedily succumb to the disruptive forces which had no longer any external outlet.

From this fate the Arab power was saved by ‘Abd al- Raḥmân (Abderame), the one survivor of the Omayyad dynasty, who succeeded after a long series of romantic adventures in escaping from the general massacre of his family (see vol. xvi. p. 578). His arrival in the Peninsula was welcomed by those Arab chieftains who had ends of their own to gain or who saw how impossible it was for Spain to be ruled from a distant centre like Damascus or Baghdad. The resistance of the Abbasid emirs, Yúsuf and 'All b. Moghíth, was overcome and 'Abd al-Raḥmán was

enabled to found a new Omayyad dynasty at Cordova. He and his immediate successors seem to have contented themselves with the title of emir, but all connexion with the eastern caliphate was cut off, and Spain became inde­pendent under its new rulers. The reign of 'Abd al- Raḥmán I. was spent in almost constant warfare. No sooner had he reduced the southern provinces than a revolt broke out in Saragossa under Ḥosein b. Yaḥya. Driven from Spain, where he had raised the black standard of the Abbasid caliph, Ḥosein fled to the court of Charlemagne and implored his assistance. The Frankish army restored Ḥosein to power, but on its return was almost destroyed by the Basque mountaineers in the famous valley of Ronces- valles (778). After a siege of two years Saragossa was taken, Ḥosein was put to death as a rebel, and the whole country up to the Pyrenees was compelled to submit to the Omayyad. A formidable rising of the sons of Yúsuf was put down in 786, and 'Abd al-Raḥmán was enabled to devote the last two years of his life to the arts of peace and to the construction of his famous mosque at Cordova. Before his death he settled the succession on his third son, Hishám, who had been born in Spain, and compelled his followers and his elder sons to swear fealty.

Hishám’s reign, which lasted only eight years (788— 796), was comparatively uneventful. He was successful in foiling the attempt of his elder brothers to seize the throne, but a projected invasion of Gaul was repulsed by the courage of the count of Toulouse. Hishám was a devotee,—strict in the performance of religious duties and absorbed in works of charity. He completed the mosque which his father had begun, and endeavoured to make Cordova the educational centre of Islam. His son and successor, Al-Ḥakam, was of a very different temperament. With a keen enjoyment of the pleasures of life, Al-Ḥakam disregarded the precepts of the Koran which forbade the use of wine, and his lax practices irritated the *faḳíhs,* the “ scribes ” of Mohammedanism. The inability of the Arabs to adapt themselves to a life of peace found expres­sion in a number of isolated risings, of which the most notable took place in Toledo and Cordova. The inhabit­ants of Toledo had never forgotten that their city had once been the capital of Spain, and most of them belonged to the class of “renegades,” who had no real attachment to the dominant faith. Al-Ḥakam determined to suppress their discontent by a notable act of cruel treachery. Feigning the most complete goodwill, he invited the chief citizens to a banquet in honour of the presence of his son in Toledo. As they entered the door they were conducted to an inner chamber and massacred by a band of assassins. More than seven hundred are said to have perished on this “ day of the fosse” (807), and the citizens, deprived of their leaders, submitted with the torpor of despair. The fate of Toledo terrified the Cordovans, and postponed their rising for seven years. But in 814 the murder of a blacksmith by one of Al-Ḥakam’s bodyguard provoked a terrible outbreak. Besieged in his palace by the infuriated mob, Al-Ḥakam only escaped death by his own coolness and presence of mind. A detachment of his guard was sent to fire the houses of the citizens ; the mob hurried off to save their families and goods; and a sudden charge of the emir and his soldiers threw them into complete disorder. With politic severity Al-Ḥakam destroyed a whole quarter of the city and condemned all the inhabitants to exile. Part of them found a new home in Africa, but others, after a temporary sojourn in Alexandria, conquered Crete, where they founded a dynasty, which lasted till 961, when the island was recovered by the Greeks. The *faḳíhs,* the real instigators of the rebellion, were treated with con­spicuous leniency, and their leader, Ṭalúit, was even admitted to Al-Ḥakam’s favour.