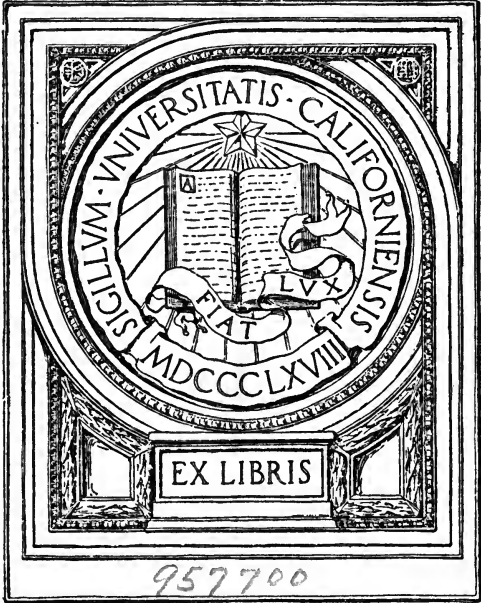


THE RUBAIYAT
OF OMAR
KHAYYAM



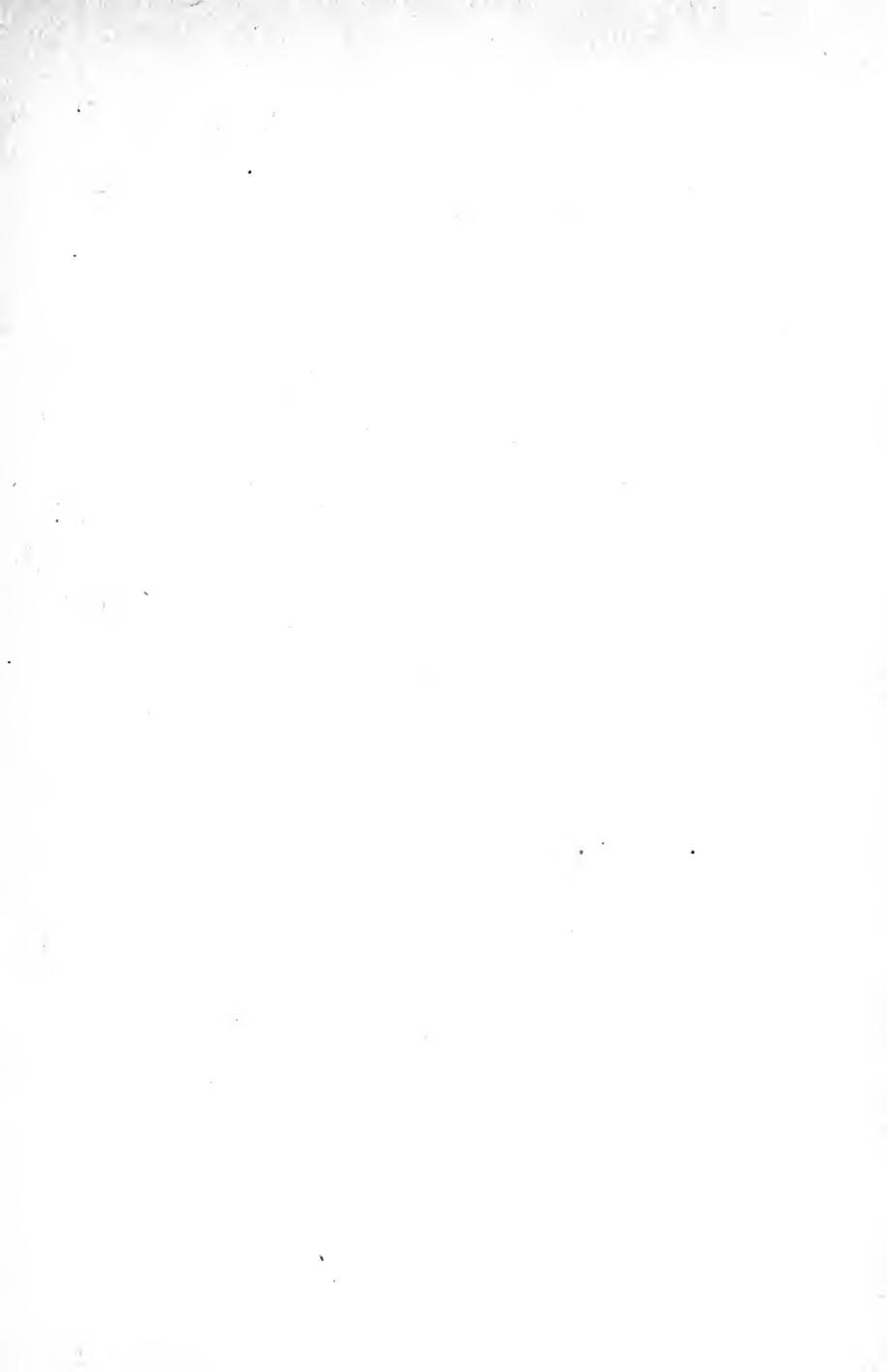
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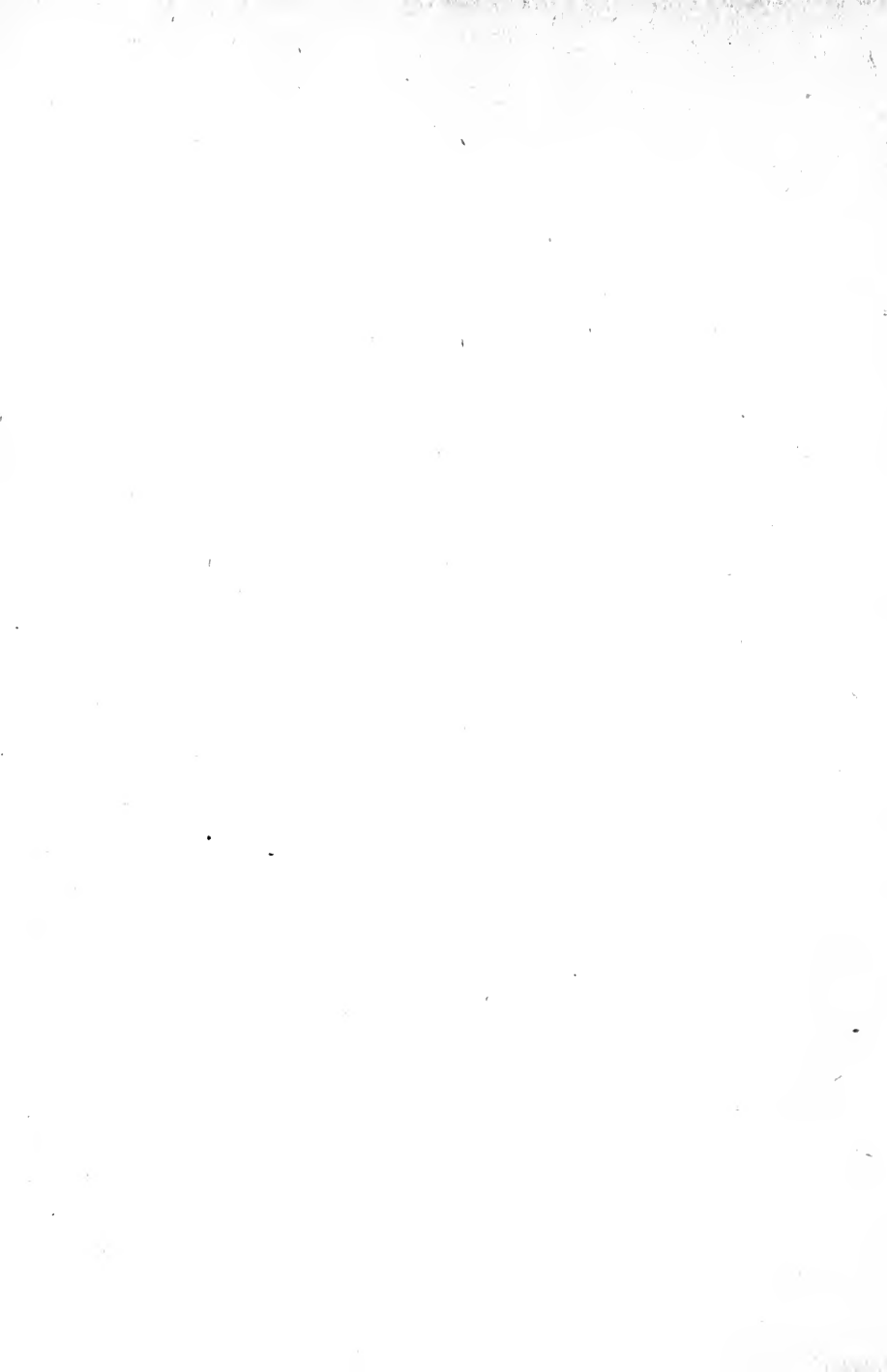
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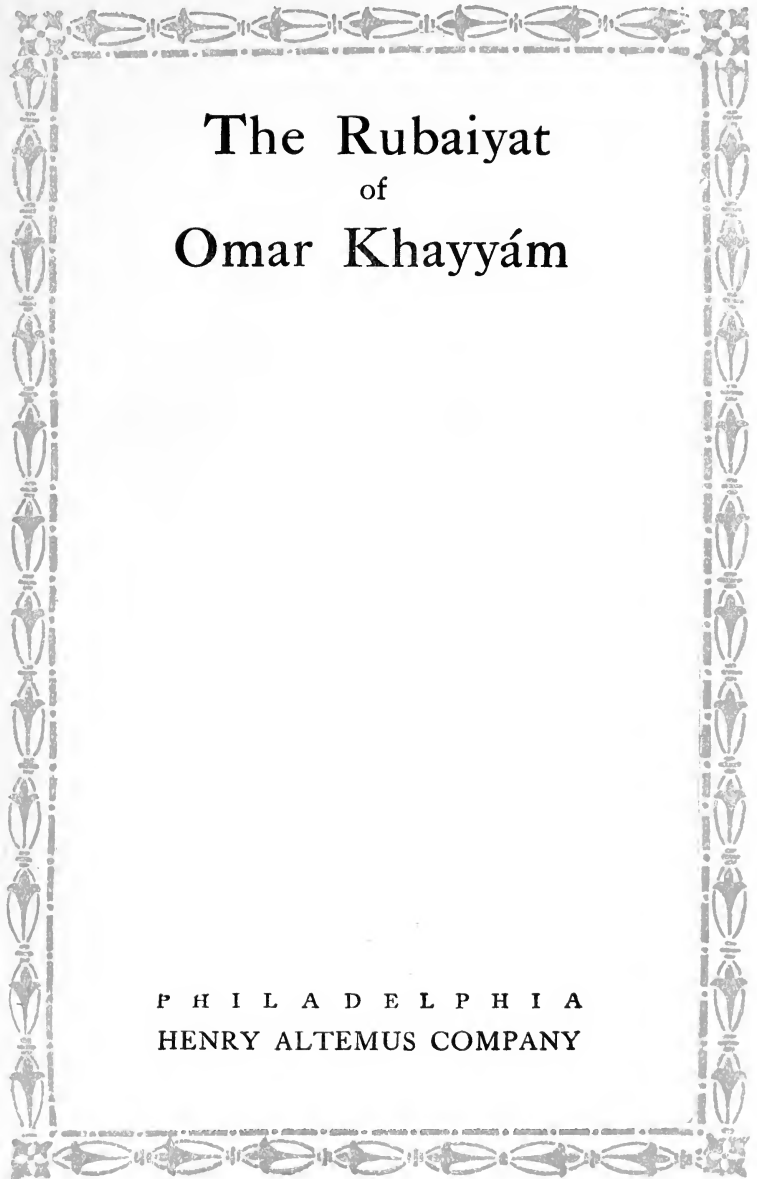


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Frontispiece

A JUG OF WINE, A LOAF OF BREAD—AND THOU



The Rubaiyat
of
Omar Khayyám

P H I L A D E L P H I A
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

Printed in U. S. A.



OMAR KHAYYÁM

*An address delivered by John Hay, December 8, 1897,
at the dinner of the Omar Khayyám Club, London :*

I CAN never forget my emotions when I first saw FitzGerald's translations of the Quatrains. Keats, in his sublime ode on Chapman's Homer, has described the sensation once for all :

“Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken.”

The exquisite beauty, the faultless form, the singular grace of those amazing stanzas, were not more wonderful than the depth and breadth of their profound philosophy, their knowledge of life, their dauntless courage, their serene facing of the ultimate problems of life and death. Of course, the doubt did



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not spare me, which has assailed many as ignorant as I was of the literature of the East, whether it was the poet or the translator to whom was due this splendid result. Was it, in fact, a reproduction of an antique song, or a mystification of a great modern, careless of fame and scornful of his time? Could it be possible that in the eleventh century, so far away as Khorassan, so accomplished a man of letters lived, with such distinction, such breadth, such insight, such calm disillusion, such cheerful and jocund despair? Was this "Weltschmerz," which we thought a malady of our day, endemic in Persia in 1100? My doubt only lasted until I came upon a literal translation of the Rubaiyat, and I saw that not the least remarkable quality of FitzGerald's poem was its fidelity to the original. In short, Omar was a FitzGerald, or FitzGerald was a reincarnation of Omar. It is not to the disadvantage of the latter poet that he followed so closely in the footsteps of the earlier. A



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man of extraordinary genius had appeared in the world, had sung a song of incomparable beauty and power in an environment no longer worthy of him, in a language of narrow range; for many generations the song was virtually lost; then, by a miracle of creation, a poet, a twin brother in the spirit to the first, was born, who took up the forgotten poem and sang it anew with all its original melody and force, and all the accumulated refinement of ages of art. It seems to me idle to ask which was the greater master; each seems greater than his work. The song is like an instrument of precious workmanship and marvelous tone, which is worthless in common hands, but when it falls, at long intervals, into the hands of the supreme master, it yields a melody of transcendent enchantment to all that have ears to hear. If we look at the sphere of influence of the two poets, there is no longer any comparison. Omar sang to a half barbarous province; FitzGerald to the world. Wherever the



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English speech is spoken or read, the Rubaiyat have taken their place as a classic. There is not a hill-post in India, nor a village in England, where there is not a coterie to whom Omar Khayyám is a familiar friend and a bond of union. In America he has an equal following, in many regions and conditions. In the Eastern States his adepts form an esoteric sect; the beautiful volume of drawings by Mr. Vedder is a centre of delight and suggestion wherever it exists. In the cities of the West you will find the Quatrains one of the most thoroughly read books in any club library. I heard them quoted once in one of the most lonely and desolate spots of the high Rockies. We had been camping on the Great Divide, our "roof of the world," where in the space of a few feet you may see two springs, one sending its waters to the Polar solitudes, the other to the eternal Carib summer. One morning, at sunrise, as we were breaking camp, I was startled to hear one of our



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party, a frontiersman born, intoning these words of sombre majesty :

“’Tis but a Tent where takes his one day’s rest
A Sultan to the realm of Death address ;
The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.”

I thought that sublime setting of primeval forest and pouring canyon was worthy of the lines ; I am sure the dewless, crystalline air never vibrated to strains of more solemn music. Certainly, our poet can never be numbered among the great popular writers of all time. He has told no story ; he has never unpacked his heart in public ; he has never thrown the reins on the neck of the winged horse, and let his imagination carry him where it listed. “ Ah ! the crowd must have emphatic warrant,” as Browning sang. Its suffrages are not for the cool, collected observer, whose eyes no glitter can dazzle, no mist suffuse. The many cannot but resent



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that air of lofty intelligence, that pale and subtle smile. But he will hold a place forever among that limited number who, like Lucretius and Epicurus—without rage or defiance, even without unbecoming mirth—look deep into the tangled mysteries of things; refuse credence to the absurd, and allegiance to arrogant authority; sufficiently conscious of fallibility to be tolerant of all opinions; with a faith too wide for doctrine and a benevolence untrammelled by creed; too wise to be wholly poets, and yet too surely poets to be implacably wise.



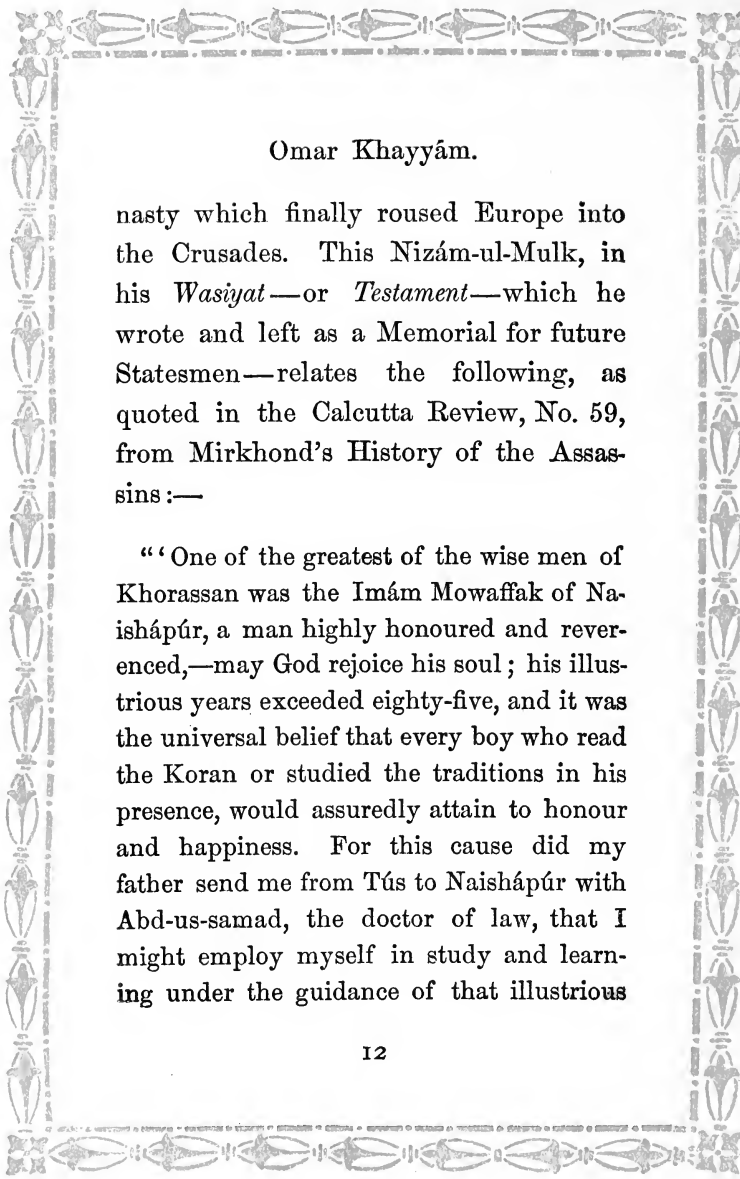
OMAR KHAYYÁM
THE ASTRONOMER POET OF PERSIA



OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishá-púr, in Khorasan, 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 Succession of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dy-



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nasty 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. 59, from Mirkhond's History of the Assassins:—

““ One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassan 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



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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 Omar 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



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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 Khorassan 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 government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of

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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 *Isma'ilians*,—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

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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 school-boy 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

* 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, ‘O God! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.’”

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him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of twelve hundred *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 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 *Jalal-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 *Zíji-Maliksháhí*,” and the French have lately

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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:—

‘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 ;

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

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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*.*

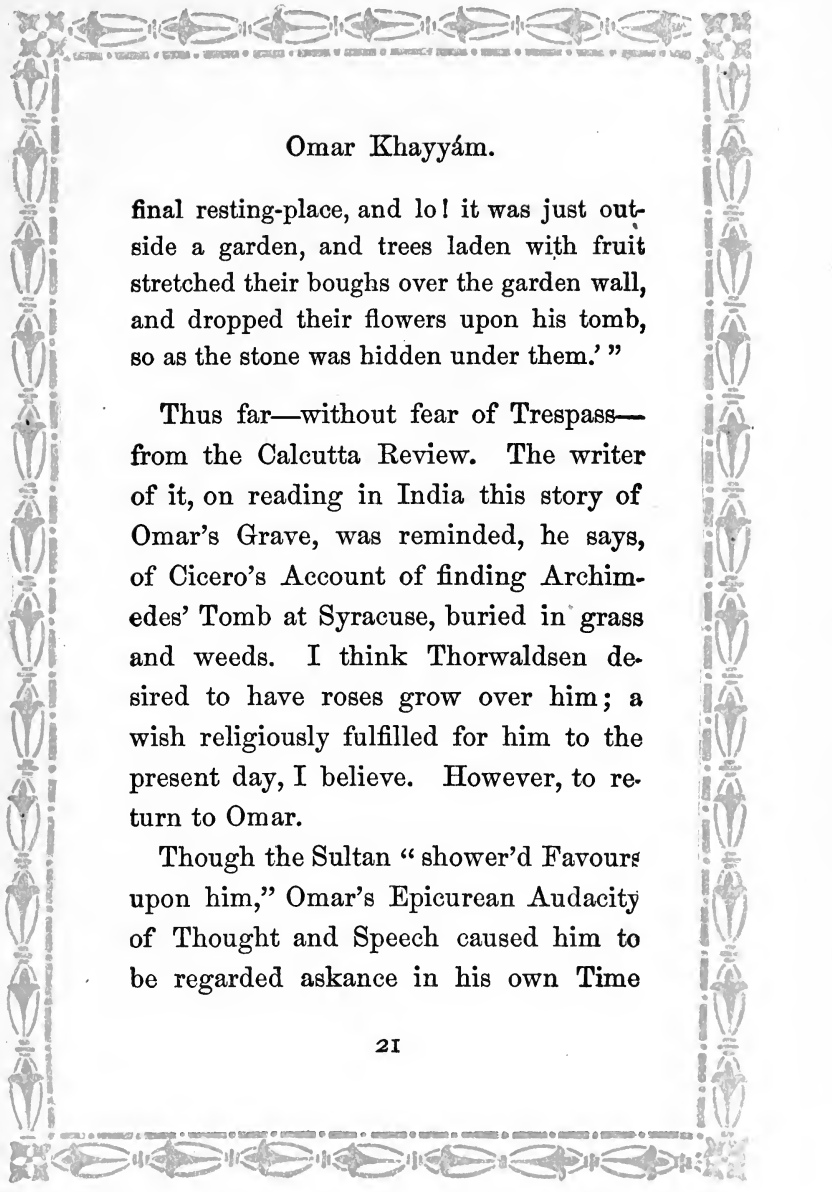
“It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123); in science he was unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age.’ Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story: ‘I 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

* “Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté dans la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle,” no part of which, except the “Philosophe,” can apply to *our* Khayyám.

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the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words.* Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his

* 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 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.'"



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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 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



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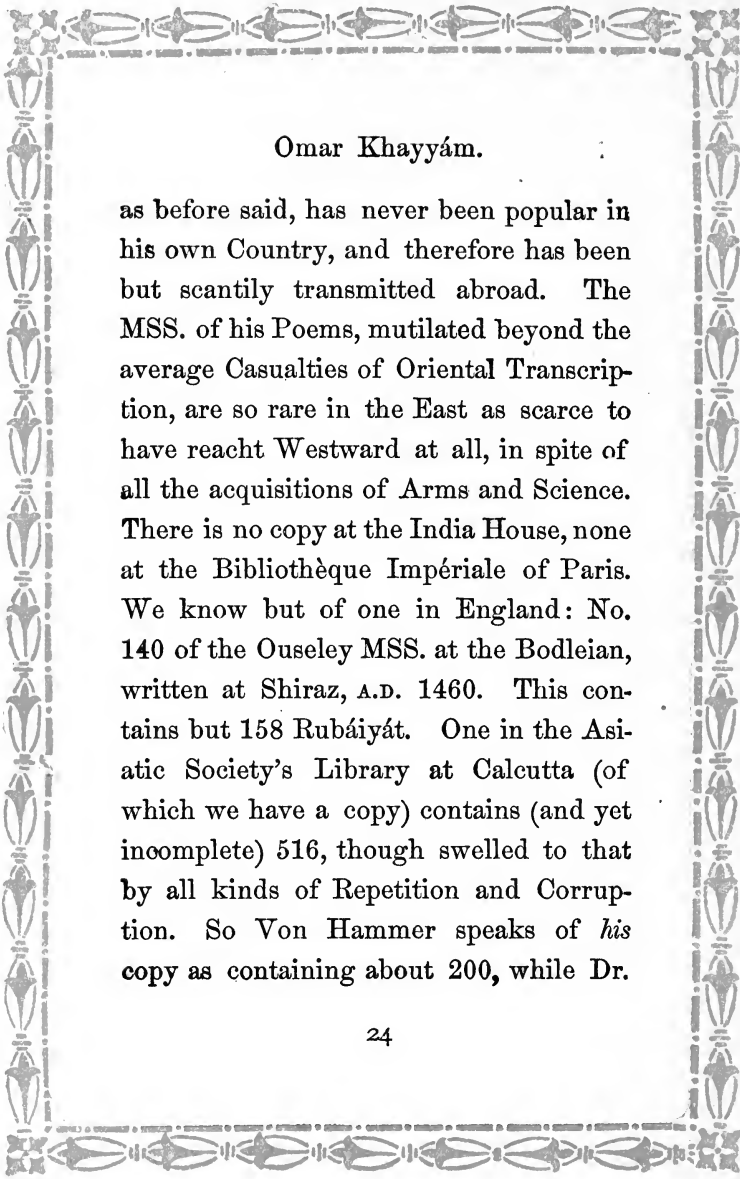
and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with 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



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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,



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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.



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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:—

“O Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn;

* “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.”



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How long be crying, ' Mercy on them, God !'
Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn ?'

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Panthe-
ism by way of Justification :—

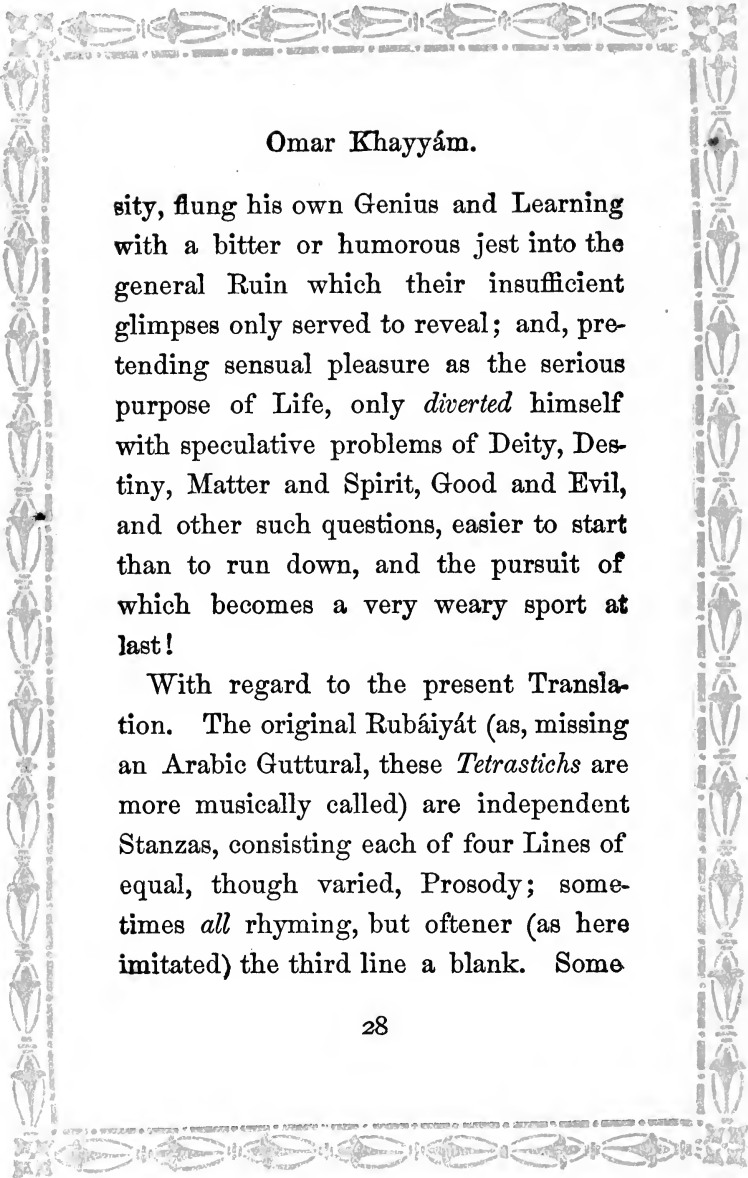
“ If I myself upon a looser Creed
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead :
That One for Two I never did mis-read.”

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 re-



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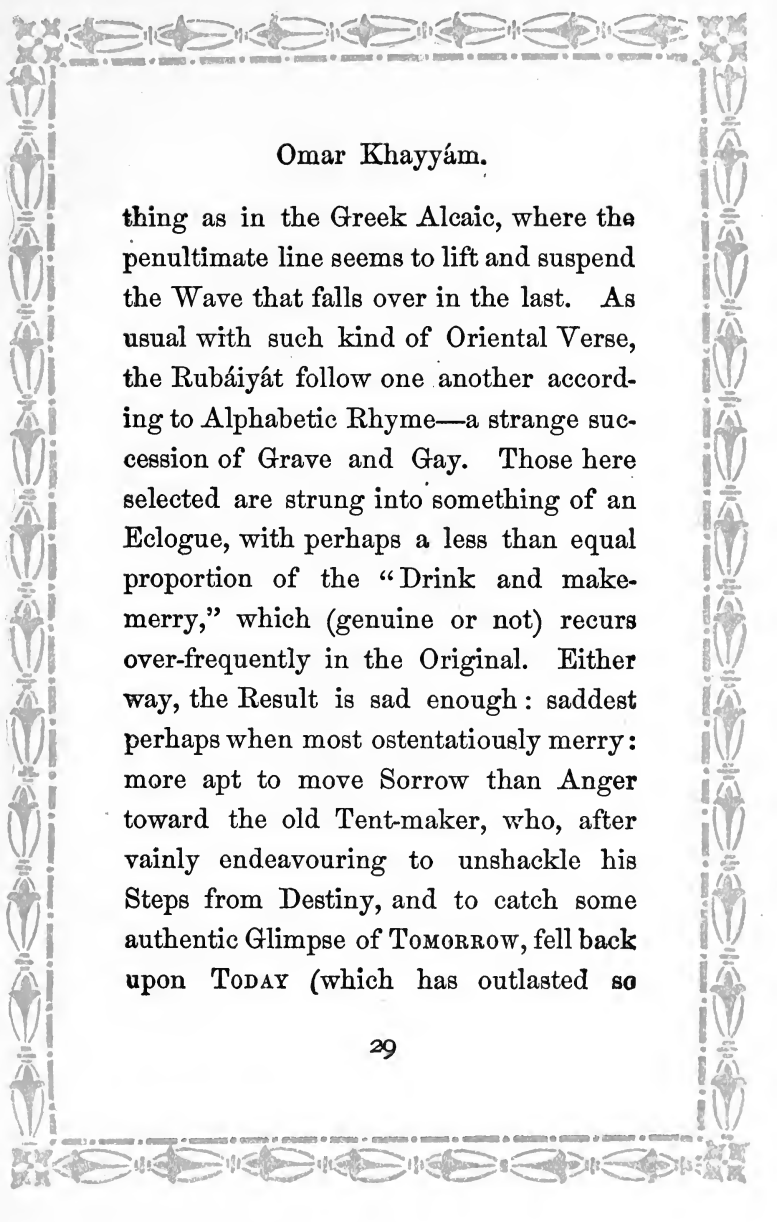
placing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better Revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of so vast a machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a Law that 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 Neces-



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sity, 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. Some



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thing 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 Tent-maker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of TOMORROW, fell back upon TODAY (which has outlasted so

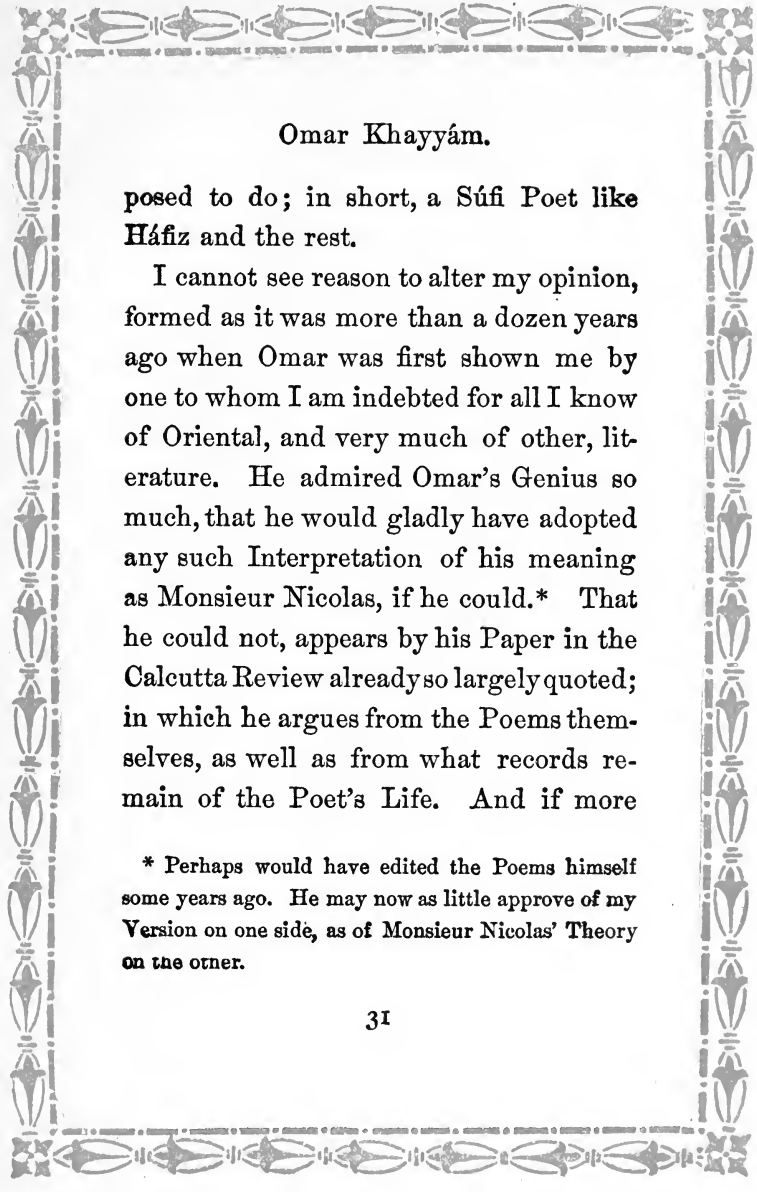


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many Tomorrows!) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

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.

Monsieur 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 sup-

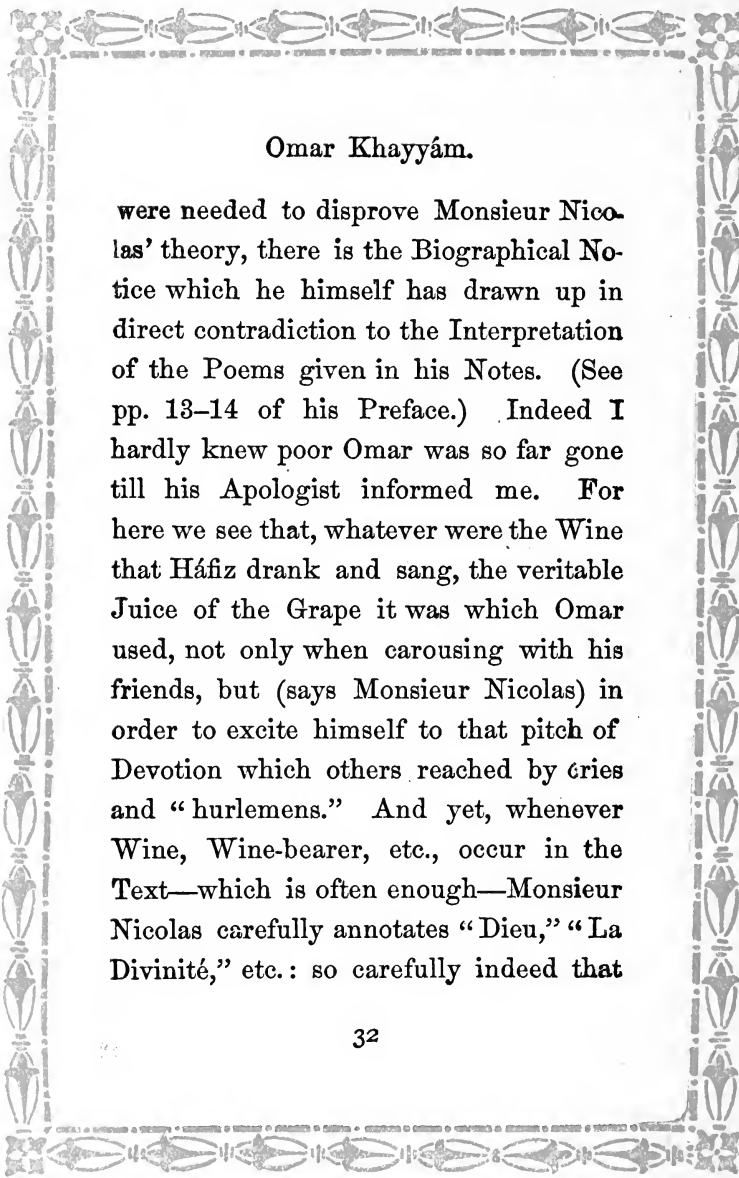


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posed to do; in short, a Súfi Poet like Háfiz and the rest.

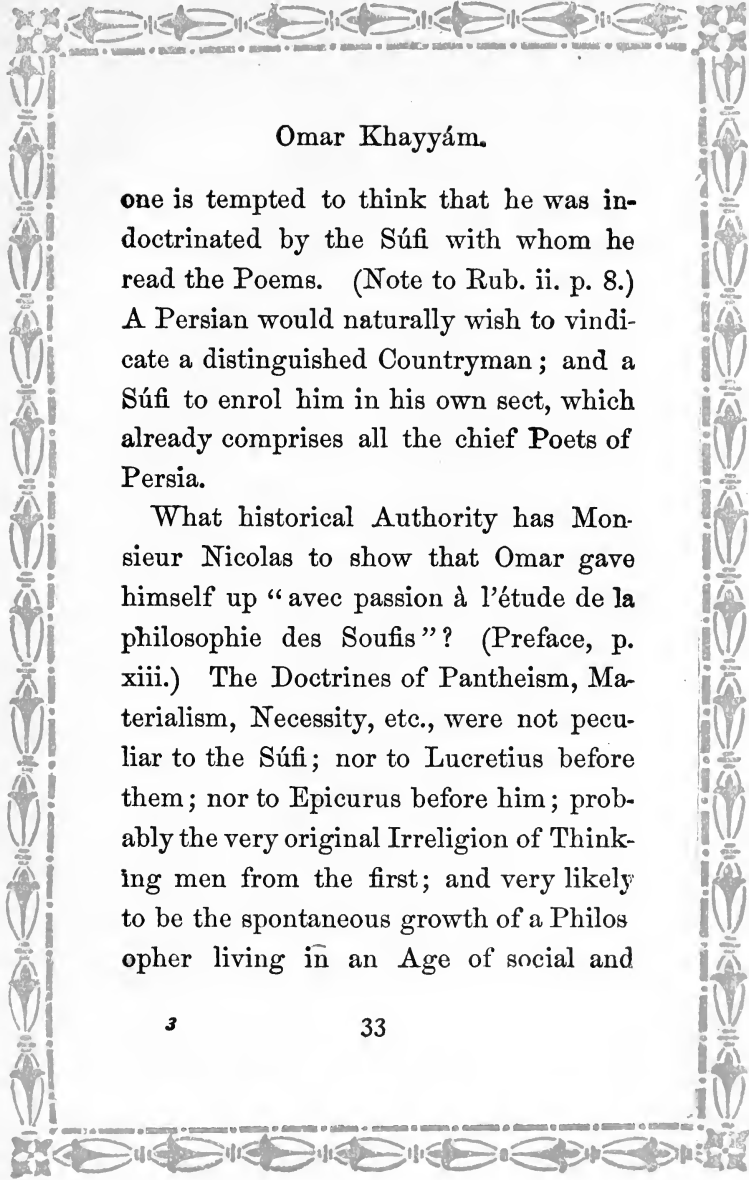
I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was more than a dozen years ago when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other, literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of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

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



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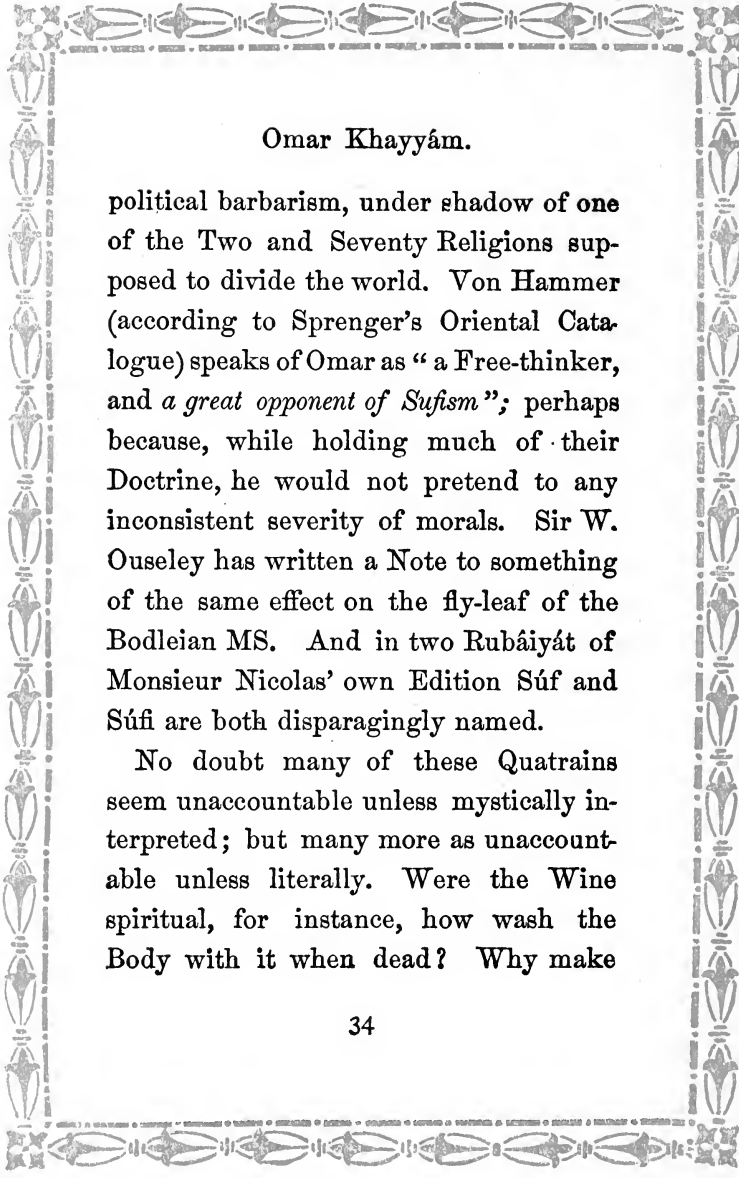
were needed to disprove Monsieur Nicolas' theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. (See pp. 13-14 of his Preface.) Indeed I hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. 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 Monsieur Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and "hurlemens." And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., occur in the Text—which is often enough—Monsieur Nicolas carefully annotates "Dieu," "La Divinité," etc.: so carefully indeed that



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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 Monsieur 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



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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 Monsieur 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

Omar Khayyám.

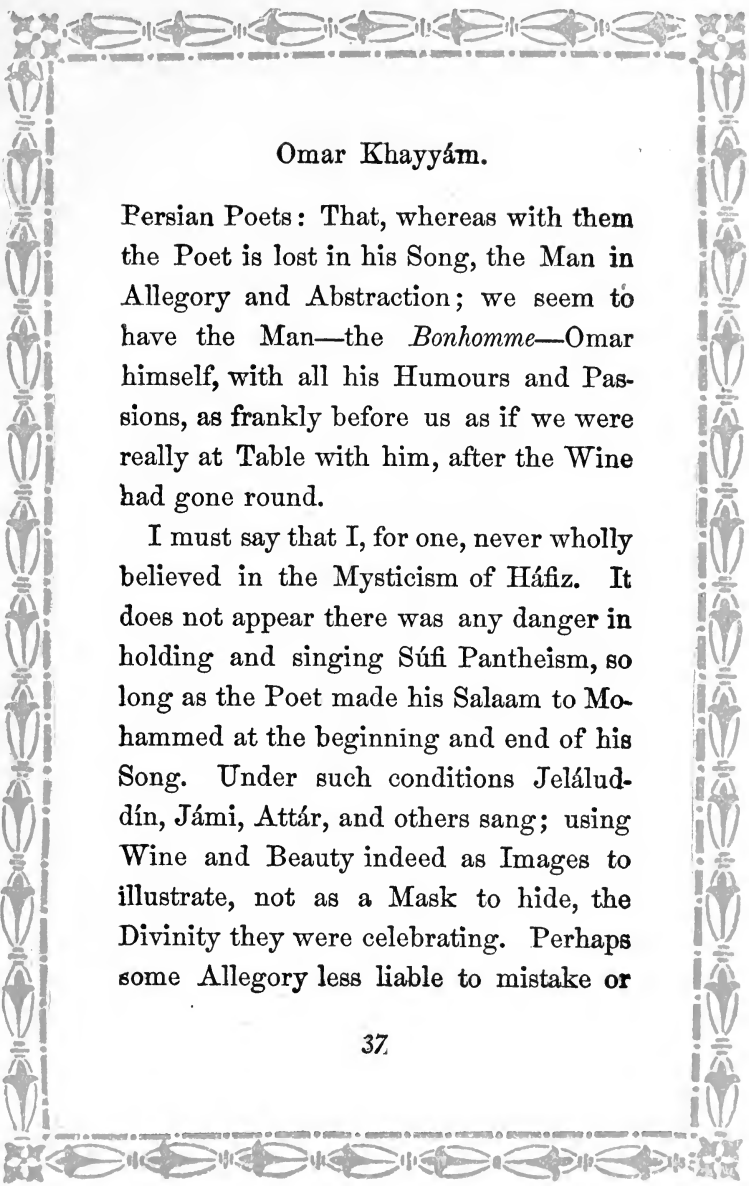
cups of the dead clay to be filled with—
“La Divinité”—by some succeeding
Mystic? Monsieur Nicolas himself is
puzzled by some “bizarres” and “trop
Orientales” allusions and images—“d’une
sensualité quelquefois révoltante,” indeed
—which “les convenances” do not per-
mit him to translate; but still which 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 “rougis-
sant” 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 dis-
cutée par les moullahs musulmans, et même par beau-

Omar Khayyám.

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 Súfí, 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

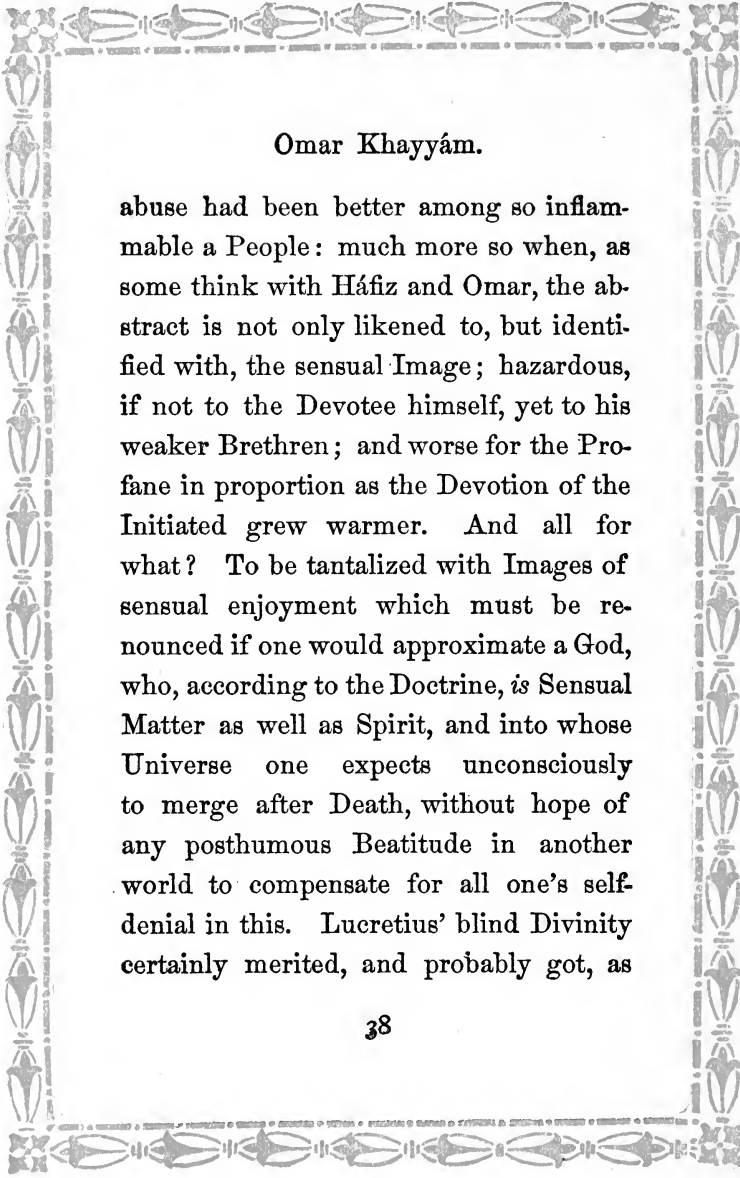
coup de laïques, que rougissent véritablement d'une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l'égard des choses spirituelles.''



Omar Khayyám.

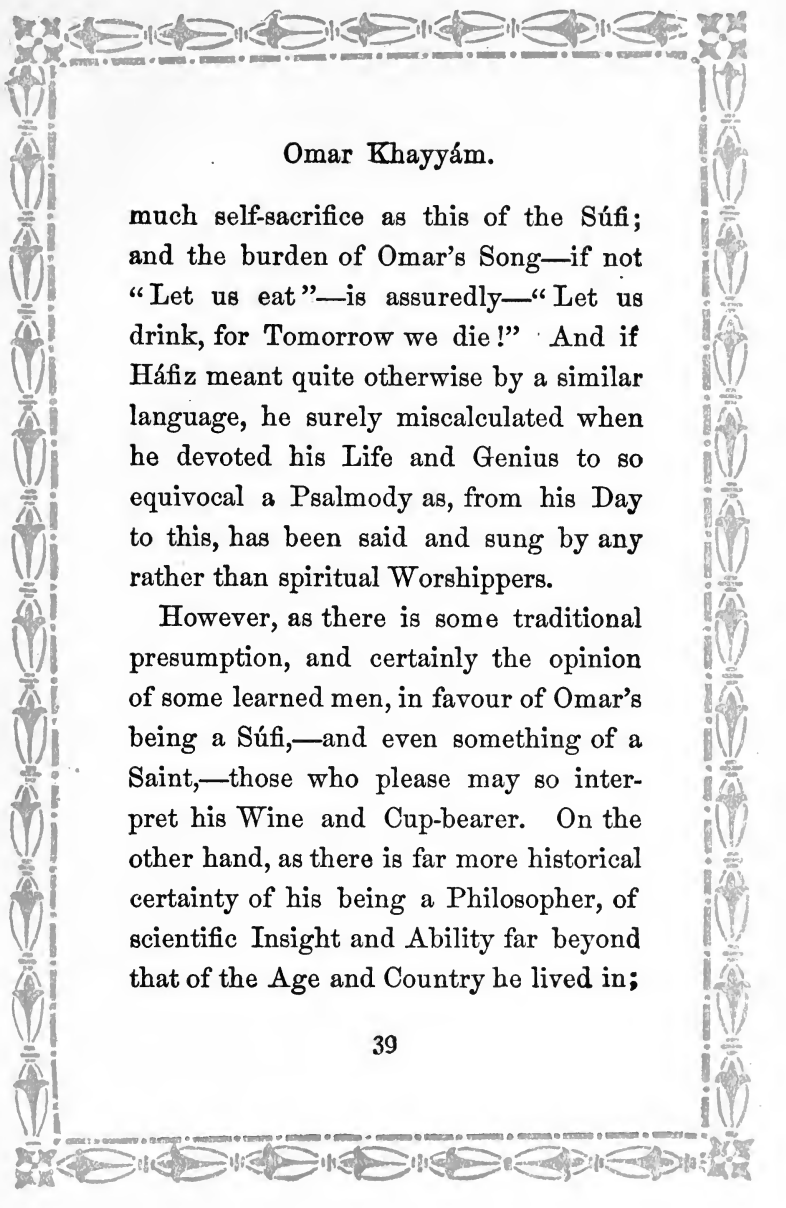
Persian Poets: That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

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 Jelálud-dín, 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



Omar Khayyám.

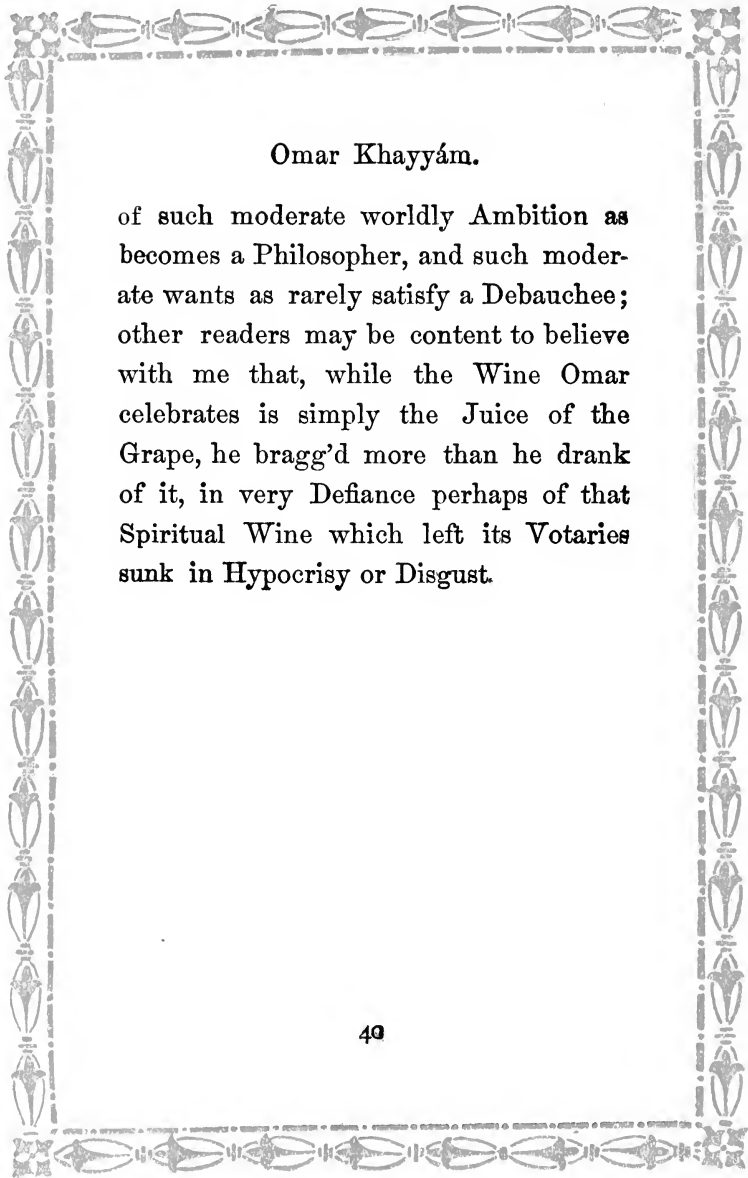
abuse had been better among so inflammable a People: much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalized 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



Omar Khayyám.

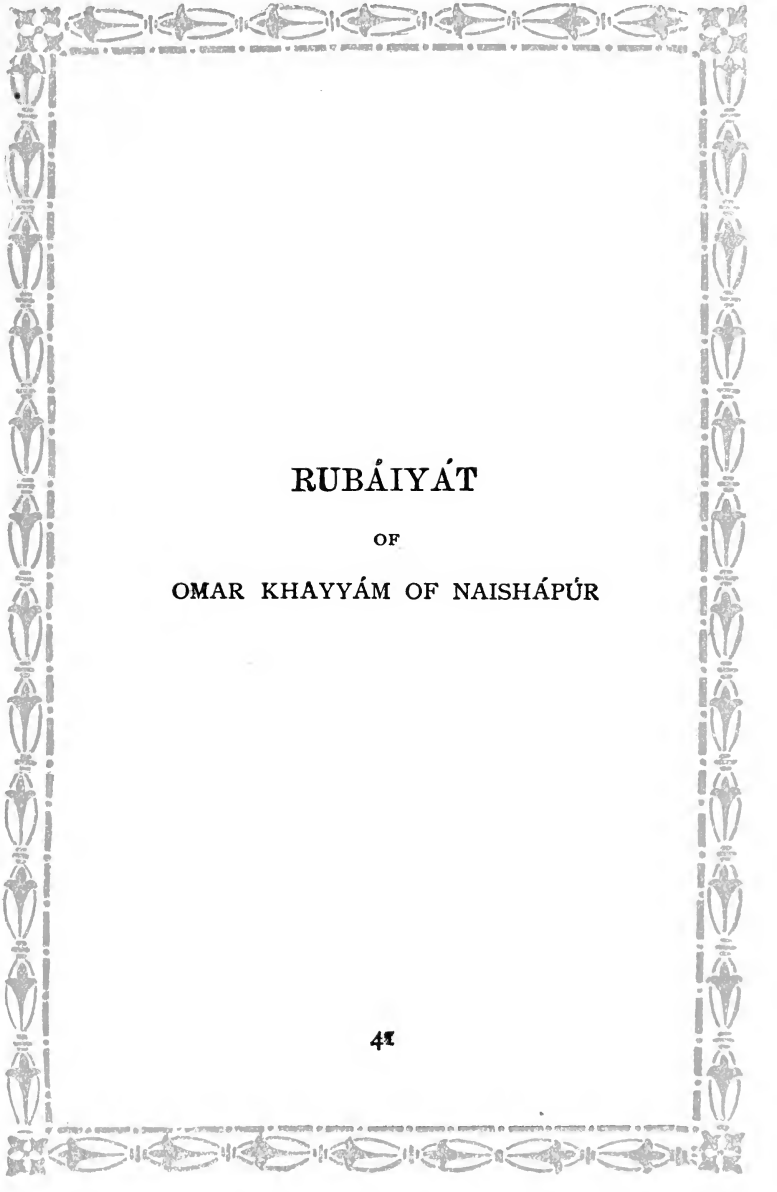
much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfi; and the burden of Omar's Song—if not "Let us eat"—is assuredly—"Let us drink, for Tomorrow we die!" And if Háfiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day 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;



Omar Khayyám.

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.



RUBÁIYÁT
OF
OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR





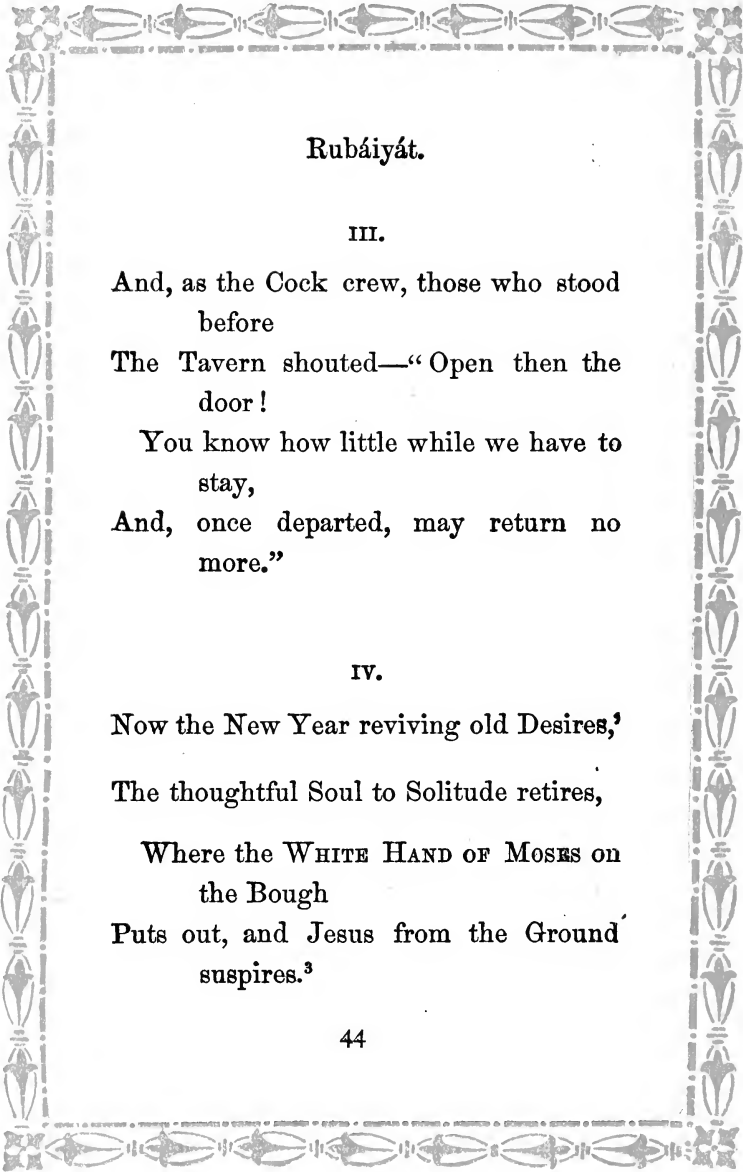
RUBÁIYÁT.

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,¹
Methought a Voice within the Tavern
cried,
“When all the Temple is prepared
within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper out-
side?”



Rubáiyát.

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,¹

The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,

Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on
the Bough

Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground
suspIRES.³



AND MANY A GARDEN BY THE WATER BLOWS

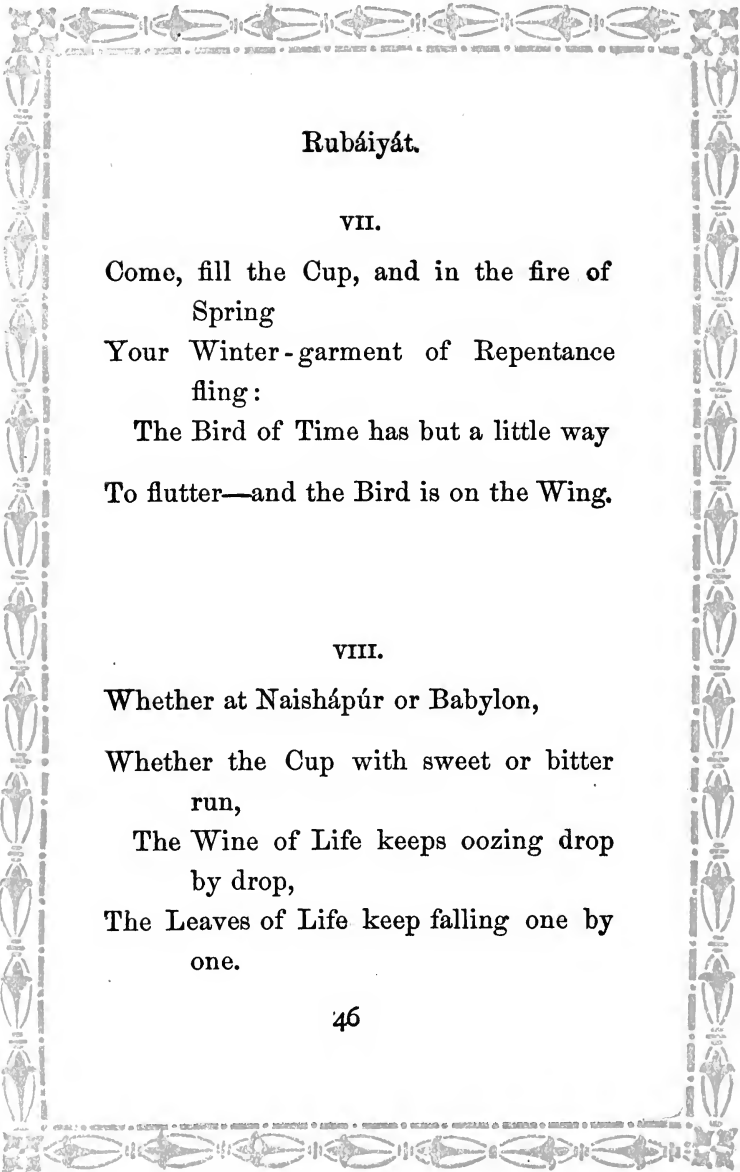
Rubáiyát.

v.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,⁴
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 divine⁵
High-piping Péhlevi, with "Wine! Wine!
Wine!
Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to
the Rose
That sallow cheek⁶ of hers to incarna-
dine.



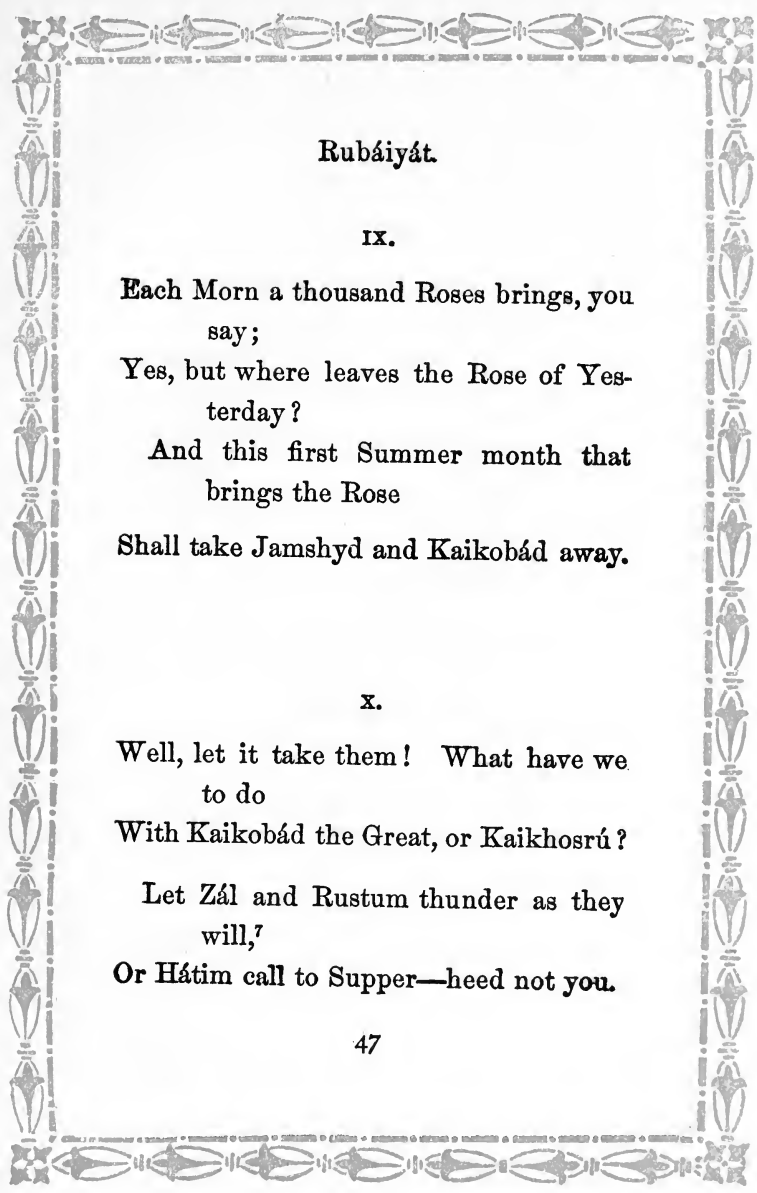
Rubáiyát.

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.



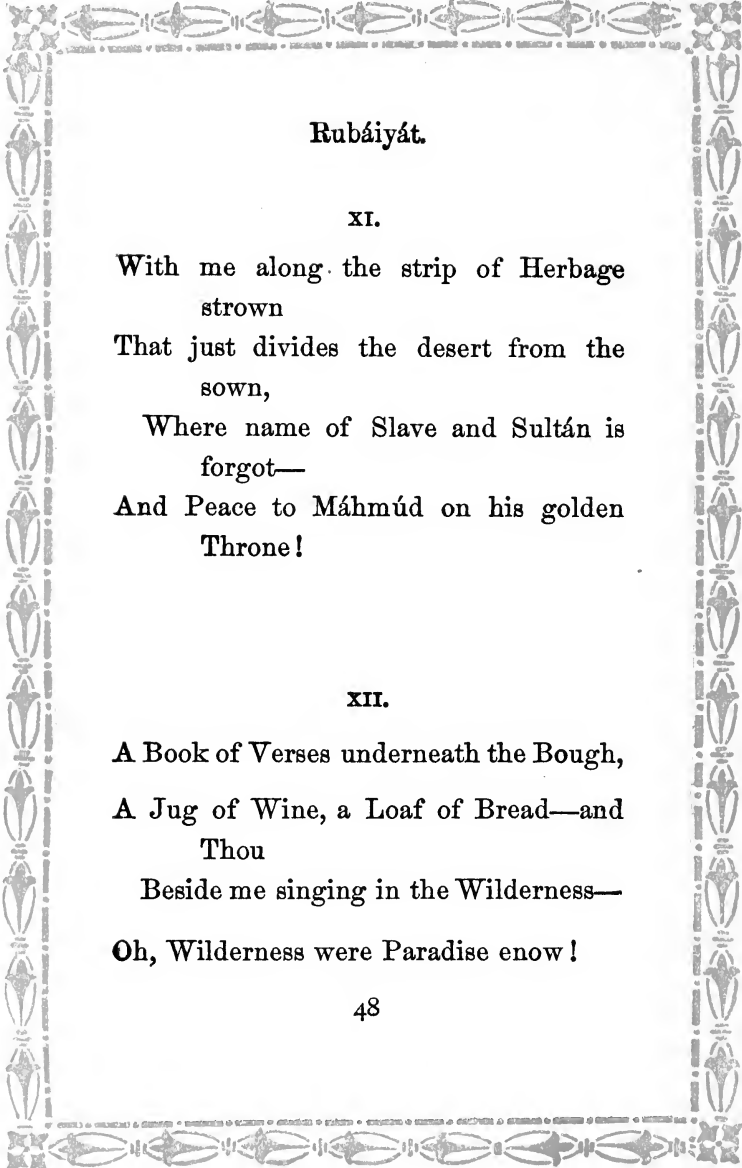
Rubáiyát.

ix.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you
say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yes-
terday?
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,⁷
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.



Rubáiyát.

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.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and
Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!



NOR HEED THE RUMBLE OF A DISTANT DRUM

Rubáiyát.

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 Credit
go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!⁸

XIV.

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.”⁹

Rubáiyát.

xv.

And 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.

xvi.

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.

Rubáiyát.

XVII.

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.

XVIII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard
keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and
drank deep :¹⁰
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the
Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break
his Sleep.

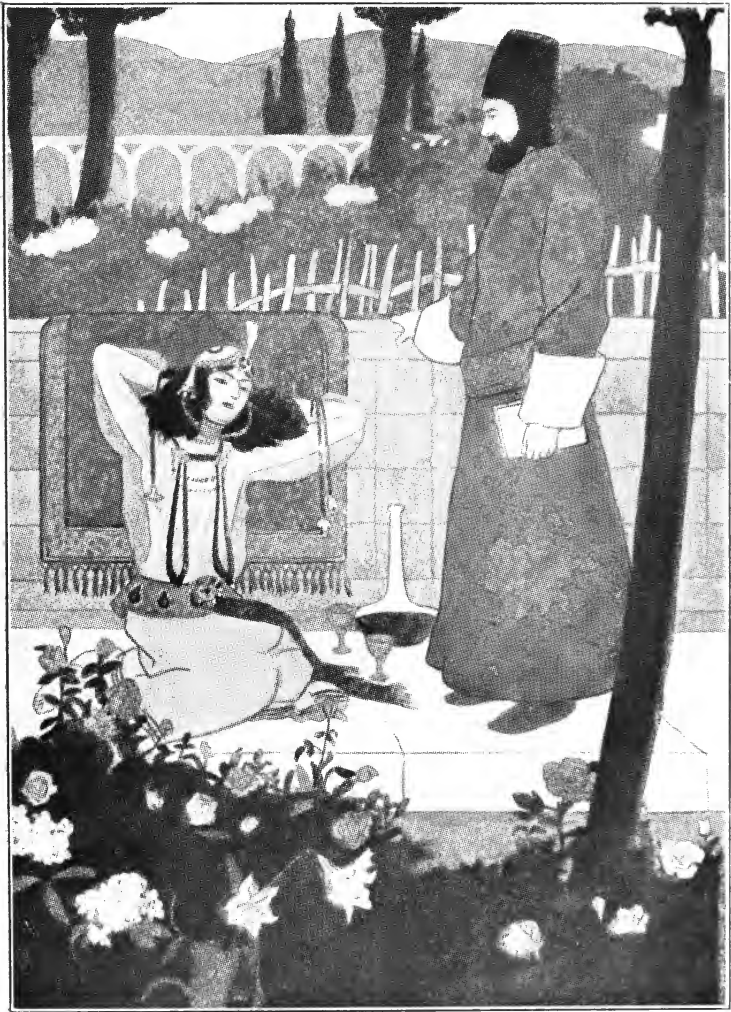
Rubáiyát.

XIX.

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.

XX.

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



LOOK TO THE BLOWING ROSE ABOUT US

Rubáiyát.

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.¹¹

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.

Rubáiyát.

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.

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 !

Rubáiyát.

xxv.

Alike for those who for To-DAY pre-
pare,
And those that after some To-MORROW
stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Dark-
ness cries,
“Fools, your Reward is neither Here
nor There.”

xxvi.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who dis-
cuss'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.

Rubáiyát.

XXVII.

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 where in I
went.

XXVIII.

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.”



ABODE HIS DESTINED HOUR, AND WENT HIS WAY

Rubáiyát.

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not know-
ing,
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flow-
ing;
And out of it, as Wind along the
Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blow-
ing.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried
Whence?
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried
hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden
Wine
Must drown the memory of that inso-
lence!

Rubáiyát.

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the
Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn
sate,¹²
And many a Knot unravell'd by the
Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human
Fate.

XXXII.

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.¹³

Rubáiyát.

XXXIII.

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas
that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord for-
lorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs
reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and
Morn.

XXXIV.

Then of the **THEE IN ME** who works
behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to
find
A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I
heard,
As from Without—"THE **ME WITHIN**
THEE BLIND!"

Rubáiyát.

xxxv.

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

xxxvi.

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



AND IN YOUR JOYOUS ERRAND REACH THE SPOT

Rubáiyát.

XXXVII.

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!"¹⁴

XXXVIII.

Listen—a moment listen!—Of the same
Poor Earth from which that Human
Whisper came
The luckless Mould in which Man-
kind was cast
They did compose, and call'd him by the
name.

Rubáiyát.

XXXIX.

And not a drop that from our Cups we
throw¹⁵
For Earth to drink of, but may steal
below
To quench the fire of Anguish in some
Eye
There hidden—far beneath, and long
ago.

XL.

As then the Tulip for her morning
sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage from the soil looks
up,
Do you devoutly do the like, till
Heav'n
To Earth invert you like an empty
Cup.

Rubáiyát.

XLI.

Perplext no more with Human or Di-
vine,
To-morrow's tangle to the winds re-
sign,
And lose your fingers in the tress-
es of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

XLII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you
press,
End in what All begins and ends in—
Yes;
Think then you are To-DAY what YES-
TERDAY
You were—To-MORROW you shall not be
less.

Rubáiyát.

XLIII.

So when the Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall
not shrink.¹⁶

XLIV.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Wer't not a Shame—wer't not a Shame
for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide ?



AT LAST SHALL FIND YOU BY THE RIVER-BRINK

Rubáiyát.

XLV.

'T is but a Tent where takes his one-day's
rest
A Sultan to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

XLVI.

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

Rubáiyát.

XLVII.

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 the SEV'N SEAS should heed a pebble
cast.

XLVIII.

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has
reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make
haste!

Rubáiyát.

XLIX.

Would you that spangle of Existence
 spend
About THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend!
 A Hair perhaps divides the False and
 True—
And upon what, prithee, does Life depend?

L.

A Hair perhaps 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;

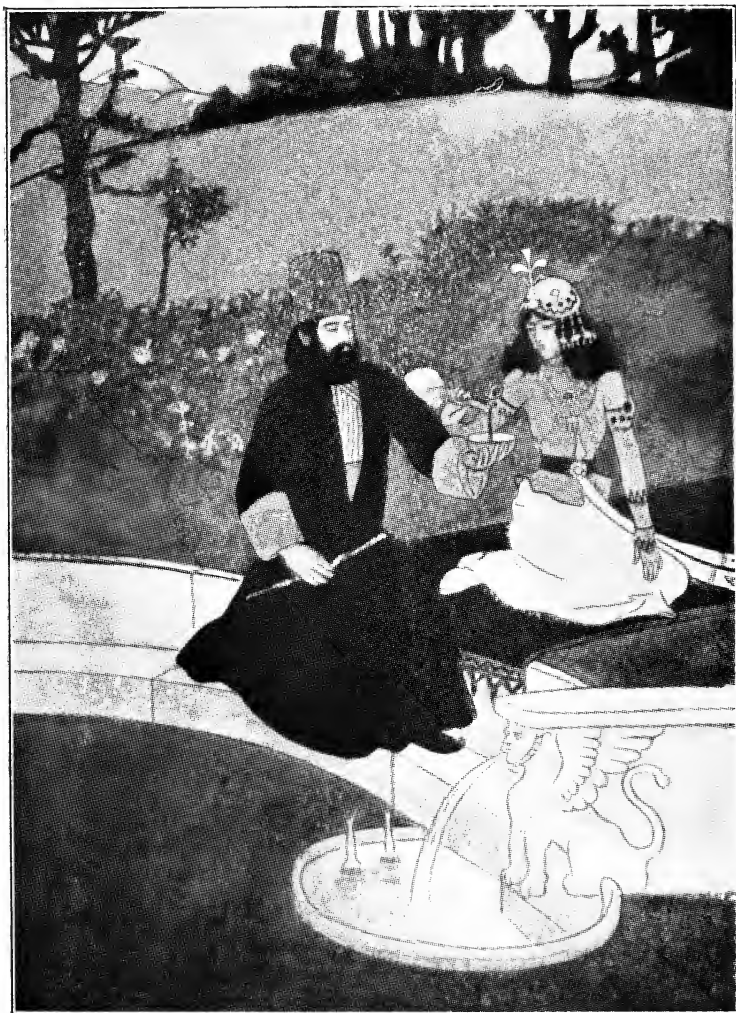
Rubáiyát.

LI.

Whose secret Presence, through Crea-
tion's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes your
pains ;
Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi ;¹⁷
and
They change and perish all—but He re-
mains ;

LII.

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.



AH. MY BELOVED, FILL THE CUP

Rubáiyát.

LIII.

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 ?

LIV.

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

Rubáiyát.

LV.

You know, my Friends, with what a brave
Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;
Divorced old barren Reason from my
Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to
Spouse.

LVI.

For "IS" and "IS-NOT" though with Rule
and Line,¹⁸
And "UP-AND-DOWN" by Logic I define,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

Rubáiyát.

LVII.

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning?
—Nay,
'T was only striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an An-
gel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 't was—the
Grape!

Rubáiyát.

LIX.

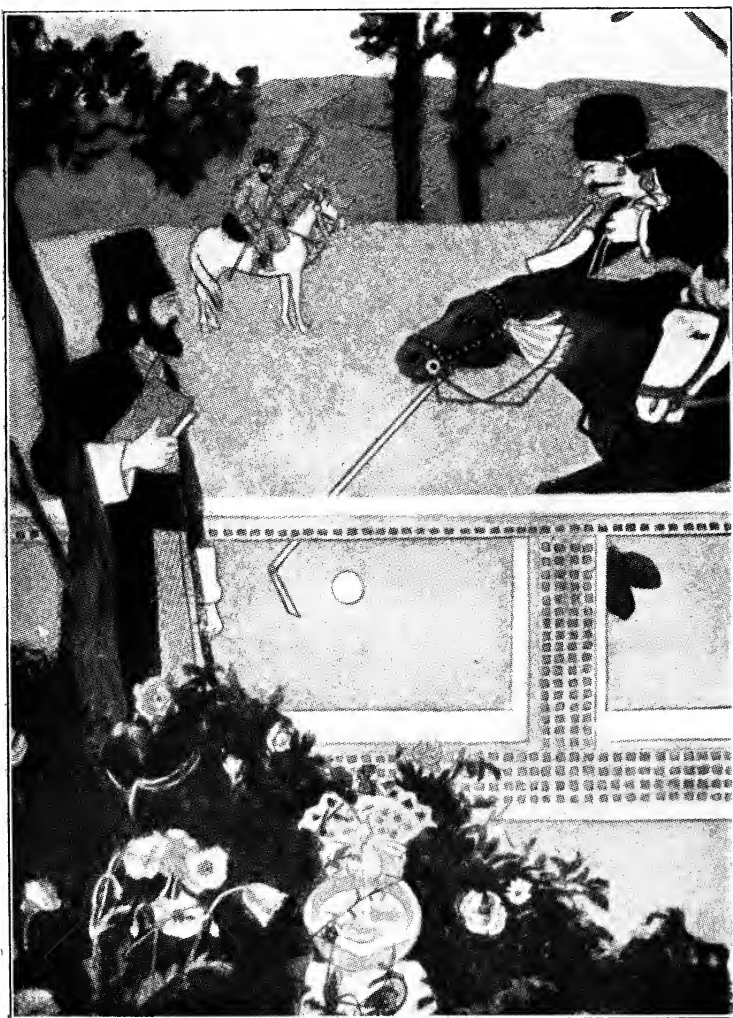
The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:¹⁹

The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute:

LX.

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing
Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black
Horde²⁰

Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the
Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind
Sword.



THE BALL NO QUESTION MAKES OF AYES AND NOES

Rubáiyát.

LXI.

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?

LXII.

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,
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into
Dust!



Rubáiyát.

LXIII.

O 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 has blown forever
dies.

LXIV.

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.

Rubáiyát

LXV.

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.

LXVI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return'd to
me,
And answer'd "I myself am Heav'n and
Hell."

Rubáiyát.

LXVII.

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

LXVIII.

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and
go
Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern
held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show ;²¹



AH. LEAN UPON IT LIGHTLY

Rubáiyát.

LXIX.

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

LXX.

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! ²²

Rubáiyát.

LXXI.

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.

LXXII.

And that inverted Bowl they 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.

Rubáiyát.

LXXIII.

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.

LXXIV.

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did pre-
pare;
To-MORROW's Silence, Triumph, or Des-
pair:

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

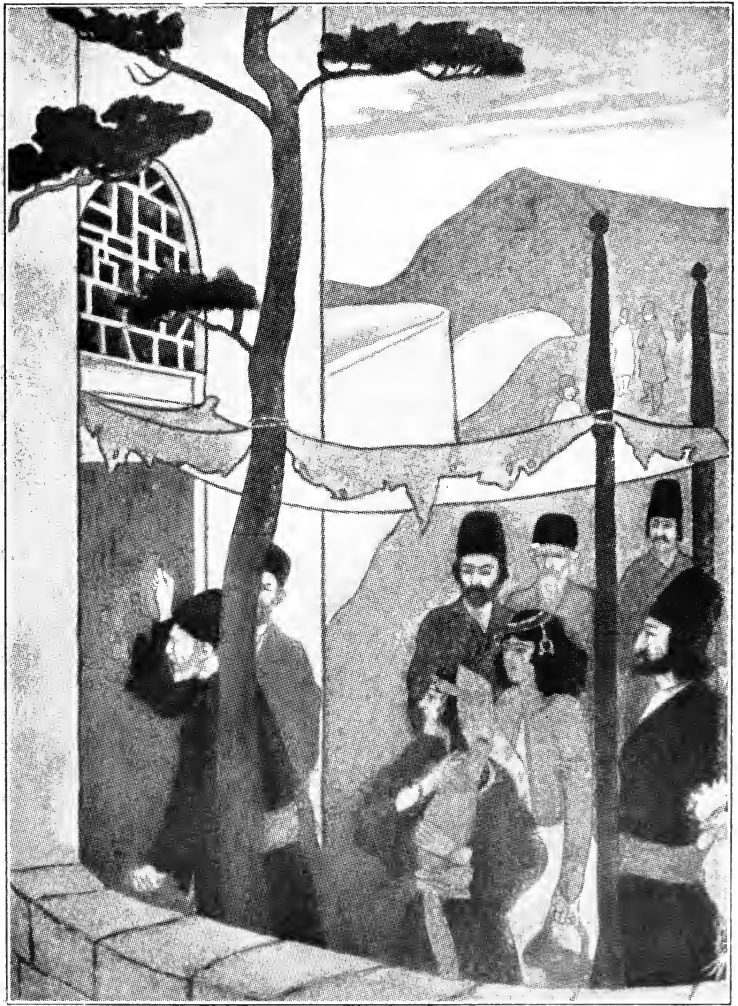
Rubáiyát.

LXXV.

I tell you this—When, started from the
Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtari they
flung,²³
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LXXVI.

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.



OPEN THEN THE DOOR



Rubáiyát.

LXXVII.

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.

LXXVIII.

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

Rubáiyát.

LXXIX.

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!

LXXX.

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
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to
Sin!

Rubáiyát.

LXXXI.

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst
make
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake :
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of
Man
Is blacken'd—Man's Forgiveness give—
and take !

* * * *

LXXXII.

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.

Rubáiyát.

LXXXIII.

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and
small,
That stood along the floor and by the
wall;
And some loquacious Vessels were;
and some
Listen'd perhaps, but never talk'd at all.

LXXXIV.

Said one among them—"Surely not in
vain
My substance of the common Earth was
ta'en
And to this Figure moulded, to be
broke,
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth
again."



I STOOD, SURROUNDED BY THE SHAPES OF CLAY

Rubáiyát.

LXXXV.

Then said a Second—"Ne'er a peevish
Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he
drank in joy:
And He that with his hand the Vessel
made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

LXXXVI.

After a momentary 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?"

Rubáiyát.

LXXXVII.

Whereat some one of the loquacious
Lot—

I think a Súfi pipkin—waxing hot—

“All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me
then,

Who makes—Who sells—Who buys—
Who is the Pot?”²⁴

LXXXVIII.

“Why,” said another, “Some there are
who tell

Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell

The luckless Pots he marr’d in mak-
ing—Pish!

He ’s a Good Fellow, and ’t will all be
well.”

Rubáiyát.

LXXXIX.

“Well,” murmur’d one, “Let whoso
make or buy,
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry:
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by.”

XC.

So while the Vessels one by one were
speaking,
The little Moon look’d in that all were
seeking:²⁶
And then they jogg’d each other,
“Brother! Brother!
Now for the Porter’s shoulder-knot a-
creaking!”

* * * *

Rubáiyát.

XCI.

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

XCII.

That 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.



MYSELF WHEN YOUNG DID EAGERLY FREQUENT DOCTOR AND SAINT

Rubáiyát.

XCIII.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in Men's eyes much
wrong:
Have drown'd my Glory in a shallow
Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

XCIV.

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 threadbare Penitence apieces tore.

Rubáiyát.

xcv.

And much as Wine has play'd the In-
fidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—
Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One-half so precious as the stuff they sell.

xcvi.

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!

Rubáiyát.

xcvii.

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

xcviii.

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too
late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder other-
wise
Enregister, or quite obliterate !

Rubáiyát.

XCIX.

Ah Love! could you and I with Him
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!

* * * *

c.

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden—and for *one*
in vain!



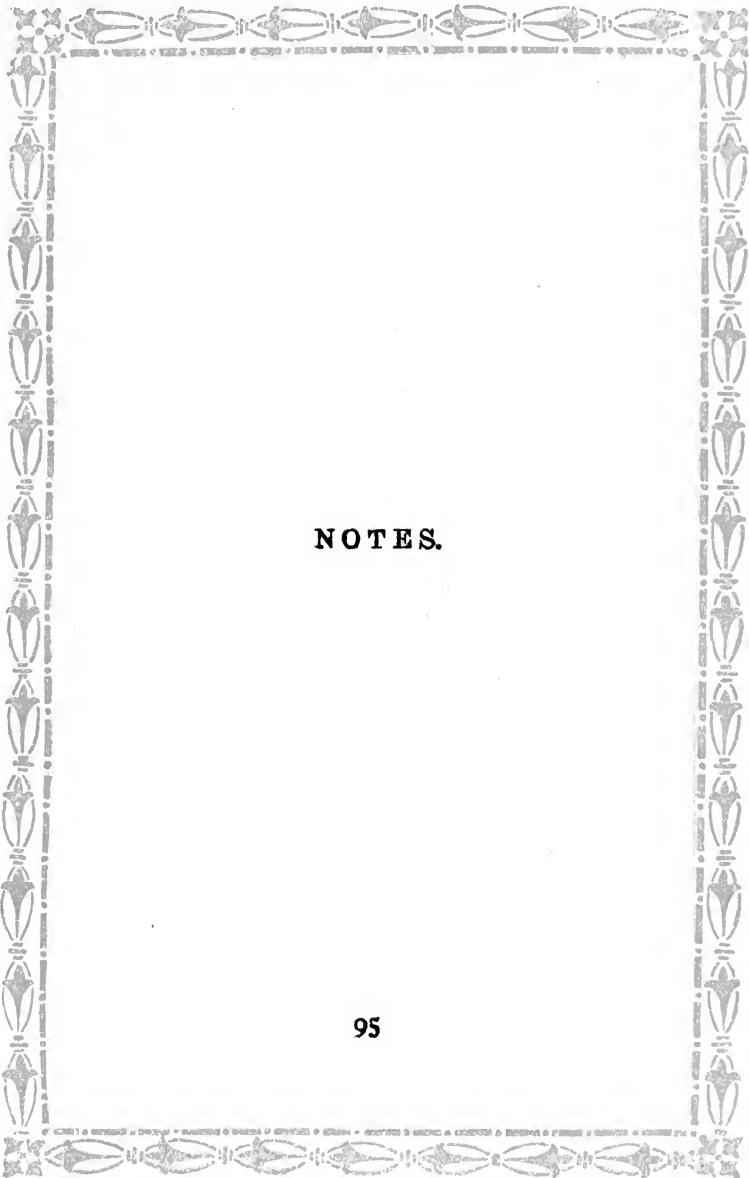
EARTH COULD NOT ANSWER; NOR THE SEAS THAT MOURN

Rubáiyát.

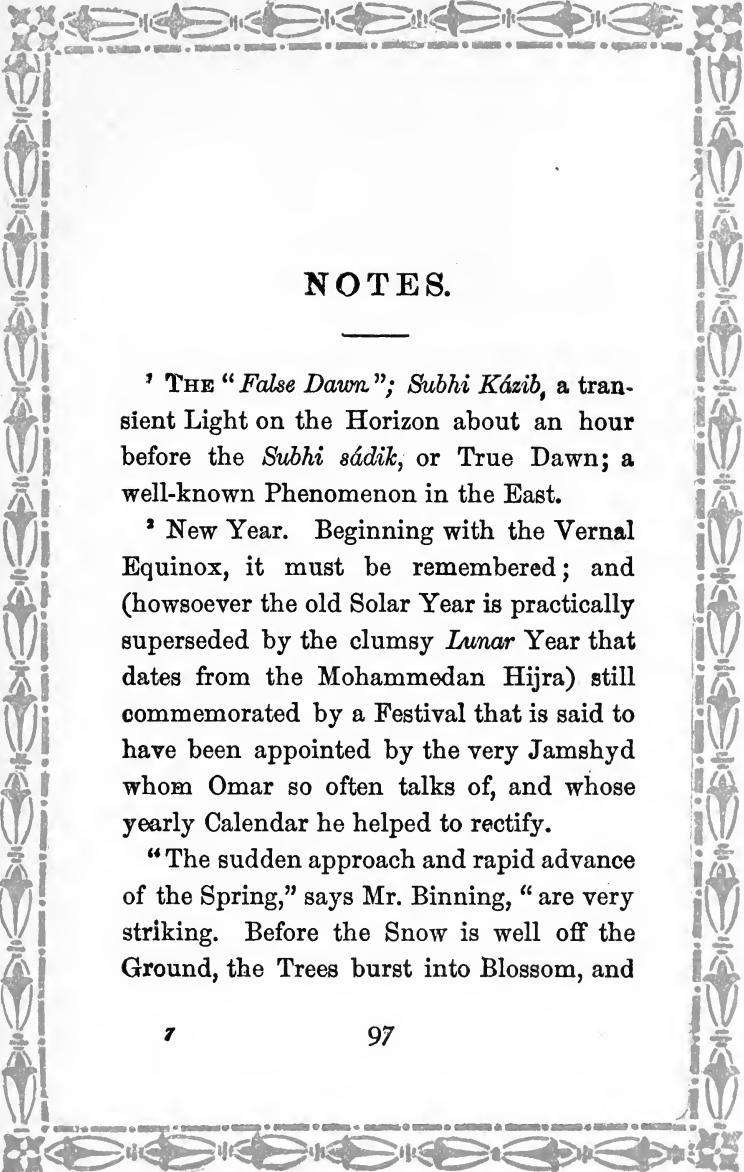
CI.

And when like her, oh Sáki, you shall
pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the
Grass,
And in your blissful errand reach the
spot
Where I made One—turn down an
empty Glass!

TAMÁM.



NOTES.



NOTES.

' 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.

' 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



Notes.

the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Nau 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 recognized some 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 Water-courses." The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Blackbird and Wood-

Notes.

pecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

³ 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.

⁴ 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*.

⁵ *Péhlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale’s *Péhlevi*, which did not change with the People’s.

⁶ 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 Rose being

Notes.

White till 10 o'clock; "Rosa Perfecta" at 2; and "perfecta incarnada" at 5.

• Rustum, the "Hercules" of Persia, and Zál his Father, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Sháh-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known Type of Oriental Generosity.

• A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

• That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

• 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—*Bahram 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

Notes.

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 Bahrá'm sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

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."

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?*"

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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.

Apropos of Omar's Red Roses in Stanza XIX., I am reminded of an old English Superstition, that our Anemone Pulsatilla, or purple "Pasque Flower" (which grows plentifully about the Fleam Dyke, near Cambridge), grows only where Danish blood has been spilt.

¹¹ A thousand years to each Planet.

¹² Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

¹³ ME-AND-THEE: some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

¹⁴ One of the Persian Poets—Attár, I think—has a pretty story about this. A thirsty Traveller dips his hand into a Spring of Water to drink from. By and by comes another who draws up and drinks from an earthen Bowl, and then departs, leaving his



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Bowl behind him. The first Traveller takes it up for another draught; but is surprised to find that the same Water which had tasted sweet from his own hand tastes bitter from the earthen Bowl. But a Voice—from Heaven, I think—tells him the Clay from which the Bowl is made was once *Man*; and, into whatever shape renew'd, can never lose the bitter flavour of Mortality.

¹⁵ The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Monsieur 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 Rével? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the

Notes.

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?"

¹⁶ According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azrâel accomplishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

This, and the two following Stanzas would have been withdrawn, as somewhat *de trop*, from the Text but for advice which I least like to disregard.

¹⁷ From Máh to Máhi; from Fish to Moon.

¹⁸ 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

Notes.

some Verses of Doctor Donne's, that are 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.

• The Seventy-two Religions supposed to

Notes.

divide the World, *including* Islamism, as some think : but others not.

²⁰ Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

²¹ *Fánúsi khiyál*, a Magic-lanthorn 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.

²² 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.

²³ Parwín and Mushtari—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

²⁴ This relation of Pot and Potter to Man and his Maker figures far and wide in the Literature of the World, from the time of the Hebrew Prophets to the present ; when it may finally take the name of "Pottheism,"

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by which Mr. Carlyle ridiculed Sterling's "Pantheism." *My* Sheikh, whose knowledge flows in from all quarters, writes to me—

"Apropos of old Omar's Pots, did I ever tell you the sentence I found in 'Bishop Pearson on the Creed'?" "Thus are we wholly at the disposal of His will, and our present and future condition, framed and ordered by His free, but wise and just, decrees. '*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*' (Rom. ix. 21.) And can that earth-artificer have a freer power over his *brother potsherd* (both being made of the same metal) than God hath over him, who, by the strange fecundity of His omnipotent power, first made the clay out of nothing, and then him out of that?"

And again—from a very different quarter—"I had to refer the other day to Aristo-

Notes.

phanes, and came by chance on a curious Speaking-pot story in the Vespæ, which I had quite forgotten.

Φιλοκλεων. 'Ακουε, μὴ φεῦγ'. ἐν Συβάρεϊ γυνή ποτε
κατέαξ' ἐχίνον.

Κατηγορος. Ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

Φι. Οὐχίνος οὖν ἔχων τιν' ἐπεμαρτύρατο,
Εἰθ' ἡ Συβαρίτις εἶπεν, εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν
τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἐάσας, ἐν τάχει
ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἰχες κλειώνα.

“The Pot calls a bystander to be a witness to his bad treatment. The woman says, ‘If, by Proserpine, instead of all this ‘testifying’ (comp. Cuddie and his mother in ‘Old Mortality!’) you would buy yourself a trivet, it would show more sense in you!’ The Scholiast explains *echinus* as ἀγγος τι ἐκ κεράμου.”

²⁵ At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse

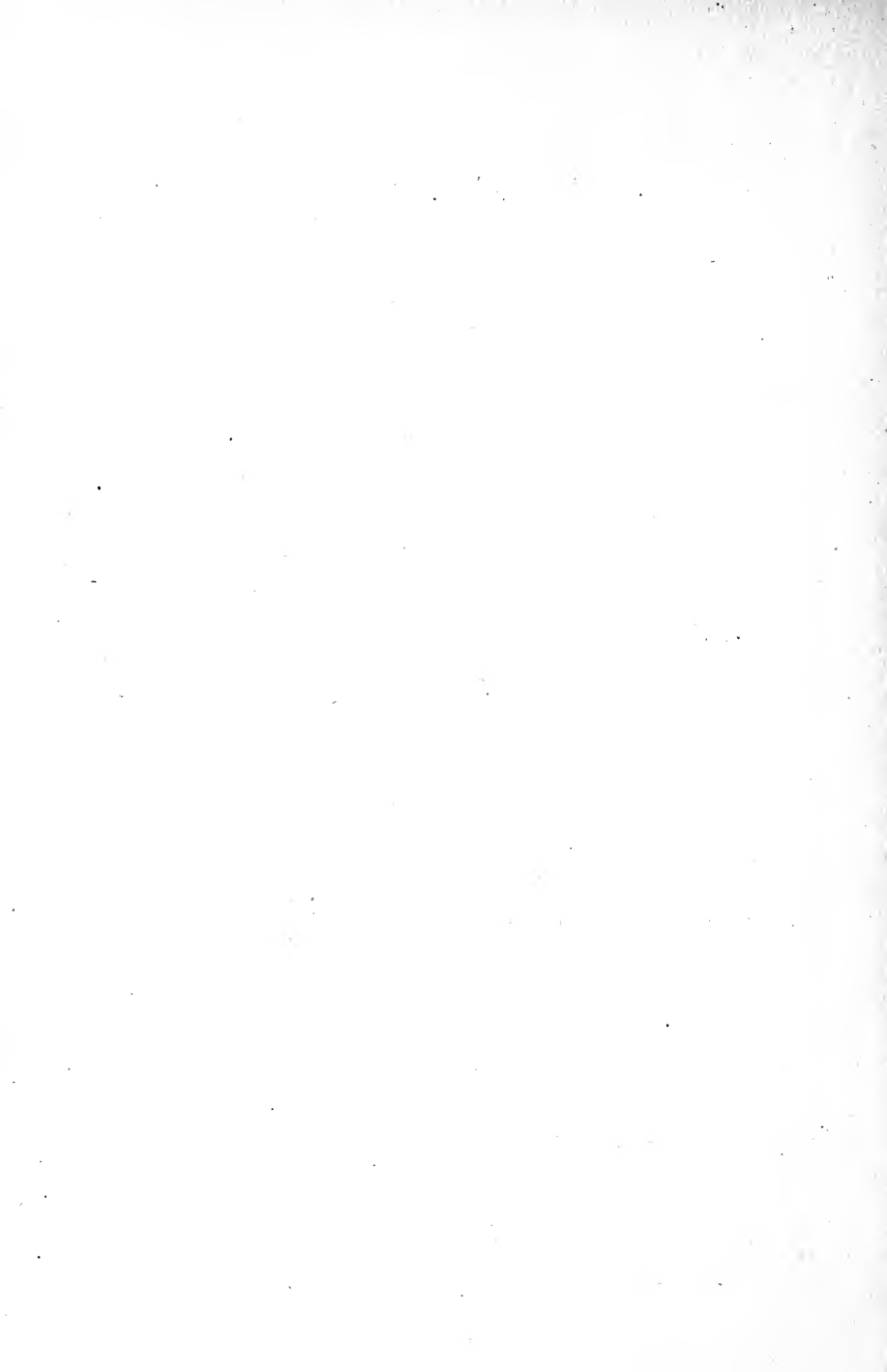


Notes.

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*. 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 by:

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



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