

While the present Edition of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Rescht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubáiyát, with translation and notes of his own.

Mons. Nicolas, whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken him for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., as Háfiz is supposed to do; in short, a Súfi Poet like Háfiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was a dozen years ago when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other, literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning as Mons. Nicolas' if he could.\* That he could not appears

\* Perhaps would have edited the Poems himself some years ago. He may now as little approve of my Version on one side, as of Mons. Nicolas' on the other.

by his Paper in the *Calcutta Review* already so largely quoted; in which he argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life.

And if more were needed to disprove Mons. Nicolas' Theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. Here is one of the Anecdotes he produces. "Mais revenons à Khéyam, qui, resté étranger à toutes ces alternatives de guerres, d'intrigues, et de révoltes, dont cette époque fut si remplie, vivait tranquille dans son village natal, se livrant avec passion à l'étude de la philosophie des Soufis. Entouré de nombreux amis il cherchait avec eux dans le vin cette contemplation extatique que d'autres croient trouver dans des cris et des hurlements," etc. "Les chroniqueurs persans racontent que Khéyam aimait surtout à s'entretenir et à boire avec ses amis, le soir au clair de la lune sur la terrasse de sa maison, entouré de chanteurs et musiciens, avec un échanton qui, la coupe à la main, la présentait à tour de rôle aux joyeux convives réunis. — Pendant une de ces soirées dont nous venons de parler, survient à l'improviste un coup de vent qui éteint les chandelles et

renverse à terre la cruche de vin, placée imprudemment sur le bord de la terrasse. La cruche fut brisée et le vin répandu. Aussitôt Khéyam, irrité, improvisa ce quatrain impie à l'adresse du Tout-Puissant: 'Tu as brisé ma cruche de vin, mon Dieu! tu as ainsi fermé sur moi la porte de la joie, mon Dieu! c'est moi qui bois, et c'est toi qui commets les désordres de l'ivresse! oh! (puisse ma bouche se remplir de la terre!) serais-tu ivre, mon Dieu?'

"Le poète, après avoir prononcé ce blasphème, jetant les yeux sur une glace, se serait aperçu que son visage était noir comme du charbon. C'était une punition du ciel. Alors il fit cet autre quatrain non moins audacieux que le premier. 'Quel est l'homme ici-bas qui n'a point commis de péché, dis? Celui qui n'en aurait point commis, comment aurait-il vécu, dis? Si, parce que je fais du mal, tu me punis par le mal, quelle est donc la différence qui existe entre toi et moi, dis?'"

I really hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. Here we see then that, whatever were the Wine that Háfiz drank and sang, the veritable Juice of the Grape it was which Omar used

not only when carousing with his friends, but (says Mons. Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and "hurlements." And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., occur in the Text—which is often enough—Mons. Nicolas carefully annotates "Dieu," "La Divinité," etc.: so carefully indeed that one is tempted to think he was indoctrinated by the Súfi with whom he read the Poems. (Note to Rub. II. p. 8.) A Persian would naturally wish to vindicate a distinguished Countryman; and a Súfi to enrol him in his own sect, which already comprises all the chief Poets of Persia.

What historical Authority has Mons. Nicolas to show that Omar gave himself up "avec passion à l'étude de la philosophie des Soufis"? (Preface p. XIII.) The Doctrines of Pantheism, Materialism, Necessity, etc., were not peculiar to the Súfi; nor to Lucretius before them; nor to Epicurus before him; probably the very original Irreligion of thinking men from the first; and very likely to be the spontaneous growth of a Philosopher living in an Age of social and political barbarism, under sanction of one of the Two and Seventy Religions supposed to divide the world. Von Hammer (according

to Sprenger's Oriental Catalogue) speaks of Omar as "a Free-thinker, and *a great opponent of Sufism*;" perhaps because, while holding much of their Doctrine, he would not pretend to any inconsistent severity of morals. Sir W. Ouseley has written a Note to something of the same effect on the fly-leaf of the Bodleian MS. And in two Rubáiyát of Mons. Nicolas' own Edition Súf and Súfi are both disparagingly named.

No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted; but many more as unaccountable unless literally. Were the Wine spiritual, for instance, how wash the Body with it when dead? Why make cups of the dead clay to be filled with—"La Divinité"—by some succeeding Mystic? Mons. Nicolas himself is puzzled by some "bizarres" and "trop Orientales" allusions and images—"d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante" indeed—which "les convenances" do not permit him to translate; but still which the reader cannot but refer to "La Divinité."\*

\* A Note to Quatrain 234 admits that, however clear the mystical meaning of such Images must be to Europeans, they are not quoted without "rougissant" even by laymen in Persia—"Quant aux termes de tendresse qui commencent ce quatrain, comme tant d'autres dans ce recueil, nos lecteurs, habitués main-

No doubt also many of the Quatrains in the Teheran, as in the Calcutta, Copies, are spurious; such *Rubáiyát* being the common form of Epigram in Persia. But this, at best, tells as much one way as another; nay, the Súfi, who may be considered the Scholar and Man of Letters in Persia, would be far more likely than the careless Epicure to interpolate what favours his own view of the Poet. I observe that very few of the more mystical Quatrains are in the Bodleian MS., which must be one of the oldest, as dated at Shiraz, A.H. 865, A.D. 1460. And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar (I cannot help calling him by his—no, not Christian—familiar name) from all other Persian Poets: That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we

tenant à l'étrangeté des expressions si souvent employées par Khéyam pour rendre ses pensées sur l'amour divin, et à la singularité des images trop orientales, d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante, n'auront pas de peine à se persuader qu'il s'agit de la Divinité, bien que cette conviction soit vivement discutée par les moullahs Musulmans, et même par beaucoup de laïques, qui rougissent véritablement d'une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l'égard des choses spirituelles."

were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Súfi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jeláluddín, Jámi, Attár, and others sang; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating. Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People: much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalised with Images of sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God, who, according to the Doctrine, *is* Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after Death, without hope of any posthumous Beatitude

in another world to compensate for all the self-denial of this. Lucretius' blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfi; and the burden of Omar's Song—if not "Let us eat"—is assuredly—"Let us drink, for To-morrow we die!" And if Háfiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than spiritual Worshippers.

However, it may remain an Open Question, both with regard to Háfiz and Omar: the reader may understand them either way, literally or mystically, as he chooses. Whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, Cypress, etc., are named, he has only to suppose "La Divinité;" and when he has done so with Omar, I really think he may proceed to the same Interpretation of Anacreon—and even Anacreon Moore.

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RUBÁIYÁT  
OF  
OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR.

I.

WAKE! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height  
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night;  
And, to the field of Heav'n ascending, strikes  
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,  
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,  
“When all the Temple is prepared within,  
Why lags the drowsy Worshipper outside?”

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before  
The Tavern shouted—“Open then the door!  
You know how little while we have to stay,  
And, once departed, may return no more.”

## IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,  
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,

Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough  
Puts out, and Jesus from the ground suspires.

## V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,  
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;

But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine,  
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

## VI.

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine  
High-piping Péhlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!

Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose  
That sallow cheek of her's to incarnadine.

## VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:

The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

## VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,  
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,  
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop  
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

## IX.

Morning a thousand Roses brings, you say;  
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of yesterday?  
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose  
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

## X.

Well, let it take them! What have we to do  
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?  
Let Rustum cry "To Battle!" as he likes,  
Or Hátim Tai "To Supper!"—heed not you.

## XI.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown  
That just divides the desert from the sown,  
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—  
And Peace to Máhmúd on his golden Throne!

## XII.

Here with a little Bread beneath the Bough,  
 A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou  
     Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
 Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

## XIII.

Some for the Glories of This World; and some  
 Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;  
     Ah, take the Cash, and let the Promise go,  
 Nor heed the music of a distant Drum!

## XIV.

Were it not Folly, Spider-like to spin  
 The Thread of present Life away to win—  
     What? for ourselves, who know not if we shall  
 Breathe out the very Breath we now breathe in!

## XV.

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo,  
 Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow:  
     At once the silken tassel of my Purse  
 Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

## XVI.

For those who husbanded the Golden grain,  
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,  
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd  
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

## XVII.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—was gone.

## XVIII.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai  
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,  
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp  
Abode his destin'd Hour, and went his way.

## XIX.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep  
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank deep:  
And BahráM, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass  
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

## XX.

The Palace that to Heav'n his pillars threw,  
 And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew—  
 I saw the solitary Ringdove there,  
 And "Coo, coo, coo," she cried; and "Coo, coo, coo."

## XXI.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears  
 TO-DAY of past Regret and future Fears:  
*To-morrow!*—Why, To-morrow I may be  
 Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years

## XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best  
 That from his Vintage rolling Time has prest,  
 Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,  
 And one by one crept silently to rest.

## XXIII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room  
 They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,  
 Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth  
 Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

## XXIV.

I sometimes think that never blows so red  
 The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;  
 That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
 Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

## XXV.

And this delightful Herb whose living Green  
 Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—  
 Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows  
 From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

## XXVI.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
 Before we too into the Dust descend;  
 Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,  
 Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

## XXVII.

Alike for those who for To-day prepare,  
 And those that after some To-morrow stare,  
 A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,  
 "Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!"

## XXVIII.

Another Voice, when I am sleeping, cries,  
 "The Flower should open with the Morning skies."  
 And a retreating Whisper, as I wake—  
 "The Flower that once has blown for ever dies."

## XXIX.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd  
 Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust  
 Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn  
 Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

## XXX.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
 Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument  
 About it and about: but evermore  
 Came out by the same door as in I went.

## XXXI.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,  
 And with my own hand wrought to make it grow:  
 And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—  
 "I came like Water, and like Wind I go."



## XXXII.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing,  
 Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing:  
 And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,  
 I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

## XXXIII.

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*  
 And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!  
 Ah, contrite Heav'n endowed us with the Vine  
 To drug the memory of that insolence!

## XXXIV.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate  
 I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,  
 And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;  
 But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

## XXXV.

There was the Door to which I found no Key:  
 There was the Veil through which I could not see:  
 Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE  
 There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

## XXXVI.

Earth could not answer: nor the Seas that mourn  
 In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;  
 Nor Heaven, with those eternal Signs reveal'd  
 And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

## XXXVII.

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind  
 The Veil of Universe I cried to find  
 A Lamp to guide me through the darkness; and  
 Something then said—"an Understanding blind."

## XXXVIII.

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn  
 I lean'd, the secret Well of Life to learn:  
 And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live,  
 Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

## XXXIX.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive  
 Articulation answer'd, once did live,  
 And drink; and that impassive Lip I kiss'd,  
 How many Kisses might it take—and give!

## XL.

For I remember stopping by the way  
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:  
And with its all-obliterated Tongue  
It murmur'd—"Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

## XLI.

For has not such a Story from of Old  
Down Man's successive generations roll'd  
Of such a clod of saturated Earth  
Cast by the Maker into Human mould?

## XLII.

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw  
On the parcht herbage but may steal below  
To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye  
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

## XLIII.

As then the Tulip for her wonted sup  
Of Heavenly Vintage lifts her chalice up,  
Do you, twin offspring of the soil, till Heav'n  
To Earth invert you like an empty Cup.

## XLIV.

Do you, within your little hour of Grace,  
 The waving Cypress in your Arms enlace,  
     Before the Mother back into her arms  
 Fold, and dissolve you in a last embrace.

## XLV.

And if the Cup you drink, the Lip you press  
 End in what All begins and ends in—Yes;  
     Imagine then you *are* what heretofore  
 You *were*—hereafter you shall not be less.

## XLVI.

So when at last the Angel of the drink  
 Of Darkness finds you by the river-brink,  
     And, proffering his Cup, invites your Soul  
 Forth to your Lips to quaff it—do not shrink.

## XLVII.

And fear not lest Existence closing *your*  
 Account, should lose, or know the type no more;  
     The Eternal Sáki from that Bowl has pour'd  
 Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

## XLVIII.

When You and I behind the Veil are past,  
 Oh but the long long while the World shall last,  
 Which of our Coming and Departure heeds  
 As much as Ocean of a pebble-cast.

## XLIX.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,  
 One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—  
 The Stars are setting, and the Caravan  
 Draws to the Dawn of Nothing—Oh make haste!

## L.

Would you that spangle of Existence spend  
 About THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend!

A Hair, they say, divides the False and True—  
 And upon what, prithee, does Life depend?

## LI.

A Hair, they say, divides the False and True;  
 Yes; and a single Alif were the clue,

Could you but find it, to the Treasure-house,  
 And peradventure to THE MASTER too;

## LII.

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins  
Running, Quicksilver-like eludes your pains:

Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi; and  
They change and perish all—but He remains;

## LIII.

A moment guess'd—then back behind the Fold  
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd

Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,  
He does Himself contrive, enact, behold.

## LIV.

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor  
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,

You gaze To-day, while You are You—how then  
To-morrow, You when shall be You no more?

## LV.

Oh, plagued no more with Human or Divine.  
To-morrow's tangle to itself resign,

And lose your fingers in the tresses of  
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

## LVI.

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit  
Of This and That endeavour and dispute;  
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape  
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

## LVII.

You know, my Friends, how bravely in my House  
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse:  
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,  
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

## LVIII.

For "Is" and "Is-NOT" though with Rule and Line,  
And "UP-AND-DOWN" by Logic I define,  
Of all that one should care to fathom, I  
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

## LIX.

Ah, but my Computations, People say,  
Have squared the Year to human compass, eh?  
If so, by striking from the Calendar  
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

## LX.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,  
 Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape  
     Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and  
 He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

## LXI.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute  
 The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:  
     The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice  
 Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute:

## LXII.

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,  
 That all the misbelieving and black Horde  
     Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul  
 Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

## LXIII.

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare  
 Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare?  
     A Blessing, we should use it, should we not?  
 And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there?



## LXIV.

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,  
 Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,  
 Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,  
 When the frail Cup is crumbled into Dust!

## LXV.

If but the Vine and Love-abjuring Band  
 Are in the Prophet's Paradise to stand,  
 Alack, I doubt the Prophet's Paradise  
 Were empty as the hollow of one's Hand.

*Wajid kum a jahan a kum kum*

## LXVI.

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!  
 One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies:  
 One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;  
 The Flower that once is blown for ever dies.

*Ala shay' a jahan?*

## LXVII.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
 Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through  
 Not one returns to tell us of the Road,  
 Which to discover we must travel too.

*Ala kum a jahan a jahan*

## LXVIII.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd  
 Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,  
 Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep  
 They told their fellows, and to Sleep return'd.

## LXIX.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,  
 And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,  
 Is't not a shame—is't not a shame for him  
 So long in this Clay suburb to abide!

## LXX.

But that is but a Tent wherein may rest  
 A Sultan to the realm of Death addrest;  
 The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrásh  
 Strikes, and prepares it for another guest.

## LXXI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,  
 Some letter of that After-life to spell:  
 And after many days my Soul return'd  
 And said, "Behold, Myself am Heav'n and Hell:"

## LXXII.

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,  
And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire,  
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,  
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire.

## LXXIII.

We are no other than a moving row  
Of visionary Shapes that come and go  
Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held  
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

## LXXIV.

Impotent Pieces of the Game he plays  
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;  
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays;  
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

## LXXV.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,  
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes;  
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,  
*He* knows about it all—**HE** knows—**HE** knows!

## LXXVI.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
 Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
 Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

## LXXVII.

For let Philosopher and Doctor preach  
 Of what they will, and what they will not—each

Is but one Link in an eternal Chain  
 That none can slip, nor break, nor over-reach.

## LXXVIII.

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,  
 Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,

Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for *It*  
 As impotently rolls as you or I.

## LXXIX.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead.  
 And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:

And the first Morning of Creation wrote  
 What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

## LXXX.

Yesterday *This* Day's Madness did prepare:  
 To-morrow's Silence, Triumph, or Despair:

Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why:  
 Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

## LXXXI.

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,  
 Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal

Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtari they flung,  
 In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

## LXXXII.

The Vine had struck a fibre: which about  
 If clings my Being—let the Dervish flout;

Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,  
 That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

## LXXXIII.

And this I know: whether the one True Light,  
 Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,

One Flash of It within the Tavern caught  
 Better than in the Temple lost outright.

## LXXXIV.

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke  
 A conscious Something to resent the yoke  
 Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain  
 Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

## LXXXV.

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid  
 Pure Gold for what he lent us dross-allay'd—  
 Sue for a Debt we never did contract,  
 And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!

## LXXXVI.

Nay, but, for terror of his wrathful Face,  
 I swear I will not call Injustice Grace;  
 Not one Good Fellow of the Tavern but  
 Would kick so poor a Coward from the place.

## LXXXVII.

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin  
 Beset the Road I was to wander in,  
 Thou wilt not with Predestin'd Evil round  
 Emmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin?

## LXXXVIII.

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:

For áll the Sin the Face of wretched Man  
Is black with—Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

\* \* \* \* \*

## LXXXIX.

As under cover of departing Day  
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,

Once more within the Potter's house alone  
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

## XC.

And once again there gather'd a scarce heard  
Whisper among them; as it were, the stirr'd

Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue,  
Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

## XCI.

Said one among them—"Surely not in vain,  
My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,

That He who subtly wrought me into Shape  
Should stamp me back to shapeless Earth again?"

## XCII.

Another said—"Why, ne'er a peevish Boy  
 Would break the Cup from which he drank in Joy;  
 Shall He that of his own free Fancy made  
 The Vessel, in an after-rage destroy!"

## XCIII.

None answer'd this; but after silence spake  
 Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make;  
 "They sneer at me for leaning all awry:  
 What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

## XCIV.

Thus with the Dead as with the Living, *What?*  
 And *Why?* so ready, but the *Wherefor* not,  
 One on a sudden peevishly exclaim'd,  
 "Which is the Potter, pray, and which the Pot?"

## XCV.

Said one—"Folks of a surly Master tell,  
 And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell:  
 They talk of some sharp Trial of us—Pish!  
 He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."



## XCVI.

“Well,” said another, “Whoso will, let try,  
 My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:  
 But fill me with the old familiar Juice,  
 Methinks I might recover by-and-bye!”

## XCVII.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,  
 One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:  
 And then they jogg'd each other, “Brother! Brother!  
 Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!”

\* \* \* \*

## XCVIII.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,  
 And wash my Body whence the Life has died,  
 And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,  
 By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

## XCIX.

Whither resorting from the vernal Heat  
 Shall Old Acquaintance Old Acquaintance greet,  
 Under the Branch that leans above the Wall  
 To shed his Blossom over head and feet.

*Handwritten notes in Persian script:*  
 در این شعر  
 کلمه امی  
 در این شعر  
 کلمه امی  
 در این شعر  
 کلمه امی

## C.

Then ev'n my buried Ashes such a snare  
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air.

As not a True-believer passing by  
But shall be overtaken unaware.

## CI.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long  
Have done my credit in Men's eye much wrong;

Have drown'd my Glory in a shallow Cup,  
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

## CII.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before  
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?

And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand  
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

## CIII.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,  
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—Well,

I often wonder what the Vintners buy  
One half so precious as the ware they sell.

## CIV.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!  
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

## CV.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield  
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed reveal'd,  
Toward which the fainting Traveller might spring,  
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

## CVI.

Oh if the World were but to re-create,  
That we might catch ere closed the Book of Fate,  
And make The Writer on a fairer leaf  
Inscribe our names, or quite obliterate!

## CVII.

Better, oh better, cancel from the Scroll  
Of Universe one luckless Human Soul,  
Than drop by drop enlarge the Flood that rolls  
Hoarser with Anguish as the Ages roll.

## CVIII.

Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire  
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
 Would not we shatter it to bits—and then  
 Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

## CIX.

But see! The rising Moon of Heav'n again  
 Looks for us, Sweet-heart, through the quivering Plane:  
 How oft hereafter rising will she look  
 Among those leaves—for one of us in vain!

## CX.

And when Yourself with silver Foot shall pass  
 Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,  
 And in your joyous errand reach the spot  
 Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!

## TAMÁM.

## NOTES.

(Stanza II.) The "*False Dawn*;" *Subhi Kázib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East.

(IV.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy *Lunar* Year that dates from the Mohammedan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

"The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring," says Mr. Binning, "are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Naw Rooz* (*their* New Year's Day) the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Garden were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing upon the Plains on every side—

'And on old Hyems' Chin and icy Crown  
 An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds  
 Is, as in mockery, set—'—

Among the Plants newly appear'd I recognised some old Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year: among these, two varieties of the Thistle; a coarse species of the Daisy, like the Horse-gowan; red and white Clover; the Dock; the blue Corn-flower; and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Watercourses." The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Blackbird and Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

(IV.) Exodus IV. 6; where Moses draws forth his Hand—not, according to the Persians, "*leprous as Snow*,"—but *white*, as our May-Blossom in Spring perhaps. According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in his Breath.

(V.) Iram, planted by King Shaddád, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the 7 Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, &c., and was a *Divining Cup*.

(VI.) *Péhlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Péhlevi*, which did not change with the People's.

(VI.) I am not sure if this refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia. I think Southey, in his

Common-Place Book, quotes from some Spanish author about a Rose being White till 10 o'clock; "Rosa perfecta" at 2; and "perfecta incarnada" at 5.

(X.) Rustum, the "Hercules" of Persia, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Sháh-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known Type of Oriental Generosity.

(XIII.) A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

(XV.) That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

(XIX.) Persepolis: call'd also *Takht'i Jamshyd*—THE THRONE OF JAMSHYD, "*King-Splendid*," of the mythical *Peeshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (according to the Sháh-náma) to have been founded and built by him. Others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Ján—who also built the Pyramids—before the time of Adam.

BAHRÁM GÚR—*Bahrám of the Wild Ass*—a Sassanian Sovereign—had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour; each with a Royal Mistress within; each of whom tells him a Story, as told in one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: all these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens, and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of these Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

(XX.) This Quatrain Mr. Binning found, among several of

Háfiz and others, inscribed by some stray hand among the ruins of Persepolis. The Ringdove's ancient *Péhlevi*, *Coo, Coo, Coo*, signifies also, in Persian "*Where? Where? Where?*" In Attár's "Bird-parliament" she is reproved by the Leader of the Birds for sitting still, and for ever harping on that one note of lamentation for her lost Yúsuf.

(XXI.) A thousand years to each Planet.

(XXXIV.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(XXXV.) ME-AND-THEE: some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

(XLII.) The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Mons. Nicolas considers it "un signe de libéralité, et en même temps un avertissement que le buveur doit vider sa coupe jusqu'à la dernière goutte." Is it not more likely an ancient Superstition; a Libation to propitiate Earth, or make her an Accomplice in the illicit Revel? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the West? With Omar we see something more is signified; the precious Liquor is not lost, but sinks into the ground to refresh the dust of some poor Wine-worshipper foregone.

Thus Háfiz, copying Omar in so many ways: "When thou drinkest Wine pour a draught on the ground. Wherefore fear the Sin which brings to another Gain?"

(XLVI.) According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azrâel



accomplishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

(XLIX.) The Caravans travelling by night, after the Vernal Equinox—their New Year's Day. This was ordered by Mohammed himself, I believe.

(LII.) From Máh to Máhi; from Fish to Moon.

(LVIII.) A Jest, of course, at his Studies. A curious mathematical Quatrain of Omar's has been pointed out to me; the more curious because almost exactly parallel'd by some Verses of Doctor Donne's, and quoted in Izaak Walton's Lives! Here is Omar: "You and I are the image of a pair of compasses; though we have two heads (sc. our *feet*) we have one body; when we have fixed the centre for our circle, we bring our heads (sc. feet) together at the end." Dr. Donne:

If we be two, we two are so  
 As stiff twin-compasses are two;  
 Thy Soul, the fixt foot, makes no show  
 To move, but does if the other do.

And though thine in the centre sit,  
 Yet when my other far does roam,  
 Thine leans and hearkens after it,  
 And grows erect as mine comes home.

Such thou must be to me, who must  
 Like the other foot obliquely run;  
 Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
 And me to end where I begun.

(LXI.) The Seventy-two Religions supposed to divide the World: *including* Islamism, as some think: but others not.

(LXII.) Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

(LXXIII.) *Fámísi khiyál*, a Magic-lantern still used in India; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted Candle within.

(LXXV.) A very mysterious Line in the Original:

O dánad O dánad O dánad O ——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

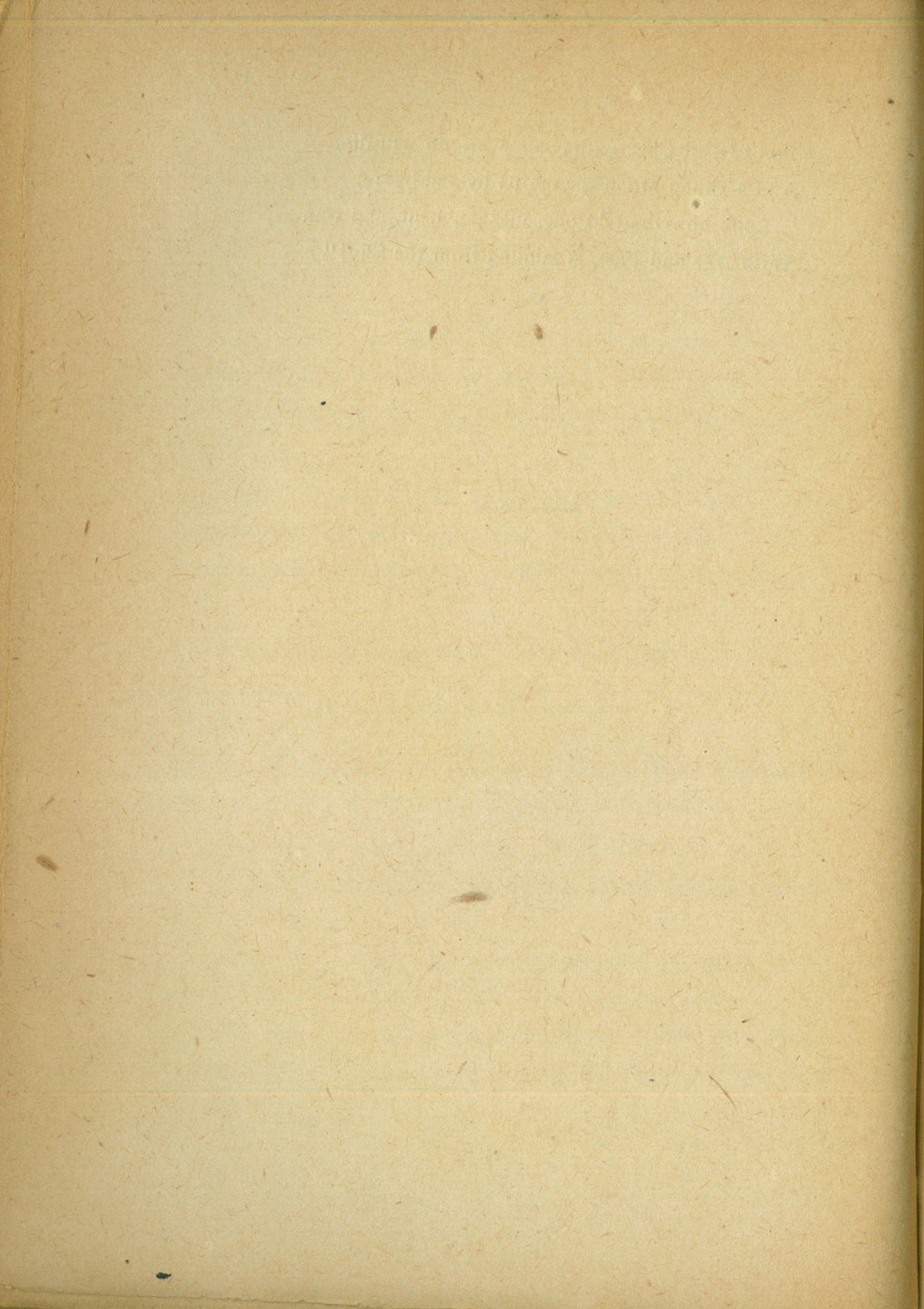
(LXXXI.) Parwín and Mushtari—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(XCVII.) At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Mussulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their Division of the Year), is looked for with the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard—toward the *Cellar*, perhaps. Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about this same Moon—

“Be of Good Cheer—the sullen Month will die,  
And a young Moon requite us by-and-bye:

Look how the Old one, meagre, bent, and wan  
With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky!”

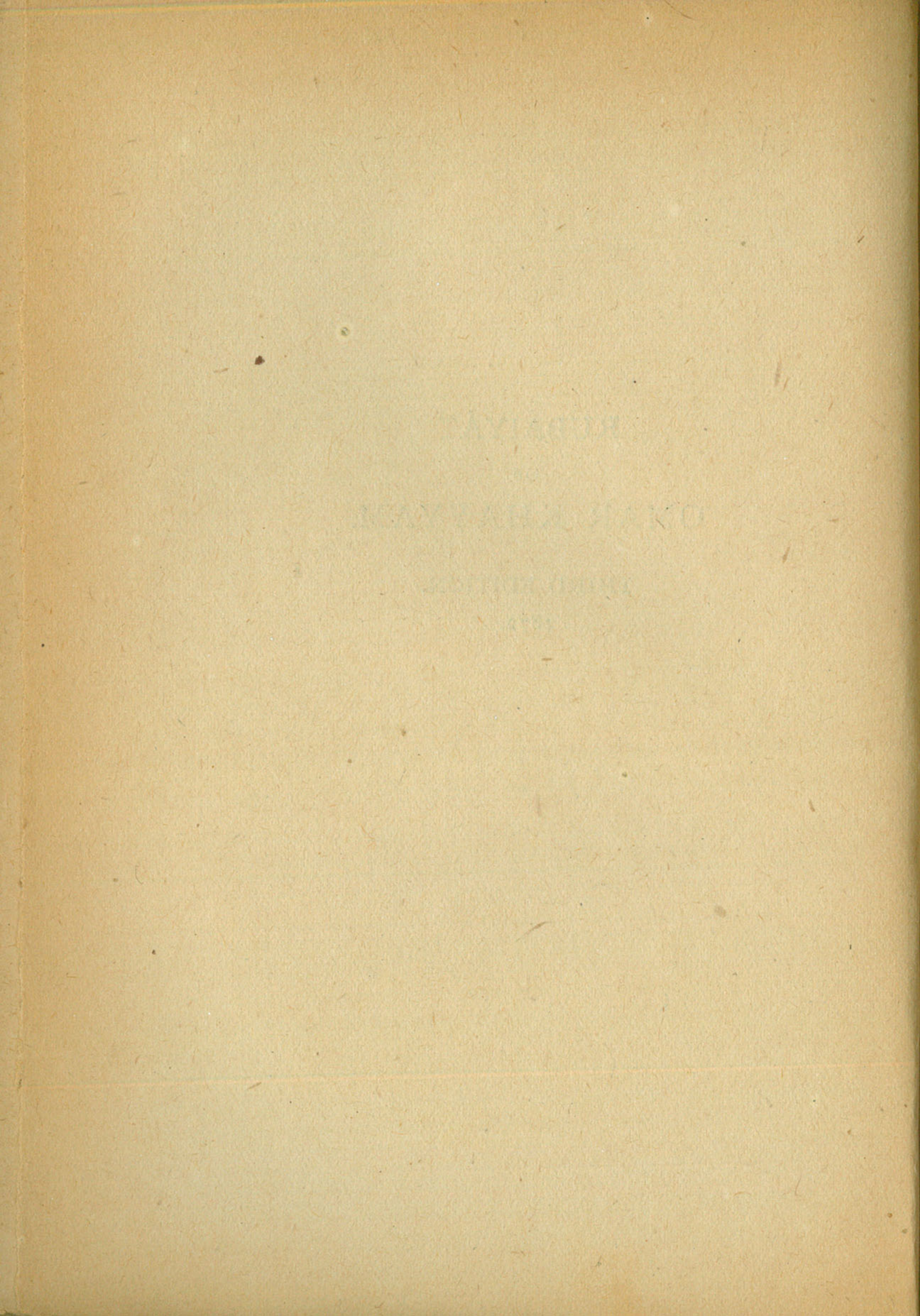
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RUBÁIYÁT  
OF  
OMAR KHAYYÁM.

THIRD EDITION.

1872.



OMAR KHAYYÁM  
THE  
ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country: one of whom tells the Story of all Three. This was Nizám ul Mulk, Vizyr to Alp Arslan the Son, and Malik Shah the Grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble Successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám ul Mulk, in his *Wasiyat*—or *Testament*—which he wrote and left as a Memorial for

future statesmen—relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. LIX., from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

“One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassán was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly honoured and revered,—may God rejoice his soul; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-us-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned an eye of favour and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Ómar Khayyám, and the ill-fated Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural powers; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to



each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh's father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyám, "It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we *all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will; what then shall be our mutual pledge and bond?" We answered, "Be it what you please." "Well," he said, "let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself." "Be it so," we both replied, and on those terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassán to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul; and when I returned, I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán.'

"He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the govern-

ment, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an oriental court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismailians*,—a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract, south of the Caspian Sea; and it was from this mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassin*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashish*, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days, at Naishápúr. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger

was Nizám ul Mulk himself, the old schoolboy friend.\*

“Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim the share; but not to ask for title or office. ‘The greatest boon you can confer on me,’ he said, ‘is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.’ The Vizier tells us, that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *mithkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naishápúr.

“At Naishápúr thus lived and died Omar Khayyám, ‘busied,’ adds the Vizier, ‘in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise

\* Some of Omar’s Rubáiyát warn us of the danger of Greatness, the instability of Fortune, and while advocating Charity to all Men, recommending us to be too intimate with none. Attár makes Nizám ul Mulk use the very words of his friend Omar (Rub. XXVIII.), “When Nizám ul Mulk was in the Agony (of Death) he said, ‘Oh God! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.’”

for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.'

"When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era (so called from *Jalál-ud-din*, one of the king's names)—'a computation of time,' says Gibbon, 'which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.' He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled *Ziji-Maliksháhi*," and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

"His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizám ul Mulk's generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, 'a druggist,' Assár, 'an oil presser,' etc.\* Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines:—

\* Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, etc., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.

“‘Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,  
Has fallen in grief’s furnace and been suddenly burned;  
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,  
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing!’

“We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems; it has been printed in the Persian in the appendix to Hyde’s *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499; and D’Herbelot alludes to it in his *Bibliothèque*, under *Khiam*:\*—

“‘It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123); in science he was unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story: “I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden; and one day he said to me, ‘My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it.’ I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no

\* “Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté vers la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle,” no

idle words.\* Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them.”’”

Thus far—without fear of Trespass—from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar's Grave, was reminded, he says, of

part of which, except the “Philosophe,” can apply to *our* Khayyám.

\* The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán: “No Man knows where he shall die.”—This story of Omar reminds me of another so naturally—and, when one remembers how wide of his humble mark the noble sailor aimed—so pathetically told by Captain Cook—not by Doctor Hawkesworth—in his Second Voyage. When leaving Ulietea, “Oreo's last request was for me to return. When he saw he could not obtain that promise, he asked me the name of my *Marai*—Burying place. As strange a question as this was, I hesitated not a moment, to tell him ‘Stepney,’ the parish in which I live when in London. I was made to repeat it several times over till they could pronounce it; and then ‘Stepney Marai no Tootee’ was echoed through a hundred mouths at once. I afterwards found the same question had been put to Mr. Forster by a man on shore; but he gave a different and indeed more proper answer, by saying, ‘No man who used the sea could say where he should be buried.’”

Cicero's Account of finding Archimedes' Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan "shower'd Favours upon him," Omar's Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they addressed; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief; as keen of Bodily Sense as of Intellectual; and delighting in a cloudy composition of both, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either.

Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as he saw them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they *might be*. It has been seen, however, that his Worldly Ambition was not exorbitant; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reacht Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothèque Impériale of Paris. We know but of one in England: No. 140



of the Ouseley MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiraz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy), contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that Number.\* The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one of Apology; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have risen from a Dream, in which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus:—

“Oh Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn  
 In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn;  
 How long be crying, ‘Mercy on them, God!’  
 Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn?”

---

\* “Since this Paper was written” (adds the Reviewer in a note), “we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at Calcutta in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS.”

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by way of Justification.

“If I myself upon a looser Creed  
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,  
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead:  
That One for Two I never did mis-read.”

The Reviewer, to whom I owe the Particulars of Omar's Life, concludes his Review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated Intellect, fine Imagination, and Hearts passionate for Truth and Justice; who justly revolted from their Country's false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it; but who yet fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of so vast a machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a Law that implied no Legislator; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the

mechanical Drama of the Universe which he was part Actor in; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime description of the Roman Theatre) discoloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain suspended between the Spectator and the Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as resulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and, pretending sensual pleasure as the serious purpose of Life, only *diverted* himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last!

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Something as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in

the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the “Drink and make-merry,” which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tentmaker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of TO-MORROW, fell back upon TO-DAY (which has out-lived so many To-morrows!) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

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While the second Edition of this version of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Resht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubáiyát, with translation and notes of his own.

Mons. Nicolas, whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken him for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., as Háfiz is supposed to do; in short, a Súfi Poet like Háfiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was more than a dozen years ago when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other, literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning as Mons. Nicolas' if he could.\* That he could

\* Perhaps would have edited the Poems himself some years ago. He may now as little approve of my Version on one side, as of Mons. Nicolas' Theory on the other.

not, appears by his Paper in the *Calcutta Review* already so largely quoted; in which he argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life.

And if more were needed to disprove Mons. Nicolas' Theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. (See pp. 13-14 of his Preface.) Indeed I hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. For here we see that, whatever were the Wine that Háfiz drank and sang, the veritable Juice of the Grape it was which Omar used, not only when carousing with his friends, but (says Mons. Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and "hurlements." And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., occur in the Text—which is often enough—Mons. Nicolas carefully annotates "Dieu," "La Divinité," etc.: so carefully indeed that one is tempted to think that he was indoctrinated by the Súfi with whom he read the Poems (Note to Rub. II. p. 8). A Persian would naturally wish to vindicate a distinguished

Countryman; and a Súfi to enrol him in his own sect, which already comprises all the chief Poets of Persia.

What historical authority has Mons. Nicolas to show that Omar gave himself up "avec passion à l'étude de la philosophie des Soufis"? (Preface, p. XIII.) The Doctrines of Pantheism, Materialism, Necessity, etc., were not peculiar to the Súfi; nor to Lucretius before them; nor to Epicurus before him; probably the very original Irreligion of Thinking men from the first; and very likely to be the spontaneous growth of a Philosopher living in an Age of social and political barbarism, under shadow of one of the Two and Seventy Religions supposed to divide the world. Von Hammer (according to Sprenger's Oriental Catalogue) speaks of Omar as "a Free-Thinker, and a great opponent of Sufism;" perhaps because, while holding much of their Doctrine, he would not pretend to any inconsistent severity of morals. Sir W. Ouseley has written a note to something of the same effect on the fly-leaf of the Bodleian MS. And in two Rubáiyát of Mons. Nicolas' own Edition Súf and Súfi are both disparagingly named.

No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted; but many more as

unaccountable unless literally. Were the Wine spiritual, for instance, how wash the Body with it when dead? Why make cups of the dead clay to be filled with—"La Divinité"—by some succeeding Mystic? Mons. Nicolas himself is puzzled by some "bizarres" and "trop Orientales" allusions and images—"d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante" indeed—which "les convenances" do not permit him to translate; but still which the reader cannot but refer to "La Divinité."\* No doubt also many of the Quatrains in the Teheran, as in the Calcutta, Copies, are spurious; such *Rubáiyát* being the common form of Epigram in Persia. But this, at best, tells as much one way as another; nay, the Súfi, who

\* A Note to Quatrain 234 admits that, however clear the mystical meaning of such Images must be to Europeans, they are not quoted without "rougissant" even by laymen in Persia—"Quant aux termes de tendresse qui commencent ce quatrain, comme tant d'autres dans ce recueil, nos lecteurs, habitués maintenant à l'étrangeté des expressions si souvent employés par Khéyam pour rendre ses pensées sur l'amour divin, et à la singularité des images trop orientales, d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante, n'auront pas de peine à se persuader qu'il s'agit de la Divinité, bien que cette conviction soit vivement discutée par les moullahs musulmans, et même par beaucoup de laïques, qui rougissent véritablement d'une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l'égard des choses spirituelles."



may be considered the Scholar and Man of Letters in Persia, would be far more likely than the careless Epicure to interpolate what favours his own view of the Poet. I observe that very few of the more mystical Quatrains are in the Bodleian MS. which must be one of the oldest, as dated at Shiraz, A.H. 865, A.D. 1460. And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar (I cannot help calling him by his—no, not Christian—familiar name) from all other Persian Poets: That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Súfi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jeláluddín, Jámi, Attár, and others sang; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating.

Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People: much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalised with Images of sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God who, according to the Doctrine, *is* Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after Death, without hope of any posthumous Beatitude in another world to compensate for all one's self-denial in this. Lucretius' blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfi; and the burden of Omar's Song—if not "Let us eat"—is assuredly—"Let us drink, for To-morrow we die!" And if Háfiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than spiritual Worshippers.

However, as there is some traditional presumption, and certainly the opinion of some learned men, in favour of Omar's being a Súfi—and even something of a Saint—those who please may so interpret his Wine and Cup-bearer. On the other hand, as there is far more historical certainty of his being a Philosopher, of scientific Insight and Ability far beyond that of the Age and Country he lived in; of such moderate worldly Ambition as becomes a Philosopher, and such moderate wants as rarely satisfy a Debauchee; other readers may be content to believe with me that, while the Wine Omar celebrates is simply the Juice of the Grape, he bragg'd more than he drank of it, in very defiance perhaps of that Spiritual Wine which left its Votaries sunk in Hypocrisy or Disgust.

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RUBÁIYÁT  
OF  
OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR.

I.

WAKE! For the Sun who scatter'd into flight  
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,  
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and  
strikes  
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,  
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,  
“When all the Temple is prepared within,  
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?”

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before  
The Tavern shouted—“Open then the door!  
You know how little while we have to stay,  
And, once departed, may return no more.”

## IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,  
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,

Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough  
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

## V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,  
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;

But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine,  
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

## VI.

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine  
High-piping Péhlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!

Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose  
That sallow cheek of her's to'incarnadine.

## VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:

The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

## VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,  
 Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,  
 The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,  
 The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

## IX.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;  
 Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?  
 And this first Summer month that brings the Rose  
 Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

## X.

Well, let it take them! What have we to do  
 With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?  
 Let Zál and Rustum thunder as they will,  
 Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

## XI.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown  
 That just divides the desert from the sown,  
 Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—  
 And Peace to Máhmúd on his golden Throne!