

## NOTE 7.—

“I said to the Kalif: ‘Thou art old,  
 Thou hast no need of so much gold.  
 Thou shouldst not have heaped and hidden it here,  
 Till the breath of Battle was hot and near,  
 But have sown through the land these useless hoards  
 To spring into shining blades of swords,  
 And keep thine honour sweet and clear.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then into his dungeon I locked the drone,  
 And left him to feed there all alone  
 In the honey-cells of his golden hive:  
 Never a prayer, nor a cry, nor a groan  
 Was heard from those massive walls of stone,  
 Nor again was the Kalif seen alive.’

This is the story, strange and true,  
 That the great Captain Alaü  
 Told to his brother, the Tartar Khan,  
 When he rode that day into Cambalu.  
 By the road that leadeth to Ispahan.” (*Longfellow.*) \*

The story of the death of Mosta'sim Billah, the last of the Abbaside Khalifs, is told in much the same way by Hayton, Ricold, Pachymeres, and Joinville. The memory of the last glorious old man must have failed him, when he says the facts were related by some merchants who came to King Lewis, when before Siette (or Sidon), viz. in 1253, for the capture of Baghdad occurred five years later. Mar. Sanuto says melted gold was poured down the Khalif's throat—a transfer, no doubt, from the old story of Crassus and the Parthians. Contemporary Armenian historians assert that Hulaku slew him with his own hand.

All that Rashiduddin says is: “The evening of Wednesday, the 14th of Safar, 656 (20th February, 1258), the Khalif was put to death in the village of Wakf, with his eldest son and five eunuchs who had never quitted him.” Later writers say that he was wrapt in a carpet and trodden to death by horses.

[Cf. *The Story of the Death of the last Abbaside Caliph, from the Vatican MS. of Ibn-al-Furāt*, by G. le Strange (*Jour. R. As. Soc.*, April, 1900, pp. 293-300). This is the story of the death of the Khalif told by Ibn-al-Furāt (born in Cairo, 1335 A.D.):

“Then Hūlagū gave command, and the Caliph was left a-hungering, until his case was that of very great hunger, so that he called asking that somewhat might be given him to eat. And the accursed Hūlagū sent for a dish with gold therein, and a dish with silver therein, and a dish with gems, and ordered these all to be set before the Caliph al Musta'sim, saying to him, ‘Eat these.’ But the Caliph made answer, ‘These be not fit for eating.’ Then said Hūlagū: ‘Since thou didst so well know that these be not fit for eating, why didst thou make a store thereof? With part thereof thou mightest have sent gifts to propitiate us, and with part thou shouldst have raised an army to serve thee and defend thyself against us! And Hūlagū commanded them to take forth the Caliph and his son to a place without the camp, and they were here bound and put into two great sacks, being afterwards trampled under foot till they both died—the mercy of Allah be upon them.’—H. C.]

The foundation of the story, so widely received among the Christians, is to be found also in the narrative of Nikbi (and Mirkhond), which is cited by D'Ohsson. When the Khalif surrendered, Hulaku put before him a plateful of gold, and told him to eat it. “But one does not eat gold,” said the prisoner. “Why, then,”

VOL. I. \* Not that Alaü (*pace* Mr. Longfellow) ever did see Cambalu.