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SARACENIC SCIENCE AND LITERATURE.

The glimpses of facts and the vestiges of events which are concealed in the blaze of ancient eloquence and which are preserved in many books make me desire to peep through their hazy nebulae and inquire how great a part the Saracens played in inflaming the expiring taper of civilisation, in spreading the flame of knowledge and in cementing the pavement of humanity. I am fully aware that such a task is onerous in its nature, and precarious in its issue, but I have endeavoured to take a cursory glance and review the Saracenic Science and Literature from their earliest period down to the expulsion of the Moors. I have curtailed my narrative as far as I could because I did not wish to tax the patience and exhaust the indulgence of my readers with superfluous and unnecessary details, of course, I have mentioned only the leading figures of those eras, because if I were to write only the names of the authors who breathed under the beneficent sky of the Mohammadan rule, I would protract my essay to an infinite length and beyond the limits which are here possible. I could not, however, refrain from drawing the picture of their poetical passion and the natural fertility of Arabia felix where nature seems to bestow all her gifts with lavish benevolence and unrestrained prodigality.

It will not be deemed irrelevant to give a sketch of the period when the Saracens flooded the whole world with their learning and genius.

If we were to view the state of affairs of that age from a lofty precipice which could have afforded an easy spectacle and a clear introspection we would indubitably have beheld a universal convulsion, popular hatred, despicable outrages, and the reign of terror. After the gaudy heroes of Greek civilisation and the golden rim of Roman advancement, Man sunk in the abyss of luxury and the furnace of corporal delectations. The hands of fate altered the tide of fortune and cut the thread of progress. The jurisdiction of conscience was infringed, the laws of remorse were violated, and the amenities of refined pursuits were recklessly disregarded and impudently trifled with. Spectres of threatening and gloomy nature loomed on the horizon and announced the unfortunate forebodings. A chaos ensued—in which the teachings of religion were discarded, the lessons of histories were rejected, the remonstrances of reason were wrenched—visionary projects were entertained, and ancient institutions were extirpated and entirely effaced. In such a critical and appalling condition, Islam emerged from obscurity. It mollified the evils and impregnated a desire for knowledge—the

account of which we shall see in the following pages. The flagitious audacities and gorgeous absurdities were corrected by its followers, and to them we are indebted for many marvellous discoveries. The irregular peninsula of Arabia is surrounded on the south by the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, on the west by the Red Sea, and stretches in the north to Palestine. This place was the cradle of Islam. Its salubrity and salubrious climate infuses vigour, its gentle zephyr mingled with perfumed and fragrant odours brace the mind for mental activity, the piercing darts of its sun cause to bloom its drooping flowers, its warbling of the birds resound with expressive and congenial notes, its retinue of palm trees dolt the paths with ancient charms, its vast track of land and lively meadows furnish an opportunity of indulging pastoral habits, its picturesque landscapes wave with spontaneous verdure—these overflowing and dainty images provide the Arabs with sufficient matters for developing the art of versification, sharpening the skill of poetry and elucidating with vivacity the frugiferous crops of innermost sensations and instil them with poetical intentions which vegetate by leaps and bounds. Even the solitary wilderness persuades the Arabs to meditate upon the epitome of nature and to ruminate upon the beauties of Creation. Besides these natural endowments, language itself teams and abounds with most copious and expressive dictions. They draw similes and metaphors from nature, and embellish it with the liveliness of their fancy and the fertility of their invention. The hidden gushing of sentiments unfolded, the secret emotions of feelings unravelled, and the ardent glowing of enthusiasm exposed, are bestrewed with flowery phraseology and bespangled with flowing diction. Their glorifying works attest their ingenuity and confirm their matchless faculty for composing verses which seems to flow with ease, and their unparalleled expertness in piercing the veil of human nature, and in penetrating with dexterity to the very core of emotions. The passion of poetry was the ruling avidity of the Arabs in every age. In the dawn of the seventh century, when Europe was buried in unfathomable ignorance and sunk in grovelling superstition, the Arabians prolonged the goal of their language, and with a voracious appetite for literature they raised it to the highest pinnacle of perfection. In order to countenance the art of versification and animate the mind of the inhabitants, the fort of poetical academy was brought into existence, and learned conferences well adapted for the encouragement were convened in a place called Ocadh. At this spot the ingenuity and skill of poets were displayed in their genuine colours and the talent and skill of authors were sifted by the impartial judges. The sincerity and conviction to meet with just encomium and suited applause encircled mankind from every part and allured

from every side. The resultant of divers forces with their reciprocal influences and mutual exertions stimulated the nomadic Arabs to cultivate the art with care and zeal. The most excellent of these poems were transcribed in characters of gold upon Egyptian paper, and were hung up in the temple whence they derived their appellation. *Modahabat*, or golden; *Mouallekat*, or suspended, were the respective terms, and the poems of the academy were clearly differentiated and termed as "*Cassides*" or eclogues. Seven of which survived the wreck of time and outlived the fate of oblivion, and are still preserved with superstitious care and reverential awe. They are considered as the finest productions of the age prior to the conversion of Arabia. After the advent of Mohammad the devout contemplations and sublime fancy of the Arabs were constantly employed in portraying the character of the great Arabian prophet, depicting the changes of fortune, describing the beauties of nature, extolling the goodness of virtue, and in branding the specks of vices. Their poems were distinguished for their eloquence and elegance, cheerfulness and hilarity, profound penetration and expressive facetiousness.

It is almost bewildering and surprising that in the short space of twenty years after the date of our illustrious prophet the nomadic Arabs were changed into men of letters, and their fiery passions moulded into profound deliberation. Wherever the banner of Islam appeared the same insignia of amelioration was manifest. In Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, and Egypt, the slow and temperate fire-branch of literary pursuit led to an immense conflagration. The Khalif Ali countenanced learning, and afforded a stimulating impetus. Expressions are generally the outburst of feeling and emotion, and his memorable words will ever be carved on the innermost corner of a scholar's mind and on the lips even of the illiterate—"That the highest ornament of a man was erudition."

After the organisation and triumph of Mohammadanism, the internal dissensions and varied discords resulted in distinct governments, and three offshoots were constituted: the Abbasides prospered in Asia Minor, the Fatamites flourished in Egypt, and the Omniads thrived in Spain. Emulation, which generally plays a prominent part in the rapid strides of mankind, actuated them, and they vied with each other, not only in political administration, but also in literary pursuits. It was the just and laudable boast of the Saracens that they stood unsurpassed in the files of time in the ramifications of sciences and literature, and defied the altercations of their adversaries. *Muawiyah*, the founder of the Omniad Dynasty effected substantial changes in the Mohammadan Government and in 661 he utterly altered the form of the same, and endeavoured to improve the phases of

literature. He made the throne hereditary and rooted out the hydra head of political fanaticism which had reared itself up with impunity. The visionary projects of fanatics were checked by his searching investigations. The precautions, talents, and far-sighted policy of the usurper induced him to remove the seat of government from Medina to a more busy and central place, and he pitched his choice at Damascus. But, in spite of his political ambitions and human frailty, we must assign to him the merit which he justly deserves of encouraging science and literature, and dispelling the voluminous mist of fanaticism ; (a) we are also indebted to Omniad for laying the stepping stone of the victory of Spain, which took place in the tranquil and prosperous reign of Aholifwalid—when Musa painted before his eyes a vivid description in glowing colours of its natural fecundity and exuberant fertility. This feeling of exploit and the very wooing desire of enterprise soon excited the monarch's curiosity and allured his attention. An over-whelming vigour soon conveyed a brisk and acute energy and the haughty Emperor waged war with the Gothic King Roderick. The undaunted vigour, the perpetual industry, the ingenious stratagems and clever devices of Tariff—a general who commanded a force of four hundred foot soldiers and a hundred cavalry—soon won a decisive victory near Cadiz (711) which is commonly known as the battle of, Xernesam, and thus they secured Spain, the account of their occupation thereof we will give in the following pages. These glorious undertakings of the Omniad were preparatory to gigantic productions, on this basis the colossal edifice of literary fame and scientific reputation was constructed. The triumphal arc and successful banner of the Crescent, in its onward march hovered on the border of China, aspiring to compass in its domain all the countries up to the Pacific Ocean. It is surprising to see that wherever the Muslim power spread and its authority increased ferocity was lessened and barbarity assuaged, and instead the seed of knowledge was *sprinkled* and the essence of learning taught. Under the reign of Omniad the studies of the Quran, cultivation of poetry and the practice of rhetoric were embraced with indomitable zeal and undying enthusiasm.

But a sad, a sombre, a gloomy day was awaiting and threatening them. The black fog of the Abbassides was destined for them, and a general consternation and universal terror rose in ascendancy ; and Merwan was put to the edge of the sword by the Abbassides. After the overthrow of the Onniades the tyrants resolved to efface the very trace of that dynasty. They

(a) He broke the bonds, says Draper, of a stern fanaticism and put himself forth as a cultivator and patron of letters. Canflit, p. 110.

added insult to injury, and provoked their resentment. A prescription was issued ordering the cold-blooded massacre of all the members of Omniade Dynasty (b), the protracted account of which is combined with full pathos, too abhorrent to feeling and repulsive to humane compunction. Time, which generally enlarges the compass of aspiration and the desire of fame, animated them with increasing inclination and an invincible passion for literary pursuits. *Al. Mansur* (A. H, 65), whose name shines with dazzling lustre, resumed the chair of Khabfati, and carried away by literary thirst, excelled in Mohammadan law. He enhanced the narrow fissure of erudition, and constantly applied himself to the knowledge and acquisition of astronomy. Haroon-ur-Rashid attached a school to every Mosque, and it is reported that he presented a hydraulic clock to Charleimagno. Under his tutelage, the sedulous minds of the Saracens were trained in the art of romance and fiction. The living testimony of this is still to be found in the famous "Arabian Nights," the perusal of which animates the readers with its lively descriptions and captivates with its glowing charms the impenetrable and undiscoverable secrets of Nature. Thus art and science each steadily pursued its course and the domain of learning, which was dimly explored by *Al. Mansur*, was extended on a grander scale by his grandson, Almamoon, the seventh of the Abbasside Khalifs. It was not till the reign of this monarch that Arabian literature mounted to its proper abode and to its destined height. Our soul is always active to improve the perishable frame in which nature has confined it, and this is vividly represented in the life of this eminent patron. He effectuated in a transport of enthusiasm a method which was perhaps suggested to him by his cool reasoning and placid understanding, and immediately he bifurcated the branches of knowledge and appointed ambassadors in Constantinople, and agents in Syria, Armenia, and Egypt, who attempted to collect the ancient researches and disquisitions of Grecian scientists. Further, in order to facilitate the elucidation of difficulties and extricate intricacy he commanded them to be translated, which was instantaneously executed, and ingenious and adroit minds were assembled to render them sweet and elegant. Almamoon, surveyd the realms of philosophy and ramblod over the precincts of science, and with incredible rapidity he formed a school of philosophy and science, and accumulated libraries to give thorough scope to their practice. He insisted on inspecting the depth of science, and notwithstanding the showers of opposition and obliquy—especially from Takyerddin, a celebrated doctor of divinity, whose fanaticism knew no bounds—the learned Khalif

(b) Abu Khalakan describes in pathetic tone, the tyranny perpetrated by the Abbasides, in his Biographical Dictionary, vol. III p. 639.

did not heed his airy flame of resistance and finally measured the earth and found it to be two hundred thousand hushimte cubits, which was bordering on the edge of 25 thousand miles—a computation which was not remote from preciseness nor far from exactness. Almamoon is also said to have measured the height of the atmosphere. He also stipulated with the Emperor Michael III, in a treaty which was subsequently maintained, that he should obtain one of the libraries of Constantinople. In that literary catacomb, he recovered Ptolomy's works on the mathematical construction of heaven, and immediately his acumen and lagosity whispered to him to diffuse its contents through the medium of Arabic translation. The stern order of the Caliph was immediately accomplished and the translation was designated with the title of *Almagest*. Almamoon was free from the taint of prejudice and the vice of pride. In a letter to the Emperor Theophilus he expressed a wish to visit Constantinople if it met with public consent and the Emperor's approbation. He further beseeched the Emperor to order Leo to come to Bagdad, and illuminate the place with his matchless faculties, promising to send him back with safety to his native town. "Do not," says the worthy monarch, "let diversity of religion or of country cause you to refuse my request. Do what a friend would concede to a friend. In return I offer you a hundred weight of gold, a perpetual alliance and peace." But the peremptory and impertinent answer of the Byzantine Emperor, combined with insolent reproach and disdainful scorn, "that the teaching which had illustrated the Roman name should never be imparted to a barbarian," naturally excited the just indignation, and exasperated the feelings of the Mohammadan world and the skilful *Abu Musa* absorbed himself in originating his own theories independent of those conceited peasants. The contrast is self-evident between the lavish benevolence, the excesses of love of knowledge, and the conspicuous hospitality of the one and the mean demeanour, frivolous disposition, and base derision of the other. A delusion so extraordinary and an infatuation so turgidly ridiculous will ever tarnish the charter of the Byzantines, and in the eyes of the sensible world they will ever stand condemned, and found guilty of foolish behaviour. But their craving to crush and extinguish the rising greatness of the Mohammadans resulted in an utter failure, and a sad crusade.

The sincerity and frankness of the Arabs induced them to confess, nay, even to emphatically assert, that the science of algebra was originated in a loose and crude form by the Grecian Deophantus. The nucleus left by Deophantus was developed with success by the Arabians, and the exertions of John Musa crystallised it in the furrows of simplicity, and bequeathed to posterity the solution of quadratic equations. The world owes a tribute of grati-

tude to that mathematician for the discovery of the science of trigonometry; because from him it is handed down to us in its present form. The Arabian mathematicians substituted lines for chords in the range of trigonometry, and extolled it to the highest perfection, and made it a separate science altogether. The famous Musa was also the author of a "Treatise on Spherical Trigonometry." The arrangement of nine digits was also introduced by the Arabs. The sublime and precarious science of astrology was conducted under the monarch Almamoon, who provided all the costly materials requisite for its achievement. The serene and clear sky of Chaldea favoured an unshaded horizon for the undertakings, and supplied a suitable mean for its determinations and speculations.

The handsome munificence and grandiloquent eulogies infused an inspiring exhilaration, and the authors derived a fresh vigour from two characteristics which were the distinguishing features of that age. The aspiring Arabs enjoyed the salutary atmosphere of the literary age. Sciences were cultivated with every degree of success. The subtle and professed learning of the Grecian sages was circulated by the intervention of translation and by the dint of perseverance of the scholars. The time-honoured channel of literature was wide open, and insatiable zeal for knowledge formed the slow and temperate taper of curiosity, which at last attained its expected meridian and the scintillating zenith. The writings of Aristotle, the genius of Euclid, the philosophy of Plato, the valuable researches of Ptolomy, were distributed in abundance. Abul Pharaggis ascribes to Henain most of the valuable renderings of Plato, Aristotle and Hippocrates.

This physician lived under the favour of fortune, and flourished at Bagdad till his decease (a). The syllogism of Aristotle was triumphantly carried and successfully improved in the Saracenic reign, and it was constantly applied to detect the talent fallacy, and to unravel the inherent sophistry of an argument. The difficulties of mathematics were set forth in an able and exemplary manner, and the perplexities of geometry were solved by the ingenuous Saracens.

In unfolding the recondite problems of mechanics, hydrostatics, and optics, it is remarkable that the solutions were achieved by performing experiments or by instrumental observations. In science their great merits consist in this, that they cultivated it after the manners of the Abenandrian Greeks, not after the manner of the European Greeks (b). Besides this, in mechanics they found the laws of falling bodies and gravities.

(a) Elibris ab ipso compositino est liberale summa philosopae aristotle Alicae, Cupis apud non est examplar syracum en versione Henain.—p. 88. Abul Pharg ab Pocock.

(b) "Draper's Conflict Between Religion and Science.

In optics they detected the erroneous and false notions of the Greeks. The scale of meditation was poised and balanced, and finally corrected, that "a ray proceeds from the eye and touches the object," and introduced the hypothesis that "the ray passes from the object to the eyes." Al-Hagen rendered himself illustrious, and originated the theory and supported it with the multifarious arrays of convincing evidences, that we see the sun and moon before they have appeared on the horizon and after they have retired to their tranquil repose.

Astronomy may be fairly said to have been developed and considerably improved under the encouraging reigns of the followers of Mohammad. The salutary influence of the Crescent was highly favourable to learning, and the suited impulse which Islam imparted towards it is absolutely unique in the history of religion.

Christianity lingered for centuries without either ameliorating or improving the dissipations, but instead of that the fathers of the church launched their deluded votaries in the set of religious altercation and in the gulf of clouded believers. The following discoveries and ensuing acquisitions were the legitimate offspring of the Saracens:—The oblique nature of sceptic, verification of the preciseness of equinox, conjunction of plannots, occultation of stars, motion of solstices, and construction of sun dial. Abdur Rahman earnestly pursued and solicitously applied himself to astronomy, and the delineation of photometry of stars is ascribed to him.

The multifarious arrays of researches, enamelled with divers experiments, abundantly prove that the Saracens not only studied these subjects, but also exercised a complete mastery over them. The frenzied desire of knowledge evidenced the range of literature, and the population inhaled the noble spirit and admirable atmosphere of those elevated societies.

The names of Mesna and Giber, of Ragi and Avincenna, were by no means inferior to the Grecian masters. In those palmy days of Bagalao, which can justly be placed in one of those regions which unfurled the banner of knowledge, digged the mine of erudition, and edified the standard of science, and which also caused and fomented 860 certificated physicians who practised their lucrative and profitable profession at the same time. Basra was the spring from which learning flowed and recruited mankind. The reign of *Almamoon* affords another striking feature. Prosperity was smiling, and was aiding with unbounded liberality and its unstinted munificence. Philosophers, renowned and celebrated, enlarged the swing of philosophy. Al-Kuidi (Ahu Yusaf Ibn-i-Ishak) composed elegant treatises on different branches of science for the spread of light and the circulation of learning. The fame of this author rests on the works which he transcribed on astrological astronomy and medicine,

and many of which are still extant. But it has been reported by trustworthy authorities and tenable testimonies that two hundred treatises were the result of his midnight lucubrations and mental activity. Towards the close of the tenth century an additional impulse was given to knowledge, and the society of "Brothers of Purity" further undertook the pleasing province of disseminating erudition, embracing logic and mathematics, and including various departments of physical science and religious instruction. Its locus was Basra, the native town of Alfarabi. It endeavoured to modify the religious liberties and even to impart a piquant stimulus to science. Fifty-one treatises were the crops of that assembly, and they were enlivened with apologies in perfect Oriental fashion, and adorned with dissertations on "moral perfection." Coeval with this, lived *Al Farabius*, the genius and store of learning. The modest testimony and recurring authorities transform this man to a legendary being or fabulous personage. He is supposed to have mastered over seventy-two languages, which naturally explains his prolific faculty and retentive memory. Besides these spontaneous and lavish gifts of nature, he excelled "in theory and practice of musical art." Of the innumerable researches which he amassed and the infinite work which he compiled only a few have been handed down to posterity. The others suffered the doom of oblivion, and sank beneath the pressure of time. His paraphrase of Aristotle formed the basis on which Avicenna constructed his system, and his logical treatises produced a permanent effect on the Latin scholars. Indubitably, the unparalleled name of Avicenna outstripped and surpassed them all. He carried the encyclopædic desire of Bagdad to its acme of satisfaction. His unceasing reputation and imperishable fame was secured by his medical knowledge and philosophical speculations.

Europe still reveres that illustrious name, and acknowledges his influence. Al-Gazali was his noble exponent and his worthy successor. He acquired a durable name by his genius and mental power. He was born in the town of Sus, and prosecuted his studies in the town of Nisabur. But human life always displays its hourly changes and its precarious vicissitudes. Circumstances compelled him to pursue a definite course, so at the age of 36 he quitted his native town and attained a high degree of excellence at Bagdad. His fame soon became world-wide and world-known, and his lectures were hankered after by multitudes with eager expectations. Life soon wearied him, and abruptly he withdrew himself from worldly pleasures and sublunary delights.

For the remaining portion of his life he enjoyed the pleasure of happy solitude and unbroken seclusion, and in that he indulged in profound meditations and philosophic contemplations,

The star of learning ascended and the balance of ability preponderated throughout the Abbaside Dynasty. This sceptre of authority which they wielded for centuries was brought to a close with the golden reign of Al-Mutasim. The glittering torch of literary zeal began to lose its intense colour and the rust of age introduced the expected dimness. This Emperor built a mosque and a college which were designated after his own denomination and which were perhaps unique and exemplary in the Mohammadan world. The extreme singularity, the exquisite novelty and the artistic resplendency which constituted it, prodigious and famous at the time of the Abbasides, Bagdad was the focus of civilisation and goal of literature. The gentle zephyr of erudition ravished with its dulcet sweetness Basrah and Kufa, which may fairly be estimated in no way inferior to Bagdad. In Aleppo, Balkh, Isphahan and Samarkund the inhabitants borrowed the learning and cultivated it with assiduity. It is a well known fact that a doctor was so pressed by external difficulties and hemmed by extraneous circumstances as to refuse the invitation of the Sultan of Bokhara because the cost of the carriage of his books was beyond his resources and attended with multifarious difficulties. But, in spite of all the progress and advancement of the Abbasides the historian finds a wonderful contrast when he compares them with the Ommiades. The former were relaxed in their morals and imbibed their luxurious manners from the Persians, with whom they came in contact after conquering their lands. The sweet influence of prosperity and pompous living, enervated their valour and debilitated their energy which made them thoroughly unfit for war and combats, while, on the other hand the dazzling lustre of the Ommiades was unsurpassed. They presented the manly valour and masculine vigour of the Arabs, and exemplified these noble characteristics on many occasions. Ommiades subdued Spain and many other countries, and on their ruins the Abbasides built their fame.

After examining the progress of these two dynasties let us make a transition to the consideration of the Fatamites, and cast a hasty glance on the additions which have been made by them.

The Fatamites of Africa exhibited the same spirit and buoyed up the zeal of erudition with equal fervour and warmth. They countenanced the toil of a scholar and meditation of a philosopher by several methods well fitted to the purpose. The literary rivalry and emulation permeated in the society and tacit seized the circuit of their thoughts and inlets of their perception and from Samarkund and Bokhara to Fez and Cordova the literary compeers stood at the top of the scale of distinction. Their transcendental genius resounded over the globe and bursts of enthusiasm and clusters of encomium were poured on their glorious name from every quarter.

Colleges were founded to transfuse learning and instruct the indigent. The Vizier of a Sultan prescribed a large portion of his income for the education of children and opened a college at Bagdad. The crop of this installation bore an exuberant harvest and 6,000 students reaped benefits from that lofty and stately building. The increase of years augmented the passion for literature and the books were procured and efforts concentrated to distribute the copies of learned writers for the diffusion of erudition. The royal library of the Fatamites included an enormous number of books and amounted to 1,00,000 volumes. But the honour of this collection is considerably enhanced when we take into account the unwieldy pressure of the time and the stubborn embarrassment of the age. Yet Scylla and Charyleidis, which nature so obstinately interposed and so insidiously thrown, were overtopped and the smooth surface was traversed by constant assiduity and unrelaxing perseverance. These manuscripts were adorned both by exquisite writings and enchanting bindings. But even this collection is eclipsed and dwindled into insignificance when we call to mind the library of the Omniades of Spain, who, notwithstanding the baffling difficulties, amassed 600,000 volumes, 44 of which were merely employed as catalogues. The royal library of the Fatamites did not scruple or hesitate in providing free access to all the aspiring students, and also further extended its pale by making it a lending library. In the beginning of the 12th century faint glimmerings of mental stagnation and symptoms of degeneracy were perceptible. Sinister presentiments ushered in on every side, and terror inspired every heart with dismal and lugubrious vaticination. The wild arrogance and capricious whim of Mustansir instigated him to burn with a philosophical library at Bagdad. The confiscating flame of power was now in its feeble and declining years, and the supreme indifference of the Khalifs prepared it for its expected loss. A traveller who sketches before us a moving panorama of that age, and draws an exact picture of that society, sincerely laments the slacking of their morals, the innovation of vice, and the stronghold of their depravation. Thieves and rogues sprang up and defiled the venerable sanctuaries with their leathsome taints. A curtain of intellectual torpor and dormancy was hung loose, and facilitated the Empire in its fall, which precipitated it in haste to its early grave. The weak and dropping state of the kingdom attracted the attention of the famous Saladin (a), in whom the undaunted courage and daring spirit of Hannibal, the fertile resources and military tactics of Napoleon, were insensibly mingled. He invaded the Empire, which fell an easy prey, and thus the final overthrow of the Fatamites was caused by that renowned king in the year 1171.

(a) Ibn-i-Khalakan gives a full account of his life and conquests, p. 740—558, vol. iv.

History, which came to a standstill among the ancient Arabs, and was ignored with supreme and extreme negligence, received a lively feature after the revival of letters and dawn of new civilisation. This state of affairs utterly sapped the assumed architect of stagnation and stirred the mental torpor. The despicable monotony of indolence was extracted and vehemently checked. The stern Arabs rekindled the dying taper of learning, and produced historical researches of equal merit and of equal dignity with those of Xenophon and Herodotus. Abou Jofar, Ibn-i-Jarir al Tabari, who is rightly styled by Gibbon as the "King of the Arabians," lived in Bagdad, where he drew his last breath in A. H. 310. Al-Tabari not only compiled the history of Mohamammad's life, but traced with accuracy and linked with correctness the progress of Islam under the early Khalifs. This work of his was crowned with the unshaken diadems of immortality and the laurel wreaths of eternity.

Abul Feda draws his descent from the prince of Hamah, and is mentioned amongst the historians of the latter times. His work is saturated with profound wisdom and inferrible researches, interwoven with thread, of impartiality.

Geography was taught with interest and delight in the Saracen schools, and the library at Cairo possessed two massive globes, which served, as great assistance to the students. Ibn-i-Rasheed peregrinated and rambled with a sauntering gaze through Africa, Egypt and Syria, and in the entrancing prospect of enthusiasm wished to balance with subtle arguments and to convince with existing proofs the truth of some of the affirmation of the Mohammadan tradition. He adhered to this intention with unfaltering confidence and unshaken resolution, and at last succeeded in reconciling some of the salutary indifferences with the reasoning of a logician and the skill of a philosopher.

The science of chemistry (a) was initiated by the Saracens and was developed under their fructifying governments. It was they who discovered alambic and who employed it for the suitable purpose of distillation. They amplified their enquiry and further differentiated by close examinations the distinction and affinities of alkalis and acids and finally they attempted to utilise the poisonous herbs, and by assiduous steadiness they at last succeeded in converting them to useful and efficacious medicines. But the most prominent determination of the Saracens lay in the transmutation of metals, in discovering of an elixir which often served them for protracting and prolonging the narrow pale of existence and ephemeral delights of life. Very frequently the perception and judgment of multitudes were eclipsed and shadowed by the propensity of ambition, and riches were melted in the delusive science of alchemy

(a) But the science of chemistry, says Gibbon, owes its origin and improvement to the industry of the Saracens, p. 150, vol. vi.

and dissipated their energies and wasted their money in the Utopian pursuit which was surrounded by the heaps of superstition mingled with the boldest fictions and flat contradictions. From this fountain Europe subtracted her share. France, Germany and Italy sent scholars to master the proficient sciences of chemistry, mathematics and optics in the Arabian schools, and thus the seed of knowledge was transported to the western lands and occidental shores. The first who established medical schools, and the college at Salerno, in Italy, was their legitimate offspring. They were also the first builders of astronomical observatories, the first one being constructed at Seville. The "barbarous Christians" of that age were ignorant of its value and unaware of its worth after the expulsion of the Moors, and used it for the purpose of a belfry, which sufficiently attests the position which they maintained and the knowledge which they possessed. The Moors were so highly cultivated and so thoroughly well versed that Al-Bagdad, says Draper, left one on land-surveying so excellent that by some it has been considered to be a copy of Euclid's lost works on that subject.

Now, Spain displays her charms and exhibits all her achievements. It was in this fair region that Mohannmadan literature reached its culmination. Cordova, the capital of the Moors, can boast of producing and of cherishing three hundred writers of highest reputation and exalted eminence, and, according to Johnson, was the cradle of Christianity. In the Andalusian kingdom seventy public libraries removed the wants of the scholars and excited the curiosity of the rich. The Saracens can also exult with truth and reason that they civilised Europe, and first showed them the light of knowledge. They were in the highest summit of their glory when Europe, was promiscuously immersed in intestine feuds and primeval barbarity. The Saracens also gave their attention to works on grammar. Two hundred and one works on that subject explain their infinite prolixity and endless scrutiny, also their punctilious manner of expounding the rules of syntax testifies the zeal which actuated them. In fact, they explored the labyrinth of grammar, which was langing so vague, so abstruse, and so loose, and by their endless treatise and work they converted it to a boundless science. Among the grammarians Ibn Al-Kasim ranks the first. The elaborate and exhaustive work of Abu-Zeman Ibn-i-Ghalib on the peculiarities of the Arabic language, and also on its kindred branches, is almost unique in that language. I here narrate a story about him, which I presume will not be deemed superfluous or irrelevant (b). When the city of Maurica was beleagured and captured by Muhajid, King of Algiers and Dena, the ambitious King despatched a note to Ibn-i-Ghalib promising him a handsome

(b) I borrow the fact from Waakri, p. 184, vol. i.

gift of one thousand dinars if he complied with his request and prefixed a title page to his work, saying that it was composed for him. But the quaint suggestion and supercilious demand of the Sultan resulted in a failure, and the unbending and inflexible disposition of the scholar rose superior to the tinklings of the money, the effected countenance of riches, and the fleeting delights of the world. The obdurate master replied in these words—"Tell your master that if he were to lavish on me all the treasures of this world, it would persist in my resolution. I cannot tell a lie. This book of mine was not written for him, but for the generality of the studious people." Such honesty of purpose and proud scorn of falsehood were the ruling passions of the Arabs.

In biography the Saracens were not inferior, but some writers indulged in their general spleen and personal animosity, and in a fit of paroxysm, or under the fetters of prejudice, reproached them for neglecting the cultivation of biographical histories. But every investigator who has read the voluminous work of Ibn-i-Khalakan will not leap to such an impetuous conclusion, and will form a very different opinion. The remarks of Sir W. James about this work, "*that Al-Nestio en hic omnibus vitarum Scriptoribus sit antepodus est certi copiosior Nepote, elegantior Plutarcho, Laertio jucundior et dignus est profecto liber, qui in omnes Europe linguas conversus prodeat,*" are incomparable and incontrovertable.

Medicine was their favourite pursuit and Allmeacis of Cordova revelled in surgery and did not shrink from performing dangerous operations, which always met with the laurels of success and perfect achievement. Cauntery and knife were employed without demur or hesitation and he apprises us that operations on the fair sex, which multiplied the difficulties on account of its delicacy, should be properly attended by trained nurses. Auenac of Cordova was helmed by good sense and guided by his enlightenment intended to reconcile the doctrines of Quran with those of Aristotle. To him we are indebted for the marvellous discovery of spots upon the sun. The Arabs did not lack in assiduity and from Spain to India, between which a precarious and dangerous route intervened, they travelled with the idea of acquiring knowledge and adding valuable researches. Abul Osman widened the narrow pale of botany and contributed valuable suggestions which were admired and were received with general enthusiasm and universal applause. Al-Bairouni made searching investigations on gems and surveyed the boundless desert and the vast tracts of land and came as far as India to extract materials and excavate the deep and profound abyss of knowledge.

The names of Rhazis, Al-Abbas, and Al-Baitar are well known to every student, and it is surprising to read that the last one surmounted the threatening barriers and visited almost all parts of the world then known for the purpose of obtaining specimens aiming to enrich the herbarium with his practical additions and novel discoveries. Ibn-i-Basji, or Avenice, followed obstinately the interesting pursuit of psychology, and by his tenacity he purchased popular aversion and implacable hatred. He was frequently a victim of the venomous shafts of obloquy and acrimony. He bestowed very great attention also to physics, and his sedulous perseverance made him the glory of his age and the treasure of erudition. Makri informs us that after the departure of Al-Farabius from the shifting stage of the world no one distinguished himself more than Ibn-i-Basji in his essay on "The Extent of Human Nature," which was intended to prove that mankind have advanced from a lower position to the higher level, evidently corroborates that the Doctrine of evolution was not unknown to the Moors

Ibn-i-Bakr another philosopher propounded the gradual development of man. Now I can safely assert on the testimony and on the authority of the best European authors that Europe falsely flatters herself in imagining that the doctrine of evolution is a recent discovery. It is an erroneous proposition to enunciate that it was initiated by Darwin (c). We possess evidence, authentic and reliable, that it existed long before the time of Darwin; that it was propagated in the school of the Saracens; that it was considerably developed in the dawn of the twelfth century, and the learned dissertations of Al Khazimi which are extant furnish us with ample grounds to show that the Moors were acquainted with the theory of evolution. "In fact," says the judicious Draper, "they carried it much further than we are disposed to do, extending even to inorganic or mineral bodies." (d).

Al-Hakkam was the first sovereign who introduced the works of ancient sages and philosophers in Andalusia. He also possessed a unique disposition, and unlike to the kings who amuse themselves in excessive musical sounds and in other corporal delectations or personal gratifications, he pursued the rigid and inflexible course of a scholar and passed his leisure in poring with patience over books, or in discussing with skill on some literary subject. An adept king and a literary monarch will naturally tend towards the collection of books. The magnet of erudition attracted him and representatives were appointed to recover the fossils of ancient literature. The remunerative and lucrative profession of representatives, captivated multitudes to seek with ardent glory the cottages of

(c) Makri Appendix, p. 13, vol. 1.

(d) Draper's Conflict, p. 118.

booksellers. They heaved like a furious wave, pruned away the excrescences and preserved the gist and essence of antiquity. From all parts of the world books were gathered and were sent to Cordova. When occasions were unfavourable and the books were beyond his reach, the learned monarch had them copied with equal promptitude and with equal energy. By these sedulous efforts Hakkam gathered four hundred thousand manuscripts. He was not content to arrange them in the shelves without enjoying their fruit, but it is also supposed that he read a great number of them and decorated them with his own annotations and observations. His store of knowledge was so immense and exhaustless that his commentaries were fostered and cherished by the schools. (a). It is reported that Kepler borrowed the idea of elliptical orbits of planets from the Saracens, and this notion prompted him and his so-called discovery. The work of Nuruddin on this very subject is still in existence and is preserved in the Escorial Library.

For a lapse of five hundred years the unencumbered chord of prosperity was stretched till it was cut off by the Christians. Their brutal and high handed actions reached its climax and in the declining age of the Saracens they did not scruple to violate the laws of humanity which were interposed between them. The complicated devices and smooth machinations of the followers of Christ were not only to wrest the sceptre but even to blot out and efface the name of the Saracen. The ungenerous disposition and insatiable thirst of Cardinal Ximenes was quenched by the unmerited conflagration of 801,000 Arabic books in the public square of Grenada. This mournful catastrophe inspired terror and foretold a gloomy future for the books which were collected by the sweat of the scholars and purchased by the exorbitant prices of the kings.

In conclusion, I shall briefly touch upon the two chief causes of the speedy downfall of their learning. It was one of the distinguishing traits of that age that movements always emanated from the kings, as if culture and erudition were their especial heirloom and privilege. The baneful effect of this imitative habit undermined the edifice of their greatness and blasted the foundation of their supremacy. The structure was unfit to endure the political stratagems and storms of fate. The loyal and approving subjects read with avidity when they were animated by the motive of fashion and excited by the example of monarchs. By the generous sentiments of Khalifs and kings the slow ebb of learning of Greece and Rome resumed its usual vigour, and their power was strenuously exerted to rehabilitate their quondam energies. Thus we see that the sterling good sense of Mansur, Haroon Rasheed, Al-Hakkam, and others, in the plenitude of their powers, invigorated the passion

(a) "Not only did he possess," says Lane-Poole, "all these volumes, but unlike many collectors he is said to have read them all." "Moors in Spain," p. 155.

and strengthened the desire for knowledge. They woke up the people from their lethargy and stagnation, compassed every department of learning, and consequently almost all the conspicuous discoveries and original researches were clustered in their reigns. On the other hand, the reign of Mustansir, in Bagdad, and Abul Hassan, in Spain, palpably demonstrate that the neglect of learning by kings exercised a paramount influence on the progress of their subjects. Besides this, the capricious behaviour of Mustansir multiplied most pernicious abuses and engendered most degrading vices, which were the forerunners of destruction. Secondly, in the bosom of remote antiquity the absence of the Press always precluded an accelerating advancement and constituted a perpetual impediment to progress, when, on the other hand, had it then been invented, many valuable works would not have been lost to posterity. The Press offers a prospective security against the violence of time and the destruction of libraries, and this was sadly wanting in that age. The death of authors, the burning of libraries by Cardinal Ximenes and others, utterly annihilated solitary and isolated works which for centuries occupied a transitory place in the shelves, so the works of many authors perished under the doom of oblivion without enjoying the fruit of labour. The surviving manuscripts and remnants stimulated investigators to rake from oblivion facts which were buried deep in obscurity, which have shed a halo of light upon the ambient clouds of mediæval darkness. The mild tenor of the precepts of Jesus were disregarded, and instead of piety and compunction, profligacy and cruelty were substituted. By such unfair dealings and hidden stratagems they enfeebled the powers of the Muslims, and it was in the year 1610, a memorable date, that the Moors bade an everlasting farewell to Spain.

Alas! the greatness of the Saracens was but temporary. The brilliant meteor of their ascendancy faded away like a mirage in the desert, the course of fate subverted the order of preceding ages, population dwindled, power waned, and learning disappeared. The matrix in which precious researches were embedded and the harvest of midnight toils were extricated by the indiscreet raillery of the Christians. How truly Pope observes, "That heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate. The heartstirring record of that sublime and elevated epoch will ever remain a subject of noblest contemplation, inflated exaltation, and ever-growing remuneration for the students of humanity. In the middle ages Spain, and Spain alone, was the pioneer of civilisation, the locus of classical radiation, and the centre of intricate and obtruse discovery, and to

it alone mankind converged like a swarm of locusts. That terrestrial paradise was like an interminable ocean of knowledge, which excited the seekers to devise in endless depth without check or restraint, and to convert the pebble into precious gems. The streets were illuminated with artificial lanterns, with gaudy devices, and thus rendered the prospect specious and attractive. Seventy-two schools opened wide their gates for the enlightenment of the mind of children, and philosophers expounded therein difficult and abstruse questions. Besides these things copious strains, luxurious living, and the serene sky of prosperity removed the insurmountable barriers which in other ages obstructed progress and hindered advancement. But what a change ! What a sad contrast ! Now, instead of philosophers and scholars, vagabonds and banditti infest Spain, and cast into melancholy shade its brilliant galaxy and its inspiring jocundity.

The very vehicle of sublimity is irretrievably scattered and rising greatness is benighted, marred and vibrated, and is irreparably depreciated, and now Spain laments the desolation of her fortune. The gardens which were once bedecked with green foliage, the streets which were once lighted with effulgent lamps, the palaces which were once inhabited by the Moorish conquerors, the halls which once resounded with the thrilling voice of the lecturers, the buildings which once served the purpose of schools are now broken, fallen into decay and covered by the cloudy tempest of adversity. The remnants of that refined age, the ruins of that learned society still point out its grandeur and the surviving fragments still ratify its passed perfection. The distant lustre and remote lights of the civilisation of Greece and Rome are at once called to mind, and history confirms the idea that nations after reaching the height of fame and the pinnacle of honour, wither and ebb away like individuals leaving behind them tissues of events and histories of enterprises for posterity to admire and for future generations to copy. It has been well said by an author of eminence, "that every civilisation that the world has yet seen has had its period of vigorous growth, of arrest and stagnation, its decline and fall."

"Authors, essayist, atheist, novelist,
Realist, rhymester, play your part;
Paint the mortal shame of nature,
With the living hues of art."

THE ALHAMBRA.

Palace of Beauty! where the Moorish lord,
 King of the bow, the bridle, and the sword
 Sat like a genie in the diamond's blaze.
 Oh, to have seen thee in the ancient days,
 When, at thy morning gates, the coursers stood,
 The "thousand" milk-white, Yemen's fiery blood,
 In pearl and ruby harnessed, for the king;
 And through thy portals poured the gorgeous flood
 Of jeweled sheik and emir, hastening.

Before the sky the purple dawning showed,
 Their turbans at the Caliph's feet to fling.
 Lovely thy morn--thy evening lovelier still,
 When at the waking of the first blue star
 That trembled on the Atalaya hill,
 The splendors of the trumpet's voice arose,
 Brilliant and bold, and yet no sound of war,
 But summoning thy beauty from repose,
 The shaded slumber of the burning noon.
 Then in the slant sun all thy fountains shone,
 Shooting the sparkling column from the vaso
 Of crystal cool, and falling in a haze

Of rainbow hues on floors of porphyry;
 And the rich bordering beds of every bloom
 That breathes to African or Indian sky
 Carnation, tuberosc, thick anemone.

Then was the harping of the minstrels heard,
 In the deep arbors, or the regal hall,
 Hushing the tumult of the festival;

When the pale bard his kindling eye-ball reared
 And told of Eastern glories, silken hosts.
 Queen of Earth's loveliness, there was a stain
 Upon thy brow--the stain of guilt and gore;
 Thy course was bright, bold, treacherous --and 'tis
 o'er.

The spear and diadem are from thee gone,
 Silence is now sole monarch of thy throne!

PEARLS OF THE FAITH.

By Sir Edwin Arnold, K. C. I. E."Al-Mo'min."

Al-Mo'min ! "faithful," fast and just is He,
 And loveth such as live in verity.
 Ibn Sawa, Lord of Bahrein, in the field
 Captured a Sheikh, an Arab of the hills,
 Sayid-bin Tayf ; and the King's oath was passed
 That each tenth man of all the captives die
 Together with their chieftains, for the war
 Waxed fierce, and hearts of men were turned to flame.
 So led they Sayid forth before the camp
 At Azan ; and an eunuch of the guard,
 Savage and black, stood with his haick uprolled
 Back to the armpit, and the cineter's edge
 Naked to strike.

But suddenly the king

Inquired, "Art thou not he gave me to drink,
 Hunting gazelles before the war began?"
 "Yea, I am he ;" said Sayid.

Quoth the King,

"Ask not thy life, but ask some other boon,
 That I may pay my debt."

Sayid replied,

"Death is not terrible to me who die
 Red with this unbelieving blood of thine ;
 But there hath come a first-born in my tent ;
 Fain would I see my son's face for a day,
 Before my eyes are sealed. Lend me my life,
 To hold as something borrowed from thy hand
 Which I will bring again."

"Ay !" laughed the king,

"If one should answer for it with his own.
 Show me thy hostage."

"Let me stand his bond,"

Spake one on whom the lot of mercy fell—
 Ishak of Tayf, a gallant youth and fair—
 "I am his sister's son ; bind ye my arms
 And set free Sayid, that he ride at speed

And see his first-born's face and come again."
 So Sayid went free again, seeking his home.
 But in the camp they mocked that faithful friend,
 Saying, "Lo! as a fool thou diest now,
 Staking thy life upon an Arab's word.
 Why should he haste to abide the bitter blade ?
 Will the scared jackal try the trap again,
 The hawk once lured return unto the snare ?
 Say to the desert wind to turn and come,
 But call not Sayid."

Ishak only smiled,
 And said, "He is a Muslim, he will come."
 The days passed, Sayid came not, and they led
 The hostage forth, for Ishak now must die;
 But still he smiled, saying, "Till sunset's hour
 Slay me not, for at sunset he will come."
 So fell it, for the sun had touched the palms,
 And that black swordsman stood again in act
 To strike, when Sayid's white mare, galloping in,
 Drew steaming breath before the royal tent;
 And Sayid, leaping from the saddle kissed
 His kinsman's eyes, and gently spake to all,
 "Labbayki! I am here."

Then said the king,
 "Never before was known a deed like this
 That one should stake his life upon a word;
 The other ride to death as to a bride.
 Live and be friends of Ibn Sawa, but speak!
 Whence learned ye these high lessons?"

Ishak spake,
 "We are believers in the book saith,
 'Fulfil your covenants, if ye covenant;
 For God is witness. Break no word with man
 Which God hath heard; and surely He hears all.'"
 That verse the King bade write in golden script
 Over the palace gate; and he and his
 Followed the Faith.

Ya! Allah-al-Mo'min!

In truthfulness of act be our faith seen.

CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER CASES.

“Enquire not too curiously into other men's failings.”—Sura 40, Koran.

Till thou hast answered it.”
 A rich man proudly walked along
 The straight and narrow way ;
 He lifted up his head in pride
 To hear the people say :
 “That is a pure and honest man—
 The noblest work of God ;
 He's built upon a perfect plan,
 He virtue's path has trod.
 “No moral law does he transgress,
 He's good and true and kind ;
 “Tis hard amongst the walks of man
 A purer soul to find.”
 'Twas thus they praised him while he lived,
 And filled his heart with pride,
 And when at last his end did come,
 And like the rest he died.
 The priest, above his gilded bier,
 Exalted to the skies
 The soul of this proud child of wealth
 As good, and great, and wise.
 And said that straight to heaven's gate
 The rich man's soul was sent ;
 While all the people bowed, and said
 “To paradise he went.”
 A poor man with his load of grief
 Went staggering down the path,
 And begged of God to grant relief
 And heap not on him wrath.
 With weight of many grievous fears
 He tottered o'er the road,
 And called on Allah thro' his tears
 To add not to his load.
 He fell upon the wayside sore,
 And yielded unto sin,
 And he the law, with iron hand,
 To prison quick dragg'd in.
 The cold, stern judge said, with a frown,
 “A crime thou didst commit,
 And thou in bond must now be kept

Into a dungeon, dark and lone,
 The poor man straight they sent,
 And chained him to the prison wall,
 And bade him there repent.
 And there for years he pined away,
 No loved one by his side,
 Until a fairer fortune came,
 And then the poor man died.
 No prayers above his dumb, cold clay,
 The silk-clad Bishop said ;
 But quick they bore his form away,
 As soon as he was dead.
 No tears were shed above his grave,
 No mound above it rais'd ;
 Neglected and despised he lived—
 He died despised, unprais'd.
 But had he lived 'neath brighter stars,
 Perhaps the narrow way
 His feet on earth had gladly trod,
 That went so far astray.
 And had the rich man felt the weight
 Of care the other bore,
 He might have fallen by the way,
 As men have done before.

W. H. A. QUILLIAM.

THE ENCHANTED VALLEY.

An Allegory of Life.

I wandered aside by the racing tide,
 Through a green and sunny valley,
 With the dancing beam played the smiling stream,
 While it laughed out musically,
 And the euphonios of glad bird throats
 With the scented breezes daily.
 Oh ! music and shine, made seem so divine,
 That valley so happy and sunny.
 The bright-plumed birds, in their radiant bowers,
 Vied with the many-hued glist of the flowers,
 With the thousand sweet odours that winged on the breeze ;
 And the leaf-woven thatch of the verdured trees,

Bent low with the ripe fruit laden,
 In the groves of that beautiful Aden.
 And the glades of that gladsome Aden.
 Yet I wished not to tarry, I willed not to stay,
 On the beautiful banks of youth's river—

Plucked I nectarine fruit and wandered away,
 And believed 'twould continue for ever.

The music, and sheen, and sweet-scented bowers,
 The iridescent plumage of bright birds and flowers,

Oh ! I thought they would terminate never.

The delectable fruits that the verdure did grow,
 With the glist, and the glow, and the fair river's flow,
 With the ever-green glades and the golden sunshine,
 The odours of Aden and pleasance divine,

Ah ! I deemed they would last, aye, and ever.

Yet I wandered aside, now stilly, now wide.
 And now grew tumultuous and narrow the tide.
 The flowers were all faded, the gay birds had flown,
 And the leaves, sere and yellow, the stark glades had
 strewn ;

No musical murmur re-echoed the air,
 And but skeleton boughs were left, bony and bare,
 Like spectres to haunt the lone river,
 Like ghosts on that once happy river.
 Where the surly blasts shriek, or low mutter despair,
 And through grey rime, goes weeping, with wailing and
 blare,

In fretful disquiet and fitful despair,
 On the banks of that unhappy river ;
 That ever on floweth more madly and grows,
 More darksome and dismal, whilst over it close.
 And around us, and behind us, while onward we fly.
 Huge barriers, enshadowed with gannet misery,
 And ensentinelled ever by grim, ghostly fears,
 That appal us, and hold us in terrors and tears ;
 In this valley of shadows, the shadows of tombs,
 Where the murmur of death, or the sobbing wind comes.
 Which howleth, and moaneth, and muttereth despair,
 That in agony creeps on the shuddering air ;
 And we weep o'er joys wasted and unfruitful flowers,
 O'er precious wealth wasted, of life's precious hours ;
 While, louder, up cometh, and nearer the roar,
 Of the tide of life, leaping the brink of death o'er,

To the dark, dismal chasm, the abyss, "Evermore."

But, lo ! from the heavens there beameth a star,
One lamp in the gloom, around, near, and afar ;
And a rift in the clouds, lined with silver, is drawn :
And a golden curved horn from the river gloom shown
And, broader and brighter, the argent rim shows,
And star upon star, unveiled, heavens disclose.

Until skies are aglow, lit with splendour and light,
And the crescent shines peacefully forth, pure and bright.
As a bride in her beauty and innocent sweet.
When she riseth, unveiled, her loved one to meet.
So, unto Earth's outcast truth-seeker, 'mid tears,
Sorrow, gloom — with peace, beautiful Islam appears.

As the moon reflex light, of the sun casts abroad,
Doth the crescent, Islam, reflect truth-rays of God :
And the light of pure faith beams from Orient skies,
On the dense clouded West, where the faith-fallen lies ;
And the desert of Araby hath borne us a flower, ✓
Which the fragrance of Paradise scatters earth o'er.

And where'er in the wild wastes its seed taketh root,
It groweth, and blcometh, and beareth fair fruit,
In the beauty of holiness, under fair skies,
While its odours in prayer unto Allah doth rise,
And sweet food for Earth's famished ones its fruit doth afford,
The feast of pure faith, truth of God's holy word.

W. O. CUNLIFFE.

THE ALMS OF AZIZ.

Said Aziz, "Verily, God is good !

I have more than sufficient for warmth and food
Having health and comfort, what need of more ?

I will give in alms-deeds the surplus o'er."

Then he stood and divided his wealth in three,

"This is for alms to the poor," said he,

"This for poor strangers and hajees be,

And this for faiths spread beyond the sea !"

Then he paused and pondered, counting the same—

"Bismillah ! who knows what fate may come ?

I will wait and put aside this store,

For a time, and make it a little more."

So he gathered again each golden pile,

And hoarded them up in his coffers awhile ;

Until one thought more sprang into his head :
 " I will put it to use and to profit, ' " he said.
 And one part at interest high he lent,
 Another for trades, in merchandise spent ;
 The portion remaining, he pondered about,
 " Shall I keep or invest it ? " he questioning thought.
 " I think I will keep it to give to the poor,
 In alms, one by one, as they come to my door. "
 So the third and last portion he put it away,
 To be used in alms gifts on some other day.
 That night to his hoard the robbers crept,
 And took it away while Aziz slept ;
 The next day his merchandise vanished in fire,
 Converted to ashes, down-trodden in mire.
 There remained yet the loan, out at highest per cent.
 But the borrower ran off, the loan with him went.
 " Alas ! for the alms-deeds undone, " Aziz cried,
 Then Aziz fell sick, wept, impoverished, and died.

W. O. CUNLIFFE.

IBRAHIM'S SIN:

Hassan and Omer went to pray
 At the holy Mosque ere break of day.
 Omer prayed, and soon had done,
 But Hassan prayed and prayed long on,
 Ere sunrise to the set of sun.
 And while the night's dark hours did run,
 And yet prayed he from morn to night,
 And from its fall to dawn of light.
 And scarcely stayed to pause to eat,
 But prayer on prayer he did repeat.
 Ibrahim saw it, and, said he,
 " Bismillah ! What is this we see ?
 One prays too long and one too short—
 The right prayer is another sort. "
 And said his prayers and went his way,
 Thinking of Hassan all the day.
 At nightfall, ere he went to rest,
 A wandering beggar came as guest,
 Whom Ibrahim tended, washed his sores
 And gave him best of all his stores ;
 And while he for his guest did care,
 He spake of Hassan's and Omer's prayer.
 Then, " Allah bless thee, brother abide
 Thou on my couch, rest by my side. "

They slept. At Isha Ibrahim arose,
But where his guest is not he knows.

Yet when his Isha prayer was done,
There guest stood, radiant as the sun.

"Doubter of good in other's deeds,"
Said he, "How knowest thou the needs?"

Know thou it was to conquer self,
That Hassan prayed for his soul's health,
✓ And Omer's Namaz soon was through,
For work that Allah willed him do." ✓

Then Ibrahim low in sorrow bowed,
For thought of evil, and wept loud—

"Allah, compassionate," cried he, "Wise,
Alas! mine evil heart and eyes—

Alas! for me and all the wrong
I wrought by evil thought and tongue.

Forgive my sin, and make me wise,
Oh, Allah!" said the guest, "Arise.

Look on the book I hold, and read,
And learn the virtue of a deed;

Herein are penned, excepting nought,
The good and ill which thou hast wrought."

He read a sin crossed "Good intent,"
Another crossed "He did repent;"

A good deed marked with "Evil thought,"
And one marked "Good, though nothing wrought,"

One "Hypocrite in holy guise;"
One "Angel, feasted, beggar, wise,"

And new light fell on Ibrahim's eyes.
The guest said, "Go now, and be wise!"

W. O. CUNLIFFE.

IBRAHIM'S BURNT OFFERING.

The voice of the Lord thus to Ibrahim spake.
"I command thee, thine only son Ismail take
To the land of Moriah—him slay with the sword
And offer as burnt sacrifice to thy Lord." ✓

✓ Then Ibrahim rose, and his heart was full sore,
But still in his heart no rebellion be bore;

For he knew that his part was to kiss the stern rod,
And hearken at once to the voice of his God. ✓

So at once to a mountain he straightway repaired
And for the dread sacrifice calmly prepared;

While the innocent victim so calmly stood by

Nor knew of the word which condemned him to die.

For "Father," said he, "both the wood and the fire
Are now waiting for thee, but tell me Sire

Where the lamb for the offering is to be found ?
For my eyes can see nought save the wood on the ground.

Then Ibrahim spake, and in answer replied,
"My son, be thou sure that the Lord will provide

For himself a burnt offering—but come thou away,
To the place which the Lord hath appointed to slay."

There an altar he built, and the wood laid upon ;
He bound as directed his loved firstborn son.

Then with uplifted arm and a knife in his hand,
He prepared to obey th' Almighty's command.

But the voice of an Angel now fell from the air
And cried unto Ibrahim "Strike not, but spare,

Unloose from the altar—harm not thy fair son
The will of the Lord has already been done."

And now hast thou shown that thou fearest the Lord
And because thou hast hearkened at once to his word.

As the stars of the Heaven, as the sand on the shore.
Thy seed shall be countless on earth evermore.*

Homo Sum.

* There is a tradition among the Mohammadans which varies slightly from the Christian Biblical story. This tradition is that when Ibrahim had laid his son on the wood he seemed nervous and hesitant to enact the trying deed, when his son noticing his embarrassment said, "Father, if the Lord has bidden thee do the deed, do it, and trust in Him. I am resigned to my fate." Ibrahim then drawing his turban over his eyes that he might not witness the agony of his beloved, drew the knife across what he supposed to be the throat of his son. Then removing the turban saw to his great delight that in the instant while adjusting his turban over his eyes his son had been removed and a ram substituted. The ram lay bleeding on the altar while Ismail ran and embraced his astonished and grateful sire.

THE END.

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