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RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

Translated into English Verse.

LONDON:
BERNARD QUARITCH,
CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.
1859.

Facsimile of the First Edition of FitzGerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

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One Spring day in 1856 Edward B. Cowell discovered in the Bodleian library at Oxford a manuscript containing 158 quatrains of Omar Khayyam which he transcribed and sent to his friend and pupil Edward FitzGerald. Later Cowell sent him from India a transcript of the so-called Calcutta manuscript. In 1857 FitzGerald completed his first draft of the poem and in January, 1858, sent it to Fraser's Magazine. After many months, in January, 1859, FitzGerald recovered his neglected manuscript and made a re-draft of the poem, which he printed privately in an edition of 250 copies, most of which he gave to Quaritch, who had ill success in disposing of them, and the remainder were sold from a clearance box at a penny each.

Since the appearance of this modest book more than two million copies have been sold in over two hundred editions, and it has been translated into almost all the tongues of modern Europe, as well as into Greek and Latin.

A soiled and penciled copy of the rare original would readily bring $300, while an uncut copy is *priceless*.

This facsimile is made from the fine copy owned by Charles Dana Burrage, to whose interest and courtesy Omarians owe so much.

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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 others very considerable Figures in their Time and Country: one of them, Hasan al Sabbáh, whose very Name has lengthen'd down to us as a terrible Synonym for Murder: and the other (who also tells the Story of all Three) Nizám al Mulk, Vizyr to Alp the Lion and Malik Shah, Son and 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 al Mulk, in his *Wasýat*—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.

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" 'One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassan was
'the Imám Mowaffak of Naisháipur, a man highly honoured
'and reverenced,—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 tradi-
'tions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and
'happiness. For this cause did my father send me from
'Tús to Naisháipur with Abd-u-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 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 Naisháipur,
'while Hasan Ben Sabbah'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 him-

'self.' 'Be it so,' we both replied, and on these 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 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. B. 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 Naisháp̃ur. 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 his 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 1,200 *mithkals* of gold, from the treasury of Naisháp̃ur."

"At Naisháp̃ur 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-ul-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-Maliksháhí," and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

These severer Studies, and his Verses, which, though happily fewer than any Persian Poet's, and, though perhaps

fugitively composed, the Result of no fugitive Emotion or Thought, are probably the Work and Event of his Life, leaving little else to record. Perhaps he liked a little Farming too, so often as he speaks of the "Edge of the Tilth" on which he loved to rest with his Diwán of Verse, his Loaf —and his Wine.

"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," Assar, "an oil presser," &c. (Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, &c. may simply retain the Sirname of an hereditary calling.) "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; related 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 Bibliothéque, under *Khiam*:—*

* Though *he* attributes the story to a Khiam, "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, who, however, may claim the Story as *his*, on the

'It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this 'King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápur 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 follow-'ing 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 idle words. Years after, 'when I chanced to revisit Naishápur, 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.

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 Compliment to Islamism which Omar would not hide under. Their Poets, including Hafiz, who are (with

Scope of Rubáiyát, 77 and 78 of the present Version. The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Koran: "No Man knows where he shall die."

the exception of Firdúsi) 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 address'd; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief; quite as keen of the Bodily Senses as of the Intellectual; and delighting in a cloudy Element compounded of all, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that could be recited indifferently whether at the Mosque or the Tavern. 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 they were, than to perplex it with vain mortifications after what they *might be*. It has been seen that his Worldly Desires, however, were not exorbitant; and he very likely takes a humourous pleasure in exaggerating them above that Intellect in whose exercise he must have found great pleasure, though not in a Theological direction. However this may be, his Worldly Pleasures are what they profess to be without any Pretence at divine Allegory: his Wine is the veritable Juice of the Grape: his Tavern, where it was to be had: his Sáki, the Flesh and Blood that poured it out for him: all which, and where the Roses were in Bloom, was all he profess'd to want of this World or to expect of Paradise.

The Mathematic Faculty, too, which regulated his Fansy, and condensed his Verse to a Quality and Quantity unknown in Persian, perhaps in Oriental, Poetry, help'd

by its very virtue perhaps to render him less popular with his countrymen. If the Greeks were Children in Gossip, what does Persian Literature imply but a *Second Childishness* of Garrulity? And certainly if no *ungeometric* Greek was to enter Plato's School of Philosophy, no so unchastised a Persian should enter on the Race of Persian Verse, with its "fatal Facility" of running on long after Thought is winded! But Omar was not only the single Mathematician of his Country's Poets; he was also of that older Time and stouter Temper, before the native Soul of Persia was quite broke by a foreign Creed as well as foreign Conquest. Like his great Predecessor Firdúsi, who was as little of a *Mystic;* who scorned to use even a *Word* of the very language in which the New Faith came clothed; and who was suspected, not of Omar's Irreligion indeed, but of secretly clinging to the ancient Fire-Religion of Zerdusht, of which so many of the Kings he sang were Worshippers.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but charily 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 that Arms and Science have brought us. There is none 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 of 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 alphabetic order; the Oxford with one of Apology; the Calcutta with one of Execration too stupid for Omar's, even had Omar been stupid enough to execrate himself.*

The Reviewer, who translates the foregoing Particulars of Omar's Life, and some of his Verse into Prose, concludes by comparing him with Lucretius, both in natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed men of subtle Intellect and high Imagination, instructed in Learning beyond their day, and of 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 any such better *Hope* as others, upon whom no better *Faith* had dawned, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, consoled himself with the construction of a Machine that needed no Constructor, and acting by a Law that implied no Lawgiver; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the Universe of which he was part Actor;

* "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."

himself and all about him, (as in his own sublime Description of the Roman Theatre,) coloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain that was suspended between them and the outer Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless, of any such laborious System as resulted in nothing more than hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and, yielding his Senses to the actual Rose and Vine, only *diverted* his thoughts by balancing ideal possibilities of Fate, Freewill, Existence and Annihilation; with an oscillation that so generally inclined to the negative and lower side, as to make such Stanzas as the following exceptions to his general Philosophy—

> Oh, if my Soul can fling his 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!
>
> Or is *that* but a Tent, where rests anon
> A Sultán to his Kingdom passing on,
> And which the swarthy Chamberlain shall strike
> Then when the Sultán rises to be gone?

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 attempted) the third line suspending the Cadence by which the last atones with the former Two. Something as in the Greek Alcaic, where the third line seems to lift and suspend the

Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubaiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange Farrago 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. For Lucretian as Omar's Genius might be, he cross'd that darker Mood with much of Oliver de Basselin Humour. Any way, the Result is sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: any way, fitter 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 TOMORROW, fell back upon TODAY (which has out-lasted so many Tomorrows!) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

IV.

Now the New Year[3] reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough
Puts out,[4] and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V.

Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose,[5]
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
High piping Pehlevi,[6] with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
"*Red* Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That yellow Cheek[7] of her's to'incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII.

And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day
Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay:
And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

IX.

But come with old Khayyám, and leave the Lot
Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosrú forgot:
Let Rustum lay about him as he will,[8]
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.

X.

With me along some Strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán scarce is known,
And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

XI.

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

XII.

"How sweet is mortal Sovranty!"—think some:
Others—"How blest the Paradise to come!"
Ah, take the Cash in hand and wave the Rest;
Oh, the brave Music of a *distant* Drum![9]

XIII.

Look to the Rose that blows about us—"Lo,
"Laughing," she says, "into the World I blow:
"At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
"Tear, and its Treasure[10] on the Garden throw."

XIV.

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

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.

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

XVII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank deep: [11]
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.

XVIII.

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

XIX.

And this delightful Herb whose tender 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!

XX.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
To-DAY of past Regrets and future Fears—
To-morrow?—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.[12]

XXI.

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

XXII.

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?

XXIII.

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!

XXIV.

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

XXV.

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.

XXVI.

Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

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 as in I went.

XXVIII.

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

XXIX.

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.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried *whence?*
And, without asking, *whither* hurried hence!
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence!

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,[13]
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

XXXII.

There was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of ME and THEE
There seemed—and then no more of THEE and ME.[15]

XXXIII.

Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, "What Lamp had Destiny to guide
"Her little Children stumbling in the Dark?"
And—"A blind Understanding!" Heav'n replied.

XXXIV.

Then to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn
My Lip 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."

XXXV.

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

XXXVI.

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—"Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

XXXVII.

Ah, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
Unborn To-MORROW, and dead YESTERDAY,
Why fret about them if To-DAY be sweet!

XXXVIII.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing[16]—Oh, make haste!

XXXIX.

How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

XL.

You know, my Friends, how long since 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.

XLI.

For "Is" and "Is-NOT" though *with* Rule and Line,
And "UP-AND-DOWN" *without*, I could define,[14]
I yet in all I only cared to know,
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

XLII.

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

XLIII.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects[17] confute:
The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

XLIV.

The mighty Mahmúd, the victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde [18]
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

XLV.

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

XLVI.

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.[19]

XLVII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in—Yes—
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what
Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou shalt not be less.

XLVIII.

While the Rose blows along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink:
And when the Angel with his darker Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not shrink.

XLIX.

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
  Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

L.

The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes;
  And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
He knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows! [20]

LI.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
  Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

LII.

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
  Lift not thy hands to *It* for help—for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

LIII.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's knead,
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
  Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LIV.

I tell Thee this—When, starting from the Goal,
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtara they flung, [21]
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LV.

The Vine had struck a Fibre; which about
If clings my Being—let the Súfi flout;
Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LVI.

And this I know: whether the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrathconsume me quite,
One Glimpse of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LVII.

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

LVIII.

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

* * * * * * * *

KÚZA-NÁMA.

LIX.

Listen again. One Evening at the Close
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone
With the clay Population round in Rows.

LX.

And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
"Who *is* the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

LXI.

Then said another—"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 common Earth again."

LXII.

Another said—"Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,
"Would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy;
"Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure Love
"And Fansy, in an after Rage destroy!"

LXIII.

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

LXIV.

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

LXV.

Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh,
"My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:
"But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,
"Methinks I might recover by-and-bye!"

LXVI.

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!
"Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

* * * * * * * *

LXVII.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.

LXVIII.

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

LXIX.

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

LXX.

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.

LXXI.

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 Goods they sell.

LXXII.

Alas, 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!

LXXIII.

Ah Love! could thou 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!

LXXIV.

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me—in vain!

LXXV.

And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!

TAMÁM SHUD.

NOTES.

[1] Flinging a Stone into the Cup was the Signal for "To Horse!" in the Desert.

[2] The "*False Dawn;*" *Subhi Kházib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádhik*, or True Dawn; a well known Phenomenon in the East. The Persians call the Morning Gray, or Dusk, "*Wolf-and-Sheep-While.*" "Almost at odds with, which is which."

[3] 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 a late Traveller in Persia) "are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Now 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 Hyem's 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 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.

[4] 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.

[5] Irám, planted by King Schedad, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the Seven Heavens. 7 Planets, 7 Seas, &c. and was a *Divining Cup*.

[6] *Pehlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Pehlevi*, which did not change with the People's.

[7] 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.

[8] Rustum, the "Hercules" of Persia, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Shah-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known Type of Oriental Generosity.

[9] A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

[10] That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

[11] Persepolis: call'd also *Takht'i Jamshyd*—THE THRONE OF JAMSHYD, "*King-Splendid*," of the mythical *Peeshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (with Shah-náma Authority) to have been founded and built by him, though others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Jann, who also built the Pyramids before the time of Adam. It is also called *Chehl-minar—Forty-column;* which is Persian, probably, for *Column-countless;* the Hall they adorned or supported with their Lotus Base and taurine Capital indicating double that Number, though now counted down to less than half by Earthquake and other Inroad. By whomsoever built, unquestionably the Monument of a long extinguished Dynasty and Mythology; its Halls, Chambers and Galleries, inscribed with Arrow-head Characters, and sculptured with colossal, wing'd, half human Figures like those of Nimroud; Processions of Priests and Warriors —(doubtful if any where a Woman)—and Kings sitting on Thrones or in Chariots, Staff or Lotus-flower in hand, and the *Ferooher*—Symbol of Existence—with his wing'd Globe, common also to Assyria and Ægypt—over their heads. All this, together with Aqueduct and Cistern, and other Appurtenance of a Royal Palace, upon a Terrace-platform, ascended by a double Flight of Stairs that may be gallop'd up, and cut out of and into the Rock-side of the *Koh'i Ráhmet, Mountain of Mercy,* where the old Fire-worshiping Sovereigns are buried, and overlooking the Plain of Merdasht.

Persians, like some other People, it seems, love to write their own Names, with sometimes a Verse or two, on their Country's Monuments. Mr. Binning (from whose sensible Travels the foregoing Account is mainly condens't)

found several such in Persepolis; in one Place a fine Line of Háfiz: in another "an original, no doubt," he says, "by no great Poet," however "right in his Sentiment." The Words somehow looked to us, and the "halting metre" sounded, familiar; and on looking back at last among the 500 Rubáyiát of the Calcutta Omar MS.—*there* it is: old Omar quoted by *one* of his Countrymen, and here turned into hasty Rhyme, at any rate—

> "This Palace that its Top to Heaven threw,
> And Kings their Forehead on its Threshold drew—
> I saw a Ring-dove sitting there alone,
> And 'Coo, Coo, Coo,' she cried, and 'Coo, Coo, Coo.'"

So as it seems the Persian speaks the English Ring-dove's *Péhlevi*, which is also articulate Persian for "Where?"

Bahrám Gúr—*Bahrám of the Wild Ass*, from his Fame in hunting it—a Sassanian Sovereign, had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour; each with a Royal Mistress within side; each of whom recounts to Bahrám a Romance, according to one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: 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*.

[12] A Thousand Years to each Planet.

[13] Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

[14] A Laugh at his Mathematics perhaps.

[15] ME AND THEE; that is, some Dividual Existence or Personality apart from the Whole.

[16] The Caravan travelling by Night (after their New Year's Day of the Vernal Equinox) by command of Mohammed, I believe.

[17] The 72 Sects into which Islamism so soon split.

[18] This alludes to Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its swarthy Idolaters.

[19] *Fanúsi 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 Candle lighted within.

[20] A very mysterious Line in the original;

U dánad u dánad u dánad u ——

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

[21] Parwín and Mushtara—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

[23] At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman 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 all Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard toward the *Cellar*, perhaps. Old 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!"

FINIS.

LAST DA

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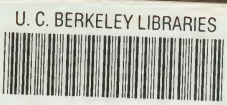
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