

## CHAPTER II.

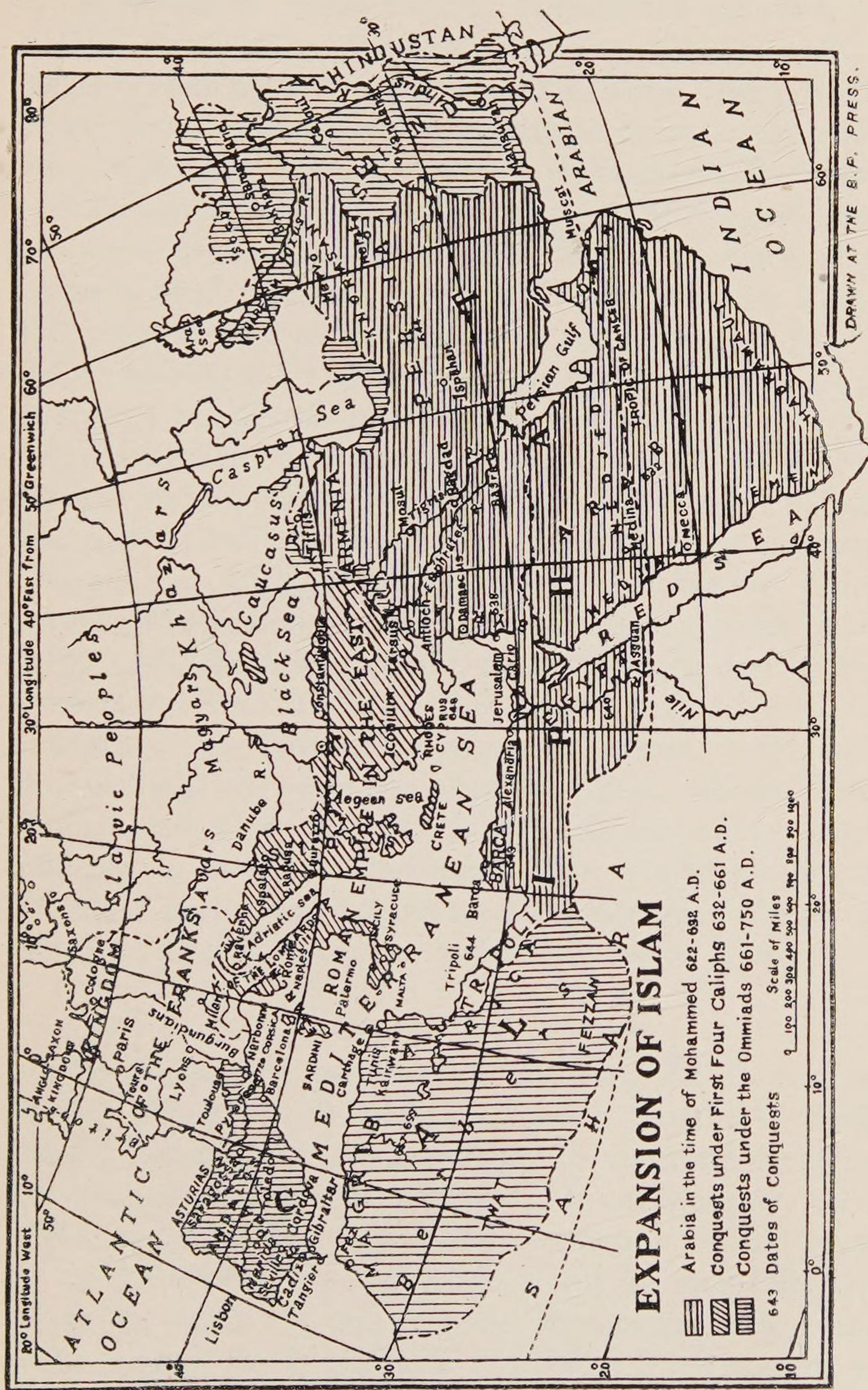
### THE SPREAD OF ISLAM.

Arabia—Syria—Egypt—Iraq—Iran—Russia and Siberia—China—  
Turkey—Malay Archipelago—North and Central Africa—India—  
Muslim Missionary Activity—Hindu Nationalism and Islam.

#### ARABIA.

Arabia is bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the east by the Indian Ocean, on the north by the Syrian desert and Iraq, and on the south by the Indian Ocean. With certain exceptions, it is a desert country, covering an area of about one million square miles. Rainfall is insignificant. The present population is estimated at about seven millions. Its climate is on the whole warm. Its earliest inhabitants, according to local tradition, were called Badya, of whom very little is known. They were succeeded by A'araba, who were followed by Mustaraba. At the rise of Islam, the inhabitants were divided into what are known as the Northern and the Southern tribes. The condition of the country then was such that, with the exception of those who had settled as agriculturists in Yemen, Hadramaut, Umman, Asir, Hejaz and Nejd, the others as nomad tribes used to move constantly from one place to another in search of pasture. Scarcity of food was such that sometimes they were forced to migrate to the neighbouring countries. Badavis or wandering Arabs, had to live on cattle rearing and hunting. They did not like an organized, responsible Government. They were intelligent, courageous, hardy, generous, and chivalrous, but cruel and pitiless in seeking revenge and in avenging an insult offered to their tribesmen and relatives. They were loyal to their chief, proud and independent. They loved freedom, women, wine, and plundering trade caravans or attacking their enemies.





EXPANSION OF ISLAM, 622-750







The Quraish, who inhabited Mecca and were the guardians of the temple Ka'aba, traced their descent from Ismael, son of Abraham. About the time Muhammad was born, most of them were idol worshippers, but a few, called Hunafa, did not believe in idolatry. Some were atheists. Some did not believe in the resurrection and thought death as the end of life. A few had become converts to Judaism and Christianity.

One or two years before the death of the Prophet, almost the whole of Arabia acknowledged him as its spiritual and temporal head. Medina became the seat of the new Empire. The Prophet died in 632 A.D., and was succeeded by Abu-Baker, who ruled for about two years and ten months. During this short period, he subdued the tribes who had revolted and commenced the invasion of Iranian territory in Mesopotamia and the Roman in Syria. During the reign of Umar, the second Khalif, Persia, Egypt and Syria were conquered. Usman, the third Khalif, extended the Islamic Empire towards Afghanistan in the East, and Tripoli (Africa) in the West. Ali, the fourth Khalif, transferred the seat of Government to Kufa in Iraq. Since then Arabia remained a province of the Islamic Empire. At present, it is divided into the kingdoms of Nejd, united with Hejaz, Yemen, Kuvit, Umman and a few other small States in the south. British influence is to-day predominant. The inhabitants are for the most part Sunnat-Jama'at and Wahabi. There are Shiahhs in Iraq and Yemen, and Khawarej in Umman.

#### SYRIA.

Syria was the battle-ground between the Roman and Persian Empires. Its inhabitants are a mixture of Arabs, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Macedonians, Persians and aborigines. The Semitic race form the majority. It was a country sacred to the Arabs. The Prophet had prophesied its subjugation by his followers. He had himself sent an expedition just before his death. It was to leave Medina in the beginning of the reign of the first Khalif. In 637 A.D., Jerusalem was surrendered to the second Khalif and Syria became Islamic