

NO. 100

Page.

Introduction ..... 1

The State of Knowledge about the East ..... 12

Lasser: Uebir ..... 21

**"THE ORIENTAL ELEMENTS**

Backford, Wainswright, De Quincey & Oriental Exotic  
128 ..... **in** ..... 74

Montgomery . **ENGLISH POETRY (1784 - 1859)"** . . . . . 92

Cambridge . . . . . **THIS IS** . . . for . . . **Ph.D.** . . . . . 104

Newby . . . . . **Submitted to** . . . . . 139

Scott . . . . . **THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.** . . . . . 157

---

Edinburgh . . . . . 214

Shelley . . . . . 240

**JANUARY, 1934.**

Keats . . . . . 263

Leigh Hunt & Writers of Oriental Verse-tales . . . . . 314

**IMDAD HUSAIN,**  
**M.A. (Punjab).**

Tennyson . . . . . 341

---

Arnold . . . . . 354

J. C. Mangan & James Thomson . . . . . 373

Pitt-Rivers . . . . . 392

Conclusion . . . . . 458

Bibliography . . . . . 575



C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page.</u>
Introduction .....	1
The State of Knowledge about the East .....	12
Landor: <u>Gebir</u> .....	61
Beckford, Wainewright, De Quincey & Oriental Exotic- ism .....	74
Wordsworth .....	92
Coleridge .....	104
Southey .....	139
Moore .....	187
Byron .....	214
Shelley .....	248
Keats .....	285
Leigh Hunt & Writers Of Oriental Verse-tales .....	314
Tennyson .....	341
Arnold .....	354
J. C. Mangan & James Thomson .....	375
FitzGerald .....	399
Conclusion .....	456
Bibliography .....	473

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N .

Professor John Livingstone Lowes, in his book Convention & Revolt in Poetry, while speaking of tendencies in modern poetry, makes the following suggestive remarks:

"One of the most illuminating chapters in the history of art - and I do not know that anyone has fully written it - would be that which dealt with the gradual drawing of the strange in space within the purlieus of the familiar. For the remote in space has always had the faculty of stirring that shuddering pleasure which springs from, what, in equal parts, we shrink from, and we want. The lure of the thing is exercising its old potency afresh to-day in manifold forms. But since restriction is imperative, I shall confine myself to the spell, which has always been thrown over poetry by the Orient, especially since that happens to lend itself to a further use. For the influence of the East has gone through stages that are perhaps of some significance."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say that I do not aspire to write that "illuminating chapter in the history of art", the want of which Professor Lowes deplores, nor is it my purpose to discuss the significance of the various stages through which the influence of the East has passed. These subjects I leave to persons better equipped than myself. My purpose in this thesis will be to examine only the influence exercised by the Orient on English poetry written between two arbitrary but convenient dates, 1784 and 1859; the year in which Sir William Jones, the great Oriental scholar founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta, the parent of all the Asiatic Societies, and the year in which Edward FitzGerald's Rubaiyat

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1. Convention & Revolt in Poetry by John Livingstone Lowes, 1930. p. 104.

of Omar Khayyám appeared. FitzGerald's famous translation, was, as we shall find, the belated but direct fruit of that enthusiasm about Oriental literature aroused by the epoch-making discoveries of Sir William Jones. Between these two dates comes most of the poetry of the Romantic Revival.

The influence of the Orient on English poets of the Romantic Revival, though perhaps not so deep and important, as on their German and French contemporaries, has been found significant enough to merit a study. Miss M.P. Conant of Columbia University in her book The Oriental Tale in England in the 18th Century, (1908) catalogued a vast number of Oriental and pseudo-Oriental tales, inspired mostly by the introduction from France of the Arabian Nights & other Oriental tales. But her book treats only the eighteenth century writers of prose tales - the only verse-tale of consequence coming under her survey being Landor's Gebir. The discovery of the treasures of Oriental literature by Sir William Jones and other Oriental scholars in the latter part of the 18th century and the enthusiasm with which Oriental literature began to be studied both in England and on the continent, were, however, matters of greater and more far-reaching importance than the introduction of the Arabian Nights. Books of travel, history and scholarship about the Orient rapidly multiplied, from which the latter writers like Coleridge, Southey, Moore, Shelley, and others, extracted material for poetry. In our first chapter we have given a short sketch of Oriental scholarship and travel, enumerating some of the more important books that supplied these poets with their bookish notions of the Orient, and in the subsequent chapters, we have treated one by one all those poets who wrote on Oriental themes; FitzGerald's Rubaiyát being the culmination and the finest product of that Orientalism, whose inaugurators were the late eighteenth century Oriental scholars, and some of the poets of the Romantic Revival.

The concluding chapter contains some general remarks on the tendencies and results of the period.

The title of the thesis "The Oriental Elements in English Poetry from 1784-1859", which has been adopted for want of a better one, is somewhat vague and requires some further explanation. First as to the word "Oriental": What is "The Orient" and "The East"? These two words, synonymous for our purposes, are understood widely and vaguely nowadays to include all the continent and islands of Asia, some part of Africa - the northern part where society and conditions are most like the Asiatic - and some regions also of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. The term implies a vague geographical area characterised by society of a certain general type, each person who thinks or writes of the East expanding or contracting its geographical area. For our purposes, it would be convenient to restrict the use of the word "East" or "The Orient" to those countries collectively, that begin with Islam on the Eastern Mediterranean and stretch through Asia - i.e. mainly Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, Persia and India. China, Japan and what is known as the 'Far East' are, of course, excluded. Even out of the geographical region thus specified, the influence of Turkey, Egypt, Syria and the 'Near East', is but touched at in the course of our work, while Palestine, with its vast subject of the Bible in English literature is entirely left out. In short the Orient will mean to us, not any precise geographical area defined in strict scientific terms, but the wide, vague and mysterious region which the poets of the early nineteenth century themselves regarded as the Orient.

It will also appear from the subsequent pages that the "Oriental elements", on which we have dwelt are not strictly Oriental i.e. they are neither the true geographical or social features of the above named countries, reflected in English poetry of our period, nor are they, to any great extent, the literary influences exerted by the literatures of those countries. The study of Oriental literatures was just beginning in England, and the influence that it exerted on English poetry of the time, through the medium of crude and fanciful translations was very meagre and remote. But this very lack of exact knowledge about the real conditions in the

Orient, and its literatures, and the abundance of popular and fanciful books of travel, translation and scholarship, encouraged the contemporary writers to express strange and fantastic ideas about the Orient in their poetry. This attitude of the English writers to the Orient, partly the product of tradition and partly the thrice distilled essence of contemporary books on the Orient, varying characteristically with each writer, but still possessing some common, recognisable features, we have decided, for convenience, to call the Orientalism of that particular writer. It is the purpose of our work to study and analyse the various manifestations of this Orientalism, within the dates specified.

The tradition of which this Orientalism is the product can be traced to the Middle Ages and even to the Greek writers, who accompanied Alexander to India and gave glowing accounts of the wealth and picturesqueness of that country.

In the Middle Ages the East was dimly known as an object of curiosity and wonder, a land of marvels where the Earthly Paradise was situated. Intertwined with all these dreams and visions about the East, was also the commercial motive, that has always led the trafficking West to the wealthy East. "In all the dreams of the politicians and merchants, sailors and geographers who pushed back the limits of the unknown world there is", said Professor Raleigh, "the same glitter of gold and precious stones, the same odour of far-fetched spices". And nowhere is this truth more obvious than in the poetry of the Elizabethan dramatists and poets who were "the children and inheritors of the voyagers." "If the voyagers explored new countries and trafficked with strange peoples, the poets and dramatists went abroad too and rifled foreign nations, returning with far-fetched and dear-bought wares, or explored lonely and untried recesses of the microcosm of man. One spirit of discovery and exultant power animated both seamen and poets. Shakespeare and Marlowe were no less than Drake & Cavendish the circumnavigators of the world."<sup>1</sup> The tasks that Dr. Faustus assigns to his serviceable

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1. The English Voyagers of the 16th Century, by Sir Walter Raleigh, 1910, p. 3-4.

spirits might have been studied from the reports of the travellers:

"I'll have them fly to India for gold  
Ransack the ocean for Oriental pearl  
And search all corners of the newfound world  
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates..."

We shall notice how the poets of the Romantic Revival, Coleridge, Southey, Shelley and others similarly reflect the great interest aroused in the East by contemporary travellers. Indeed, in this as in many other respects the poets of the Romantic Revival offer an analogy to their Elizabethan predecessors, whom they regarded as their poetical masters. But as Professor Raleigh has remarked, the background of the Elizabethan poets was that of history and action, while that of the romantic poets, of fiction and books. "As the voyagers were the begetters of the Elizabethan Age, so were the encyclopaedists of the age of revived Romance. The later movement had its impulse and inspiration from the long labours of critical thought and the hopes of awakening science."<sup>1</sup> Consequently all the poetry of the Romantic Revival is 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'.

This 'thought-sickness' is, however, more characteristic of the intellectual and philosophical aspects of the Romantic Revival, than of the purely imaginative. In their efforts to enlarge the sphere of their imagination, the romantic poets ransacked the mythologies of various nations and the fables of the Middle Ages and the Orient as enterprisingly, though perhaps not so successfully, as their Elizabethan predecessors had rifled the stores of new learning opened up by the Renaissance, and the adventurous accounts of the voyagers.

There were other more important reasons, for the interest of the romantic poets in the Orient, than this analogy with the Elizabethans. Some of these we shall outline here.

Perhaps the most comprehensive single phrase that sums up the manysided activities of the early romantic poets, their sense of 'wonder' their feeling for the 'strangeness in beauty', their vision

1. Ibid, p. 155.

of Man and Nature - their metaphysical and philosophical aspirations, their historical interest, the importance attached by them to the senses, and several other cults which were, the outcome of all these complex activities, the cult of the picturesque, of Gothicism, of Horror-romanticism of Medievalism and finally of Orientalism, all these are summed up in Professor Elton's phrase "the convalescence of the feeling for beauty."<sup>1</sup> There have, of course, been other critics and scholars who have cut the Gordian knot by reducing all the aspirations and aberrations of the Romantics, to very simple 'complexes'. Professor Mario Praz in his recent book The Romantic Agony, for example is able to say: "In no other literary period, I think, has sex been so obviously the mainspring of works of imagination ...."<sup>2</sup> And T. S. Hulme in his Speculations, diagnosed the maladies of the Romantics, their "nostalgia for the infinite", as "spilt religion".<sup>3</sup>

There is, no doubt, ~~there is~~ in these explanations a certain measure of truth, in so far as all activities of the Man-animal are rooted deeply in his religious instinct and his sex-instinct. But to isolate any single factor out of the complex phenomenon that was Romanticism and regard it as an adequate explanation, the whole truth, is, to say the least of it, extremely misleading. However, it is not our purpose to enter into these pro-romantic and anti-romantic discussions. As the Orientalism of the romantic poets, has been regarded as one of their erotic aberrations by Praz, it has been necessary to make these brief remarks.

In addition to its own original impulses, Romanticism was to a great extent a revolt, a revolt against pseudo-classicism. When a group or a society is preparing for departure in an untried direction, the pioneers of the new movement, become aware of a larger fraternity than that of state and race; their ideals tend to become more cosmopolitan. The Barbarian, the feudal man, the cavalier of the Renaissance, the Moslem, the Indian, all are regarded as having beauty, and their own ideals. Romanticism set out to discover

1. A Survey of Eng. Lit. 1780-1830. vol. I. p. 9.

2. The Romantic Agony, 1933, p. V.

3. Speculations by T. S. Hulme, edit. by Herbert Read, p. 118.

that beauty and enjoy it. But to be studied all these nationalities must first be correctly portrayed in their proper costume and sentiments, however barbaric. This explains the excessive desire for 'local colouring', in the romantic poets, their fondness for correct historical detail, examples of which we shall notice in our survey. However fictitious, the Middle Ages or the Orient revived by the romantics, one of its distinctive feature was going to be a passion for concrete historical detail. Thus it has been possible to speak of the 'realism of romanticism'.

The desire to portray the various nationalities and ages in their correct costume, presupposes in its turn, historical, antiquarian and archaeological research. Consequently we find a great abundance of scholars, historians, and antiquarians in the latter half of the eighteenth century, whose work was a sort of herald to romanticism. The Oriental aspect of this antiquarianism and scholarship, which was a prelude to the works of Beckford, Southey, Moore and others, we have discussed in our first chapter.

It will also be noticed in the course of this thesis that the so-called Orientalism of the romantic poets, offers a very close analogy to and is in some cases synonymous with, their taste for the Gothic fiction of terror. The unrest of the age provoked a strong desire in the early romanticists for violent sensations and crude thrills, which was satisfied by horrible and sentimental stories translated from the German. The crude Oriental tales of the time catered to similar tastes. But it must not be forgotten that out of these very crudities was to be evolved that subtler dread, that deeper awe, of The Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan and La Belle dame Sans Merci. Horror-romanticism was only a degraded offshoot and travesty of what the philosopher Rudolph Otto<sup>1</sup> has called, the sense of the numinous, the awe-struck apprehension of divine presence discerned through the veil of phenomena. Paul Yvon in the study of Horace Walpole calls it "frisson nouveau", the frisson of the supernatural. In the chill light of rationalism the new "Goths" sought the glow of mystical apprehension of life; and the profound sense of the numinous that is stamped on the architec-

1. The Idea of the Holy by Rudolph Otto, trans. by J.M. Harvey, 1928.

ture, painting and fable of the Middle Ages was what attracted them to the Gothic. Examples of this numinous awe as applied to the Orient we shall notice in Beckford and Coleridge.

On the other hand, Michael Sadleir<sup>1</sup> makes some very suggestive remarks on the Gothic-romantic taste from the point of view of architecture. "The central idea of 'Gothicism' was," says Sadlier "to evolve an art different from Classicism. The most striking of the conventions adopted and exploited by 18th century designers, artists and writers was the convention of ruin - ruins not regarded as mementoes of the Grand tour of Italy and Greece by the classical enthusiasts, but ruins dilapidated for dilapidation's sake.

From the adoption of Gothic forms it was an easy transition to the adoption of similar mental attitudes. The ruin, the bristling silhouette, the flowing untidy lines of piled masonry or creeper-clad rocks, became in terms of emotional 'sensitivity', an elegant dis-equilibrium of the spirit. Thus were enthroned alike in visual and in ethical appreciation, ideals of luxuriance, of profuse ornament and of rather heady liberty. Houses, churches, pictures and furniture inspired by the Gothic (or its easily apprehended twin, the Oriental') mode reveal unmistakably the idea behind their 'Gothicism' or 'Orientalism'. They exaggerate precisely those elements in the basic styles agreeable to the anti-classicists of the time ..... To the Gothicism the medieval convention of ornament was more intriguing than the structural principles, that - if one may thus express it - the sound of a strange language allured the ear, but its grammar, and indeed much of its meaning, were ignored by minds indifferent to such technicalities." How truly all this applies to Orientalism, as well as Gothicism we shall see in our subsequent chapters.

Similarly, Orientalism was reinforced by the cult of the 'picturesque'. Sir Uvedale Price in his book On the Picturesque (1794) said that "the two opposite qualities of roughness and of sudden variation, joined to that of irregularity are the most efficient

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1. "The Northanger Novels, A foot-note to Jane Austen" by Michael Sadleir, The English Association Pamphlet No. 68, Nov. 1927.

causes of the picturesque",<sup>1</sup> and it is significant, that in addition to the Gothic buildings, rugged old oaks, the ass, rough water dog, shaggy goat, etc, which Price mentions as examples of the picturesque, the Eastern buildings are also considered picturesque by him. Not only the landscapes, but also the characters of the so-called Oriental poems, we shall find, possess the same kind of turbulent picturesqueness.

As for the picturesque in Nature, we shall find that following the works of the Oriental travellers, it was considered necessary by poets, to depict in their poems, scenery other than the English. Perhaps one of the earliest and the most notable examples of Oriental Nature regarded as picturesque occurs in the work of James Thomson, the author of The Seasons. In his section on Summer,<sup>2</sup> Thomson visits in imagination the various countries of historical or geographical note in the torrid zone, Abyssinia, Egypt, India etc and describes their flora, fauna, physical features & peculiarities of climate in considerable detail - "Great are the scenes with dreadful beauty crowned." The romantic poets were to make many similar imaginary pilgrimages to the East, and their idea of the picturesque was to be a similar amalgam of terror and beauty. But here we must also quote some very opposite remarks of Prof. Lane Cooper, who in his article "A Glance at Wordsworth's Reading" says: "The present writer ventures to hope that the suggestions and queries mentioned in this article) however inadequately developed, may stimulate a useful curiosity....and open up a comprehensive study of the relation between geographical discovery, during the latter part of the 18th century and that release of the imagination and renewal of poetic wonder, which characterise the so-called "return to nature" in the literature of romanticism ..... Might we not call this romantic "return to nature", the "return to geography", using the word geography in its most pregnant signification, 'the science that describe

1. On the Picturesque by Sir Uvedale Price, edit. 1796, I. p.62-81.

2. Summer, Lines 629-1102.

the surface of the earth, with its various peoples, animals and natural products."<sup>1</sup>

So far as Orientalism is concerned these remarks are more appropriate when applied to Southey's poetry than to Wordsworth's. In Southey, we shall also find how the idea of 'return to nature', of the simplicity of pastoral life, is applied to the Orient.

Two more aspects of Orientalism remain to be mentioned - the Exoticism of the senses, associated by Beckford, Wainwright, De Quincey and Keats, with the Orient; and what we may call, Beckford's and Byron's 'Satanic-Orientalism'. The latter of these we shall see was to have a whole host of third rate imitators, who wrote Byronic - Oriental tales in Verse, which as a genre / <sup>correspond</sup> to the Oriental prose-tale of the eighteenth century. But as these two aspects have been dealt with at length in the body of the work, we need not dilate on them here. These two aspects of Orientalism typify in different ways, the essentially romantic desire of escape on the part of the romantics. Since the society about them, observed in the main a certain humdrum commonsense in its behaviour, they transported the figures of their imagination to more congenial spheres, where the sub-conscious might manifest its immanence, without ridicule or too flagrant contradiction with experience, to the lands of faerie and legend, to a Medieval past, to the Orient, which if it never existed in the form in which Romanticism conceived it, is nevertheless in that form a most attractive playground for the imagination.

It has been found necessary to give extensive quotations, and long explanations in this introduction to make clear the scope of the thesis, which its title but inadequately expresses. In addition to these general aspects of Orientalism the 'sources', genuinely Oriental, or pseudo-Oriental, as the case may be, of the poems have been studied in detail, and some new ones 'discovered'. As in the study of 'sources' it is only possible to be brief, at the cost of inaccuracy or superficiality, the writer has chosen the lesser

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1. Modern Language Notes vol. XXII No. 3. for March, 1907; p 83-89 and No. 4. April 1907. p. 110-117.



THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EAST.

The full development of Oriental studies in England may be said to date from the seventeenth century. This century saw the establishment, by Sir Thomas Adams and Archbishop Laud, respectively, of Arabic chairs at both Cambridge (1632) and Oxford (1636), of which the latter was filled by the illustrious Edward Pococke and the former by the equally illustrious Abraham Wheelock. The Oriental scholarship in the seventeenth century, however, was almost synonymous with Biblical scholarship. The controversies of the Protestant and Catholic divines made it necessary to study the scriptures in their original languages. It was discovered that Hebrew could not be thoroughly understood without a knowledge of the cognate dialects, and the entire family of languages called Semitic was diligently studied both in England and the continent. The highest peak of English scholarship was reached in the compilation of the great Polyglott Bible<sup>1</sup> which uses nine different languages, Greek, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian and Latin. All the great Oriental scholars of the time, James Usher, Abraham Wheelock, Edmund Castell, collaborated in the production of this great work, marking an epoch in Semitic scholarship.<sup>2</sup>

The increasing trade between England and the Levant engaged others besides theologians to study Arabic and Syriac. The chaplaincies of the merchant companies of England, especially the Levant Company at Aleppo, furnished important opportunities for the cultivation of Oriental languages. The greatest of these chaplains was Edward Pococke (1604-1691), who in 1636 was appointed by Laud as the first professor of

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1. Biblia Sacra Polyglotta. Lond. 1657, folio.  
Edited by Brian Walton.

2. In 1669 Edmund Castell, Semitic scholar and professor of Arabic at Cambridge, brought out his valuable Supplement to the Polyglott, Lexicon Heptaglotton.

Arabic at Oxford. Pococke's Specimen Historiae Arabum (1649) consisting of elaborate essays on Arabian history, science, literature and religion, a work of immense erudition and sound scholarship, was a source of reference for many succeeding Orientalists.

The other great Oriental scholar who succeeded Pococke as Laudian Professor of Arabic (1691) at Oxford was Thomas Hyde (1636-1703) whose work Historia religionis Veterum Persarum (The History of the religion of the Ancient Persians, Parthians and Medes ..... ) published in 1700 may be taken as representing the high water mark of knowledge on this subject at the close of the 17th century.<sup>1</sup> Hyde not only used the works of his predecessors - Henry Lord's Religion of the Parsees (1630), Sanson's De Hodierno Statu Persiae, and the narratives of the travellers Pedro Texeira, Tavernier, Thevenot, Chardin, Petis de la Croix, but also a number of Persian, Turkish, Hebrew and Syriac manuscripts. Hyde's work remained the authority on the subject till the publication of Anquetil du Perron's great work, Zend Avesta, Ouvrage de Zoroastre in 1771.

Simon Ockley (1678-1720) who was appointed to the chair of Arabic at Cambridge (1711) was the last of that remarkable group of seventeenth century scholars by whose exertions the name of "Oriental literature" was naturalized into the English language. Ockley's "The Improvement of Human Reason exhibited in the life of Hai ebn Yokdhan - " (1708), a translation from the Arabic of Ibn-at-Tufail, possesses interest as a link between the works of the seventeenth century Orientalists like Dr Pococke and the Oriental tales of the eighteenth century. But the chief work

1. Another monumental work to be published at the end of the 17th century was the Bibliothèque Orientale - 1697 of D'Herbelot, the great French Orientalist. This encyclopaedia of oriental knowledge has been a mine of reference for all subsequent orientalist.

5. Travels of Chardin into Persia and the E. Indies, Lond. 1705.

by which Ockley achieved a wide popularity was "The Conquest of Syria, Persia and Egypt by the Saracens" (1708), known under the less accurate title of the History of the Saracens. With all its inaccuracies Ockley's History became a secondary classic and formed for generations the main source of the average notions of Early Mohammadan History. Gibbon used it freely in his "Decline and Fall".

In addition to the scholars mentioned above, the Eastern travellers helped to furnish information about the countries they visited. "The addition made by such men to our knowledge .. furnished meditations to the philosopher, scenes to the painter and songs to the poet: they open new fields to the speculations of commerce and give a surer direction to the policy of states."<sup>1</sup> Prominent among the seventeenth century travellers were the Frenchmen F. Bernier,<sup>2</sup> Jean de Thevenot,<sup>3</sup> J. B. Tavernier,<sup>4</sup> and Jean Chardin.<sup>5</sup> Of these the voyages of Bernier and Chardin are the more remarkable, the former for the lively style of writing and latter for its authenticity of facts. Bernier, 'the most instructive of the East Indian travellers', remained for twelve years in India, eight of which he acted as physician to Aurangzebe, and had ample opportunities for studying the intimate politics of the Moghuls and the condition of India "within the horrid glare of a Mohammadan Sceptre". Among lively descriptions of the Government of India, historic cities of Delhi and

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1. Travels in the Mogul Empire by F. Bernier, translated by Irving Brock, 1826. Preface.
2. A History of the Empire of the Mogol, collection of travels through Turkey into Persia and the E. Indies. Translated from the French, 1684.
3. The Travels of Mons. de Thevenot into the Levant in three parts Turkey, Persia and the E. Indies, newly done out of French by D. Lovel, London, 1687.
4. A collection of travels through Turkey into Persia and the E. Indies and the voyage of Aurangzebe from Delhi to the Valley of Kachemire, Lond. 1684.
5. Travels by Sir J. Chardin into Persia and the E. Indies, Lond. 1686.

Agra, Bernier also gives an account of the "degrading and unhallowed rites of the Hindoos - the crushing of Juggernaut's car - the juggles of lustful and profligate Brahmins, the immolations, often compulsory of females - the drowning of the sick and the dying" - picturesque details that caught the fancy of the romantic poets. The description of the Journey of Aurangzebe from Delhi to the Kingdom of Kashmere "the terrestrial Paradise of India," with a military retinue of fifty thousand, the description of the Taj Mahal at Agra, and a host of other graphic descriptions of India opened the door to a new world of wonders, furnishing "Songs to the poet!" Dryden employed Bernier's travels for his drama Aurengzebe & Coleridge, Southey and Moore, as we shall see later, were also to make use of them. Taverniers travels contain equally glowing descriptions of the Court of Aurangzebe and the "Peacock Throne", "the Kohinoor Diamond," Silks, Spices, Musk and the Mines of Golconda. The grandeur of the Moghul Court was ~~the~~ for the first time graphically presented to the eyes of the West by Bernier and Tavernier while Chardin's travels brought prosaic but authentic first hand accounts of Persia and the East Indies.

On seeing the popularity of these French books of travel an Englishman, John Fryer, published an account of his travels, A New Account of East India and Persia in eight letters ---- London 1698, a very useful and picturesque account of the Countries that he visited. Other early travellers in India who deserve mention were, Jean Struys<sup>1</sup> the Dutchman & Sir Thomas Roe the Stewart diplomat who was the ambassador of James I at the court of "the Great Mogoar, King of the Orientall Indyes, of Condahy, of Chismer and of Corason", wrote a very readable journal<sup>2</sup> relating his life at the Court of Jehangir.

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1. The Voyages and Travels of Jean Struys, through Italy, Greece, Turkey, Media, Persia ---- done out of Dutch by I. Morrison; London, 1684.
  2. The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Country of the Great Mogul; in Churchill's collection of Voyages and Travels, 1707-1747.

The first decade of the 18th century marks the introduction into England, through France, of the Arabian Nights and kindred tales, Oriental and pseudo-Oriental; a phenomenon of far greater significance in stimulating the study of Oriental literature in Europe, than anything else before or since. More credit is due to these collections of stories in popularising Oriental literature in the West than to the combined efforts of all the Orientalists and travellers. Many Oriental Collections of tales like the Gesta Romanorum, Disciplina Clericalis, Sandibar, Fables of Bidpai,<sup>1</sup> & Barlam and Josaphat, had drifted into Europe by way of Syria, Byzantium, Italy and Spain, during the Middle Ages, but none had caught the popular imagination in the manner of the Arabian Nights, because none had the time and the manner of introduction that fell to the lot of these tales.

In 1704 there appeared at Paris the first four volumes<sup>2</sup> of a collection of Arabic Stories called Les Mille et une Nuits, translated by Antoine Galland<sup>3</sup> (1646-1715), an Orientalist and archaeologist of high reputation in his day. In France the interest in the Orient had been growing in connection with the Colonial and commercial expansion of the country in the reign of Louis XIV. Merchants, Jesuit missionaries, travellers and ambassadors had returned with information and entertaining stories. M. Galland was one of the Oriental scholars sent by Louis XIV to the assistance of M. de Nointel, his ambassador at Constantinople. Galland during his residence and researches

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1. Fables of Bidpai first English version by Sir Thomas North, entitled The Morall Philosophic of Doni --- Englished out of Italian by Thomas North --- (1570). The book had many 18th century versions.
2. In 1705, vols V & VI of the Arabian Nights appeared, In 1706 Vol. VII; in 1712 vols IX & X; in 1717 vols XI & XII, two years after Galland's death.
3. Galland also wrote "The Origin and Progress of Coffee" (1699). Europe owes its use of coffee to Arabia and first interest in Arabia was taken on account of the coffee trade with Yemen in the 16th century. Coffee houses were first opened in Constantinople and Venice. In London the Coffee houses date from 1652. It is curious to observe that the England of Queen Anne enjoyed the vogue of coffee at the same time as that of the Arabian Nights.

first met with "The Book of the Thousand and One Nights". The translation of these stories on his return to Europe displayed new scenes to the eye of imagination and fancy. Richard Burton<sup>1</sup> a later translator of the Nights speaks of Galland's version as follows: "Abridged to one fourth, mutilated fragmentary, and paraphrastic though the tales were, the glamour of imagination, the marvel of the miracles, and the gorgeous/and magnificence<sup>ness</sup> of the scenery at once secured an exceptional success: it was a revelation in romance and the public recognised that it stood in presence of a monumental literary work. France was afire with delight at something so new, so unconventional, so entirely without purpose, religious, moral or philosophical; the Oriental Wanderer in his stately robes was a startling surprise to the easy-going and utterly corrupt Europe of the ancien regime with its indecently tight garments and perfectly loose morals".

Galland's fine literary flair, his pleasing style, his polished taste and perfect tact at once made his work take high rank in the world of letters. Though he abridged, amplified, substituted and distorted facts and phrases, as the later Arabists have pointed out, his knowledge of Eastern languages proves that he erred mostly for the purpose of popularising his work and his success has indeed, justified his means. Literary license was the order of Galland's day and it is not surprising to find him correcting and concealing the defects and the grotesqueness, expunging the childish indecencies and the wild orgies of the original, generally rejecting the proverbs, epigrams and moral reflections which form the pith and marrow of the book; - in short clothing the bare body in the best of Parisian suits. Galland was a born storyteller and produced a great French story book. Without his genius it is conceivable that the Nights would never have taken the

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1. R. Burton in his excellent Terminal Essay to the Nights vol. VIII, pp 90 of the Library Edition of the translation of the Nights.

1828, vol. VIII, pp 110, 112. See Comment

place with the West, that they have done. Besides, his version was highly composite, the manuscript which he used is still the oldest known and in many respects the best and the most authentic.

At least as early as 1707, six volumes of the Nights were rendered into English by an unknown translator, often called "the Grub street translator", under a long descriptive title beginning with Arabian Nights Entertainments.-- The popularity of the Nights in England rivalled their vogue in France, judging from the fact that in 1713, or nine years after Galland's 'Editio Princeps' appeared, they had already reached a fourth issue. "When the work first appeared in England", says Henry Weber,<sup>1</sup> "it seems to have made a considerable impression on the public. Pope in 1720 sent two volumes (French? or English?) to Bishop Atterbury,<sup>2</sup> without making any remarks on it; but from his very silence it may be presumed that he was not displeased with the perusal. The bishop who does not appear to have joined a relish for the flights of imagination to his other estimable qualities, expressed his dislike of these tales pretty strongly, and stated it to be his opinion, founded on the frequent description of female dress, that they were the work of some French woman. The Arabian Nights, however quickly made their way to public favour". Southey declared many years later that "the Arabian Tales have lost their metaphorical rubbish in passing through the filter of a French translation"; while Carlyle is said to have characteristically termed them "downright lies" and forbidden the house to such "unwholesome literature".

The Arabian Nights were followed in France and afterwards in England by collections of similar stories, some genuine translations from Arabic and Persian and some mere imitations. Persian Tales or the Thousand and One Days, translated by Mr. Ambrose

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1. Introduction to his collection Tales of the East 3 vols. Edinburgh 1812. A useful survey to which Conant and the present writer are both indebted. Miss

2. Bishop Atterbury thought the "Arabian Tales" "So extravagant, monstrous and disproportionate" that they "gave a judicious eye pain". Works of A. Pope --- edited by Rev. W.L. Bowles, London 1806, vol. VIII; pp 110, 112. See Conant pp 230; 244.

Phillips London (1714 - 1715),<sup>1</sup> The Persian and the Turkish Tales Compleat (sic) --- by Pétis de la Croix (assisted by A.R. le Sage) translated into English by Dr. King and several other hands, London (1714), were the two best known collections, while The Turkish Tales appear also in the latter of the above two collections. Conant has given a detailed account<sup>2</sup> of these and other similar collections in her book The Oriental Tale in England. She speaks of them as follows;

"The time was ripe in France for this new literary material. At the beginning of the new century there were especial reasons for the welcome given to Oriental stories and to Perrault's fairy tales, the chief reason being a natural reaction from the dominant classicism of Boileau..... From Fairyland and the Far East two streams began to flow into the main current of French Romanticism-- Galland and Pétis de la Croix --- found an enthusiastic reception. Their collections were succeeded by a swarm of preposterous imitations, such as those of Gueullette. --- Fantastic elements from the fairy tales of Perrault and his successors were mingled with the extravagances of Oriental Stories --- Satire on both Oriental Tales and fairy stories inevitably appeared and proved a sharp weapon in the hands of Hamilton, Caylus and a score of others. Philosophical satirists like Montesquieu (Lettres Persanes, 1721) found the Oriental tale a convenient medium for scarcely veiled criticism of French Society and the versatile genius of Voltaire perceived the latent capabilities of this fiction as a vehicle for philosophy as well as for satire ..... In England the general development of the Oriental tale was similar partly because of the direct influence of numerous translations from the French and partly because of the presence of tendencies in England analogous to those in France. The propensity to moralize and to philosophize, the love of satire and the incipient romantic spirit were common to both countries, although present --- in varying degrees. In England this fiction falls naturally into four

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1. See Conant, pp.13 ff; 273.  
 2. Conant pp. xxiii ff.

groups, - imaginative, moralistic, philosophic and satiric."

The authoress expands the above hypothesis in the course of four chapters, with specific examples of each class and in the final chapter presents a literary estimate of the genre as a whole. Thus the works coming under Conant's survey are The Arabian Nights and similar tales, Beckford's Vathek, the Oriental aspect of the Essays of Steele and Addison, Addison's Vision of Mirza, Goldsmith's Citizen of the World, Johnson's Rasselas and a host of other minor works of the kind. For us, therefore, these authors are important only in so far as they mark a definite stage in the progress of Oriental studies and act as an influence, on the writers of the 19th century. For further information the reader should refer to Conant's book.

The whole of 18th century Oriental literature is in one way or other a product of the influence and imitation of the Arabian Nights. But though the Arabian Nights were welcomed, there was no sudden efflorescence of imaginative and fanciful fiction as in France. In England the emphasis fell, as can be expected upon philosophy and morals rather than on satire. Addison and Steele<sup>1</sup> first began to improve upon the stories of the Arabian Nights and use them as convenient vehicles to point their dainty morals and this diadactic tradition was intensified by Johnson in his Rasselas<sup>2</sup> (1759). Numerous other writers e.g. J. Hawkesworth, Count Hamilton, Eyles Irwin, John Scott and others, tried their hands at writing Oriental tales. But as Conant points out "the moralizing tendency and the rationalistic mood were two barriers opposed to the free development of imaginative Oriental fiction." The charm of the Arabian Nights lies in a sense of escape from the matter of fact surroundings of a work-a-day world, into a Wonderland where all probability is outraged and all possibility out-stripped; where an ordinary human being can assume all

1. See Spectator No; 535; Guardian No; 162. Also Spectator Nos; 584, 585, 583 etc. Guardian No. 167. And Conant pp 79.

2. For Johnson's Oriental tales, etc. See Idler Nos. 99, 101. Ramble Nos; 120, 190, 204, 205. Conant 118 ff. For the Prince of Abissinia (sic), a Tale ( - Rasselas) London 1759; see Conant 140 ff.

those powers which he hankers for in vain in every day life; he can summon mighty spirits to work his will, however whimsical, he can transport himself in an eye-twinkling wherever he wishes, he can ruin cities and build palaces of gold and silver, gems and marble, he can partake of delicate viands, choicest fruits and delicious drinks and bring any number of beloveds to his arms; - in short he can satisfy all his latent desires that are baffled in life. It is in this "grand exploration of the Wonderful", that the joy of the Arabian Nights lies - and not in its morality or philosophy or even a sense of character. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the 18th century writers, with their religious dread of enthusiasm and abandon, of romance in every form, should miss the spirit of the Arabian Nights. Their canons of rationality, order and good sense kept them from appreciating fully this wild, unconventional and a-moral book. How these tales appealed to the Romantics we shall see later. At the present moment we are concerned only in marking the failure of the Nights to be assimilated into the body of the eighteenth century current literature. The only exception to this was Beckford's Vathek (1786) "a sporadic and isolated phenomenon" in the 18th century fiction of whose romantic aspect we shall speak later. Beckford and John Scott (Oriental Eclogues 1782) constitute a link between Johnson's, Collins' and other eighteenth century writers' method of Orientalizing by a few phrases here and there, and that of Southey Moore and Byron, later, who alluded copiously to the Oriental writing of the scholars, historians and travellers. It is a characteristic of Southey, Moore and other romantic writers' attitude towards their eighteenth century predecessors that they make no reference to the Oriental tales of Addison, Steele, Johnson or Goldsmith, but instead, go directly to the original Oriental sources of information. - This lack of influence of the 18th century writers gives me another reason, beside the one I have already given, of not dwelling on

them too long.

Before concluding the account of Oriental Studies in the 18th century and passing on to the new era of scholarly studies heralded by Sir William Jones, it would be proper to take account here of another significant event - the translation of the Koran (Al - Qur'an) by George Sale (1697? - 1736), in 1734. Perhaps no other single Oriental Book, except the Bible and the Arabian Nights, has aroused more interest in the Western world than the Koran. From the time of the Saracenic Conquest of Spain in the eighteenth century, it had been the custom of the theologians of that age and many subsequent ages to speak of Islam and the Koran in terms of contempt and horror, to regard Moslems as idolators and their religion a compound of all conceivable abominations. The divines of the seventeenth century, of whom we have spoken, did not find it worth while translating this heretical book, even for the purposes of refutation. Two Latin translations existed; one by Robert Retenensis and Hermannus Delmata, done in 1143, a very unsatisfactory translation; the other a very literal translation, by Father Lewis Marraci, with notes and refutation, published at Padua ( 1698 ). The only English translation by Alexander Ross (1590 - 1654), from the French version by Andre du Ryer, issued in 1649, was full of mean language and the mistakes of both translators. Humphrey Prideaux, (1648-1724) had published a Life of Mahomet or The True Nature of Imposture fully displayed in the life of Mahomet --- 1697, a work that was very popular at the time. But as a translator Sale had the field almost entirely to himself. Sale's translation appeared in November 1734,<sup>1</sup> with notes and a valuable

1. Sale's Translation reprinted 1764, 1795, 1801, 1826, 1870, 1876, 1877.

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preliminary discourse - displaying a remarkable acquaintance not only with the works of European writers upon Mohammedanism and its history but also with the native Arab commentators. One of the reasons for translating the Koran, Sale tells us in the preface, was, "to enable us effectually to expose the imposture"; but, he goes on to say " I have/<sup>not</sup>in speaking of Mohammed and his Koran allowed myself to use those opprobrious appellations and unmannerly expressions which seem to be the strongest arguments of several who have written against them". The result of taking such a liberal attitude was that the Society for the promotion of Christian Knowledge of which Sale was a member, did not view his translation of the Koran in a favourable light and suspected his orthodoxy. Gibbon called "our honest and learned translator, Sale --- half a Mussulman."<sup>1</sup> Sale's translation and preliminary discourse, despite a few errors, have been a mine of reference for all subsequent writers, on the faith of Islam and the Mohammedan peoples.<sup>2</sup> Nearly all the Oriental writers of the 19th century referred to Sale for information on Islam, and kindred matters. Mention here must also be made of a few of the many later religious writers and missionaries who in their controversial religious books helped to disseminate the knowledge about the East. The most famous missionaries of their time were the Baptist Missionaries William Carey (who landed in Bengal in 1794), Marshman and Ward, who found a refuge at the hands of the E. I. Company. In England it was feared that their efforts at conversion would lead to insurrection and risk to the Empire (See Edinburgh Rev. 1808). The Ramayana of Valmiki was also translated from Sanskrit by W. Carey and J. Marshman (1806-1810).

Thomas Maurice, (1754-1824), Vicar of Cudham, Kent wrote

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1. Gibbon's Decline and Fall chap. XLVI.
2. In 1739, Hamerston published "The Lives and Memorable Actions of many illustrious Persons of the Eastern Nations, the work designed and begun by Sale.

seven volumes of Indian Antiquities London (1793), dissertation  
 historical, geographical and religious, <sup>an</sup> introductory to his  
History of Hindostan<sup>1</sup> 3 vols, London (1795-1798), in which he  
 discusses among many other things, "the pure system of Primeval  
 theology" of India, Persia Egypt and Greece, the "astronomical  
 mythology" of Hindostan, the purpose being to refute "Mr. Volney's<sup>2</sup>,  
 impious attempt to mythologise away the whole of the Christian  
 system by insisting that the history and miracles of Christ were  
 borrowed from those of the Indian Creeshna". Maurice, however  
 speaks with contempt of these "horrors of atheistical France".  
 He also wrote a series of letters to the Episcopal Bench, called  
Brahmnical Fraud detected London (1812), and The Indian Sceptic  
confuted and Brahman Frauds exposed, London (1806), works whose  
 nature is apparent from their titles. A work of a less contro-  
 versial nature was that of Rev. Samuel Burder - Oriental Customs;  
Illustration of the Sacred Scriptures by an application of the  
manners and Customs of the Eastern Nations, London (1802) "The  
 language of that divine book (especially of the old Testament)  
 being Oriental and very often figurative and hyperbolical ----  
 cannot be understood without a knowledge of the things from which  
 such figures are taken, which are natural properties and particu-  
 lar manners of the countries to which they refer --- "3 Taking  
 these words of Sir Jean Chardin, the Eastern traveller as a motto  
 Burder composed a very learned book in explanation of the metaphors  
 and allusions of the Old Testament. Many Oriental poets e.g.  
 Hafiz, Khakani etc. are alluded to, in support of the contentions  
 brought forward. Although the purpose of the book is religious  
 it brings together much useful information on Oriental literature  
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1. The History of Hindostan, its Arts and Sciences, London 1795-1798, gives only the Ancient Indian History up to the time of Alexander. Maurice followed it with The Modern History of Hindostan, London 1802-1810.
2. Volney (Constantin Francois Chasse-Boeuf) 1757-1820) French Sevant, author of Les Ruines, ou meditations sur les revolutions des empires, ( an essay on the philosophy of history), 1791.
3. pp VI Preface to Travels in Persia by J. Chardin (1686) and the East Indies.

and customs. Less interesting but typical of this kind of writing are, Claudius Buchanan's (1786-1815) "Christian Researches in Asia, with notices of the translation of the Scriptures into Oriental languages", Cambridge, 1811; Charles Forster's Mohametan-ism Unveiled 1829, and The Historical Geography of Arabia (1844), or the Patriarchal evidences of revealed religion, also by the same author.<sup>1</sup> Elijah Hoole's Personal Narrative of a Mission to the South of India from 1820-1828, Manchester, 1829, describes the Wesleyan mission to India and voices the belief of such missionaries --- "that India has been allotted to England in the distribution of power by Him who is the sole Arbiter of human events, with the design that it might become a field as open as it is extensive for the propagation of the Gospel --- cannot for a moment be doubted by the enlightened and pious observer of the operations of Providence"<sup>2</sup>. Books such as these have no literary merit, and their only importance for our purposes is that they served as sources of information to later Oriental writers whose ideas about the East were based almost entirely on books.

The efforts of the missionaries constitute only a minor channel through which information regarding India began to reach England at this time. The main source was the East India Company and its employees. The East India Company was formed at the end of the sixteenth century to compete with the growing trade of the Dutch merchants. From the day Queen Elizabeth granted her Royal Charter on Dec. 31, 1600, a new link was established between England and India. Although in the early days of the Company no effort was made to study the literature of India, the early vicissitudes of trade, and the disputes between the Dutch and the English culminating in the "massacre of Amboyna," kept the popular interest about India aroused. In the reign of Charles II, the company grew to a great Chartered Company and from 1689 began its

1. Forster alludes to Gibbon and Prof. Whitehead of Oxford as "eloquent and insidious infidel writers" and points out their "fallacies."

2. Preface to the Narrative.

ruling career. Disputes arose in the Parliament regarding the transactions of the Company; hostilities with France began, bringing into prominence the names of Dupleix and Clive and finally Clive's victory at Plassey in 1757, established the E. I. Coy: as a ruling body.

Besides the directors who collected and published such statistical, economic and geographical information as was necessary to the profitable management of the trade, no book of information about India appeared before<sup>1</sup> the translation from Dutch of Abraham Roger's Open door to Hidden Heathendom, Amsterdam 1651. Roger, who was a Dutch Chaplain at Pulicat (1631-1641), was the first to publish a translation from Sanskrit<sup>2</sup> into any European language and the first to mention the Vedas and give an account of the Brahmins.

Captain Robert Knox's An Historical relation of the Island of Ceylon in the East Indies, London 1681, on the other hand, is the first account of Ceylon in the English language and tells of the author's captivity, with fourteen other Englishmen, in the interior of the Island for nineteen years and a half and his miraculous escape in 1679 - a delightful and trustworthy book and very popular at the time<sup>3</sup>.

Other books of the same kind are Jonas Hanway's, "An historical account of the British trade over the Caspian Sea, with a journal of travel from London through Russia into Persia and back again---, (1753) and John Henry Grose's "A Voyage to the East Indies --- 1757.

The serious scholarly study of the literature of India, however, did not begin till the time of Warren Hastings (1732-1818). Lord North's Regulation Act (1773), had raised the Governor

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1. The Letters of Father Thomas Stephens who went to Goa in 1579 and settled there, have been preserved by Purchas . Also the lively descriptions of adventures of Master Ralph Fitch, merchant of London who travelled in the East from 1583 - 1591, preserved by Hakluyt and Purchas, were of great use to those who sought to promote an English East India Company.

2. The translation of "Bhartrihari's Satakas."

3. Reprinted in J. Harris's "Navigantium Bibliotheca" vol. II, with additions from the History of J. Ribeyro, folio Lond.1705. Also printed 1817, 1818, 1877.

of Bengal - Warren Hastings, to the rank of Governor-General and in 1784, Pitt's India Bill created a board of control as a department of the English Government. The government of India thus passed from the Company to the Governor General and the Ministry. On account of these far-reaching political changes, it became necessary to study the basis of civilization in India; in other words, to become acquainted with the religion, the history, the codes of legislation, and the popular traditions of India.

Great popular interest was aroused at this time about everything concerning India by the Impeachment of Warren Hastings. Burke's famous speeches, "On Mr. Fox's East India Bill," (1783). "On the Nabob of Arcot's Debts", (1785), and the series of speeches on the trial of Warren Hastings, contain vivid and moving descriptions of the ancient civilization of India and its present state under the rule of merchants intent only on profits and corrupt gain. Burke though he never set foot in India, knew <sup>more</sup> about India than most of his contemporaries. "I believe" he said modestly, "I have been as conversant with the manners and customs of the East as most persons whose business has not directly led them to that country." And what is a matter of greater surprise is the fact that Burke's view of India was not the conventional romantic view of his time. Lord Morley summed up Burke's view of India in the following words, splendid almost as Burke's own: "From the beginning to the end of the fourteen years in which Burke pursued his campaign against Hastings, we see in every page that India which ever glowed before his vision was not the home of picturesque usages and melodramatic costume but rather, in his own words, the land of princes, once of great dignity, authority and opulence; of an ancient and venerable priesthood, the guides of the people while living and their consolation in death; of a nobility and antiquity and renown; of millions of ingenious mechanics, and millions of diligent tillers of the earth, and finally, the land where might be found almost all the religions professed by men, the Brahminical, the Mussulman, the Eastern and Western Christian." Such a temperate and realistic view does credit to Burke's ~~sense~~ of scholarship.

Whatever may be the fate of the name of Warren Hastings

in the world of politics, he gave encouragement and aid in his power to a group of talented individuals who devoted themselves to the severe study of the Indian literature, manners and history; ardent scholars who loved knowledge for its own sake. Trifling as was the amount of patronage bestowed, it was the principal cause of the literary treasures of India being opened to the wonder and admiration of the world.

Warren Hastings summoned eleven Brahmins to Calcutta to compile a code of Hindu laws and customs from the old Sanskrit law books and N. B. Halhed, a young 'writer' of the East India Company, was asked to translate this code from a Persian translation into English. Halhed's translation "A Code of Gentoo Laws or Ordinations of the Pundits --- " appeared in 1776<sup>1</sup> and marked the beginning of a scholarly era of translations and study of Indian literature. To Halhed also belongs the credit of being the first to draw attention to the affinity between Sanskrit words and 'those of Persian, Arabic and even Latin and Greek'. It was Sir William Jones, however who inaugurated the study of the science of philology. Nine years later (1785) a young merchant, J. Wilkins sent forth his translation of the Bhagavad - Gita<sup>2</sup> the great philosophical poem and two years later the collection of Hindu stories, known as the Hitopadesa,<sup>3</sup> the original source of the famed fables of Bidpai or Pilpai. Wilkins was the first Englishman to gain a thorough grasp of Sanskrit, and as such was greatly esteemed by Sir William Jones, who stated that but for Wilkins' aid he would never have learned Sanskrit.

In 1789 Sakuntala, a drama of Kalidasa, 'the Shakespeare of India' was given to the West by Sir William Jones. This drama showed to the West that India

1. A Code of Gentoo Laws 1776; 1777; 1781 and several more editions. Translated into French. Halhed also wrote A Grammar of Bengali language Hoogly 1778.
2. Bagvad - Gita, issued in London by the E. I. Coy. with an introductory letter by Warren Hastings, 1785.
3. Hitopadesa, Bath 1787. Wilkins also issued new edition of Richardson's Persian, Arabic and English Dictionary, 1806; and a Grammar of Sanskrit language, 1808.

possessed something more valuable than bales of Calico, rich spices and gems. The attention not only of men of taste<sup>1</sup> but also of scholars<sup>2</sup> was naturally attracted towards these works and efforts were made in Europe to study and master the Sanskrit in which they were composed. This brings us to the great Oriental scholar, Sir William Jones (1746-1794) to whom Europe owes much of its subsequent interest in Indian literature.

It does not come within the scope of this thesis to deal with all the works of this remarkably versatile scholar, nor even to consider all his Oriental writings. We shall be concerned only with that aspect of his Oriental writings which helped in the furtherance of the study of Oriental literature in England. In 1768, Christian VII of Denmark had brought to England a life of Nadir Shah in Persian, which Jones was asked to translate. The translation appeared in 1770, and set Jones on the path of Oriental scholarship. In 1771, in a 'Dissertation sur la littérature Orientale', Jones defended the Oxford Scholars against the strictures of Anquetil du Perron,<sup>4</sup> the French Orientalist, published in

1. Prof. Max Müller in his History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature 1859, Introduction, says of Sakuntala. "The first appearance of this beautiful specimen of dramatic art created at the time a sensation throughout Europe and the most rapturous praise was bestowed upon it by men of high authority in matters of taste -- Goethe was one of the greatest admirers of Sakuntala, as may be seen from the lines written in his Italian travels at Naples, and from his well known epigram: (Muller gives the translation in English, in addition to the German original.)  
 "Wilt thou the blossoms of Spring and the fruits that are late in season,  
 Wilt thou have charms and delights, wilt thou have strength and support,  
 Wilt thou with one short word encompass the earth and the heaven,  
 All is said if I name only, Sacontala, thee."
2. F. Schlegel (1808) "Upon the language and Wisdom of the Hindus," where he derives the Indo Germanic family from India.
3. The History of the life of Nadir Shah of Persia, founded upon Tarikhe-Nadri by Mohammed Mahdi ibu Mohammad Nasir Lond. 1773.
4. Anquetil du Perron (1754-1771), who after several years of labour in acquiring and translating produced his epoch-making volumes of Zond Avesta ouvrage de Zoroastre in 1771.

1. In the original manuscript, Anquetil was mentioned by his illustrious compe-

the latter's translation of the Zendavesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion. The appearance of Anquetil's monumental work in 1771 was far from at once convincing the whole learned world of the great services, which he had rendered to science. The general disappointment found its most ferocious expression in the famous letter<sup>1</sup> of Sir William Jones. This letter, written in French on the model of Voltaire, is equally remarkable for the vigour and grace of its style and the deplorable violence and injustice of its contents; but time fully vindicated Anquetil du Perron, and took its revenge on Jones, whose letter now possesses only a historic interest. For the time being, Jones' opinion, on the strength of his reputation, carried great weight, especially in England<sup>2</sup>. We find his scepticism as to the genuineness of the Avesta echoed by Sir John Chardin and Richardson (the celebrated Persian lexicographer). Jones published several works of scholarship on Oriental subjects in addition to his labours as a jurist, till, in 1783 he was appointed a judge of the high Court at Calcutta. The ten years from 1783 to his death in 1794, which Jones spent in India were the most important of his life.

Many Englishmen, notably Warren Hastings, who had spent long years in India had become well versed in the language and literature of the country, but they were too much occupied with the practical work of administration to embody their knowledge and researches in literary and scientific form. Jones, on the other hand, came to India with a mind imbued not only with enthusiasm for Oriental studies, but with a wider knowledge of classical and other literatures than men sent to India in their early manhood ordinarily possessed. No subject was too abstruse or too trifling for Jones to investigate;— Hindu chronology, music, chess, botany

1. See Vol. IV pp/ 583-613 of the Works of Sir William Jones, Lond. 1799.

2. In France Anquetil, was vindicated by his illustrious compatriot Sylvestre de Sacy.

and Zoology were all studied by him. But the study of language and literature remained his favourite pursuit.

Jones' first work was the foundation of the Bengal Asiatic Society in 1784, - the parent of all the Asiatic Societies in Europe. The Society was formed on the 15th of January, 1784, at Calcutta, on the plan of those established already in the principal cities of Europe (chiefly the Royal Society of London). Its purpose, as outlined by the President,<sup>1</sup> Sir William Jones, in his first discourse,<sup>2</sup> was the inquiry "into the history and antiquities, the natural productions, arts, Sciences and literature of Asia;" the investigations being "bounded only by the geographical limits of Asia". The intended objects of the inquiries within these spacious limits were to be, "Man and Nature; whatever is performed by the one, or produced by the other." It was with these memorable words that this first great Asiatic Society supplied the impulse for the serious study of the hitherto neglected literatures of Asia. The transactions of the Society, called the "Asiatick Researches,"<sup>3</sup> printed at Calcutta in 1788 for the first time, and in London in 1801, constituted dissertations historical, geographical, literary, medical, zoological botanical, mathematical, astronomical and religious. Sir William Jones' eleven anniversary discourses<sup>4</sup> to the Society as president and his contributions to the Asiatick Researches, form the backbone of the Society and mark an era in the study of

1. Warren Hastings declined the Presidentship and was the Patron of the Society. Prominent among members were, John Hyde, William Chambers, Francis Gladwin, Charles Wilkins, John Scott and David Anderson.
2. pp IX - XVI of the Asiatic Researches vol. I (1788).
3. (a) Asiatic Researches or Transactions of the Society instituted in Bengal for inquiring into the History and antiquities, the arts, Sciences and literature of Asia - vol. 1-20 Calcutta 1788-1839. (b) Asiatic Researches etc.-- printed verbatim from the Calcutta edition vol. 1-12 Lond. 1801-1812.
4. The titles of these 'Discourses' are: 'on the Orthography of Asiatic words', 1784; 'On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India', 1785; 'On the Hindus', 1786; 'On the Arabs', 1787; 'On the Tartar's', 1788; 'On the Persians', 1789; 'On the Chinese', 1790; 'On the borderers, mountaineers, and islanders of Asia', 1791; 'On the Origin and families of nations', 1792; 'On Asiatic History Civil and Natural', 1793; 'On the Philosophy of the Asiatics', 1794 (Asiatic Researches vol. 1-4)

the Indian languages, literature and philosophy. A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine of May 1801 justly remarks: "These discourses must be assumed the most valuable of all Sir William Jones' writings. Taken collectively, they add largely to the stock of general knowledge, for they contain a variety of new and curious materials whereby the philosopher may illustrate the history of man and the politician may advance the wealth, prosperity and happiness of nations. As to the style of the dissertations, it is always easy, flowing, perspicuous and highly classical, sometimes rising into eloquence and never sinking into lameness; it is occasionally tedious owing to an extreme amplification of the periods". It is in the third Anniversary discourse "On the Hindus",<sup>1</sup> that the memorable words occur, that marked the beginning of the Science of philology.<sup>2</sup> But it is as a pioneer of Sanskrit learning, and not a philologer, that Jones is remembered by posterity. He felt it to be his life's mission to communicate some of his knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, Oriental literature to the Western world by means of translations of the Asiatic classics. His translations included versions of the Hitopadesa of Pilpay, of Kalidasa's Sakuntala, of various Hindustani hymns and of some extracts from the Vedas. Such was Jones' enthusiasm at the first discovery of the ancient religion and philosophy of India, that he wrote in his discourse 'On the Hindus'<sup>3</sup> in 1786: "It would be sufficient in this dissertation to assume what might be proved beyond controversy, that we now live among the adorers of those very deities, who were worshipped under different names in Old Greece and Italy, and among the professors of those philosophical tenets, which the Ionic or Attic writers illustrated with all the beauties of their

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1. 'On the Hindus', 1786. pp 422 Asiatic Researches vol. I 1788.
  2. The work of the French Jesuit missionary Coerdoux 1767, with its comparison of Sanskrit with Latin was not printed till 40 years later. So the credit is generally given to N.B.Halhed and Sir William Jones for giving these sporadic hints which were worked up in the 19th century by Rask, Bopp and Grimm into comparative Philology.
  3. 'ON the Hindus', vol.I pp 28 of the works of S. W. Jones edited by A. M. Jones 6 vols. Lond. 1799.

melodious language. On the <sup>one</sup> other hand we see the trident of Neptune, the eagle of Jupiter, the Satyrs of Bacchus, the bow of Cupid and the chariot of the sun; on another we hear the cymbals of Rhea, the songs of the muses, and the pastoral tales of Apollo Nominus. In more retired scenes in groves and in Seminaries of learning, we may perceive the Brahmins and the Sarmanes mentioned by Clemens, disputing in the forms of logick, or discoursing on the vanity of human enjoyments, on the immortality of the soul, her emanation from the eternal Mind, her debasement, wanderings and final union with her source. The six philosophical schools, whose principles are explained in the Darsana Shastra, comprise all the metaphysicks of the old Academy, the Stoa, the Lyceum; nor is it possible to read the Vedanta --- without believing, that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of India". Carrying on the development of this fascinating theory,<sup>1</sup> with immense erudition and a beautiful command of language, Jones succeeded in finding "a resemblance between the popular worship of the Old Greeks and Italians and that of the Hindus, --- a great similarity between their strange religions and that of Egypt, China, Persia, Phyrigia, Phoenicia, Syria --- ; while the Gothick system, which prevailed in the Northern regions of Europe, was not merely similar to those of Greece and Italy, but almost the same in other dress with an embroidery of images apparently Asiatick --- . From all this, it may satisfactorily be proved, we may infer, a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world".

Although there have been considerable differences of opinion between the later comparative mythologists and philologers,<sup>2</sup> with regard to the antiquity of Indian literature and religion, and

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1. 'On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India', written 1784 and since revised vol. I pp 230, Works of S. W. Jones.
  2. Grimm, Max Muller, F. Rosen Etc.

3. Vol. IV pp 567, of Works of S. W. Jones.

4. See also pp 530, vol. IV Works for Eastern Mythology and metaphysics etc.

of late the "Indianists" have been looked upon with suspicion<sup>1</sup>, the fact remains that at the time when Jones wrote in this persuasive vein, with the enormous reputation of a prodigy of learning, Oriental literature in general and Indian literature in particular, achieved once more its ancient reputation of wisdom and antiquity that it had enjoyed before the divines and the religious writers of the 17th and the 18th century had written about it with contempt. The old belief that the East was the cradle of the human race began to be revived and for a time it was believed<sup>2</sup>, that the Vedic Sanskrit was the primitive language of humanity. And when we add to it, the reaction against the excessive use of classical mythology in English poetry, led by Sir William Jones in the following words, we shall realize the importance of this great Oriental scholar in creating a vogue for Oriental literature in England:

"I can not but think", writes Jones in "An Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations",<sup>3</sup> "that our European poetry has subsisted too long on the perpetual repetition of the same images and incessant allusions to the same fables: and it has been my endeavour for several years to inculcate this truth, that if the principal writings of the Asiatics --- were printed with the usual advantages of notes and illustrations, and if the language of the Eastern nations were studied in our seminaries of learning --- a new and ample field would be opened for speculation; we should have a more extensive insight into the history of the human mind; we should be furnished with a new set of images and similitudes<sup>4</sup>; and a number of excellent compositions would be brought to light, which future scholars might explain and future poets might imitate."

The importance of this passage in connection with the writings

1. See Prof. Browne's Literary History of Persia vol. I pp 300-301.
2. The theory of the migration of the nations of Europe from the Bactrian plains of central Asia, formulated by Grimm took the place of the earlier hypothesis of Weber (Modern Investigations on Ancient India, 1857) See also Max Müller "Lectures on the Science of language" etc.
3. Vol. IV pp 547, of Works of S. W. Jones.
4. See also pp 530, vol. IV Works for Eastern Similes and metaphors etc.

of Southey and Moore and other romantic writers on Oriental themes, cannot be exaggerated.

Jones not only stressed the importance of the use of Oriental mythology for poetic purposes, but also addressed the gods of Indian mythology in a series of hymns "which if not of the highest order of poetry, are yet aflame with enthusiasm and knowledge"<sup>1</sup> and prepare the ground for the similar compositions of Southey and others. Of this series of hymns, the Hymn to Narayena<sup>2</sup> is perhaps the best. The following is a specimen from this hymn describing the creation according to the philosophical mythology of the Hindus:

"Ere spirits were infused or forms displayed,  
Brehm his own mind surveyed,  
As mortal eyes, (thus finite we compare  
With infinite) in smoothest mirrors gaze:  
Swift at his look a shape supremely fair  
Leaped into being with a boundless blaze,  
That fifty suns might daze.

Primeval Maya was the goddess named,  
Who to her fire with love divine inflam'd  
A casket gave with rich Ideas filled,  
From which the gorgeous Universe he fram'd  
For when the Almighty will'd  
Unnumbr'd worlds to build,  
From Unity diversifical he sprang,  
While gay creation laughed and procreant nature rang."

But the importance of Jones' poetry lies more in the influence that it exerted on later writers, than in its intrinsic poetic merit. His Indian Hymns, The Palace of Fortune, the translations of Sakuntala, Gitagovinda and the Moallakat, as we shall see, were to exercise an enormous influence on the succeeding romantic poets, Southey, Shelley and even Tennyson.

Sir William Jones had an immense reputation and influence in his own day, but after his premature death in 1794 at the age of forty-seven (before he had time to revise and rearrange his researches), a reaction set in and the indiscriminate admiration

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1. Cambridge History of English Literature vol. XIV pp 334.  
2. pp 10. Asiatic Miscellany by William Chambers and Sir William Jones. The book contains also other poems on Eastern subjects and imitations etc. by Thomas Law, Captain Thomas Ford, Capt. William Kirkpatrick. But the compositions have no literary merit.

of his works gave way to an equally indiscriminate depreciation of his merits. The Edinburgh Review<sup>1</sup> wrote of Jones in 1805: "A consummate scholar, an accomplished philologist, an elegant critic, a candid and perspicuous reasoner, he was undoubtedly --- but we do not feel quite so well assured of the extent of his philosophical capacity, of the original strength of his understanding, or of his familiarity with the general principles which lead to great and simple discoveries and bind together into one useful whole the particulars of our miscellaneous knowledge".

Sir William Jones, despite his real and sterling qualities of the mind was incapable of reining his imagination, and he set up theories of correspondence between Hindu and other civilizations on the unsatisfactory authorities supplied to him by native Pundits. On the discovery of such blunders, Indian scholarship began to be regarded with suspicion; men of learning in other studies ventured to doubt the existence of the Vedas, as ancient writings and even to agree with Dugald Stewart<sup>2</sup> that Sanskrit might after all be a mere invention of the Brahmins - a literary language coined by priests to conceal their impositions.

The first to dispel these doubts and restore the prestige of Indian Scholarship was H. T. Colebrook, (1765-1837) 'the first great Sanskrit scholar of Europe'. Although Sir William Jones was a man possessed of great originality, of a highly cultivated taste and of an exceptional power of assimilating the exotic beauty of Eastern poetry, Colebrooke was gifted with the critical conscience of a scholar and had surveyed almost the whole domain of Sanskrit literature; he could say exactly and in precise terms what the Sanskrit writers had to tell about astronomy, or contracts, or prosody, or religion, and the very dryness and moderation of his tone carried with it the conviction of his accuracy.

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1. Edinburgh Review, Jan. 1805. Review of Lord Teignmouth's Life of Sir W. Jones.
2. Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), philosopher and Professor of moral philosophy at Edinburgh. Also Bentley had published a paper denying the antiquity and originality of Hindu Astronomy and started a controversy with Colebrook that lasted for many years. Colebrook replied finally in the Asiatic Journal of March 1826.

Colebrooke was in the service of the E. I. Company for thirty two years first as a Revenue Collector and then as a professor of Hindu law and Sanskrit at the recently founded College of Fort<sup>3</sup> William and also a judge on the bench of the new Court of Appeal at Calcutta. Besides publishing a 'Digest of Hindu Law'<sup>1</sup> (Calcutta, 1798), which had been left incomplete by Sir William Jones. Colebrooke also compiled a Grammar of Sanskrit language (Calcutta 1805), which placed the results of the native grammarians, especially of Panini, in their true light for the first time, and vindicated their authority against the scholars who had regarded them as of little value. Of the many articles that Colebrooke contributed to the Asiatic Researches from 1795-1816, the most important was the 'Essay on the Vedas' (1805), the first authentic account of these ancient scriptures. All subsequent Orientalists have borne testimony to Colebrooke's honesty, learning and extreme caution. The result was that he restored the Vedas to their rightful place, demolished the absurd speculations which ignorance, or worse a partial knowledge, had induced, and showed what Indian Science really was worth when divested of the fanciful excre<sup>s</sup>ences of learned Europeans.<sup>2</sup> The 'Essay on the Vedas' was written<sup>when</sup> Colebrooke was at the zenith of his reputation and soon after its publication he was elected president of the Bengal Asiatic Society. After his return to England in 1814, he finished some of the works which he had begun in Calcutta and wrote his well-known papers on Hindu philosophy<sup>3</sup> for the

1. 'A Digest of Hindu Law, translated from the Original Sanskrit 4 vols. folio, Calcutta 1798.
2. Colebrooke speaks very slightly of "The amateurs who do not seek the acquisition of useful knowledge, but only wish to attract notice, without the labour of deserving it, which is readily accomplished by an Ode from the Persian, an apology/Sanskrit, or from a song from some unheard of dialect of Hinduee, of which the amateur favours the public with a free translation, without understanding the original, as you will immediately be convinced if you peruse that repository of nonsense Asiatic Miscellany!" Colebrooke, however makes one exception, Wilkins, of whom he speaks highly.
3. 'On the philosophy of the Hindus' - five parts. Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society 1823-1827.

transaction of the Royal Asiatic Society, which he had helped to found in 1823, and of which an account will presently be given.

Of Colebrooke, Prof: Max Muller<sup>1</sup> writes: "Had he lived in Germany, we should long ago have seen his statue in his native place, his name written in letters of gold on the walls of academies --- In England, if any notice is taken of the discovery of Sanskrit, - a discovery in many/<sup>respects</sup>equally important, in some even more important than the revival of Greek scholarship in the fifteenth century - we may possibly hear the name of Sir William Jones and his classical translation of Sakuntala, but of the infinitely more important achievements of Colebrooke, not one word. The fact is, the time has not yet come when the full importance of Sanskrit philology can be appreciated by the public at large ---"

There was at this time far more interest shown in France and Germany for the literature of the East than in England, though England alone possessed an Eastern Empire. Thus we find Colebrooke writing in one of his letters to Prof. H. H. Wilson, another great Oriental scholar, of whom we shall have to speak later:- "Schlegel in what he said of some of us (English Orientalists) and our labours did not propose to be uncandid nor to undervalue what has been done --- I do think with him, that as much has not been done by the English as might have been expected from us --- In England nobody cares about Oriental literature, or is likely to give the least attention to it."

Colebrooke's object in founding the Royal Asiatic Society of England on the pattern of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was not only to stimulate Oriental scholars living in England to greater exertions but likewise to excite in the English public a more general interest in Oriental studies.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland was

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1. In his excellent biographical Essay on Colebrooke in 'Biographical Essays' pp.228 ff. (1884). The Essay was first published in Edinburgh Review, Oct. 1872.

instituted in March 1823 under the Presidentship of Rt. Hon. Charles Watkins William Wynn, with H. T. Colebrooke as Director and several well-known Oriental scholars of the time, like Sir Gore Ouseley, H. H. Wilson, Sir John Malcolm, Charles Wilkins, Alexander Johnson and others, as members of the Council; "for the important purpose of the advancement of knowledge in relation to Asia." "To those countries of Asia," said H. T. Colebrooke in his opening discourse<sup>1</sup> to the Society on March, 15, 1823, "in which civilization may be justly considered to have had its origin, or to have had its earliest growth, the rest of the civilized world owes a large debt of gratitude --- and England, as most advanced in refinement, is, for that very cause the most beholden; and by acquisition of dominion in the East is bound by a yet closer tie --- In progress of such researches (into the arts and Sciences of the East) --- something may yet be gleaned for the advancement of knowledge and improvement of arts at home. In many recent instances, inventive faculties have been asked to devise anew, what might have been as readily copied from an Oriental type; or unacknowledged imitation has reproduced in Europe, with an air of novelty, what had been for ages familiar in the East --- In beauty of fabric, in simplicity of process there possibly yet remains something to be learnt from China, from Japan, from India, which the refinements of Europe need not disdain."

<sup>2</sup> Had the exertions of the first <sup>scholars</sup> who cultivated the field of

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1. Transactions of the R. A. Society vol. I pp XVII - XXIII.
  2. W.C. Taylor in an article, "On the present state and future prospects of Oriental literature viewed in connection with the Royal Asiatic Society" in the Journal of the R. A. Society vol. II 1835, pp 1-12, gives a brief survey of Oriental studies enumerates the advantages of the R. A. Society. See also another article, probably by the same writer in the Athenaeum, Dec. 28, 1833, "The effect of the cultivation of Oriental literature on the general literature of England." This latter article was reprinted in Allan Cunningham's Biographical and critical History of the literature of the last fifty years; Paris 1834.

1. The article by W. C. Taylor, referred to in the previous list the writer is, obviously, still too inquisitive about the newly discovered treasures of Indian literature and culture.

inquiry into Oriental literature & Science, been scrutinized and regulated by such a body as the Royal Asiatic Society, the partial, crude and incomplete accounts which they subsequently retracted or had the mortification of seeing refuted by others, would not have been published or if published severely censured. It was with these imperfect theories, these mixtures of half investigated truth and entirely erroneous guess, finding their way into the libraries and becoming books of reference to other equally ignorant theorists, that the Oriental literature was unjustly lowered in public estimation. Such evils became rare with the foundation of the R. A. Society, and since the beginning of the 19th century scholars learned to form and diffuse in the public correct notions of the diverse character of Oriental literature. Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Sanskrit, began to be differentiated from each other and the vague hazy notions excited by the word "Oriental" began to be clarified and understood. "It was an astounding discovery, that Hindostan over which so many conquerors had passed in wrath --- possessed, spite of the changes of realm and chances of time, a language of unrivalled richness, --- the source alike of Grecian flexibility and Roman strength; a philosophy, beside which in point of age, the lessons of Pythagoras were but of yesterday, and in point of daring speculation Plato's boldest efforts were tame and commonplace; a poetry more purely intellectual than any of which we had before <sup>any</sup> conception; and systems of Science whose antiquity baffled all powers of chronological computation." <sup>1</sup> These and the diverse other languages of Asia, Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Malays, Singhalese, were beyond the grasp of a single mind and if the vast literary treasures were to be made available to Europe, the task had to be undertaken by a Society. The Asiatic Societies of Bengal, England and France did more for the elucidation of the literature, the philosophy and the religion of the East, in a very few years, than had been previously effected in centuries.

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1. The article by W. S. Taylor, referred to on the previous page. The writer is, obviously, still too enthusiastic about the newly discovered treasures of Indian literature and philosophy.

But the languages and literature of Asia, vast as their extent formed only a part of the objects for which the Royal Asiatic Society was instituted. The arts of India, its geography and statistics, its agricultural, natural history and above all its manufactures and its commerce merited the attention of the society and the British people. The Royal Asiatic Society was designed to be the storehouse of intelligence for all who desired information respecting the trade and capabilities of all the countries between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Chinese seas. "It may seem odd to connect Oriental Commerce with Oriental literature, --- but no country in the world is more thoroughly utilitarian than England: in no other nation is it so difficult to introduce a new object of study or extend the cultivation of a old one, without demonstrating its immediate pecuniary advantages. The languages of the Levant were most deeply studied, when the Levantine Company flourished in its pride of place and Indian Literature has been studied only as Indian commerce advanced.--- The Royal Asiatic Society only advances a recognised principle when it declares that its literary claims are also essentially commercial."<sup>1</sup>

The tradition of Sanskrit scholarship was handed over by Colebrooke to Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1860), who excited by the example and biography of Sir William Jones had taken up the study of Sanskrit, while serving the E. I. Company as an Assistant Surgeon in Bengal. Later Wilson came into association with John Leyden<sup>2</sup> and Colebrooke, and upon the latter's recommendation was made the Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In 1813

1. W. C. Taylor's article referred to above.
2. John Leyden M.D. (1775-1811), physician and poet, a friend of Sir William Scott, went to India as an assistant surgeon and later became a professor of Hindostani at the Calcutta College. Author of an elaborate essay on the Indo Persian Indo-Chinese and Deccan, languages (1807), 'Malay Annal' (1821), 'Commentaries of Baber' (1826) etc. His "poetical Remains" edited by James Morton in 1819. Wrote several poems on Anglo Indian topics, the "Ode to an Indian Coin" being the best known. He has been unfairly compared to Sir William Jones for acquiring such an amount of knowledge in a brief career of thirty six years. Scott speaks of his 'bright brief career', Lord of Isles IV. XI.

Wilson published a poetical translation of the Meghaduta<sup>1</sup> an epic poem of Kalidasa, which obtained a wide reputation in Europe. As early as 1819 Wilson completed the first "Sanskrit English Dictionary", which remained until the completion of the great German lexicon in 1785, the standard reference book for European scholars. His publication of the "Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus",<sup>2</sup> in 1835, caused great astonishment and interest; for the four ancient Sanskrit dramas that he translated, were found to possess much artistic merit in the combination of incidents and in the exhibition of character.

In 1832, on his return to England Wilson was selected to fill the chair of Sanskrit at Oxford which had been founded by Joseph Boden in 1827 and subsequently succeeded Sir Charles Wilkins as Librarian to the E. I. Company. Wilson also held the office of the Director of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1837 till his death and published many valuable dissertations in the Journal of the Society.

Following in the line of Jones and Colebrooke Wilson did much to promote a real knowledge of the numerous branches of Indian learning which he made his own. Although his manner of writing, like Colebrooke's, was dry and bald, there flowed an undercurrent of enthusiasm beneath all his writings. On noticing the cold and discouraging reception given to Oriental Studies in England<sup>3</sup> (while the interest on the continent was rife in everything relating to the East)<sup>4</sup>, Wilson proposed to inaugurate a series of popular lectures "as a corrective to this state of indifference and of extending and keeping alive some permanent feeling of interest in the East and in India, especially". "But", Wilson goes

1. Megha Duta, or Cloud Messenger: Sanskrit text with translation in Verse --- Calcutta 1813; London 1814; 1843.

2. "Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus", Calcutta 1827; London 1835. Went through several editions. For a full list of Wilsons' Works see the Annual report of the Journal of the R. A. Society for 1860, vol. XVIII.

3. Lecture on present state of the cultivation of Oriental literature, delivered before the R. A. Society on January 24, 1852. See vol XIII of the Journal, pp 191 ff.

4. From 1840-1867 was the heroic age of Eastern Studies in Europe - as the names of Bournouf, Rosen, Julius Mohl, Schlegel, Lassen, Grotefund, Von Hammer, Purgstall, will show.

on to say rightly, "those subjects which are purely literary - the languages, the literature, the institutions, the religions of the Eastern world, - can scarcely be rendered interesting by so summary a proceeding, as they cannot interest where they are not understood, and can not be understood where they are not studied: they require previous training. Not only are they unfamiliar in themselves and strange to the tenor of European thought, but the language in which alone they can be described is unknown, the terms are unintelligible, the names of persons, the denominations of things, are sounds so unlike anything to which the European ear and eye are accustomed, that they are like inarticulate babbling or hieroglyphic signs - make no definite impression - and leave no perdurable recollection. Without any precise notion of the names, we can have no sympathy with the persons, and the gods and heroes of Hindu & Persian mythology and fable pass before their eyes like misty shadows, of whose outline we have no distinct conception; in whose substantiality we have no belief. It is impossible therefore to take a real interest in the literature of which they are the ornaments and essence".<sup>1</sup> The poems of Southey had proved the truth of Wilson's remarks.

This inherent alien quality of Oriental literature, the lack of curiosity in the English society, and of patronage in the English government and also the absence in England of "a learned public (that exists on the continent) formed of a sufficient body of scholars and men of letters, who are engaged and interested in something better than the ephemeral literature of the hour - in the investigation of the productions of the human mind, in all times and in all countries, in the study of Universal man"; these are the reasons according to Wilson for the unpopularity of Oriental literature in England.<sup>2</sup> Colebrooke however writing to Wilson,

1. Wilson's lecture referred to on the previous page.

2. Wilson was a great collector of Sanskrit manuscripts. No fewer than five hundred and forty comprising both Vedic and classical works, were brought together by him and form the most important part of the Sanskrit manuscripts now in the Bodleian Library.

derived satisfaction from the fact that the Englishmen had been the first to ~~sketch~~<sup>map</sup> out the study of Oriental literatures, but had left it to the foreigners to pursue the subjects further.

This is, however, truer of Sanskrit scholarship than of the other Oriental languages, Persian and Arabic, for example, which were neglected in England till late in the nineteenth century. An account of the Persian and Arabic scholarship in England will presently be given.

To Wilson also belongs the credit of continuing James Mill's famous 'History',<sup>1</sup> the first adequate History of India under British rule. It would be convenient here to briefly consider the early historians of India, who, though they treated the subject from particular points of view, were for that very reason, instrumental in providing the later imaginative writers with romantic notions of India.

Writers of travels in the 17th century had made occasional fanciful and inexact observations on the history of India. But the first history in the strict sense of the word was, "The History of the Military Transactions of the British in Indostan from 1745 - 1761" by Robert Orme<sup>2</sup>, published 1763 - 1778, a contemporary memoir and a "prose epic of the early military achievements" of the British race in India. "It is a record of noble deeds written with picturesque details and in dignified and natural language appropriate to its subject"<sup>3</sup> - and has served as a mine of information for subsequent historians. Alexander Dow, besides

1. 'History of British India' 3 vols. 1817. 4th edn. Ed. with continuation by H. H. Wilson, 10 vols. 1858.
2. Robert Orme's "Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, of the Marattos and of the English concerns in Indostan from the year 1659", 1782, gives the earlier history of India.
3. ~~pp 293 - 294~~, Cambridge Hist. of Literature vol. X, pp. 293-294.

4. Cambridge History of Literature vol. XIV pp 335.

publishing his two tragedies<sup>1</sup> on Oriental themes Zingis (1769) and Sethona (1774), and "Tales translated from the Persian of Inatullah of Delhi (1768), also translated 'The History of Hindoostan' from the Persian of Mohammad Kasim Frishta<sup>2</sup> (1770) and had great success. The History gives a detailed and fairly accurate account of the establishment and decline of the Moghul Empire and in the dissertation at the beginning of vol. I, the customs, manners, languages religion and philosophy of the Hindus are described and a useful catalogue of Hindu gods is given. Others who may be mentioned are Charles Hamilton who wrote a history of the 'Rohilla Afgans' 1787, 1788, Thomas Pennant who in his 'Outlines of the Globe', vol. 1-3, 1796-1800, gives a miscellaneous description of India, and James Rennell (1742-1830) 'the father of Indian Geography' whose 'Memoir of the Map of Hindoostan OF the Mogul Empire'<sup>3</sup> (1783) gives a first approximately correct map of India. Other later historical writers were James Tod, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan (1829-32), 'a work fuller of romance than most epics,'<sup>4</sup> Mark Wilks with his accurate and critically

1. Zingis & Sethona both produced at Drury Lane, the latter by Garrick in 1774. Zingis was founded on 'Tarich Mogulistan' or the History of the Moghul Tartars in Persian.  
 "Too much the Greek and Roman chiefs engage  
 The Muse's care ---  
 To fill the scene tonight our author brings  
 Originals at least ---  
 The mighty fathers of the Tarter line."  
Sethona is a melodramatic pseudo-Elizabethan play, laid in Egypt. Both Zingis & Sethona are feeble plays without any literary merit. Baker in 'Biographia Dramatica' challenges the authorship of Dow, for 'he is said by those who knew him well to be utterly unqualified for the production of learning or of fancy either in prose or verse'.
2. Mohammad Kasim Frishta of Delhi flourished in the reign of Jehangeer about the beginning of the seventeenth century.
3. Coleridge made use of Rennell's 'Memoir' in Kubla Khan, as has been pointed out by Prof. John Livingston Lowes in his brilliant Road to Xanadu - especially the account of Cashmere pp 105-107. We shall come to that later.
4. Cambridge History of Literature vol. XIV pp 335.

written Historical Sketches of the South of India 1810-1817, and E. S. Waring,<sup>1</sup> A History of Mahrattas (1810). Sir John Malcolm, whose work on Persia will be noticed later, also published his Sketch of the Political History of India 1811, 1826,; Sketch of the Sikhs, 1812, and a Memoir of Central India, 1823, describing <sup>in many</sup> events/of which he had taken part himself. Grant Duff's History of the Mahrattas 1826, besides showing the pioneering ability of the author, has a strong romantic interest. A little later was published Monstuart Elphinstone's History of India<sup>2</sup> (1841), whose accuracy and authenticity had made it a standard book on the subject. Edward Cowell, who edited the fifth edition in 1866, speaks very highly of the reliability and sympathy of the book. In this respect Elphinstone's History differs very much from James Mill's History of India, which though comprehensive and eloquent, displays "the kind of contempt which is not always based on familiarity".<sup>3</sup> Mill had never been in India and as he confessed "if he had any, had a very slight and elementary acquaintance with any of the languages of the East". H. H. Wilson who edited the fourth edition of Mill's History (1840-1848) and continued it from 1803 to 1835, exposes the author's lack of knowledge about India.

Before quitting the subject of India and passing on to the survey of knowledge regarding Persia and Arabia, we might mention a few other minor writers of letters, sketches etc., who contributed to the spread of popular knowledge about India.

The Oriental Memoirs, selected and abridged from a series of

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1. E. S. Waring also wrote A tour to Shiraz Bombay 1804, 1807. describing the manners and customs of the Persians, giving many passages of translations from Persian poets.
2. Elphinstone's "An account of the Kingdom of Caubal ---" (1815) was written when the author accompanied a mission to the King of Caubal. In 1808, it appeared from various circumstances that the French intended to carry the wars into India and Elphinstone's mission was sent with the purpose of influencing the King of Caubal to help the British.  
Sir Henry Pottinger's Travels in Beluchistan and Sindh (1816) explorations of the regions between India and Persia, for the same reason as above.
3. Cambridge History of English Literature. vol. XIV pp 97-98.

familiar letters during seventeen years residence in India by James Forbes (1813), described by the Quarterly Review of Oct. 1814, as a 'magnificent work'; "Original letters from India" (1817) by Eliza Fay, descriptive of her travels from England to Calcutta, the anonymous Hartley House, also letters, though described as a novel; and finally Sketches in India by William Higgins and Mrs. Graham's Journal of a Residence in India(?), constitute the more popular collections of letters descriptive of Anglo Indian life at the time. The Oriental Annual or scenes in India containing engravings from original drawings by William Daniell R. A. and<sup>a</sup> descriptive account by Rev. Hobart Caunter, (Lond. 1835), was one of the series of annuals, describing the impressions and striking incidents of a tour, intermingled with individual portraiture and historical episodes and was described as having "the reality of a mere book of travels without its dryness and some of the spirit of fiction without its untruth".<sup>1</sup> Of a similar nature were Thomas Bacon's "First impressions and studies from Nature in Hindostan" --- Lond. 1837, written in a lively conversational style, descriptive of Anglo Indian life, and the sights of India.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to consider the Anglo Indian literature of the century in all its various branches. Enough has been said to present a rough idea of the state of knowledge about India in the first two or three decades of the nineteenth century and suggest the main channels through which such knowledge was entering England. We shall proceed now to a similar, if less detailed survey of Persia and Arabia.

Persia and Arabia did not receive as much attention at the hands of English Orientalists as India, partly because of India's greater political contact with Britain and partly because of the difficulties of travel and communication in Persia and Arabia.

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1. The Spectator of Oct. 17, 1835.

Persian and Arabic had been studied, as we have already seen, by Pococke, Hyde, Sale and other Oriental scholars of the seventeenth century and the learned D'Herbelot, by his "Bibliothèque Orientale" in 1697, had made the West acquainted with most of the Moslem authors. But very little was known about the actual conditions of these countries and the manners and customs <sup>of</sup> their inhabitants before the exploration of Carsten Niebuhr's party in 1763, under the patronage of Frederick V of Denmark. Of this party Niebuhr alone survived and brought his report and the incomplete notes of his comrades to Denmark, which<sup>1</sup> he published in German between 1772 and 1778. A condensed English translation<sup>2</sup> by Robert Heron appeared in Edinburgh in 1792. Among explorers of the Near East, Niebuhr ranks with Chardin and Lane. Like them he had a philosophic detachment, which makes his book a candid and impersonal, yet sympathetic, account of these Eastern countries - a book of travel the interest of whose narrative has survived its own age and is confessed by all intelligent readers of whatever race, generation or special taste.

Equally fascinating and popular at the time was James Bruce's (1730-1794) book Travels to discover the sources of the Nile --- (1790), a book of African rather than Persian or Arabian travel. "He will always remain the poet and his work the epic of African travel," says Richard Garnett<sup>3</sup> of Bruce. Of Coleridge's use of Bruce's account we shall have to speak later. Bruce's narrative contains a valuable history of Abyssinia and disquisitions on the history and religion of Egypt, Indian trade, Syria, Barbary etc. and was much read in the nineteenth century.

The next great traveller<sup>4</sup> to visit Syria Nubia and Arabia was

1. Beschreibung von Arabien (1772); Reisebeschreibung von Arabien und anderen umliegenden Landern (1774-78).
2. Travels through Arabia and other countries in the East trans. from German by R. Heron. Edin: 1792. Also in abridged form in "A general collection of the best and the most interesting voyages in all parts of the world" by John Pinkerton vol.X. Pinkerton's collection in 17 vols. Lond. 1808-1814, contains selections and abridgements from most of the travellers. Pinkerton himself was a mere collector and editor. vol.VIII of the collection is about Hindostan.
3. In the Dictionary of National Biography.
4. Other travellers to visit Arabia or the neighbouring countries were, Richard Pococke 'A description of the East---' (1743-45) & E.D. Clarke "Travels in Europe, Asia, Africa (1810-24).

J. L. Burckhardt (1784-1817), a Swiss by birth, but by adoption a Cambridge man. Burckhardt was well versed in the law and custom of Islam and disguised as a Mohammedan, he was able to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca and gain admission into the forbidden mosque at Kaba. His descriptions of Jidda and Mecca are truly encyclopaedic;- Richard Burton, forty years later could do no better than quote Burckhardt. Burckhardt's travels,<sup>1</sup> published with the assistance of Sir W. Ouseley and Colonel Leake from 1819 to 1830 satisfied all the curiosity felt at the time concerning the Holy cities and their neighbourhood by students of religion, politics, social custom and local history, by geographers, economists and merchants and we may add poets. "Burckhardt's<sup>4</sup> judicious pen-pictures of the scenes of the Mohammedan pilgrimage have not been bettered; and no one who has witnessed them has proved more sensitive to their ancient mystery and actual human interest".<sup>2</sup>

It would not be out of place to mention here Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-1788) and its share in popularizing the knowledge about Arabia and Islam. Gibbon's account of the spread and establishment of the Mohammedan religion, in the famous fiftieth chapter of the Decline and Fall, was based on the writings of the earlier Orientalists, D'Herbelot, Ockley, Pococke, Hyde, Sale, Marracci and the Eastern travellers, Niebuhr, Thevenot, Chardin, and Shaw. Although Gibbon professed his total ignorance of the Oriental tongues, his masterly and accurate use of the authorities mentioned, coupled with his unique style, resulted in the production of those "chapters on the origin of Mohammedanism and its first triumphs against the Empire that would alone be enough to win perpetual literary fame".<sup>3</sup> "In the interest of literature we may perhaps be glad that like Ockley he used with

1. Travels in Nubia 1819;1822; Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, 1822; Travels in Arabia, 1829. Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys, 1830. Arabic Proverbs 1830.

2. pp 89 and 92, Penetration of Arabia by D. G. Hogarth (1904).

3. J. B. Bury's Introduction to the History of the Decline and Fall pp XI.

confidence the now discredited Al Wakidi, but without Al Wakidi's romance these chapters would not have been written."

The popularity of Gibbon's History, during his own time and after, succeeded in recommending the authorities he had used and also in providing the English reader with a comprehensive and intensely readable account of Arabia and the rise of Islam.

The interest awakened in the exploration of Arabia and Persia was reflected in the works of the poets and the scholars of the time. Sir William Jones was the pioneer in introducing Persian and Arabic literature in England, as he was in discovering Sanskrit literature. As early as 1771, Jones had published a Persian Grammar, and in 1772 appeared a small volume of poems, consisting chiefly of translations from the Asiatic languages with two dissertations, "On the Poetry of the Eastern nations"<sup>1</sup> and "On the arts commonly called Imitative". "Arabia", Jones writes in the first of these Essays, "I mean that part of which we call the Happy and which the Asiaticks know by the name of Yemen, seems to be the only country in the world, in which we can properly lay the scene of pastoral poetry; because no nation, at this day can vie with the Arabians, in the delightfulness of their climate and the simplicity of their manners". Southey, we shall see, was to make use, too literal a use, perhaps, of Jones' suggestions.

In the same Essay Jones attributes a greater liveliness of fancy and a richness of invention to the inhabitants of the warmer East and for a proof of this he cites the seven Arabian poems or Mu<sup>a</sup>llakat<sup>2</sup> 'which were suspended on the temple at Mecca' and which Jones translated for the first time in 1782. Jones' translations from Persian and Arabic, like his Indian Hymns mentioned before, are workmanlike and literal and possess very little literary merit, except that of presenting to the English reader a

1. 'On the Poetry of the Eastern Nations' pp 533, vol IV. of the works of S. W. Jones.

2. See note 2 page 158 of this work.

new set of images and opening new sources of the sublime and the pathetic by familiarizing the scenery and manner of the Eastern nations.

Translations of a more elegant, if less literal, nature were also given from the Arabic by J. D. Carlyle, the Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, in Specimens of Arabian Poetry (1796).

Persian received attention from John Richardson who published his Specimens of Persian Poetry. (1774), consisting chiefly of translations from Hafiz, and his Grammar of the Arabic Language in 1776. But the work <sup>by</sup> which Richardson's name is chiefly remembered, is his Dictionary of Persian, Arabic and English first published in 1777<sup>1</sup>, which in various forms has proved of very great service to several generations of students of Persian. The prefatory "Dissertations on the languages, literature and manners of Eastern nations", separately issued in 1777, is an able discourse based on exact scholarly knowledge of the words and their exact sense. Among matter of a useful nature, the Dissertation also contains information regarding Eastern notions of supernatural beings<sup>3</sup>, Peris and Divs, used by Moore in his Paradise and the Peri.

A Dictionary of Persian, Hindostani and English was also published by Francis Gladwin at Calcutta in 1809. Gladwin, among numerous renderings from Persian, also translated a portion of the encyclopaedic work of Abul-Fazl-Allami, under the title of Ayeene-Akbari or the Institutes of Emperor Akbar, in 1783-86, and the Gulistan of Sadi (printed from Calcutta edition, in 1809). Most of Gladwin's work was done in India where he was appointed a

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1. A later editor Francis Johnson proved Richardson's Dictionary to be little else than an abridgement of Meninski's Oriental Thesaurus with the omission of the Turkish words and some additions from Golius and Castell. Reprinted by Charles Wilkins in 1806 and 1810. In 1829 revised and improved by Francis Johnson, who in 1852 still further expanded the work. Finally 'reconstructed' by Dr. Steingass (1892).
  2. Page 2, the Dissertation.
  3. Chapter 3. section III pp 165 of the Dissertation.



professor in the College of Fort William.

Richardson's and Gladwin's dictionaries helped in making the study of Persian and Arabic, easier for the younger Orientalists, as also did Sir William Ouseley's "Persian Miscellanies or an essay to facilitate the reading of Persian manuscripts with engraved specimens, philological observations and notes critical and historical", 1795. Ouseley (1767-1842) helped to popularize the study of Oriental literature also by publishing a quarterly work, The Oriental Collections (1797-9), consisting of original essays, translations etc., illustrating the sciences and literature of Asia. Although the literary quality of the dissertations and translations in the Oriental Collections is not high, they served the purpose of familiarizing the readers with the names of the Persian and Arabic authors, as is proved by "the Queries and Notices" column at the end of each periodical volume.

Before taking account of the further work of Sir William Ouseley and <sup>of</sup> his brother Sir Gore Ouseley it would be proper to notice the political relationship of Great Britain and Persia during the first two decades of the century - a relationship that has an importance bearing on the progress of Persian studies in England.

The increase of the British Empire in India during the last century had introduced new relations between the two neighbouring powers of Persia and the Indian Government. The first modern Embassy to Persia of importance, took place when Sir John Malcolm<sup>1</sup> was dispatched from the Governor General of India to the King Fateh Ali Shah of Persia, for obtaining his support against the inroads of the Afghans. Not long afterwards the relations of Persia with England assumed greater importance. The invasion of the British dominions in the East had been a favourite project with the Emperor Napoleon, whose recent alliance with Russia excited great and not unreasonable alarm in England. The anxiety caused

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1. The literary results of this mission will be noticed later.

3. A Second journey through Persia, Arabia and India, 1810-1816, (1819).

by the apprehension of an invasion by Napoleon through Russia and Persia, induced the British Government to communicate directly with the Shah and Sir Harford Jones Bridges was dispatched as Envoy Extraordinary from the King of England. But certain circumstances in the condition of the relations of Persia and the anomalous and undefined authority of the Government of India, resulted in a confusion of diplomatic transactions.

In 1809 considerable interest was excited both at the English court and in the public by the arrival in London of Mirza Abul Hasan, an Ambassador from the Persian King; - an event almost novel in English diplomacy. In 1810, Sir Gore Ouseley was ordered to accompany Mirza Abul Hasan, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary from the King of England. Sir William Ouseley accompanied his brother on the mission as private Secretary and J. J. Morier the novelist, was the Secretary of the embassy. On their return several members<sup>1</sup> of these embassies, notably Sir William Ouseley and Morier, published their accounts of Persia, marking an era in the development of knowledge regarding Persia. Of these Morier's account "A journey through Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor to Constantinople in the years 1808 to 1809", published 1812, was the first and the best - and "at once took rank as an important authority on a country then little known to Englishmen, and by its admirable style and accurate observation, and its humour and graphic power, still holds a foremost place among early books of travel in Persia".<sup>2</sup> Morier after his second visit to Persia, with Sir Gore Ouseley's embassy, published A second Journey to Persia<sup>3</sup> --- in 1818, an equally admirable book. Sir William Ouseley's account of the same journey, "Travels in Various countries of the East, more particularly Persia, (1819-1823)", in which he illustrated many subjects of antiquarian research, history,

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1. Journal of the British Embassy to Persia by William Bryce describes the same journey which Morier and Sir W. Ouseley described.
  2. Stanley Lane Poole in the Dict: of Nat: Biog:
  3. A Second journey through Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor in the years 1810-1816, (1818).

geography, philology and miscellaneous literature with extracts from rare and valuable Oriental manuscripts - is a book of Persian scholarship rather than Persian travel.

Sir Gore Ouseley furthered the study of Oriental languages in other ways, besides those mentioned above. He had helped Colebrooke to found the Royal Asiatic Society in 1823, and was chosen one of the Vice Presidents and a member of the Council. In 1828, at the instance of Rev. Prof. Lee,<sup>1</sup> Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, and the efforts of Sir Gore Ouseley and Colonel Fitzclarence, it was decided to engraft upon the Royal Asiatic Society, a committee which should devote itself to the choice and superintendence of translations from Oriental languages into English, if possible, Latin or French, - of the numerous Oriental manuscripts which were deposited in public and private libraries and ought to have been long before translated. So the Oriental Translation Committee of Great Britain and Ireland was formed of which Sir Gore Ouseley was elected the chairman. In 1842, Sir Gore was also appointed President of the Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, instituted in that year, and the Gulistan of Sadi, from the Calcutta edition of F. Gladwin, was printed under his direction. Ouseley's only printed work "The Biographical notices of Persian Poets, with critical and explanatory remarks," (1846) was published by the "Oriental Translation fund of Great Britain and Ireland", after his death, and contains valuable notes on the life and criticism of the Persian poets, Sadi, Hafiz, Nizami, Firdausi, Rumi, Jami and others.

Sir John Malcolm<sup>2</sup> (1769-1833) too, like Sir Gore Ouseley, visited Persia as an Envoy - and embodied his intimate knowledge of the country in a series of books. His History of Persia (1815), though still a valuable and suggestive book, and one of the earliest histories of Persia to be written, confuses history with

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1. Lee also translated the Travels of Ibn Batuta from Arabic 1829.  
2. Malcolm's work on India has been noticed before.  
3. That Yahya was more than an imitation of the Arabian Nights will be shown in our next chapter.

legend. Malcolm's versatility was great, besides being an administrator, a diplomatist and a historian, he succeeded in producing Sketches of Persia<sup>1</sup> (1827) and Persia, a poem (1814), works of a better literary character than the foregoing, that bridge, as it were, the gulph between books of travel pure and simple and works like Hajji Baba of Ispahan, which are both novels and books of travel. Malcolm's Sketches of Persia contains lively and interesting descriptions of Persian manners, personalities, pomps and ceremonies, written in a distinct and elegant prose style. The author steps himself in the life, and the fables of the Persians and describes them with sympathetic zest. Only the link of a plot is absent, that would give continuation to the narrative and make it a novel instead of a sketch. The book however contains two extremely entertaining interpolated tales, the Tale of Abdullah and the Tale of Ahmad the Cobbler, in the Arabian Night's style, told by Derveesh Seffer, the best reciter of poetry and teller of tales in Persia. The author also gives examples of the Eastern fables and apologues.

With the development of the real knowledge of the East, based upon the authentic records of travellers and resulting from the great expansion of England in her wars with France, there was growing up a literature descriptive of the East of actual fact, marking a complete departure from the eighteenth century imitations of the Arabian Nights, of which Beckford's Vathek was the last example.<sup>2</sup> Although it is beyond the scope of our work to go into any detailed account of prose fiction relating to the Orient, we shall mention here a few early works that, mark, as it were, the transitional stage, from the sketches of the travellers to novels proper.

There appeared in 1819, a prose work of startling originality and vigour, Anastasius, or Memoirs of a Greek, a novel in three volumes descriptive of the life of the Near East, mainly Greece, Turkey and Egypt. The work appeared anonymously and was

1. Reviewed in the Quarterly Review, vol. XXXVI, 1827. pp 353 ff.

2. That Vathek was more than an imitation of the Arabian Nights will be shown in our next chapter.

3. Edinburgh Review, 1827, March, 1821, pp 91 ff.

confidently assigned to Byron because it was "full of a clever innate scoundrelism --- not only too bad in many of its details but calculated to profane many serious and sacred things".<sup>1</sup> A review in Blackwood's Magazine<sup>2</sup> ridiculed the notion that Thomas Hope, the architect and art collector 'a very respectable and decorous gentleman', who wrote 'with some endeavour' about house furniture and decoration could be the author. The work was praised enthusiastically in the Edinburgh Review<sup>3</sup> by Sydney Smith, who also expressed his surprise at Hope being the author of such a fine book.

Anastasius was a picaresque novel, on the model of Le Sage's Gil Blas, dealing with the vicissitudes in the life of a roughish Greek who was sometimes a beggar in the streets of Constantinople and at others an officer of the highest rank under an Egyptian Bey. The scene was laid mainly in Greece Turkey and Egypt. Hope was a scholar of great wealth who had studied Eastern life deeply and had travelled much. The book in spite of its inordinate length contains some fine passages of writing and is more tragic than comic. There is much of horror in the careless life of the adventuring Greek, but there is also great variety and for the Western reader a store of information. Thomas Hope created an Oriental hero such as Defoe or Fielding or Smollett would have loved to portray and opened up a new field for the writers of picaresque fiction.

Hope's first and best successor in this field was J. J. Morier the author of The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824), who in his turn became the founder of a series of romances that took for their subject the life and manners of Persia and India. Hajji Baba was in the direct line of the English novel of the picaresque kind. It owed much to the method of Anastasius but broke fresh ground farther East in its treatment of the life and manners of Persia.

Morier was deeply interested in the life and literature of

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1. Blackwood's Magazine, Sept. 1821, pp 200.

2. Ibid.

3. Edinburgh Review XXXV, March, 1821, pp 92 ff.

the East and deplored the absence of any true delineation of Asiatic manners. Those who had travelled in the East, he maintained, had described Oriental life by sweeping assertions which left no precise image on the mind, or by disjointed facts of consequence only to the individual traveller himself. It was Morier's conviction that the best plan to portray Oriental life fully would be to collect so many facts and anecdotes of actual life in the East and work them into a connected narrative upon the plan of the Gil Blas of Le Sage.<sup>1</sup> His opportunity came when he was appointed to the suite of the British Ambassador to the Shah of Persia. In that country he remained long enough to acquire an unusual knowledge of the language and the life of its people. He appears to have had ever in mind the idea of an Oriental romance, and admitted that he left Persia "with books filled with remarks and portfolios abounding in original sketches". On his return to Europe, Morier published Hajji Baba as an autobiography entrusted to him by a Persian Mirza. But the facts given by Morier should not be taken too literally. Reading between the lines it is easy to detect something of an ironical tone. The story of the gift of the Mirza's autobiography was an invention as justifiable as it was conventional, and served as a useful introduction to incredulous British readers of what was an amazingly romantic and realistic piece of fiction. No Persian could have created this picture, for the reason that it depends for its best effects upon that humorous contemplation of Eastern life that springs from the contrasted points of view of East and West.

When Hajji Baba appeared in 1824 good judges of fiction, among them Sir Walter Scott<sup>2</sup>, immediately recognised it as a fine piece of picaresque literature worthy to be compared with Gil Blas, the masterpiece that had suggested to Morier the mould into which to pour his knowledge of the East. The excellence of the book as a

1. Introductory Epistle to the first edition of Hajji Baba.

2. Quarterly Review vol. XXXIX, 1829 pp 73 ff. Also Fraser's Magazine vol. II, for Feb. 1833, pp 159. Morier described as "the best novelist who now exercises his powers of romance-manufacturing".

picture of Persian life has been enthusiastically praised by Oriental experts and it is more common to meet with a solemn reference to it as "a book about Persia", than as a picaresque novel. So accurate was Morier's delineation of Persian life and character, that at its publication, Hajji Baba raised a storm of angry disapproval at Teheran, the expression of which was undertaken by no less a person than a Persian Minister of state who wrote in 1826 and protested against the fidelity and satire of the book. Morier's satire is, however, rendered less pungent by his humour. Instead of being shocked and disgusted at the conditions prevailing in the East, Morier maintained that an Englishman, "should he have any turn for humour --- can not help being amused at the ingenuity exercised, at the lighthearted levity and apparent clown and pantaloon philosophy with which evils such as the Englishman would call great are supported". Morier himself had that "turn for humour"; so instead of being astonished and disgusted he is only amused - and Hajji Baba is the record of that vast amusement of the West at the expense of the East.

Morier also published The Adventures of Hajji Paba in England, in 1828. The book was inspired by the ludicrous experiences of the Persian Ambassador Mirza Abul Hassan whom Morier had accompanied on his visit to England in 1809, and its object like that of Hajji Baba was to give a correct idea of Oriental manners, by throwing them into a strong contrast with those of England:- somewhat in the manner of Marana's Turkish Spy, Montesquieu's Persian Letters and Goldsmith's Citizen of the World. But Morier through his intimate knowledge of Persia, could think, speak and write like a true Oriental, while Marana, Montesquieu and Goldsmith had only vague, hazy notions of the East. Hajji Paba in England is a very entertaining manual of manners both Persian and English but as a sequel to the novel, Hajji Baba, it is disappointing.

Morier wrote several other novels<sup>1</sup> of which the most successful was Zohrab the Hostage (1832), an historical tale, but even

1. Besides the books mentioned above, Morier wrote:-  
 (1) Ayesha, the maid of Kars, 1834; (2) The Mirza (1841)  
 (3) Misselman a Persian Tale (1847) (4) An Oriental Tale (1839).

this book, though popular in its day, has failed to survive. Morier's knowledge of Persia was rivalled by that of James Baillie Fraser, whose Kuzzilbash in 1826 was followed in 1830 by its sequel The Persian Adventurer; both novels dealing with the period of Nadir Shah and describing the fortunes of that adventurer up to his notorious sack of Delhi. It is curious that the subjects chosen by these writers already named moved farther East, from the Levant into Persia and thence to India as the century advances. Anastasius dealing with Greece and Egypt dates from 1819; Hajji Baba dealing with Persia from 1824; and the Kuzzilbash dealing with Persia and India from 1826. The latter touches but lightly on India proper. This inexhaustible theme was reserved for William Brown Hockley who in 1826 produced his famous Pandurang Hari. This was the first realistic novel of Indian life in English literature. It was followed by The Tales of the Zenana (1827) and The Memoirs of a Brahmin. All these works are indebted to the example of Morier but exhibit a knowledge of Indian life and character, as extensive and intimate as that shown of the Persian in Hajji Baba. Hockley's work was continued by two writers: Thomas Henry Ottley the author of Rustum Khan (1831) and Captain Meadows Taylor whose Confessions of a Thug (1839) is essentially of the picaresque type. With these books the series of works of fiction inaugurated by Thomas Hope in Anastasius came to an end. By 1839 the whole Eastern cycle had been completed in the brief period of twenty years. Into this short space of time had been crowded a definite literary achievement. In the first place the range of English fiction had been extended and in the second the veil of vague romance that obscured the features of the East began to be torn aside.

We have seen in the course of this somewhat tedious chapter how the knowledge about the East was gradually acquired by England; how the religious divines of the seventeenth century first began to be interested in Arabic through Hebrew; how the earlier voyagers and travellers brought back fanciful accounts of strange Eastern

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lands; how through the introduction of the Arabian Nights in England a lasting impetus was given to the study of Oriental literatures; how with the successes of the East India Company, the necessity arose to study the literature of India and finally how through the political relationship of England and Persia and the explorations of the travellers, Arabia and Persia came to be thoroughly known to England. We have also seen how Oriental fiction emerged and grew in the beginning of the nineteenth century, not from the Oriental tale of the past century, but from the sketches and impressions of the travellers put in dramatic form.

In the subsequent chapters we shall see how all this accumulation of knowledge about the East affected the poets who wrote on Oriental themes.

Yet one thing the author of Ishtar and the author of Ishtar have in common: they both mark the transitional period, as it were, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Both, while retaining some of the qualities of style that the great poets of the Augustan age possessed, bear unmistakably the stamp of that vague spirit of unrest, which was to be an essential part of the Romantic Revival.

Lambert was indebted for the story of Ishtar to a book by Eliza Follen, The Progress of Romance -- left to him by Rose A. Follen, who later immortalized in his well-known poem. This book is a collection of the novels of the time, written in vindication of the "romance," which the authoress declares are regarded "as proper only for a lady's library". Why, she asks further, "should the tales of the Egyptians and Arabians, of the Greeks and Romans, be entitled to the appellation of romances as well as those of the Middle Ages, to which it was generally appropriated?" and so on.

The Progress of Romance, through China, India, and the West, by Eliza Follen, 2 vols. London, 1803.

Ibid p. XII, Preface.

LANDOR.

Walter Savage Landor's Gebir (1798) is the first of those 'Oriental' epics, of which Southey's poems were to be the most conspicuous examples. But unlike Southey, Landor makes no elaborate efforts to Orientalize his tale; Gebir is 'Oriental' only in so far as its source happens to be a pseudo-Oriental tale from the French, of which there was such an abundance in the eighteenth century. For that other exotic Orientalism, which depends on its elaborate effects of verisimilitude on the materials drawn from the accounts of travellers, scholars, historians etc., we must wait till we come to Beckford, whose Vathek, though published two years earlier than Gebir, is the real ancestor of the Oriental poems of the Romantic Revival. Yet one thing the author of Vathek and the author of Gebir have in common: they both mark the transitional stage, as it were, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Both these tales, while retaining some of the qualities of style that the Oriental prose tales of the Augustan age possessed, bear unmistakable traces also of that vague spirit of unrest, which was to be so characteristic of the Romantic Revival.

Landor was indebted for the story of Gebir to a book by Clara Reeve, The Progress of Romance ---<sup>1</sup> lent to him by Rose Aylmer, whom he later immortalized in his well-known poem. This book is a sort of critique of the novels of the time, written in vindication of the "Romances", which the authoress deplors are regarded "as proper furniture only for a lady's library". Why, she asks further, "the fictions of the Aegyptians and Arabians, of the Greeks and Romans were not entitled to the appellation of Romances as well as those of the Middle Ages, to which it was generally appropriated?"<sup>2</sup> And in support

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1. The Progress of Romance, through times Countries and Manners, with remarks on the good and bad effects of it --- by C. R. (Clara Reeve) 2 vols. London, 1785.
  2. Ibid p. XII, Preface.

Review of September 1799, reviewed it in a laudatory tone, praising such passages as "the Shell" <sup>1</sup> and also pointing out the faults of an "ill-chosen story and a frequent absence of perspicuity." In February 1800 the Monthly Review <sup>2</sup> accused Landor of borrowing too many phrases from Milton <sup>3</sup> and also said that "the poem was nothing more than the Version of an Arabian tale". This brought down from Landor's pen that savage and vehemently personal Prose Postscript to Gebir, a summary only of which exists in John Forster's <sup>4</sup> biography of Landor. In it Landor attaches an exaggerated importance to his own originality, so far as his indebtedness to Miss Reeve's book is concerned. And his biographer agrees with him. But as a matter of fact the reviewer was as far from the truth in saying that Gebir was nothing more than the version of an Arabian tale, as Landor was in protesting that there was not a single sentence in the poem nor a single sentiment in common with the Arabian tale. Landor said that some characters were drawn more at large, some were brought out more prominently and several more added. He had not changed the scene which would have distorted the piece; but every line of appropriate description, and every shade of peculiar manners were originally and entirely his own. If we compare Landor's poem with Miss Reeve's version, we find that all this is not true.

Landor omits all the ancient story prior to the invasion of Egypt by Gebir to which Miss Reeve devotes more than a hundred pages. His poem commences with Gebir's coming, because of

1. Gebir Bk. I, 162-173. "the ocean burners there."

2. Monthly Review, vol. XXXI, 1800, p 206.

3. In reply to the charge of using too many Miltonic expressions Landor said "The language of Paradise Lost should not be the language of Gebir. There should be the softened air of remote antiquity - not the severe air of unapproachable sanctity." On Landor's indebtedness to Milton see William Bradley "The Early Poems of Landor", London ( ), who after a detailed examination of Gebir comes to the conclusion that Landor's debt to Milton is too often exaggerated.

4. Walter Savage Landor; A Biography by John Forster 2 vols, Lond. 1869; vol. I, p 126-140. An imperfect manuscript of Landor's Postscript exists in South Kensington Museum.

"meditating on primeval wrongs",<sup>1</sup> and not merely, as in the source, because he hears of Charoba's fame. Both stories dwell on the fact of Gebir's giant race. The phrases are very like: in the first "men of great stature and strength";<sup>2</sup> in the second "men of gigantic force, gigantic arms."<sup>3</sup> The detail of the stones on the heads is used by Landor, with fidelity to the original, though he turns it into vivid verse. Miss Reeve says: "Every one carried a large stone upon his head, and was completely armed."<sup>4</sup> Landor writes:

"... nor sword sufficed,  
Nor shield immense nor coat of massive mail,  
... upon their towering heads they bore  
Each a huge stone, refulgent as the stars."<sup>5</sup>

In Miss Reeve's story Gebir asks Charoba where he may enter Egypt, threatening, if she refuses, to dam the Nile and starve the Egyptians. Charoba confides in her woman servant, "an artful, subtle, contriving woman, and a great Enchantress,"<sup>6</sup> who counsels strategy. Most of this Landor omits. Charoba asks advice of the nurse, who urges Charoba herself to persuade Gebir to build a city. Landor makes much of the meeting of Charoba and Gebir. At this point in both stories occurs the shepherd episode. Each version is substantially the same, but Landor has expanded the incident into a closely packed narrative concerned with the beauty of the nymph and the passion of Tamar, who is here also the brother of Gebir. Now occurs the most famous passage in Gebir, the description of the sea-shell:

". . . I have sinuous shells of pearly hue,  
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed  
In the sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked  
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave:  
Shake one and it awakens, then apply  
Its polisht lips to your attentive ear,  
And it remembers its august abodes,  
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Gebir, l. 6.
  2. Clara Reeve, The Progress of Romance, p 115.
  3. Gebir, l. 13.
  4. Clara Reeve, The Progress of Romance, p.116.
  5. Gebir, lls. 15-17.
  6. Clara Reeve, The Progress of Romance, p 117.
  7. Wordsworth imitated the passage on the shell in The Excursion:  
". . . I have seen  
A curious child, applying to his ear,  
The convolutions of a smooth-lipp'd shell,  
To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul  
Listen'd intensely, and his countenance soon  
Brighten'd with joy; for murmuring from within  
Were heard sonorous cadences.

See Wordsworth, The Excursion, Book IV.  
& Byron also uses the figure in The Island, Canto II Stanza 17:

Landor's story ends differently, for Tamar is in love with the lady, and Gebir confesses to him his passion for Charoba. Landor drops the incident for a time, but Miss Reeve adds the sequel at once. Gebir changes garments with the shepherd, defeats her and learns from her charms with which to frighten away the demons. With her help Gebir finishes his city. Some of these details Landor uses, but not until later. Yet, though Landor's treatment of the source is often free, his account of the first conversation between the lady and the shepherd is almost paraphrase.

Landor next describes in great detail the building of the city, and its destruction by unknown forces. The people attempt to propitiate the gods, but in vain. It is then that Landor introduces the sequel of the shepherd episode, following the source closely. In Clara Reeve's tale we read: "Thou shalt sacrifice a fat Bull to every one of those statues, and cause the pillar under it to be rubb'd with the blood of the bull; then perfume it with the hair of his tail, and shavings of his horns and hoofs." <sup>1</sup> And later: "Rub the door with remainder of the bulls' galls, and perfume it with the shavings of the horns and hoofs, and the hair of the tails, and then the door shall open."<sup>2</sup> Landor writes:

"And at each pillar sacrifice thou one.  
Around each base rub thrice the blackening blood,  
And burn the curling shavings of the hoof,

. . .

The yellow galls, with equal care preserv'd  
Pour at the seventh statue from the north."<sup>3</sup>

From this point Landor's story departs far from the original. Gebir descends into subterranean regions of pure Landoresque invention; The third book of the poem opens with an apostrophe to Shakespeare. Gebir beholds the spirit of Aroar, who fought under his forefathers and witnesses the torment of the lost souls that live by the "weary river". Beyond, separated by a flaming arch, he sees the abodes of the blest. Before him pass the spirits

1. Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, p 126.

2. *Ibid*, p. 127.

3. Gebir, Book II, lls. 219-224.

of famous Kings, among them George III, Louis XVI, and William the Deliverer.<sup>1</sup> Gebir meets also the spirit of his own father.

Similarly, the fourth book owes nothing to the source. The story proceeds as related up to the time of the plot to kill Gebir. Here, as noted, Dalica, the nurse, secretly secures charms from her sister. Landor describes the horror of Dalica as she watches her sister prepare the poison.<sup>2</sup> But in Miss Reeve's story there is a detailed account of the joint plans of the nurse and Charoba to get rid of the King's party before he himself is attacked. All this Landor omits, and besides these omissions and changes in the fifth book of his poem, his sixth book bears no relation to the source. It describes the love affair of Tamar and the nymph. This part of the poem is enlarged by some one hundred and fifty lines of political allusion, among them the striking reference to Napoleon. The picture of the games is Landor's invention. But the great difference between the poem and the source at the end is in the denouement. In Miss Reeve's poem Charoba hates Gebir; in Landor's poem she loves him. In the source she has achieved her end and is happy; in the poem she is bereaved. Landor depends upon the tragic death scene at the end. Miss Reeve, however, goes on to relate briefly further fortunes of Charoba, together with her death, and the succession to the throne of Dalica. Yet in both Gebir <sup>arises</sup> ~~rouses~~, seemingly dead, to address Charoba; in both the poisoned garment is the means of Gebir's death; and in both is the employment of the servant or nurse as the instrument of Gebir's death. ~~grossly condensed.~~ As a result of this abridgement

Such a comparison indicates the untruthfulness of the reviews in saying that the poem, Gebir, was merely a version of an Arabian tale. It is evident that Books III, IV, and VI, and most of Book V are Landor's invention. He omits the first episode of the old

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1. In printing Gebir Landor condensed the poem by reducing it nearly one-half. In the last edition about one hundred and fifty lines were eliminated from Books III and VI, most of these allusive to contemporary events. The line in the original, describing Napoleon as "a mortal man above all mortal praise," was qualified by a note.
  2. Landor stated that he took these lines from a passage in the pages of the traveller, Bruce. It is very possible that the precise origin was the chapter on Cerastes, or Horned Viper. See James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile VII, 292ff.

story, and the last episode in the history of Charoba. The story is basically altered for the poet's own purposes. He develops and relates to the main story the love affair of the shepherd. The poem is filled with contemporary allusions. Above all Landor has enriched and expanded the legend into an epic poem of seven books and two thousand lines. Gebir is remarkable for compact thought, luminous image, and dignified emotion. The passage on the sea-shell is itself remarkable.

On the other hand, Landor's indebtedness to Miss Reeve cannot be gainsaid. He has clung to fundamental facts and incidents: the character of Gebir; the building of the city; and the aid of the nymph; the poisoning of Gebir. It is perfectly possible to prove that a number of passages in Gebir are taken almost verbatim from the source. Gebir is neither a "version" nor is it "originally and entirely his own."

But the peculiar beauties of Gebir owe nothing to the Arabian tale. "When I began to write Gebir", says Landor, "I had just read Pindar a second time and understood him. What I admired was what nobody else had even noticed - his proud complacency and scornful strength. If I could resemble him in nothing else, I was resolved to be as compendious and exclusive".<sup>1</sup> The beauties and the faults of Gebir can alike, be attributed to this desire to be "compendious and exclusive".

Another reason for the abruptness and condensation of Gebir is that the poem was begun in Latin,<sup>2</sup> then turned into English and then vigorously condensed. As a result of this abridgement the narrative is packed, the transitions from one theme to another are abrupt and the difficulty of the poem is further increased by the occurrence of the grammatical constructions borrowed from Latin. Although a reader is at once impressed with the beauty and power of particular passages in Gebir, it is after considerable study that he succeeds in grasping the poem as a whole. It is in the individual passages such as the following (from book VII) L.79-94, that

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1. of Colvin Landor (E.M.L.) pp 21.  
 2. The Latin translation of Gebir. Gebirius - Poema appeared in 1803. Oxford. Slatter & Munday.

one is struck with the vividness of the author's imagination and the severe, classical grace of style:

"Next to her chamber, closed by cedar doors  
 A bath of purest marble, purest wave,  
 On its fair surface bore its pavement high:  
 Arabian gold enchased the crystal roof,  
 With fluttering boys adorned and girls unrobed:  
 These when you touch the quiet water, start  
 From their aerial sunny arch, and pant  
 Entangled mid each other's flowery wreaths,  
 And each pursuing is in turn pursued.  
 Here came at last, as ever wont at morn,  
 Charoba: long she lingered at the brink,  
 Often she sighed, and, naked as she was,  
 Sat down, and leaning on the couch's edge,  
 On the soft inward pillow of her arm  
 Rested her burning cheek: she moved her eyes;  
 She blushed and blushing plunged into the wave"

Here was a remarkable opportunity for a romantic poet to imitate the florid Oriental style in describing the voluptuous bath of an Eastern Queen. But, instead, we find in Landor the quiet dignity of a true classical style that presents with admirable restraint concrete images clearly perceptible by the senses. This applies to the whole of Gebir. The theme of primeval warfare and enchantment of the original Arabian story was pre-eminently suggestive of a romantic treatment. Landor's treatment is classical in the best sense of the word. Landor presents to us, says Sir Sidney Colvin, "conceptions calmly realized in words that exactly define them, conceptions depending for their attraction not on their halo but on themselves."<sup>1</sup> Hence he has been called a classic writing in a romantic age. But if the severe grace of Landor's style is classical, the subject<sup>matter</sup> and spirit of Gebir are romantic. The choice of such a remote and little known Oriental tale for the subject of an epic itself shows a catholicity of taste that is more characteristic of the romantic poets than of the school of Pope. We have Landor's own word that the Oriental tale struck his imagination as having in it something of a shadowy antique grandeur - magnificum nescio quid sub crepusculo Vetustatis.<sup>2</sup> And we must also remember that M. Vattier had noticed the resemblances of Gebir's story to the 4th book of <sup>The</sup> Odyssey and to Ovid's Metamorphoses. It does not seem

1. P. XIII, Preface to Selections from Landor, 1895.

2. Preface to the Latin Version of Gebir, Gebirus, Poema, 1803

to have been noticed what a remarkable parallel Landor and Mathew Arnold afford in their two poems Gebir and Sohrab & Rostum the one coming at the beginning and the other at the end of the Romantic Revival. Both were attracted to Oriental sources because they found in them, or fancied they found in them the simplicity, the grandeur and the nobility of action, that are characteristic of the classics. Of these two poems, Gebir is perhaps a finer and a less artificial revival of the classical style, though Arnold's poem is more carefully executed and possesses a greater unity of effect.

We must, next, give a brief consideration to a volume published by Landor in 1800 entitled Poems from the Arabic and Persian<sup>1</sup> which further testifies to the 'Oriental' propensities of the author of Gebir. In the preface Landor says: "Some poems have reached the continent, I believe in number not exceeding nine, represented as translations from the Arabic and Persian. Ignorant of both these languages I shall not assert their authenticity. The few that I have ever met with are chiefly the Odes of Hafiz --- In my opinion it is quite sufficient, if without the fatigue of travelling over a dry uninteresting waste of perhaps some hundred pages, the public be presented, whether from Egypt or from France with a new and rich collection of undistorted images. And as these translations have afforded some pleasure to those who have read them ---- I shall hesitate no longer to send them on, accompanied with my observations."

As no one has succeeded in finding either the originals or the French versions of these nine poems supposed to be

1. Poems from the Arabic & Persian, with notes by the Author of Gebir, London 1800. Reprinted with some of the notes in Dry Sticks, Fagoted by W. S. Landor Edinburgh 1858. A reduced facsimile of the quarto of 1800, reprinted by Gowans and Gray Ltd. London and Glasgow, 1927. (In the National Library, Edinburgh).

translations, the most probable conclusion is that they never existed. The poems were republished by Landor in 'Dry Sticks, fagoted by Walter Savage Landor, 1858,' where a note preceding the poems says "The following were presented as Poems from the Arabic & Persian. A hundred copies were printed for friends. One of those caused them to be written, by remarking to the author, who perhaps undervalued the Orientals, that 'he' should be glad to see how anyone would succeed in an attempt to imitate them'.

This agrees with Mrs. Browning's statement who records Landor's assurance that he wrote these poems for the mystification of scholars.<sup>1</sup>

The source of these poems is given by an autograph note added to the author's own copy, in which he says, "I wrote these poems after reading what had been translated from the Arabic and Persian by Sir W. Jones and Dr. Nott." The latter of these seems to have inspired Landor. 'Select Odes from the Persian Poet Hafez, translated into English verse, with notes critical and explanatory, by John Nott. London, printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand' - was published by subscription in 1787. Landor's father "Landor M.D. Warwick" was one of the subscribers of whom a list is given. Therefore, it is at least possible that Landor was familiar with these translations some years previously and may have derived from them the Eastern epithets etc. for his own supposed translations.

John Nott's preface to the Select Odes contains the following remark: "And we lament whilst years are bestowed in acquiring an insight into the Greek and Roman Authors, that those very writers should have been neglected from whom the Greeks evidently derived both the richness of their mythology and the peculiar tenderness of their expressions." Hafiz is described by Dr. Nott as the Anacreon of Persia and is also likened to Petrarch, whose canzoni are, Nott maintains, an exact imitation of the Persian Gazel. Landor however, in his notes<sup>2</sup> disagrees violently with these views, saying:

1. See Letters and unpublished writings of W. S. Landor edited by S. Wheeler, Lond. 1897, pp 130, 131.

2. pp 1-2 note 'b' Poems from the Arabic and Persian.

"I should be ashamed to be numbered with those enthusiasts who diminish the merit of the Western poetry by deriving so much of it from the East. Voyages had given Homer, and libraries had given Theocritus access to these copious and undisputed springs - but their waters were useless to Anacreon". The long note from which this extract is taken is attached to Landor's first Ode from the Persian, entitled 'Address to the Vine'. A few lines may be quoted as an example of the general style.

"O Thou that delightst in the gardens of Shiraz,  
And bathest with coyness in her canopied stream!  
Daughter of Beauty, favourite of Nature!  
Where she is beneficent thou art her handmaid,  
Thy voice is transport, thy bosom peace"

There is, surely, nothing remarkable in these lines and it seems a very curious coincidence that the place names mentioned in these verses or in the notes - Shiraz, Samarcand, etc. - are for the most part to be found in Nott's book. Was Landor indulging in a grim joke and holding up the pseudo-Orientalism of his time to ridicule by forging these worthless lines from Nott's Oriental translations and calling them a "new and rich collection of undistorted images"?

Four of the "Arabic" poems in Landor's volume are attributed to 'the son of unfortunate Sheik Dahir'. Dahir or (Tahir Pasha) was the ruler of Acre and was over-thrown by Hassan Pasha and the soldier of fortune, Ahmed el Jezzer. "According to the French traveller, M. Volney (whose description of Palmyra is mentioned by Landor in <sup>the</sup> notes<sup>1</sup>) Dahir had a son Othman, who on account of his extraordinary talent for poetry was spared and carried to Constantinople".<sup>2</sup> Nothing more is recorded of him, but there was also another son or grandson Fazil Bey, whose poem the Zenan-Nameh,<sup>3</sup> sings the charms of the women of all nations and could certainly not have supplied Landor with his material. The conclusion seems

1. pp 10 Poems from the Persian and Arabic.

2. Wheeler pp 132-133.

3. First translated into French by J. A. Decourdemanche (Le Livre des Femmes: Paris 1879)

to be that the poems from the Arabic like the poems from the Persian are imitations suggested by the translations of Nott and Jones.

One must indeed be very naive about things Oriental, to agree with Mrs. Browning, who considered these feeble verses "extremely beautiful breathing the true Oriental spirit throughout, ornate in fancy, graceful and full of unaffected tenderness." The last piece "Addressed to Rahdi", is perhaps the most pleasing in the volume:

"O Rahdi, where is happiness?  
 Look from your arcade, the sun rises from Busrah;  
 Go thither, it rises from Ispahan.  
 Alas, it rises neither from Ispahan nor Busrah,  
 But from an ocean impenetrable to the diver.  
 O Rahdi, the sun is happiness!"

There is nothing specifically Oriental about these lines except the sprinkling of a few Persian names; and the note that Landor adds helps one to the belief that the poem came from Landor himself. "This poem", Landor says, "resembles not those ridiculous quibbles which the English in particular call Epigrams, but rather, <sup>for</sup> abating/some little for Orientalism, those exquisite eidyllia, those carvings, as it were, in ivory or gems which are modestly called Epigrams by the Greeks."<sup>1</sup>

Landor is always "abating ~~some~~ a little <sup>for</sup> Orientalism".<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Southey written in 1809, Landor writes of The Curse of Kehama, thus; more perhaps, in a vein of generous gratitude for Southey's praise of Gebir, than any true spirit of criticism: "If the poem could be translated into any Oriental language, what a happy effect it might produce! It would show them that puny conceit and weak extravagance are no requisites in poetry and that wildness of imagery is not inconsistent with truth and simplicity of expression." It is well perhaps that Southey's epics have not been translated into any Oriental language! Landor here is evidently confusing the "truth and simplicity" of his own style with the artificial simplicity and the childishness of Southey's poems, but his

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1. Poems from the Persian & Arabic, p. 14. . . .

opinion of real Oriental literature is more characteristic and illuminating. "I have read everything Oriental; Landor goes on to say in the same letter, "that I could lay my hands on, and everything good may be comprised in thirty or forty lines. There is a prodigious deal of puckering and flouncing and spangles, but nothing fresh, nothing graceful, nothing standing straight upwards or moving straight forwards on its feet. I would rather have written the worst page in the Odyssey than all the stuff Sir William Jones makes such a pother and palaver on; yet what volumes would it fill! what libraries would it suffocate. God forbid that I should ever be drowned in any of these butts of malmsey! It is better to describe a girl getting a tumble over a skipping rope made of a wreath of flowers."<sup>1</sup>

Landor's sound classical taste revolted healthily against the "puckering and flouncing", the "pother and palaver" of the over-enthusiastic Orientalists, of whom we have spoken in our last chapter, and later English poets, Southey, Coleridge and even FitzGerald, as we shall find, were also to deliver similar eloquent tirades against the exaggerated praise accorded to the newly discovered Oriental literatures and the pseudo-Orientalism that it encouraged amongst their contemporaries. Yet in spite of these outbursts, the paradoxical fact remains that Landor with <sup>all</sup> his genuine taste in classical literature should attempt to translate from French some third rate specimens of Oriental literature, and should <sup>found</sup> his classical, heroic epic on an obscure Oriental tale picked out of a little known book of missish romance! The reason of this divided allegiance probably lies in the remark already made, that Landor was a classic writing in a romantic age.

Gebir never became really popular, but it has always had the applause of the select few, whose opinion, its author thought was worth having. Southey, Coleridge, De Quincey, Scott, Shelley and Lamb, were all the admirers of Gebir, and of these Southey, and Shelley, as we shall see, were to acknowledge the influence of Landor's poem on their own poems dealing with the Orient.

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1. Poems of the Persian and Arabic, p. 14

BECKFORD, WAINEWRIGHT, DE QUINCEY,

and

ORIENTAL EXOTICISM.

Beckford wrote no Oriental poem, and our concern being solely with the poems on Oriental themes, his inclusion in our survey deserves an apology.

When we come to Southey, Moore & Byron's Oriental poems, we shall find that Beckford's, or rather Samuel Henley's notes to Vathek, constituted a major source of information regarding Oriental costume etc., for those poets. Not only that; Beckford's chief claim to be considered here, lies in the fact that he is the first real exoticist in English literature, who by drawing on the accounts of the Oriental travellers, scholars, historians etc., conjures up an imaginary cultural atmosphere in his writings, for the satisfaction of his sensuous dreams. This elaborate Orientalism distinguishes Vathek from the other Oriental prose tales of the eighteenth century and at the same <sup>time</sup> links it with the writings of the later romantic poets.

As has been remarked before, the allegorical and moral Oriental tales written by Addison, Johnson and other eighteenth century writers, had nothing Oriental about them except a few Eastern phrases and metaphors scattered here and there to make more palatable the moral and social aphorisms which their authors wanted to convey. No better idea of the eighteenth century Oriental tale can be got than from the following <sup>1</sup> skit by Goldsmith in the Letters from a Citizen of the World to his friends in the East, where he satirises the absurd Oriental tales of his day. Goldsmith's mythical Chinese philosopher has been talking:

1. W. P. Ker in his 'Essay on Romance', Collected Essays, edit. C. Whibley, vol II, p 325, additional note, says that this passage affords a "glimpse of romance not very clearly remembered to-day"

" 'This gentleman's conversation', says one of the ladies, who was a great reader, 'is like our own, mere chit chat and common sense; there is nothing like sense in the true Eastern style, where nothing more is required but sublimity. Oh, for an history of Aboul-faouris, the grand voyager, of genii, magicians, rocks, bags of bullets, giants and enchanters, where all is great, obscure, magnificent, and unintelligible!' 'I have written many a sheet of Eastern tales myself,' interrupts the author, and I defy the severest critic to say but that I have stuck close to the true manner. I have compared a lady's chin to the snow upon the mountains of Bomek; a soldier's sword to the clouds that obscure the face of heaven. If riches are mentioned I compare them to the flocks that graze the verdant Tefflis; if poverty to the mists that veil the brow of Mount Baku. I have used thee and thou upon all occasions. I have described fallen stars and splitting mountains, not forgetting the little Houris, who make a very pretty figure in every description. But you shall hear how I generally begin. 'Eben-ben-bolo who was the son of Ban was born on the foggy summits of Bendrabassi. His beard was whiter than the feathers which veil the breast of the penguin; his eyes were like the eyes of the doves, when washed by the dews of the morning; his hair, which hung like the willow weeping over the glassy stream, was so beautiful that it seemed to reflect its own brightness; and his feet were as the feet of a wild deer which fleeth to the top of the mountains.' There is the true Eastern taste for you; every advance made towards sense is only a deviation from sound. 'Eastern tales should always be sonorous, lofty, musical and unmeaning.'<sup>1</sup>

The fashion of the Oriental verse tales of the Romantics, was to deserve, as we shall see, an equally severe chastisement from later parodists like Martin and Aytoun; but that will come in its proper place.

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1. Letters from a Citizen of the World --- By Oliver Goldsmith, edit: R. Garnett; p. 94-96.

"To get out of the ruts or cast off the absolute shackles" of classicism, two methods might be adopted by the early romanticists. "The intellectual horizon might be widened by including a greater number of ages and countries; or men might try to fall back upon the thoughts and emotions common to all times and races, and so cast off the superficial incrustation. The first method, that of the romanticists aims at increasing our knowledge; the second that of the naturalistic school, at basing our philosophy on deeper principles."<sup>1</sup> These two methods working side by side, were responsible, according to Sir Leslie Stephen, for the gradual change that came over the English literature in the last half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The revival of the study of the Middle Ages by antiquaries, Gough, Hearne, Bentham, Perry, Grose and later Tyrwhitt, Ellis, Ritson/<sup>Weber</sup> and others, the study of <sup>Old Norse</sup> ~~Runic~~ literature by Gray, and finally the medieval revival by the Warton brothers, all these subjects have been dealt ably by scholars. But not much account seems to have been taken of the similar revival of Oriental studies following the work of Jones, Colebrooke, <sup>The</sup> Ouseleys and others, that resulted in that minor tributary of Medieval romanticism, the Oriental romanticism. All the scholars, travellers and historians dealt with in the preceding chapter prepared the way for Beckford, Southey, Moore, Byron and other writers who wrote on Oriental themes. "An antiquary" says Sir Leslie Stephen again, "is naturally a conservative, and men soon began to love the times whose peculiarities they were so laboriously studying. Men of imaginative minds promptly made the discovery that a new source of pleasure might be derived from these dry records."<sup>2</sup> This applies as much to the medieval revival of Scott as to the Oriental revival of Southey. Consequently we find that following the works of the Oriental antiquaries, there is a greater desire in the new writers on Oriental themes,

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1. History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century by Sir Leslie Stephen, 1902, vol II, p. 448.

2. Ibid, p. 445.

vain. It is not possible now to believe in Cyrus Redding's remarks for 'local colour' and concreteness of detail, as compared to that Beckford wrote Vathek in one sitting, in the white heat of the general and abstract Orientalism of their eighteenth century inspiration, when shut up in his apartment one 'Eve' he was moved by predecessors. "In substituting men of concrete individual lives a 'Spirit'. Beckford's later biographers have proved beyond contention for the ideal figures of tragic art", says G. Pellissier, "romanticism that, Vathek was written while Beckford was in constant consultation with the learned Henley, in matters of costume and 'local colour' local casual details. In the name of universal truth the classicists rejected the colouring of time and place: and this is precisely what the romanticists seek after the name of particular Nights was so strong in his childhood, that like Coleridge his reality." Thus it was that the Romantic revolt against classicism guardians had to withhold these objectionable tales from the impressionable boy, who was described as "compounded of the elements of air and fire." This did not however stop young Beckford from his study of Oriental literature and books of travel. The following letter to Mrs. Hervey in April 1778 not only shows how the East had laid a spell in delineating it!"<sup>2</sup>

on young Beckford, it also voices that attitude towards the East which was to be so characteristic of the later romantic poets: Of course this "realism of Romanticism,"<sup>3</sup> must be applied with qualifications to the writers on Oriental themes who form the subject of our thesis; some of them, as we shall see, were more dreamers with the Orientals themselves. It is the country they inhabit which claims all the admiration I bestow on that quarter of the Globe. It is their woods of Spice trees, their strange animals, their vast rivers which I delight in. The East must be better known than it

Beckford is the first example of this new type of Orientalism which is at once visionary and concrete. The hundred and twenty tolerable judgment upon it not a single relation nor one voyage of one pages of notes appended to the first English edition of Vathek, volume of travels must be neglected, whether in Portuguese, Spanish or any other language. With this intent I am learning Portuguese, and find great treasures indeed, unknown descriptions, Gough and Bishop Percy, (notes so pedantic in nature that they merited the witty sarcasm of Stephen Weston in the Gentleman's Magazine Historical and perilous adventures half of which I may ine<sup>4</sup> that Vathek had been composed by Henley himself as a text venture to place in the chapter of fables (?) And why read such 'for the purpose of giving to the publick the information contained in the notes' !) amply prove that D'Herbelot, Pococke, Richardson, Sale, Chardin, Picart and a hundred other Oriental scholars I answer - these I look in as occupations, the other amuse- and travellers mentioned/our preceding chapter had not written in

1. Literary Movement in France by G. Pellissier p. 220 quoted by Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth century; 1899; p 44.
2. C.H. Herford/Romanticism, Essays & Studies, vol. VIII.
3. G. Pellissier's phrase, quoted by C. H. Herford, op. cit.
4. January 1787; cf Life and Letters of William Beckford by L. Melville, p 140.

vain. It is not possible now to believe in Cyrus Redding's remark that Beckford wrote Vathek in one sitting, in the white heat of inspiration, when shut up in his apartment one 'Eve' he was moved by a 'Spirit'. Beckford's later biographers have proved beyond contention that, Vathek was written while Beckford was in constant consultation with the learned Henley, in matters of costume and 'local colour'.<sup>1</sup> Henley had no doubt helped Beckford with his Oriental studies, when the two met in 1781. But Beckford's own love for the Arabian Nights was so strong in his childhood, that like Coleridge his guardians had to withhold these objectionable tales from the impressionable boy, who was described as "compounded of the elements of air and fire."<sup>2</sup> This did not however stop young Beckford from his study of Oriental literature and books of travel. The following letter to Mrs. Hervey in April 1778 not only shows how the East had laid a spell on young Beckford, it also voices that attitude towards the East which was to be so characteristic of the later romantic poets:

"Dont fancy, my Dear Sister (Beckford says) I am enraptured with the Orientals themselves. It is the country they inhabit which claims all the admiration I bestow on that quarter of the Globe . It is their woods of Spice trees, their strange animals, their vast rivers which I delight in . The East must be better known than it is to be sufficiently liked or disliked. If you would form a tolerable judgment upon it not a single relation not one voyage or volume of travells must be neglected, whether in Portuguese, Spanish or any other language. With this intent I am learning Portuguese, and find great treasures indeed, uncommon descriptions, marvellous Histories and perilous adventures half of which I may venture to place in the chapter of Fires (?) And why read such unmeaning Stuff? What matters it whether we are conversant with India or no? Is it not better to study the histories of Europe? I answer - these I look upon as occupations, the other amusements. Such is my taste ; it may very easily be a

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1. L. Melville, op. cit. p. 126-139.

2. Ibid. p. 20-21.

lamentable one." <sup>1</sup>

This egotistical love of the idea of the East, rather than the actual East and the conscious transcendence of reason for something more desirable than reasonable things, constitutes, as we shall find, the true romantic attitude to the East. And in the creation of this attitude the marvellous adventures related by travellers were to contribute a new source from which the romantics like Coleridge and even Wordsworth, were to satisfy their growing sense of wonder and the thirst for new knowledge:

Beckford went further than most of the contemporary and succeeding writers of Oriental tales, also, because he was able to study Oriental literature in first hand. We know that as early as 1780 and later in 1782 and 1783 he was working in Paris with the help of an old Turk<sup>2</sup> named Zemir ("the right old Mussulman to serve up tales hot and hot")<sup>3</sup> on translating some Oriental manuscripts, collected by that other Oriental eccentric Wortley Montagu. J.W. Oliver<sup>4</sup> the recent biographer and Guy Chapman,<sup>5</sup> the bibliographer of Beckford assure us, that in addition to Vathek and the other published Arabian tale Alraoui, there are among Beckford's unpublished papers as many as six translations of Arabian and Persian manuscripts and fragments of original Oriental tales. With Wortley Montagu's manuscripts and Gibbon's library<sup>6</sup> at his disposal (and probably the blood of Count Hamilton<sup>7</sup> in his veins) it is not surprising to find the rich pupil of Zemir and Henley, soaked as thoroughly in Orientalism as Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe were in Gothicism. "The idle sceptic of the eighteenth century" says Sir Leslie Stephen of Walpole, "looking for a new amusement, found it

1. J. W. Oliver, op.cit, p 23.

2. Ibid, p. 283; G. Chapman in the introduction to Vathek, with Episodes of Vathek 1929, calls Zemir 'a native of Mecca'; in that case he should be an Arab, not a Turk as J. W. Oliver says.

3. A Bibliography of W. Beckford -- by G. Chapman in conjunction with J. Hodgkin, 1930, p 94.

4. op. cit, p. 283.

5. A Bibliography of W. Beckford, op. cit. p 93-101.

6. J. W. Oliver, op. cit. p 217.

7. The author of Le Quatres Facadins; L. Melville, op. cit. p 126.

not a bibliography - see p. 222 note

in the products of industrious antiquarian labour and dressed it up a charming new toy."<sup>1</sup> Orientalism was not exactly a toy for Beckford nor perhaps was Gothicism for Walpole,<sup>2</sup> but it is surprising indeed, to notice how much of the first Romantic Revival sprang from the dreams of the well-to-do Georgians. Beckford's exotic cults had their root in ennui, but he was more genuinely an exoticist by temperament than most of his contemporaries. So real were his dreams to him, that they became a part of his very life, and thanks to his unlimited wealth they even materialized into the Oriental-Gothic sublimities of the Fonthill Abbey, with all its paraphernalia of illicit love-affairs and scandals. So imbued was Beckford's life with Orientalism that when he wanted to compliment his beloved Louisa, Beckford, the wife of his cousin Peter Beckford for writing charming letters to him, he could do no better than exclaim, "How Pure! How truly Oriental! Indeed I believed it dated from Sanna, or Hismal Mowahib, the Castle of Delights. This must be an Arabian composition, said I within myself, it breathes all the odours of that happy Country and I inhale them, tho' surrounded by perfumes; for you must know I have left Fonthill sometime

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1. History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century by Sir Leslie Stephen, 1902, vol. II, p 446.
  2. Michael Sadlier in a very suggestive essay "The Northanger Novels, A foot note to Jane Austen" (The English Association Pamphlet No. 68) regards rightly the "Gothic-romantic epoch", not as a toy-cult but as "an uprush of the desire for freedom and beauty and conversely a reaction from formalism and dignified reserve". "The central idea of Gothicism was, to involve an art different from classicism." Hence the ruins, crags etc. dilapidated for dilapidations sake." "From the adoption of Gothic forms it was an easy transition to the adoption of similar mental attitudes. The ruin, the bristling silhouette, the flowing untidy lines of piled masonry or creeper-clad rocks became in terms of emotional 'sensibility' an elegant disequilibrium of the spirit. Thus were enthroned alike in visual and in ethical appreciation, ideals of luxuriance, of profuse ornament and of rather heady liberty-Houses, churches, pictures, and furniture inspired by the Gothic (or by its easily apprehended twin, the 'Oriental') mode reveal unmistakeably the idea behind their Gothicism or their Orientalism. They exaggerate precisely those elements in the basic styles agreeable to the anti-classicists -- to the Gothicism the medieval convention of ornament was more intriguing than the structural principles, that - if one may thus express it - the sound of a strange language allured the ear, but its grammar and indeed much of its meaning were ignored by minds indifferent to such technicalities."

and have been transported to Ginnistan". In another of his letters he asks her if she still remembers "those delightful days at Fonthill", "Does she still dwell with pleasure on the recollection of what passed in our subterranean Apartment, where we used to recline like voluptuous Orientals on Silken beds in the glow of transparent curtains. Don't you remember Louisa the soft perfume of roses that seem to float in the air and the affecting sound of the music in the hall?"---

Beckford is perhaps the first real exoticist in English literature, who, through his abnormal keenness of the senses of smell, colour and sound, likes to transport himself into an ideal region of his imagining, where he can enjoy the curiosities of an alien cultural surrounding. This 'land of heart's desire' happens to be the Orient, because traditionally, <sup>the</sup> Orient is the most appropriate region for the full satisfaction of the life of the senses - a land full of pomp, gorgeousness, sensuous beauty, passion, voluptuousness and cruelty. "My imagination roams to other countries", Beckford writes to Louisa, in search of pleasures it no longer finds at home. This Evening it has been transposed to those immense unfrequented plains of Tartary which are covered with herbs and flowers. Amongst these I fancied myself reposing and thought the one I loved best in the Universe was gathering Roses by my side."<sup>2</sup>

Such semi-erotic visions of bliss, however, are not confined strictly to the East, "My thoughts are wandering", Beckford says in another vision, "into the interior of Africa and dwell <sup>for</sup> hours on those countries I love. Strange tales of Mount Atlas and relations of Travellers amused my fancy."<sup>3</sup> And in yet another letter he continues, "I have lately committed myself to the guidance of Voyagers and followed them over Vast oceans to distant climates where my exotic inclinations are satisfied,"<sup>4</sup>

1. L. Melville, *op.cit.* p. 80. For Beckford's relationship with Louisa Beckford see J. W. Oliver, *op.cit.*, 36-37, 70-78, 88-91 &
2. L. Melville, *op. cit.*, p 82.
3. L. Melville, *op cit.* p. 62.
4. *Ibid* p. 75-76.

Examples of such transporting visions to various countries, the sources of the Nile, and the "Fortunate Mountain of Paradise"<sup>1</sup> etc, may be infinitely multiplied from Beckford's letters and Travel Diaries. "Let me dream away my existence in the lap of illusions,"<sup>2</sup> is his motto. So entranced is he with the voluptuous Orient that we find him saying even at Venice that he "cannot help thinking St. Mark's a mosque and the neighbouring Palace some vast Seraglio, full of arabesque saloons, embroidered sofas and voluptuous Circassians."<sup>3</sup> Similarly when at Rome we find him decorating St. Peter's with Chinese lanterns, where the Emperor Ki "being tired of the sun would absolutely have a new firmament of his own creation and an artificial day." "For my part", Beckford adds, "I should like of all things to immure myself after his example, with those I love; forget the divisions of time, have a moon at command, and a theatrical sun to rise and set at pleasure."<sup>4</sup>

It is significant to notice the part that the keen sense of smell of an exoticist plays in transporting him to visionary lands. While at <sup>the</sup> Hague Beckford comes across in the Prince of Orange's "cabinet of paintings and curiosities," Some "Oriental essences, enough to perfume a zenana" which make him say: "If disagreeable fumes as I mentioned before, dissolve enchantments, such aromatic oils have doubtless the power of raising them; for whilst I scented their fragrance, scarcely could anything have persuaded me I was in the wardrobe of Hecuba,

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Where treasured odours breathed a costly scent"

No less suggestive of exotic visions is the power of music. "Musick raises before me a host of phantoms which I pursue with eagerness. My blood thrills in my veins, its whole current is changed and agitated."<sup>6</sup>

1. Ibid. p. 63-64.

2. Ibid. p. 92.

3. J. W. Oliver, op.cit. p. 119

4. The Travel Diaries of W. Beckford, Edit. G. Chapman, 1928, Vol. I, p. 188.

5. Ibid., p. 20.

6. L. Melville, p.92.

With such a volatile imagination and such an abnormal keenness of the senses, it was inevitable that the future author of Vathek, should float about in these half-erotic, half-sentimental visions of the Orient. But if this side of Beckford's temperament links him to the romantics, he was a true child of the eighteenth century in other respects. His emotional expansiveness was always held in check by Reason. Beckford sums up very adequately his own character when at the end of a rather hectic vision he concludes: "Such are my fantastic Visions and such the flights of my fancy when Reason has abandoned it --- Thus you see my Reason or my fancy is continually employed, when abandoned by the one I obey the other. These two powers are my Sun & Moon. The first dispels vapours and clears up the face of things, and the other throws over all Nature a dim haze and may be styled the Queen of Delusions. I should be too happy could I remain all Winter under the dominion of these Sovereigns, lapt in the silence and solitude they both so peculiarly esteem.---"<sup>1</sup>

If Fancy is responsible for the "dim haze" of his visions and the sensibility of the "picturesque traveller" in the first streaks of the romantic dawn, Reason gives that luminous, marmorean firmness to his prose style, that is such a noticeable characteristic of the wildest of Beckford's visions and the most picturesque of his accounts of travel. Thus we have the characteristic moods of romanticism set forth in a prose that has not yet yielded its classical restraint to the turgidity that followed the Romantic triumph.

Nowhere is this contrast of classical style and romantic subject matter more obvious than in Vathek.

Beckford, no doubt, employs in this tale the same machinery and costume of the Arabian Nights which the eighteenth century writers of Oriental tales had used; but he uses it with the thorough going accuracy and a more genuine sense of the exotic, which differentiate him very markedly from his predecessors. The vein of sardonic humour which pervades and, as it were disinfects the extravagances and improprieties of Vathek, is also of the eighteenth

1; J. W. Oliver, op.cit. p.31. L. Melville, op.cit. p. 65.

century and may well be due to the influence of Voltaire whose benediction Beckford received at Ferney,<sup>1</sup> or to Count Hamilton, of whom he said: "I think Count Hamilton will smile on me when we are introduced to each other in Paradise."<sup>2</sup> But neither an accurate costume nor the Voltairian humour, constitute the remarkableness of Vathek; of all the pseudo-Oriental tales written by Europeans, Vathek lives exactly on account of the quality that is most un-Oriental about <sup>its</sup> intensely personal and allegorical note. The Arabian Nights are entertaining on account of their marvels, frequently they are shocking on account of their morals, but at all times they are impersonal, logical and unindividualistic. Vathek on the other hand is intensely individualistic; it is an allegory of the life of William Beckford of Fonthill.

Born at a time when the dawn of Romanticism was peeping at the horizon, Beckford like all other adolescent Romantics felt in himself the stirrings of a vague, half sentimental, half intellectual restlessness. Marcel May the French author of La Jeunesse de William Beckford et la Genese de son "Vathek",<sup>3</sup> has, it seems, traced Beckford's familiarity with the Faust theme which was then in the air and has also found some reminiscences of Marlowe's play in Vathek. But the present writer, being unable to procure the above book can not speak with assurance about any of these points. What is beyond dispute and a point of greater importance is the fact that Vathek is the product of that "realization of Romance in its most extravagant intensity,"<sup>4</sup> at the "Coming of Age" Xmas party at Fonthill in 1781, when, as Beckford's latest biographer puts it, there is no doubt, "things must have been done in the dubious glow shed by Louthembourg's mysterious contrivances which

1. J. W. Oliver, op. cit. p. 25.
2. L. Melville, p. 126.
3. Paris, 1928.
4. J. W. Oliver, p. 91.

Translation by Sir Frank F. Marzials, 1912; see also along with Vathek by G. Chapman, 1929.

could ill bear the light of day."<sup>1</sup>

These guilty experiences, whatever their nature, undoubtedly acted as a stimulus for Beckford's imagination, in concentrating into this tale of the wealthy and self-indulgent Eastern caliph, whose dissolution and unholy thirst for knowledge lead him to damnation, all those personal dreams of power, pleasure and knowledge, which had been the preoccupation of its author since childhood. The strange and typically romantic sense of guilt pervading Vathek is utterly unlike any Oriental tale. In Vathek as well as the Episodes,<sup>2</sup> which were to form a part of it, we come across the same impetuous Faustian lovers and the same searchers for mysterious and ungodly wisdom who are so invariably, though as Beckford himself says, so magnificently damned. In spite of the terrifying scene of retribution with which the tale closes, the author's sympathies are obviously with the malefactors, those lovers with their violence of feeling and ruthless egotism of passion, amateurs of witchcraft and magic, who can, we feel sure, come to no good. The faithful eunuchs, the pious dwarfs and the loyal Viziers who follow the paths of virtue and believe in Mohammed and his faith, are, on the other hand, all slightly ridiculous. In this misanthropic reversal of values Beckford may have been indebted to Voltaire, but Voltaire would never have felt the delicious remorse of being damned and savoured the luxury of perdition. These are purely Romantic feelings and Vathek belongs as much to the age of <sup>the</sup> Cenci and Manfred, as to the eighteenth century. Without this Romantic sense of guilt, Beckford might have accumulated Eastern magnificence and sought to inflame the minds of his readers with spices and jewels in vain.

Yet it would be misleading to make a complete Romantic of Beckford. His sense of humour and fundamental sanity saved him from the monomaniac egotism of the romantics, as they also deprived

1. Ibid. p. 92.

2. Published in translation by Sir Frank T. Marzials, 1912; and in original along with Vathek by G. Chapman, 1929.

3. The Arabian Nights, ed. by G. Chapman, 1929, p. 100. The reference to the caliph's death-leading eye is taken from the portion of which was begun soon after the publication of the 1810 edition of Vathek.

him of the capacity to invest Vathek with the muffled defiance of that exoticism of the senses which the notice in such later writers as Thomas Wainwright, De Quincey and even Coleridge, classicism more in evidence than in the firmness of outline and the restrained, pellucid imagery of his prose style. It is not an insignificant fact that Vathek was written in prose and not in verse.

In Richard Garnett's words, Vathek "is at once very French and very English, very Oriental and very European, very frivolous and very tragic, very shallow and very profound. In this it represents its author a child of the eighteenth century unconsciously inspired with the emotions of the nineteenth; who as M. Mallarme justly says, in imitating Voltaire, announces Chateaubriand. While few books display more either of the lucidity of the eighteenth century or of its sarcastic persiflage, it is equally animated by the spirit of vague unrest and yearning melancholy which were to attain such proportions in "René" and "Childe Harold".<sup>1</sup>

A somewhat similar temper of mind is noticeable in De Quincey. On account of the circumstances attending its publication in England in 1786, Vathek was debafed from having an influence on the contemporary writers. It was not till 1809 and 1815 when the second and third editions were published, that the book began to be read widely. Its popularity then, achieved such an extent that the death dealing eye of Vathek and the flaming hearts of the doomed in the Hall of Eblis, became well nigh proverbial.<sup>2</sup> Byron was one of the first to praise openly this "Sublime tale"; and of its influence on him and other Romantic poets we shall have to speak later. Among the prose writers, the young Benjamin Disraeli,

partly under the influence of Beckford and partly that of Byron and

1. Scott, produced in 1833 his romantic tale "The Wondrous Tale of Alroy", which elicited great praise from the author of Vathek. Like

2. Vathek the tale is written in highly coloured prose with the supernatural and the sublime hovering on the perilous edge of the exoticism, a genuine anticipation of Flaubert's lascivious, cruel pantomime, and like it is accompanied by erudite notes.

1. Introduction to Vathek --- 1893. living in a cruel and magnificent age was tentamental to the explorations of the sources of
2. J.W. Oliver, op. cit. p. 284, mentions that even Scott makes a reference to the caliph's death-dealing eye in Rob Roy, the composition of which was begun soon after the publication of the 1815 edition of Vathek.

But more than anything Beckford is the first English example of that exoticism of the senses which we notice in such later writers as Thomas Wainewright, De Quincey and even Coleridge.

Thomas Wainewright (1794-1852), described in the Dictionary of National Biography as "poisoner and art critic", had an exotic taste for luxury displayed in his majolica, his proof engravings, his exotic plants and similar foibles with which like Beckford, he loved to surround himself. In one of his essays he describes himself as rioting "in immeasurable delight" of artistic and sensational enjoyment." I am, "he says", as great as Sardanapalus I am a concentration of all the Sultans in the Arabian Nights." <sup>1</sup> These supersensual propensities or "aatrapsim", as Mario Praz <sup>2</sup> calls it, "the lustful imaginary self-identification with an Oriental monarch," link Wainewright with Oscar Wilde, Gautier and Flaubert, in whom Praz notices a similar Oriental exoticism - allied, of course, with finer artistic and intellectual qualities.

A somewhat similar temper of mind is noticeable in De Quincey. In "The Confessions of an Opium-eater", we find him settling down in his room with a bottle of "ruby-coloured laudanum", a "book of German metaphysics" and "an eternal teapot", and feeling himself transported, in his opiate dreams, to Asiatic scenery among awful images and associations. As "the cradle of the human race", he felt "a dim reverential feeling "for the East, while he felt deep awe on contemplating the "ancient monumental, cruel and elaborate religions of Hindostan." The antiquity of Asiatic things, institutions, mythologies, overpowered him, as did the "mystic

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1. 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', London Magazine, July 1821. reprinted in Essays and criticisms collected by W. C. Hazlitt, 1880; p. 140.
2. The Romantic Agony, London 1933. p. 203. For Oriental Exoticism <sup>9</sup> Gautier Flaubert etc. in Ibid, p. 203 ff. Praz also says (Ibid p. 183) that "there is a hint of romantic exoticism, a genuine anticipation of Flaubert's lecherous, cruel Orient, in Marlowe's Tamburlane the Great, on which see my essay in English Studies (Amsterdam), vol. XIII, no. 6 (Dec.1931). With Marlowe just as with French Romantics about 1830, the exploration of the soul of a powerful tyrant living in a cruel and magnificent age was tantamount to the explorations of the sources of his own 'desire lift upward and divine'."

sublimity of the castes", "the sanctity of the Ganges". Vast empires swarming with human life gave "a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names and images". This is how he describes The "unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures" impressed on his mind.

of  
 "Under the connecting feeling/tropical heat and vertical sun-lights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances that are found in all tropical regions and assembled them together in China or Hindostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama, through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed they said which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived and was buried in stone coffins with mummies and sphinxes in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed with cancerous kisses by crocodiles and was laid confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud."<sup>1</sup>

These terrible and eloquent visions were no doubt provoked by opium and resemble the painful opium dreams of Coleridge when he speaks of a:

"Fiendish crowd,  
 Of shapes and thought that tortured me:  
 A lurid light, a trampling throng,  
 Sense of intolerable wrong."

But unlike De Quincey, Coleridge had also visions of "divine repose" and green spots of "enchantment with fountains and flowers and trees in the heart of a waste of sands".<sup>2</sup>

Praz remarks that the ecstatic visions of the exoticist are also sometimes endowed with "a sort of metaphysical intuition which discerns

1. May 1818, Confessions of an English Opium eater, p 441-442, Works of Thomas De Quincey edited by D. Masson, vol.III.

2. Letters of Coleridge, vol. I, p 414-425.

behind the complex outward appearances of things the permanence of a unique essence."<sup>1</sup> And as an example of it he quotes Keats, whom he regards as an exoticist of the same type as Beckford and De Quincey:

"Thou wast not born for death, Immortal Bird!" --- etc"

How far Keats can properly be regarded as a real exoticist, and how far his exoticism is only of that 'generic' kind, indispensable for a poet, we shall discuss in a later chapter, when we are dealing with Keats' Orientalism. For the moment we will confine ourselves to De Quincey, in whom Praz finds similar mystic intuitions of an exoticist. In describing the *Mater Lachrymarum* (in Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow, 1845) De Quincey imagines his allegorical figure present in Rama, where there is heard the lamentation of Rachel weeping for her children; at Bethlehem among the massacred Innocents; in the chambers of the Tsar and so on:

"By the power of the keys it is that our Lady of tears glides a ghostly intruder into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless woman, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi ...."

This and other quotations from Beckford given above, make it clear that there is some sort of a resemblance between an exoticist and a mystic; in so far as both project themselves out of their present selves into an ideal state; the former into a transcendental region of the Divine and the latter into an ideal region of the imagination, beyond time and space, where his senses can have their full enjoyment. But the resemblance is only superficial. A true mystical state implies a negation of the senses, a "night of sense", according to St. John of the Cross, and "Neti, Neti, Neti," (It is not that, It is not that, It is not that), according to the Hindu Upanishads. An exoticist, on the other hand, (and for that matter, also a poet) revels in the delight of his senses. A mystic's

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1. Praz, op. cit. p. 202.



for the fantastic. But, this latter category, and also some Oriental subjects, WORDSWORTH. -----  
 No survey of English poetry in the nineteenth century, from whatever angle it may be, can afford to neglect the enormous influence which the poetry and the critical theories of Wordsworth and Coleridge exerted on the following generations of poets. No apology is needed, as we shall see, for including Coleridge in our survey; as for Wordsworth, although he wrote no professedly Oriental poem, it would be worth our while to determine his attitude to the Orient by glancing at a few references in his poems to the Orient or other kindred topics, and also to examine the possible bearing of his critical theories on our subject.

Wordsworth's gospel of "return to nature", his plea for a simple life of the instincts and senses and the literary theories that he deduced from such a view of life were all, in a sense inimical to the predilection for exotic subjects and the use of outlandish epithets in poetry. Thus, on the whole, one might say, that the force of that far-reaching literary revolution that the Lyrical Ballads of 1798 effected in the domain of English poetry was exerted against all fantasticalities of subject and diction, including Orientalism. But that would be only one aspect of the matter. We must remember that in that well-known division of labour in the composition of the Lyrical Ballads, if Wordsworth's "subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life (and) the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them or notice them",<sup>1</sup> it was agreed that Coleridge's "endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic ...."<sup>2</sup> which he was to infuse with a human interest. Thus Wordsworth's realistic concern with the familiar was to be balanced by Coleridge's romantic preference

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1. Biographia Littraria, edit. Shawcross, vol. II, p 5.

2. Ibid. (1853)

for the fantastic. That this latter category was going to include some Oriental subjects, we shall see by and by; it would be sufficient at the outset to notice that the literary theories of Wordsworth and Coleridge in some respects, the first official manifesto of Romanticism, were not without a loophole for the choice of exotic themes in poetry.

Even Wordsworth, though the whole weight of his personality and practice was to be on the side of simplicity and naturalism, is not entirely free from the propensity to admire the Arabian Nights in his youth and to preserve a more or less continuous interest through life in the literature of travel.

In the fifth book of The Prelude,<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth relates how in his school days:

"A precious treasure had I long possessed,  
A little yellow, canvas-covered book,  
A slender abstract of the Arabian Tales;"

how it was to him "a promise scarcely earthly", when he learnt from his companions:

"that this dear prize of mine  
Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry-  
That there were four large volumes, laden all  
With kindred matter,"

how on learning this he made a "covenant" with one not richer than himself "that each should lay aside the money he possessed and hoard up more till our joint savings had amassed enough to make this book our own." This heroic vow was "preserved religiously for several months", "but firmness failed" and the money was spent. But afterwards when Wordsworth returned to his father's home for holidays he found that "golden store of books" once again. "What heart was mine", says Wordsworth,

"For a whole day together have I lain  
Down by thy side, O Derwent! murmuring stream,  
On the hot stones, and the glaring sun,  
And there have read, devouring as I read,  
Defrauding the days' glory, desperate!  
Till with a sudden bound of smart reproach,  
Such as an idler deals with in his shame,  
I to the sport betook myself again."

It will be noticed that though Wordsworth's eagerness and delight

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1. The Prelude, edit by E. de Selincourt, 1926; p 160 ff; Bk V. 460ff (1850)

in romances and the "Tales that charm away the wakeful night in Araby" was great and sincere, the "stern daughter of the voice of God", Duty, can, even in those childhood days, deliver "a smart reproach" at him for being idle; unless, of course, if we consider that is the grown up Wordsworth, who is imposing his later convictions on the child. In either case Wordsworth is here, as elsewhere, quite unlike Coleridge whose delight in the Arabian Nights as we shall see, was equally great and lasted all through life, because it was unmixed with any theories of the value of 'wonder' in child-education or any other ulterior consideration. In a passage quoted for the first time by Professor Selincourt from a manuscript note book (Y;),<sup>1</sup> never included <sup>E. de</sup> in <sup>in ^</sup> The Prelude, we have further evidence of Wordsworth's moralistic attitude to the Arabian Nights.

Here he discusses in detail the effects of the human association of Nature upon the child's mind - how the instinct of wonder in the child by degrees gets dissatisfied by an outerworld and finds new food in the world of fable and romance. "It is interesting to notice", remarks Professor Selincourt, "how fully Wordsworth draws his illustration of the universe of fable from the Arabian Nights."<sup>2</sup>

The passage is significant for our purpose because it not only sums up the appeal that the Arabian Nights had for Wordsworth, but gives in a sort of résumé all the wonderful and gorgeous elements in Oriental fiction with which later poets like Southey and Moore were to decorate their poems:

"Trees that bear gems for fruit, rocks spouting milk,  
 And diamond palaces, and birds that sing  
 With human voices, formidable hills,  
 Or magnets which, leagues off, can witch away  
 Iron, disjuncting in a moment's space  
 The happy ship that comes within their reach,  
 Enchanted armour, talismanic rings,  
 Dwarfs, giants, genii, creatures that can shape  
 Themselves and be or not be at their will,  
 Others, the slaves and instruments of these,  
 That neither are beast, bird insect, or worm,  
 But shapes of all and powers intemperately  
 Upon each other heap'd or parcell'd out  
 In boundless interchange."<sup>3</sup>

All these wonders, Wordsworth says "appease the absolute necessities

1. The Prelude, edit. <sup>E. de</sup> Selincourt, p. 553 ff.

2. Ibid, p 555, note.

3. Ibid, p 555, lines 85-98.

that struggle in us." accounts of the travellers as a source of

the child's "Dumb yearnings hidden appetites, are ours  
And they must have their food."<sup>1</sup>

But the world of fable and romance is not the only source from which the growing child feeds its wonder.

"Nor less esteem  
Wear at this season the more sober tales  
Of travellers through foreign climes, that shew  
A face as if it were another earth,  
As if another nature flourished there;  
Bananas, palm trees, citrons, orange groves  
And jasmine bowers, or desert wastes of sand  
Helpless and hopeless, or in desert woods  
The enormous Snake that is a tree in size,  
The burning mountain, the huge Cataract,  
Or lands that see the sun through half a year  
And lie as long in night, beneath the stars."<sup>2</sup>

These two passages written about 1804,<sup>3</sup> sum up almost prophetically, though rather dully, the two main sources of the Orientalism of later poets, the Arabian Nights and the accounts of the travellers, the one supplying them with the gorgeousness and the marvels of Oriental fiction and the other symbolising the mysterious fascination that the unknown in space exerts on the exploratory spirit of man, in life as well as in literature.

But in Wordsworth this 'Wonderment' & fascination is but a stage in the development of the child. As the voice of duty turned the young Wordsworth away from his delight in the "abstract of the Arabian Tales", so here the voice of the moralist is heard once more. "Romance has its dangers; it tends to pervert the child's simple wonder and joy in nature into a taste for the strange and the bizarre (lines 110-19). Minds untutored by Nature advance no further: in after life they will always need gross stimulants to awaken thought and feelings."<sup>4</sup>

"Untutor'd minds stop here, and after life  
Leads them no further; vivid images  
To them and strong sensations must be given..."<sup>5</sup>

That is, Wordsworth is willing to recognise the value of the

1. Ibid. V (1850), 506-507. Prof. Legouis (Early Life of Wordsworth, 1921, p. 39, note) considers this vindication of dreams and fancy in Wordsworth to be the result of Coleridge's influence, who had anticipated Wordsworth in attributing the origin of his best intellectual gifts to the study of these fairy tales. We shall come to this, however, in connection with Coleridge.

2. The Prelude, op.cit. p 555, lines 98-109.

3. According to E. de Selincourt, see Introduction to The Prelude, p. XXII-XXIV.

4. Ibid. p. 552. Prof. Selincourt sums up the substance of Wordsworth's lines.

5. Ibid., p. 556, lines 120-122.

Oriental Tales and the accounts of the travellers as a stage in the child's education but he is not willing to be an exoticist, like Beckford or De Quincey, or to a certain extent Coleridge; exoticists who through ennui of their present life, like to escape, either through imagination or by the help of other narcotics, into an exotic land of strong and congenial sensations, a fairy-land, or the Orient. Nor, Wordsworth says elsewhere, is he going to pander to the prevalent taste for the tales of horror, a branch of literature in some ways akin to the Oriental tales. He has other nobler aims:

"The moving accident is not my trade,  
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:  
'Tis my delight alone in summer shade,  
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts".<sup>1</sup>

Not only these; he is going to keep clear of all fanciful and supernatural literature. It is well known how Coleridge was unsuccessful in luring Wordsworth into the realm of fancy. The prologue to Peter Bell written in 1798 is as Professor Legouis says Wordsworth's "profession of faith in realism and at the same time a farewell not unmingled with irony to their schemes for writing supernatural poems together".<sup>2</sup> The poet's crescent-shaped boat journeys amongst the stars, over deserts, snows and oceans, all of which fail to attract the poet,

"Fair is that land as evening skies  
And cool though in the depth it lies  
Of burning Africa."<sup>3</sup>

So the boat tries to tempt the poet:

"Or we'll into the realm of Faery  
Among the lovely shades of things"<sup>4</sup>

Or if the poet "thirsts with hardy zeal less quiet regions to explore" the boat offers to show him,

"How earth and heaven are taught to feel  
The might of magic love".<sup>5</sup>

But it is all in vain. The poet abjures all romance, "the dragon's

1. Heart-leap well, 97-100.

2. Early Life of William Wordsworth, by E. Legouis; Trans. J. W. Mathews, 1921, p 429.

3. Peter Bell, prologue, 98-100.

4. Ibid, 101-102.

5. Ibid, 109-110.

wing, the magic ring". His province is elsewhere.

from Alfoxden: "Long have I loved what I behold  
The night that calms, the day that cheers  
The common growth of mother earth  
Suffice me - her tear her mirth  
Her humblest mirth and tears." 1

Not only were fiction and romance, and with it all the Oriental tales to be, renounced by Wordsworth in poetry, they were stigmatized in criticism by that famous but false distinction between imagination and fancy which Coleridge later elaborated, and to which we shall recur in connection with Coleridge.

With all his preoccupation with humanity and the "mind of man", Wordsworth was not insensible to the lure of travel and the charm of romance. But like Milton he had sternly resolved to concern himself only with the very highest; like Milton he was a dedicated spirit. When in Ruth Wordsworth can describe the new world that opened up before the Georgian youth when he crossed the Atlantic as:

"Before me shone a glorious World  
Fresh as a banner bright unfurled  
To music suddenly" 2

or describe the statue of Newton in The Prelude as

"A mind forever  
Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone," 3

we feel that it is not insensibility but will that is keeping him back from the "brave new world" of ~~the~~ travel books, to the charms of which, like the rest of his contemporaries, he was keenly susceptible. It is not entirely true to believe with Sir Walter Raleigh, 4 for example, that Wordsworth had no teachers but nature and solitude and all that he learnt was from the impulses from vernal woods. "The dominant passion of Wordsworth's life owed nothing to books," it is true; but to believe that he imbibed nothing from books at all and that his career "shows us the genius of poetry from its living material, without literary intermediary" is to ignore the hundred and one references to books, especially travel

1. Ibid, 130-135.

2. Ruth, 169-171.

3. The Prelude (1850) III, 62-63.

4. Wordsworth by Sir Walter Raleigh, 1903, pp 44, 45.

books that he makes in his poetry.<sup>1</sup> In March 1798 while Wordsworth was at work on The Prelude, he wrote to his friend J. Tobin from Alfoxden: "If you could collect for me any books of travels you may render me an essential service, as without much of such reading my present labours can not be brought to any conclusion."<sup>2</sup> "The pages of The Prelude", accordingly, says Professor Selincourt, "are studded with simile metaphor and allusion drawn from the narratives of famous navigators and explorers of unknown continents".<sup>3</sup> In book VII Wordsworth says:

"There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned  
Of airy palaces, and gardens built  
By geni of romance; or hath in grave  
Authentic history set forth of Rome,  
Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis;  
Or given upon report by pilgrim friars,  
Of golden cities ten months' journey deep  
Among Tartarian wilds - fell short, far short  
Of what my fond simplicity believed  
And thought of London - "<sup>4</sup>

"There was a time"! Wordsworth always takes care to safely consign his romantic moods and habits to the past, the slightly reprehensible past that he has outgrown! But the susceptibility to the charm of travel and history is there.

In book VIII again we have the following fine description of "the paradise" where Wordsworth "was reared", for which he draws on Lord Macartney's description of the garden of Gehol, quoted by J. Barrow, in his Travels in China a passage as Professor Selincourt points out,<sup>5</sup> also strongly reminiscent of Milton:

"That famed paradise of ten thousand trees,  
Or Gehols' matchless gardens, for delight  
Of the Tartarian dynasty composed

A sumptuous dream of flowery lawns, with domes  
Of pleasure sprinkled over, shady dells  
For Eastern monastries, sunny mounts

1. On this see E. de Selincourt op.cit. p XXIX, 504, 518-19, 550-1, 555, 602-5.

2. Letters of the Wordsworth Family, edit. W. Knight, 1907, vol. I p 115.

3. op.cit. p. XXIX.

4. The Prelude, (1850) VIII, 77-86.

5. op.cit. p. 550-551, <sup>E. de</sup> Selincourt also quotes the passage from J. Barrow.

With temples crested, bridges, gondolas,  
 Rocks, dens and groves of foliage taught to meet  
 Into each other their obsequious hues,  
 Vanished and vanishing in subtle chase  
 Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth  
 In no discordant opposition, strong  
 And gorgeous as the colours side by side  
 Bedded among rich plumes of tropic birds;  
 And mountains over all, embracing all;  
 And all the landscape, endlessly enriched  
 With waters running, falling, or asleep."<sup>1</sup>

The "domes of pleasure" recall Kubla Khan, and the whole passage is not an unworthy contribution from Wordsworth's pen to that series of Oriental paradises, which from Milton to Coleridge, Southey, and Moore have fascinated the imagination of the West. But as one expects, Wordsworth immediately assures us that "these resplendent gardens with their frame imperial and elaborate ornament," though they

"Would to a child be transport overgreat  
 When but a half hour's roam through such a place  
 Would leave behind a dance of images  
 that shall break in upon his sleep for weeks,"<sup>2</sup>

"Even then the common haunts of the great earth and ordinary interests of men" --- "all without regard as both may seem, are fastening on the heart insensibly".<sup>3</sup> Thus does Wordsworth, invariably affirm and at the same time deny the power of romance! He can sum up dispassionately in two exquisite lines, the haunting power on the child's mind of "that dance of images that shall break upon his sleep for weeks" but at the same time go on in a calm impersonal manner to affirm his doctrine of "the ordinary human interests", and "the common haunts of the green earth"! "Emotion recollected in tranquility" with a vengeance this! yet in this lies Wordsworth's unique and tantalising, strength.

In Wordsworth's view of Nature and his pantheism, one notices a similar mixture of absolute sincerity and temperamental fanaticism. Aldous Huxley in an article ironically called "Wordsworth in the Tropics"<sup>4</sup> trenchantly attacked Wordsworth's view of life and

1. The Prelude, 1850, VIII 76-97.

2. Ibid, 112 -115.

3. Ibid, 116 -120.

4. Do what you will, by Aldous Huxley, London 1929, p. 113-129.

Nature. "A voyage through the tropics", said Huxley, "would have cured him of his easy and comfortable pantheism"... "Nature under a vertical sun and nourished by the equatorial rains, is not at all like that chaste mild deity who presides over the Gemüthlichkeit, the prettiness, the cosy sublimities of Lake district"... "the jungle is marvellous, fantastic beautiful, but it is also terrifying, it is also profoundly sinister"... Wordsworth's fault was to "pump the dangerous unknown out of Nature and refill the emptied forms of hills and woods, flowers, and waters, with something more reassuringly familiar - with humanity, with Anglicanism".<sup>1</sup>

This is clever, if not profound criticism, that blames a poet for not being what he never intended to be, Shakespeare for not being Milton, Wordsworth for not being Conrad or Hardy. Moreover it is doubtful how much of the power of Wordsworth's poetry depends on the scientific truth of his theories of nature, and how much on the imaginative manner of expressing, what to him was truth.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the fact remains that there was a tendency in Wordsworth, as he grew older, to interpret his diverse and even contradictory sense-impressions in terms of a preconceived and uniform philosophy; and the sense of the sinister in Nature which Aldous Huxley so misses in his poetry, though present in a very marked degree in childhood (witness his well-known description of the journey in a boat, The Prelude, I, 378-385) was, like his sense of love and romance somewhat warped by his doctrines. However, even if he had visited the tropics, or some part of the Orient, as at one time it was his plan to study the Oriental Literatures on the advice of his uncle who thought "that that was the best field for a person to distinguish himself in, as a man of letters";<sup>3</sup> even if Wordsworth had preached Christianity in the Orient as some sort of chaplain

1. op.cit.

2. The problem of Belief in poetry is a complicated one, and we need not discuss it here.

3. Letter to W. Mathews, Nov. 13, 1791, Letters of the Wordsworth Family, edit. Knight, I, p. 38. See also p 37.

or Padre instead of preaching the religion of Nature amidst Grasmere hills & Cumberland dalesmen, one wonders if his view of life would have been any different. Aldous Huxley probably overlooked the fact that Wordsworth did speak of Tropical Nature, and very characteristically too, in his poem Ruth, where a youth of "impetuous blood", an American Indian comes from Georgia and woos the English maiden, and in the end deserts her. This is how his native climate moulds his sensual character:

Whatever in those climes he found  
 Irregular in sight or sound  
 Did to his mind impart  
 A kindred impulse ....  
 Nor less to feed voluptuous thought  
 The beauteous forms of nature wrought  
 Fair trees and gorgeous flowers  
 The breezes their own languor lent;  
 The stars had feeling which they sent  
 Into the favoured bowers.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Wordsworth is reluctant to admit that Nature even though Tropical can do any harm to this handsome youth:

"Yet in his worst pursuits I ween  
 That sometime there did intervene  
 Pure hopes of high intent:  
 For passions linked to forms so fair  
 And stately needs must have their share  
 Of noble sentiment."<sup>2</sup>

How far Wordsworth's idealized peasants and dalesmen correspond to the Noble Savage idea of the American Indian has been ably discussed by H. N. Fairchild in his book The Noble Savage.<sup>3</sup> It was left for Southey to extend this idea to Arabia and India, as we shall see, when we come to him.

Wordsworth's few references to Arabia in single phrases and lines in various poems express only the enchantment that the Arabian Nights had provided for him in his youth. In Vauillacour and Julia, a poem supposed to make some disguised references to the Annette Vallon affair, the ecstasy of the lover is described as:

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1. Ruth 127-138.  
 2. Ibid 139 - 144.  
 3. The Noble Savage by H. N. Fairchild, New York, 1928, p. 172 ff.

Arabian fiction never filled the world  
With half the wonders that were wrought for him,

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All Paradise  
Could, by the simple opening of a door,  
Let itself in upon him: pathways, walks  
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sunk  
Surcharged within him ----"1

In the Solitary Reaper, there is that bewitching reference to travel in Arabia, which everybody knows by heart:

"No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome note to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt  
Among Arabian sands."2

And in one of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets addressed to "Eminent Reformers", the "freight of holy feeling" which we meet in company of good men is spoken of as

"More sweet than odours caught by him who sails  
Near spicy shores of Araby the blest".3

Likewise there is a reference to "India's spicy regions" in a poem suggested by a picture of the Bird of Paradise, where this mysterious bird is spoken of as fit to fly with Glendoveers, the aerial beings of Hindu mythology mentioned by Southey in The Curse of Kehama. The word Indian with Wordsworth nearly always means the American Indian, but in the Excursion,<sup>4</sup> the belief of the Hindoos as to the heavenly sources of the Ganges is mentioned and in Peter Bell:

The rocks that tower on either side  
Build up a wild fantastic scene;  
Temples like those among the Hindoos,  
And mosques and spires....."5

There are several references to the East and the Orient in general of which we may mention only a few. The Venetian Republic "Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee;"<sup>6</sup> in The Haunted Tree:

"That Eastern Sultan, amid flowers enwrought  
On silken tissue might diffuse his limbs  
In languor;"

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1. Vaudracour and Julia, 39-50.
  2. The Solitary Reaper, 9-12.
  3. Ecclesiastical Sonnets, XXXIX, Eminent Reformers, 9-10 cf. also "Arabian Prophets' native waste" in Ecc. Son. XXVII, Imaginative Regrets, 11.
  4. The Excursion III 254-255.
  5. Peter Bell 681-684.
  6. On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic, 1.
  7. The Haunted Tree, 12-14.

in Excursion:

"That accumulated store of gold  
And Orient gems, which for a day of need  
The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs"<sup>1</sup>

in The Prelude a patriot is rejected and "with an Oriental loathing spurred, as of a different caste",<sup>2</sup> in the Poems founded on affections, X, the haughty Geraldine

"Immovable by generous sighs  
She glories in a train  
Who drag, beneath our native skies  
An Oriental chain"<sup>3</sup>

and finally in A Fact and an Imagination, Canto's Courtiers flatter him with an "Oriental flattery".<sup>4</sup>

All these references though trivial in themselves prove that inspite of his passionate concern with English countryside and the "mind of man" Wordsworth had read with enjoyment the Arabian Nights and the accounts of the travellers, and was not loth to use metaphors and images from them in his poetry.

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1. The Excursion IV. 567-569.
  2. The Prelude, IX, 291.
  3. Line 5-8
  4. A Fact and Imagination, line 18.

C O L E R I D G E .

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Coleridge's contribution to the so-called 'Oriental' literature is not great but it has been found necessary to devote more space to him than his poems deserve for several reasons. Firstly, because like Wordsworth, he occupies an important and influential position in the beginning of the century. His rehabilitation of the supernatural in English poetry, as well as his imaginative use of the raw material extracted from books, although not necessarily Oriental books, were to have a deep influence on poets like Southey and Moore, for example, who were to employ or pervert his theories for their own Oriental poems. Equally important in determining the trend of English poetry were Coleridge's views of the Arabian Nights, Persian poetry, Hindu philosophy and other kindred matters, which it is worth while examining in some detail, if only to determine the causes why Oriental literature and philosophy failed to exert a similar influence on English poetry, to what they did on contemporary German literature; and why 'Orientalism' in England remained more or less a sort of poetic exoticism of the kind witnessed in Beckford and others.

We have seen how Wordsworth enjoyed reading the Arabian Nights in his childhood, because they gave him a sense of mastery over time and space, and how he rejected them as he grew up, because they encouraged exoticism. Coleridge's love for these tales is more wholehearted. In one of his autobiographical letters to Thomas Poole, he tells us how he read the Arabian Nights when he was six. "One tale made so deep an impression on me --- that I was haunted by spectres whenever I was in the dark, and I distinctly remember the anxious and fearful eagerness with which I used to watch the windows in which the books lay, and whenever the sun lay upon them, I would seize it by the wall and bask and read."<sup>1</sup>

But this childish delight is not unmixed with elderly admonitions, which seem the result of afterthought. Coleridge too,

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1. Letter to T. Poole, Oct. 9, 1797. Letters edit. E.H. Coleridge, I, p. 12.

through his lifelong feeling of self-criticism and self-disgust cannot help adding: "So I became a dreamer, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity --- fretful, and inordinately passionate --- sensibility, imagination, vanity sloth and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for all who traversed the orbit of my understanding were even then prominent and manifest".<sup>1</sup> The effect of the Arabian Nights and other Fairy Tales, was however not altogether for the worse. "From my early reading of Fairy tales, and genii etc. etc, Coleridge goes on to say, "my mind had been habituated to the Vast, and I never regarded my senses in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions not by my sight even at that age. Should children be permitted to read romances and relations of giants and magicians and genii?... I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths, step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but parts and all parts are necessarily little and the universe to them is but a mass of little things ----"<sup>2</sup> Thus the empiricist's disconnected impressions of sense/distasteful to Coleridge and, in the region of the supernatural and fantastic, he can already find inklings of a transcendental mysticism and a deeper sense of the numinous, which were to be so characteristic of the Romantic movement. We saw in an earlier chapter, how the Arabian Nights, appealed to the writers of pseudo-Oriental tales in the eighteenth century, because they could appropriate the fantastic machinery of these tales to their own moralising or satirical ends. Nothing is more symptomatic of the gradual change that had come over English poetry during the half century or so preceding the publication of the Lyrical Ballads, than this new attitude towards the supernatural, evinced by Coleridge and others. It is well known how Coleridge in reply to Mrs.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid. p. 16-17.

Barbauld who complained that the Ancient Mariner had no moral, said that, on the other hand, the poem had too much moral for a work of such pure imagination. "It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights tale of the merchants sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the seeds aside, and lo! a genii starts up and says he must kill the aforesaid merchant because one of the date-shells, had, it seems, put out the eye of the genii's son".<sup>1</sup>

The bearing of this remark on the Ancient Mariner has been often noticed, but there is implied in this remark, also, a criticism of the Arabian Nights. Why should Coleridge take the Arabian Nights as a perfect example of the type of fiction in which the laws of space, time and casualty are so, ruthlessly, yet so convincingly violated? And if he regards the Arabian Nights as a model of such fiction is it not possible that his own poem, whose logic is the same, owes something to these tales in its treatment of the supernatural?

It appears that Coleridge among his multitudinous interests had also given some thought to the mythology and the supernatural beings of the East. In Asia on account of the surviving influence of the unity of God, Coleridge says, with his usual insight, "all other super-or ultra-human beings could only be represented as ministers of or rebels against his will. The Asiatic genii or fairies are, therefore, always endowed with moral qualities and distinguishable as malignant or benevolent to man. It is this uniform attribution of fixed moral qualities to the supernatural agents of Eastern mythology that particularly separates them from the divinities of old Greece".<sup>2</sup> This is quite true of the dualism of the principle of good and Evil in Persian mythology, of Ahura-Mazda and Ahri-man, of the Peris and Divs and also to a lesser extent of Hindu

1. Table Talk, Bohn's Standard Library, p 87.

2. Miscellanies, Aesthetic and Literary, Bohn's Standard Library, p. 150,-151.

mythology. Southey too, as we shall see, noticed this but he noticed nothing else. Coleridge goes to the very root of the matter when, further, he goes on to say that "the Asiatic supernatural beings are all produced by imagining an excessive magnitude or an excessive smallness combined with great power, and the broken associations which must have given rise to such conception are the sources of the interest which they inspire, as exhibiting through the working of the imagination the idea of power in the Will. This <sup>is</sup> delightfully exemplified in the Arabian Nights Entertainments and indeed more or less in other works of the same kind. In all these there is the same activity of mind as in dreaming, that is an exertion of the fancy in the combination and recombination of familiar objects so as to produce novel and wonderful imagery; To this must be added that these tales cause no deep feeling of a moral kind - whether of religion or of love; but an impulse of motion is communicated to the mind without excitement, and this is the reason of their <sup>being</sup> so generally read and admired."<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to believe that Coleridge when he wrote the above, was not also thinking of the Ancient Mariner; for there too we find "the same activity of mind as in dreaming.--- the combination and recombination of familiar objects to produce novel and wonderful imagery," the same lack of moral purpose and "an impulse of motion communicated to the mind without excitement". There is the same inconsequence, and vividness as of a dream, in the Arabian Nights and in the Ancient Mariner.

But one suspects that in spite of the high opinion that Coleridge had of the Arabian Nights, he would rather have called them a work of Fancy, rather than of Imagination. Persian poetry we know, he regarded as a work of Fancy, though not the Arabian Nights, which are, as a matter of fact, strictly Persian in their supernatural machinery.

"I must acknowledge", said Coleridge in his Table Talk, "I never could

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1. Ibid. p. 152-153.

see much merit in the Persian Poetry, which I have read in translation. There is not a ray of imagination in it and but a glimmering of fancy. It is in fact, so far as I know, deficient in truth. Poetry is something more than good-sense, but it must be good-sense, at all events; just as a palace is more than a house, but it must be a house at least. The Arabian Nights Tales are a different thing - they are delightful, but I can not help surmising that there is a good deal of Greek fancy in them."<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge's poor opinion of Persian poetry may be due, to some extent, to the mechanical translations in pseudo-classical verse by Sir William Jones and John Nott, on which he based his opinion, but more especially it is due to the romantic distinction between Fancy and Imagination, by which, even the better poetry of Dryden and Pope was safely condemned as fanciful and "deficient in truth". Persian didactic poetry has to some extent the same sense of decorum and verbal ingenuity, "the gaudiness and inane phraseology" according to Wordsworth, which characterise the English neoclassical poetry and against which the crusade of the Lyrical Ballads was directed. It is generally believed now that this distinction between Fancy and Imagination, which was such a favourite weapon of condemnation in the hands of the romantics, was false and arbitrary. Fancy is nothing but an inferior, less dynamic form of imagination and the "distinction lies not in the materials with which they operate but in the degree of intensity of the operative power itself".<sup>2</sup> In this case it is interesting to compare with Coleridge's distinction, the modern contentions of Professor Herbert Read, in whose opinion Fantasy and Fancy are the same things, or to be more exact, that Fantasy is the product of the mental faculty of Fancy as defined by Coleridge. The comparison is especially relevant for our purpose, because Professor Read regards the Arabian Nights as the "greatest work of Fantasy that has ever been evolved by tradition, and given .....

1. Table Talk, Bohn's standard Library, p. 72.

2. The Road to Xanadu by J.L. Lowes, 1927, p. 103; cf. also The Idea of Great Poetry by L. Abercrombie, 1925, p.52-58. and Wordsworth by H. W. Garrod, p. 145,n.

literary form"<sup>1</sup>. "Fantasy" according to Prof. Read, "is a product of thought, Imagination of sensibility. If the thinking, discursive mind turns to speculation, the result is Fantasy; if however the sensible and intuitive mind turns to speculation the result is Imagination. Fantasy may be visionary, but it is cold and logical; Imagination is sensuousness and instinctive."<sup>2</sup> These distinctions are perhaps not altogether sound, but they help us to understand the difference between the Arabian Nights and the Ancient Mariner. There is certainly a cold and logical quality in the Arabian Nights, a certain lack of human interest and, in spite of the profusion of magical and supernatural machinery, a certain monotony and lack of 'invention', which a Western reader is more apt to notice, because the literatures of his own country, at least since the Renaissance, have concerned themselves to a greater extent with Man, human nature and human passions. In common with the Arabian Nights, Coleridge's poem possesses the two qualities that according to Prof. Read characterise a fantasy, objectivity and arbitrariness,<sup>3</sup> but in addition to these Coleridge succeeded in transferring to it "from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith."<sup>4</sup> The Semblance of Truth, that inner logic and consistency which characterise a work of art, are also to be found in the Arabian Nights, but the human interest, ("the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real")<sup>5</sup> are not characteristic of the undramatic nature of Oriental art, at least not of that species of art to which the Arabian Nights belong. Moreover, it is questionable how far the authors

1. English Prose Style, by Herbert Read, 1928, p 146.

2. Ibid. p 137.

3. Ibid. p 138.

4. Biographia Literaria, edit. Shawcross, II p.6.

5. Ibid. p. 5.

of the Arabian Nights, and the Eastern readers up to this day, employ that "willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith". This famous phrase, implies, one is inclined to think, that conscious transcendence of reason which is more characteristic of the "romantic" attitude towards literature, or at least of the sophisticated Western reader with definite views on aesthetics. The more simple minded Eastern reader either wholly believes in the Arabian Nights with a solemn, almost religious faith, or if he happens to be an Orthodox Moslem, rejects them outright as untruthful or fictitious, calling them as Carlyle did, "downright lies". With him there is no "romantic" half-way house of aesthetic valuation, "poetic faith".

In any case the Arabian Nights never promoted the sense of the Vast and the whole in any Eastern reader! It has been necessary to discuss Coleridge's attitude to the Arabian Nights, at some length, because it brings out the main characteristics of the romantic attitude towards the supernatural, which the later poets like Southey and Moore and others were to adopt in variously modified forms. The comparison between the Ancient Mariner and the Arabian Nights, has also, it is hoped, thrown some light on the real character of these Oriental tales, as distinguished from the romantic view of them.

We pass on now to the second aspect of Coleridge's poetry which was equally influential in determining the trend of English poetry in the early nineteenth century - namely, the tendency to extract material for poetry from the accounts of the travellers. We have seen evidence of this tendency in Wordsworth, but to Coleridge belongs the credit of the first imaginative use<sup>1</sup> of those vast stores of learning that his reading of travellers, historians, writers of natural history, geographers etc. had provided him. In

1. Cf. Lewti with "its" lucid & liquid melody "its" imagery of moving light "its" vague wildly romantic subject matter" (A. Symons, The Romantic Movement in Eng. Lit. p.140) - "a sort of preliminary study for Kubla Khan. Written about 1794 & first entitled The Wild Indians Love Chant "Tamaha's stream" is the Altamaha river of Georgia, & "Lewti's Lover it seems was originally a redman" (The Noble Savage by H. N. Fairchild) Thus Lewti ranges itself with other Pantisocratic poems of Coleridge (To a young Ass, Pantisocracy etc.) and fails to include itself in our survey as an "Oriental" poem. For the genesis of the poem see The Road to Xanadu, J. L. Lowes, p. 513-516.

the "Advertisement" to Lyrical Ballads (1798), it is stated that "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner was professedly written in imitation of the style as well as of the spirit of the elder poets", Spenser, Milton and other Elizabethans. But as we have remarked before, this revolt of the new "school" from the tradition of Queen Anne, to the tradition of the Elizabethans meant a recourse on the part of the romantics not merely to their own observations of nature and a full use of their senses, but also to the observations of travellers, natural scientists and others. As the Elizabethans had employed in their poetry the inspiring knowledge opening up to them by a revival of the classics and the geographical discoveries of the travellers, so the Romantics of the nineteenth century annexed new territories to the realms of their imagination by a study of the accounts of the travellers, of which, as we have seen, there was a sudden efflorescence during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Thus the emancipation of the imagination from the narrow limits imposed by the neo-classic<sup>al</sup>/tradition, and the "return to nature" meant not only that a free scope should be given to man's instincts and senses, the impressions gathered from external nature and countryside in England should be made subjects for poetry, but also the natural descriptions of foreign countries, peoples, animals, and natural products, should be regarded as fit subjects for literature. This expansion of the borders of the imagination, was not without its disadvantages and dangers in the hands of the bookish poets like Southey, for example, and the parallel that it affords with the Elizabethan age should not be pressed too far; but in Coleridge, at least, we find a perfect imaginative transmutation into poetry of the raw material gathered from books.

Professor John Livingston Lowes, with the skill of a detective and the prodigious industry and scholarship that make him one of the greatest literary sleuths living, has traced in his The Road to Xanadu, Coleridge's vast reading back to its sources. We

can do no more than refer to the fascinating account that he has given of the ways of the imagination, the part played by conscious and unconscious memory in literary creation and the mysterious processes by which a poet's "Shaping Spirit of imagination", reduces the chaos of impressions gathered from books into an artistic unity. Our concern being solely with Kubla Khan, we shall recount here briefly,<sup>1</sup> and in somewhat bald terms, the sources which supplied Coleridge with the impressions that went to the making of this 'Oriental' poem:

Purchas His Pilgrimes<sup>2</sup> & Purchas His Pilgrimage<sup>3</sup> contain that description of the famous Paradise of the Old Man of the Mountain, which was the starting point of Coleridge's dream (Milton<sup>4</sup> in Paradise Lost had drawn some images and names in the description of the Paradise of Eden, from Purchas; and Southey, as we shall see, was to base his Garden of Irem in Thalaba on the same source). Bartram's Travels,<sup>5</sup> supplied Coleridge with the suggestion of the "incense bearing trees". James Bruce's Travels to discover the sources of the Nile,<sup>6</sup> which were to serve later for Southey, Moore and others were responsible for the underground fountains; and Maurice's History of Hindostan, Major Rennel's Memoir of a Map of Hindostan, F. Brenier's Voyage to Surat, all supplied Coleridge with single phrases and images from the description of the Valley of Cashmere and of the impressions of India. Besides these Pausanias and Strabo and Beckford's Vathek, may also have been read by Coleridge.<sup>7</sup>

The chief point to note about Coleridge is that he did not 'get up' his facts like Southey and Moore and then deftly or laboriously dovetail them together. The following utterance of

1. For a further account see Road to Xanadu, p. 343-413.
2. Hakluytus Postumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes in twenty volumes; Glasgow 1905-1907; vol. XI, p. 207-209.
3. Purchas His Pilgrimage --- 1617, pp 249 and 428. See Lowes, p. 586.
4. See Prof. Lane Cooper's article "The Abyssinian Paradise in Coleridge & Milton, Modern Philology III, 327-332. Also Lowes, p. 374.
5. Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida --- by William Bartram, Philadelphia, 1791. p 157 See Lowes, p. 364 ff.
6. In 5 vols. Edinburgh, 1790 III 396-597, Lowes p. 371. ff.
7. On all these See Lowes, 379-400.

Coleridge in Biographia Literaria, surprisingly left out by Professor Lowes, sums up the difference between Coleridge's way of using his bookish material and that of Southey. "Imagery (even when taken from Nature, much more from books, as travels, voyages and works of natural history; affecting incidents, just thoughts; interesting personal or domestic feelings; and with these the art of their combination or intertexture in the form of a poem, may all by incessant effort he acquired as a trade, by a man of talents and much reading--- who has mistaken an intense desire of poetic reputation for a natural poetic genius (It is impossible to believe that Coleridge has anybody but Southey in mind!) But the sense of musical delight with the power of producing it, is a gift of imagination and this together with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling may be cultivated and improved but never learned". And again; a poet "diffuses a tone and a spirit of unity, that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each by that synthetic and magic<sup>a</sup>/power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination."<sup>1</sup>

But this fusion and synthesis can only take place, if the images are not directly and immediately transplanted from say, a book of travel, into the poem, as we suspect they must have been Southey's in/poems; they must sink into the "unconscious well of cerebration" which Coleridge defined as "the twilight realm of consciousness";<sup>2</sup> "that shadowy half being", "that state of nascent existence in the twilight of imagination and just on the vestibule of consciousness"<sup>3</sup> Here by the "streamy nature of association"<sup>4</sup> (Coleridge's phrase), the images coalesce, potently and energetically. "The imagination,"

1. Biographia Literaria, edit. Shawcross, II p. 14. *paid to its*

2. Ibid. II, p. 120; Lowes p.55.

3. Letters I, 377; Lowes p.55 *Lowes p. 50.*

4. Anima Poetae, edit. E. H. Coleridge, p. 46.

5. Biographia Literaria II, p. 120; Sir John Davist, "The Poet's Mind", Coleridge, p. 120.

Coleridge says again," - the inward creatrix instantly out of the chaos of elements or shattered fragments"<sup>1</sup> discerns the pattern of a whole; thinking "curbs and rudders"<sup>2</sup> the streamy nature of association. And by these mysterious processes the raw material gathered from books passes into poetry.

Coleridge applies to the imagination the following lines of Sir John Davies once used of the soul:

"Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns  
Bodies to spirits by sublimation strange  
As fire converts to fire the thing it burns ---  
From their gross matter she abstracts their forms  
And draws a kind of quintessence from things"<sup>3</sup>

Just as in the Ancient Mariner we see the "sublimation strange" of the "gross matter" of the ballads and tales of horror and in Keats' Dame La Belle/Sans Merci of the medieval literature of magic and chivalry, in Kubla Khan we find the thrice distilled "quintessence" of Orientalism "abstracted" by Coleridge from a reading of Oriental travel books. We could do no better in the course of our survey, than use this unique poem as the touchstone for judging the worth of all poems similarly suggested by the reading of travel books and other literature relating to the Orient. What Southey Moore and other writers of Oriental verse tales, failed to do in 'epics' of many hundred pages, Coleridge achieves within the compass of fifty four lines, whose power of suggestion and conjuring up an atmosphere is literally magical., Lamb relates how Coleridge repeated Kubla Khan, "so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into my parlour when he says or sings it to me". After Lamb how many subsequent readers have experienced the same irradiation and enchantment! Much has been written on Kubla Khan, its "disembodied music", its ideal perfection of lyric poetry and so on. But not enough attention seems to have been paid to its

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1. Anima Poetae, op.cit. p. 206. Lowes p. 56.  
2. Ibid, p. 46.  
3. Biographia Literaria II, p 12-13; Sir John Davies, 'of the Soul of Man', stanzas 90-91. Lowes, p.74.

Oriental aspect; how Coleridge's vision of almost paradisaical happiness and "holy dread", hovers vaguely round the Orient. Professor Lowe's valuable finds and deductions have proved how the "stately pleasure dome" of the poem is a quintessence of the gorgeousness of all the Oriental palaces, the Mongolian Palace of the historical Kublai Khan in Shang-tu<sup>2</sup>, the exquisite Taj Mahal of Agra<sup>3</sup> and one might also add of the Moorish Alhambra in Granada. How the "gardens bright with sinuous rills" "where blossomed many an incense bearing tree" are full of the odorous suggestions and 'leafy luxury' of the Shalimar Gardens in Kashmere,<sup>4</sup> with their numerous fountains, and rivulets and pleasure-domes miraculously floating on the waters of the canals - veritable "terrestrial Paradises" which the epicurean and luxuriant Moghul emperors built for their pleasure and retirement, after the summer heat and dust of the Indian plains. But Coleridge's vision is not an unmixed assemblage of "Sunny spots of greenery" and "music loud and long" that gives "deep delight"; the Orient of the romantic imagination, as we shall have abundant opportunities of noticing, also contained elements of terror, which add to the preciousness of beauty, by an imperilling contrast with its opposite. "'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror", of which Shelley spoke in his lines on the Medusa. But as the beauty is subtly suggested in Kubla Khan rather than elaborately described in catalogues in Southey's or Moore's vein, so the terror is sublimated and purified into a "holy dread", a 'numinous' sense of awe which is at once fascinating and terrifying:

A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon lover!

This powerful image has not been 'accounted for' by Professor Lowes; it might in Coleridge's mind have recalled that weird fascination which the spectres out of the Arabian Nights, had over him in child-

1.

2. In Yule's Cathay and the Road Thither, edit. H. Cordier (Hakluyt Society, 1914, III 107-133) there is a singular coincidence pointed out by Cordier and quoted by Lowes (p.358-585) of the Kaan's dream about the palace of Langtin, which like the palace of Kubla Khan, was itself an "embodiment of a remembered vision in a dream".

3. See Lowes, p 387.

4. Ibid. p. 382 ff.

hood. There is many a "woman wailing for her demon lover" in the Arabian Nights.

The other equally compelling image of the youth, reminiscent of the fanatic devotees and dancing Dervishes of Aladdin's Paradise in Purchas<sup>1</sup>, as well as of the sinister Abyssinian King in Bruce's Travels<sup>2</sup>, conveys a subtle mixture of "holy dread", associated with primitive magic and the felicitous sumptuousness of the Mohammedan Paradise:

...Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise".

It is futile to attempt to convey in any other words but those of the poem itself the rich suggestiveness and magical power of these lines which are poetry as well as pure incantation. All that we are attempting to do is to suggest the juxtaposition of a paradisaical beauty and a 'numinous' dread, that are, as it were, the warp and woof of Coleridge's conception of the Orient in Kubla Khan.

This brings us to the topic of Coleridge's exoticism. How far is Coleridge's exoticism of the same type as that of Beckford, De Quincey and Thomas Wainwright, to whose visions of an exotic Orient, Kubla Khan bears some resemblance?

Professor Lowes says of Coleridge's relation to Beckford: "I wish I could say with the complete assurance which is based on evidence, that Coleridge had read Vathek. As it is I have neither doubt nor proof".<sup>3</sup> Professor <sup>Lowes</sup> has spoken of a vision similar to Kubla Khan, which Beckford had when he was eighteen. The earlier pages of Vathek too are conceived in the very spirit of the dream. We have the Palaces of the Five senses - 'pleasure houses', par excellence, a Paradise with cedars and incense-bearing trees, four fountains, like the 'four sacred rivers' which watered Eden; and the

1. Lowes, p 362 - 363.

2. Ibid. p 378.

3. The Road to Xanadu p. 398. I am indebted to Prof. Lowes for this reference, but the parallelism between the exoticism of Beckford and Coleridge, which I have attempted to trace here, owes nothing to Prof. Lowes.

foot of the hill of the Four Fountains there was "an immense gulph" or "chasm".<sup>1</sup> And as Vathek, after the Giaour had disappeared in the abyss, looked over the edge "One while, he fancied to himself voices arising from the depth of the gulph; at another he seemed to distinguish the accents of the Indian; but all was no more than The hollow murmur of Waters, and the din of cataracts that rushed from steep to steep, down the sides of the mountain".<sup>2</sup> This tumult Professor Lowes points out is similar to the tumult of the waters in Kubla Khan and similarly it rises with the voices as in Coleridge's poem, from the abyss. "That a reminiscence of it flashed through the interweaving fancies of the vision is well within the bounds of possibility".<sup>3</sup>

There is also a further parallel/ism between the exotic dreams & visions of Beckford already quoted in our earlier chapter and Coleridge's opium dreams. Kubla Khan, itself, as everybody knows, is an opium dream. A letter written in April 1798, just before Kubla Khan was written, shows that Coleridge had become actually addicted to opium at the time: "Laudanum gave me repose, not sleep", he wrote to his brother George, "but you, I believe, know how divine that repose is, what a spot of enchantment, a green spot of fountains and flowers and trees in the heart of a waste of sands!"<sup>4</sup> This 'spot of enchantment', symbolical of the "divine repose", induced by opium, refers as Professor Lowes has shown to the memories of a description in Bartram's Travels of an "enchanted little Isle of Palms", which were, a month or two later to contribute to the enchanting loveliness of the opening lines of Kubla Khan. Thus we find that opium was already inducing visions of luxurious

1. An Arabian Tale etc. (The History of Caliph Vathek), London 1786, pp 2-5, 23-24, 35-36.

2. Ibid. p 37

3. Lowes, op.cit. p. 399

4. Letters, I p. 414-425. 11, Oct. 18, 1797, Letters I, p 420-421.

tropical scenery, of much the same kind as those of Beckford and De Quincey. But in a letter written as early as October, 1797, occurs the following passage,<sup>1</sup> which if it does not recount the reminiscences of an opium dream, is at least, expressive of that ecstasy of dissolving into the infinite, with which the romantics were so much in love. And what is more interesting, it is connected again with the Orient. In a mood of philosophical despair Coleridge writes to Thelwell: "More frequently all things appear little, all the knowledge that can be acquired child's play --- I can contemplate nothing but parts and parts are little! My mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something great, something one and indivisible (cf Coleridge's saying that the Arabian Nights habituated him to "the Vast", "the Great and the Whole") And it is only in the faith of that that rocks, waterfalls mountains, or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty! But in this faith all things counterfeit infinity --- It is seldom that I raise and spiritualize my intellect to this height; and at other times I adopt the Brahmin creed, and say "It is better to sit than to stand, it is better to lie than to sit, it is better to sleep than to wake, but death is the best of all! I should much wish like Indian Vishnu to float along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotus and wake once in a million years for a few minutes just to know that I was going to sleep a million years more."

So acceptable was this state of world-weary Nirvana to Coleridge that he put it twice in his verse, once in the mouth of

1. Letter to J. Thelwell, Oct. 16. 1797, Letters I. p 228-229. Professor Lowes ignores the impossible importance of this letter as an evidence of Coleridge's opium habit, when in his chapter 'Not Poppy nor Mandragora', 414-425, he modifies J.M. Robertson's contention that Coleridge's poetry is "an abnormal product of an abnormal nature under abnormal conditions" (New Essays towards a critical Method, London 1797, p.187)

2. Letter to J. Thelwell, Oct. 16, 1797, Letters I, p 228-229.

3. Essays, ed. J. Thelwell, p. 118.

Alhadra, the Moorish woman in Osorio<sup>1</sup> (1797) and later in the fragments of the unfinished Historical Drama, The Triumph of Loyalty, written in 1800. This is how Earl Henry soliloquises in the latter piece:

"Oh! there is Joy above the name of Pleasure  
 Deep self-possession, an intense Repose,  
 No other than as Eastern sages feign,  
 The God, who so floats upon a Lotos Leaf,  
 Dreams for a thousand ages; then awakening,  
 Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble  
 Relapses into bliss."<sup>2</sup>

We shall meet echoes of this mood of "honeyed indolence", and ecstatic blissfulness also in Keats when he speaks of being "half in love with easeful Death" and call/ "him soft names in many a mused rhyme". But with Keats this mood is seldom if ever connected with the Orient. This pseudo-mystical state of losing one's identity in the intensity of a single sensation, examples of which we have also noticed in Beckford and De Quincey, is a favourite of the romantics, and deserves, as we have already remarked the name of exoticism, rather than true mysticism. The use of opium may have stimulated Coleridge's exoticism as it did De Quincey's, but one is inclined to believe that the roots of this exoticism lay deeper in the personalities of these romantics; it was not merely the result of artificial stimulants such as opium or alcohol. T.E. Hulme was perhaps nearer the truth when he attributed the various emotional and philosophical maladies of the Romantics to what he called "Spilt religion".<sup>3</sup>

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1. "I need the sympathy of human faces  
 To beat away this deep contempt for all things  
 Which quenches my revenge. Oh! would to Alla  
 The raven and the seamew were appointed  
 To bring me food, or rather that my soul,  
 Could drink in life from the universal air!  
 It were a lot divine in some small skiff,  
 Along some ocean's boundless solitude  
 To float forever with a careless course  
 And think myself the only being alive!"

1. Osorio, Act. V. Sc.I. 47-56, Poems of Coleridge, edited E. H. Coleridge, II, p 584, cf 577.

2. Lines 311-317; Coleridge's Poems, edit. E. H. Coleridge, II, p. 1071; cf I, p.422.

3. Speculations, edit Herbert Read, p. 118.

But Coleridge's "Nostalgia for the infinite" is not restricted to dreams of Hindu Nirvana. In a lecture on the Gothic art he says, like Beckford. "The Gothic art is sublime. On entering a Cathedral I am filled with devotion and with awe; I am lost to the actualities that surround me and my whole being expands into the infinite; earth and air nature and art all swell up into eternity and the only sensible impression left is "that I am nothing".<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's genius was many-sided and his "tangential" mind as Hazlitt<sup>2</sup> called it, was almost encyclopaedic in its interests. It would be wrong on the strength of the quotations/above to identify him with a mere exoticist or a vague Pantheist. We have seen that Coleridge had no sympathy with the empiricists, who he said "seem to want a sense which I possess --- The Universe to them is a mass of little things". His own mind "ached to behold and know something great something one and indivisible"; he longed for a faith/<sup>in</sup> which mountains caverns, waterfalls, "all things counterfeit infinity". But this imaginative interpretation of nature was in no danger of leading him into Pantheism, Hindu or Wordsworthian. "With Coleridge" says J. Shawcross, "this was impossible, because he placed the exclusive, transcendent consciousness of God above all other forms of consciousness. To him therefore, the beautiful in nature was necessarily regarded as symbolic of a spiritual reality, but not co-existent with it --- It is at best a reflection by which we are aided to a deeper knowledge of the reality".<sup>3</sup>

Many in "All that meets the bodily sense I deem or devalue  
 Symbolical, one mighty alphabet  
 To infant minds; and we in this low world  
 Placed with our backs to bright reality  
 That we might learn with young unwounded ken  
 The substance from the shadow."<sup>4</sup>

With this Platonic view of reality, Pantheism was distasteful to Coleridge. One would think that he was deceiving with his usual

1. Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare ---- Everyman, p. 219.  
 2. The Spirit of the Age, Everyman, p. 195.  
 3. Biographia Literaria, edit. J. Shawcross, I, p. XIX.  
 4. Destiny of Nations, line 17 ff. See Coleridge as Philosopher.  
 5. Coleridge as Philosopher, J. H. Muirhead, p. 253.

Coleridge. It is not surprising then, that he classed Schelling and Spinoza as pantheists, defining pantheism as "the inevitable result of all consequent reasoning in which the intellect refuses to acknowledge a higher or deeper ground than it can itself supply and seems to possess itself the centre of its own system".<sup>1</sup> Nor is it surprising that he should express his contempt for Hindu Pantheism, with which he became acquainted through the translations of Wilkins and Jones. In a note on Brahmanism printed for the first time from a manuscript by J. H. Muirhead in Coleridge as Philosopher<sup>2</sup> (1930). There occurs the following strong and interesting denunciation of Hinduism.

"There is in almost all the Sanscrit philosophical and religious writings, as far as they have fallen under my notice, a character which it seems to me, might be plausibly accounted for on the supposition of childish intellects living among gigantic objects, of mean thoughts and huge things - living Lilliputs among inanimate Brobdignags. Thus their Pantheism or visible God, God, proved to them, not from, but in and by the evidence of their senses, taken in conjunction with the languor of a relaxing climate and the lulling influence of a deep, sombre and gigantic vegetation, seems to me a natural result of an imbecile understanding, producing indistinction, half from indolence, and half intentionally by a partial closure of the eyelids and when all hues and outlines meet into a garish mist deeming it unity."<sup>3</sup>

Many later day theists of the West have used even severer terms in denouncing Hindu Pantheism and even Wordsworthian Pantheism. What is interesting about Coleridge's remarks is that he should be able to realize so intimately the dangers of pantheistic réverie. One would think that he was denouncing with his usual

1. The Friend, Coleridge's works, edit. Shedd, II p. 470.
2. Muirhead quotes this fragment from a manuscript in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, which, in his opinion bears all the marks of authenticity and is probably a part of Coleridge's incomplete Opus Maximum. See Coleridge as Philosopher, p. 266-269.
3. Coleridge as Philosopher, J. H. Muirhead, p. 283.

vehement self-criticism his own propensity to lose himself in "the vast" and the infinite, his dreams of "divine repose" in "a spot of enchantment" which laudanum induced! In some moods nature seemed to him too, like "one mighty alphabet to infant minds"! Of course it is right and proper that we should distinguish between exoticism and mysticism, between the repose of a lazy mind and the repose of a saint. As a modern writer has said: "Repose may be the index of very different types of character, and the by-product of very different activities. It may be akin either to the peace of the saint and the sage, or to the placidity of the cow and the slumber of the tired horse. The pursuit of rest may be every whit as selfish as, and may entail even more injury to others, than the pursuit of wealth, and may have its roots in sheer indolence and cowardice."<sup>1</sup> But it would be wrong to suppose that the ideal of Nirvana, or peace attainable through godliness in Brahmanism and through selflessness in Buddhism, means a flight from life. On the other hand, it is seldom realized, it is a strenuous coping with life:

"The realisation of Nirvana  
This is the greatest blessing  
Beneath the stroke of life's changes  
The mind that shaketh not,  
Without grief or passion, and secure  
This is the greatest blessing."<sup>2</sup>

It is doubtless true that the Being of Plato, as compared to the Being of the Hindu philosophers is more clearly intellectualized, but the Hindus did not wish to intellectualise their Being. It was attractive because of its vagueness and because it could not properly be described as Being or non-Being. They wanted/only to grasp it by intuition, under an overpowering sense of that mysterium tremendum, which a recent writer<sup>3</sup> has emphasized as the essence of the religious consciousness.

1. The Nature of Religion, by W. P. Paterson, 1929; p. 205.

2. Mangala Sutta trans. Rhys. Davids, p. 127.

3. R. Otto, The Idea of the Holy.

Coleridge's own sense of the numinous and the supernatural was strong enough to sympathise with the state of mind of those of his contemporaries who had come under the spell of Brahmanism: "It would be more than we are entitled to expect of the human mind", he goes on to say, in the same note "if Sir W. Jones, Mr. Wilkins & great and good as we know them to have been, had not over-rated the merit of works, the power of understanding which is such rare occurrence, and so difficultly attained. In the present instance there is an additional excuse; an excuse which more than acquits the judges, though it can not prevent the reversal of their decision; for to the writings in question, all the notions, images and feelings, which are best calculated to excite that obscure awe, that lies midway between religion and superstition, hang and encluster. Their undoubted antiquity is so great, and the antiquity claimed for them at once so daring and so visionary that we might almost say "liber ipse superstat, the book itself (Bhagvat Gita) walks like a ghost of a departed world. There is a superstition involved in a survival so contrary to the ordinary experience of mankind. I have myself paid this debt of homage on my first presentation to these foreign potentates by aid of the great linguists above mentioned. But having so done I sought to purge the sight with the euphrasy of common sense, and took a second and more leisurely view before I put the question to myself, "And what then have I seen?"

themselves  
to avail/in difference  
"What are  
These potentates of inmost Ind?"

Shall I confess the truth? Their next neighbour of the North, the temple-throned infant of Thibet, with the Himala behind and the cradle of the Ganges at his feet, conveyed to my mind an impressive likeness, seems to me a pregnant symbol of the whole Brahman Theosophy. Without growth, without production! Abstract the enormous shapes and phantasms, the Himala, the Ganges of the fancy, and what remains? - A baby! The personality and the additional mystery of secondary impersonation, metamorphoses, incarnations and these and all the attributes of persons, dance in and out like wandering

falshes, or motley aliens from a distant country, the mutes of the show often enough to remind us of their incompatibility with the doctrines of omniety and infinity which are the constant theme and philosophic import of the Indian theology; but without even an attempt to resolve the riddle. These impersonations or Avators betray themselves as fables ~~partly~~ half verbal and built on accidents of language, and half symbolical; though nothing can be more obscure and conjectural than their direct interpretation."<sup>1</sup>

All this is well said and in addition to its value as the considered judgement of the philosophical high priest of romanticism on the subject of our survey, deserves quotation for its eloquence alone. The study of Indian religions and mythologies was in its infancy in Coleridge's day and many of the opinions expressed in this passage can be proved to be erroneous; but there can be no question of its historical importance. When we compare the damping import of this passage with the extravagant eulogies bestowed upon the wisdom of Indian thought and philosophy in Germany by Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel (of Friedrich's famous little book Die Weisheit der Indier, 1808), which Coleridge probably had in mind, one thing becomes abundantly clear: ~~The~~ English literature was going to take a different course from the literature of Germany, so far as the influence on it of Oriental literatures was concerned. Southey, Moore, Byron, even Shelley and Keats were themselves to avail/in different ways of the merely external paraphernalia of exotic names and images, gathered by Oriental Scholars and travellers, but the conservative tradition of English literature and the characteristically English "euphrasy of commonsense", noticeable even in so "subtle-souled" a metaphysician as Coleridge, were to relegate these uncouth Indian philosophies, "these motley aliens from a distant country", to the more hospitable and cosmopolitan

1. Coleridge as Philosopher, J. H. Muirhead, p. 283-284.

traditions of Germany. English statesmanship had completed the material conquest of India and English scholars were the first to discover and explore the literary treasures of India, but it was left to German scholars and poets, Herder, the Schlegels, Von Hammer, Goethe, Platen, Rückert, Heine, Bodenstedt, Von Schack and others, to study more deeply the Indian and Persian literatures and even experiment in Oriental verse-forms. But the West-Eastern movement even in German literature, though it helped in the realization of Goethe's fond dream of Weltliteratur, did not produce any great poetry of permanent merit, for causes which we leave for a later discussion. Practically no influence was exerted by the German West-Eastern poetry on English Literature so we can safely proceed in our survey, ignoring almost completely the formidable names of the German scholars and poets just mentioned.

If Coleridge can be accused of prejudice and a certain lack of sympathy towards Oriental philosophical thought he is on surer grounds when he compares the merits of Indian and English literature. We have noticed his opinion of Persian Literature already; here is his opinion of the Bhagavad Gita, the well-known Hindu philosophical poem, which he said "walks like a ghost of a departed world". Charles Wilkins,<sup>1</sup> the translator of this poem had compared a certain episode of the Hindu epic The Mahábháratá with Milton. "The translator of the Bhagavad Gita," Coleridge retorts, "finds in the story of churning the ocean for the fourteen jewels, a wonderful affinity to - Milton! I could not, I confess help inferring from this remark that taste does not resemble the wines that improve by a voyage to and from India. For if there be one character of genius predominant in Milton it is this, that he never passes off bigness for greatness. Children never can make things big enough and exactly so is it with the poets of India."<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Bhagavat Geeta or Dialogues of Kreeshna & Arjoon; trans. Charles Wilkins, London, 1785. The passage in question is on p. 146-151; it does not form a part of the Bhagad Gita.
  2. Coleridge as a Philosopher, by J. H. Muirhead, p. 283.

Coleridge is here on the whole right. The episode translated and quoted by Wilkins, does not bear "a wonderful affinity to Milton's description of the war in heaven."<sup>1</sup> Yet there is some superficial resemblance between the battle of the Soors and Asoors, the good and bad angels of Hindu mythology and Milton's account of the war in heaven in Paradise Lost Bk. VI. Even if we account for the loss of power that the Hindu epic suffers in an unsatisfactory prose translation by Wilkins, whose pretensions to poetry, were anything but great, the fact remains that the imaginative powers of Milton in suggesting sublimity and grandeur are beyond the range of the authors of the Mahábháratá. Coleridge's exasperation seems to be justified to some extent when we compare a passage like the following from Wilkins' translation with something similar in Milton:

"In the midst of this dreadful hurry and confusion of the fight Nar and Narayana entered the field together -- The faithful weapon (of Narayana) by name Soodársan, ready at the minds call, flew down from heaven with direct and refulgent speed, beautiful yet terrible to behold. And being arrived, glowing like the sacrificial flame, and spreading terror around, Narayana, with his right arm formed like the elephantine trunk, hurled forth the ponderous orb, the speedy messenger, and glorious ruin of hostile towns; who raging like the final all-destroying fire, shot bounding with desolating force, killing thousands of the Asoors in his rapid flight, burning and involving, like the lambent flame and cutting down all that would oppose him. Anon he climbeth the heavens and now and again darteth into the field like a Peesach to feast in blood."<sup>2</sup>

This has been greatly enfeebled by Wilkins' diffuse translation; but even allowing for that, to hold that it has a "wonderful affinity" with, for example, the following sublime description of Michael and Satan before the battle, with its wonderful "stationing" power and suggestions of awful grandeur, is, as Coleridge said, to

1. The Bhagavat Geeta, trans. Charles Wilkins op.cit. p. 145.

2. Ibid, p. 150.

show a deplorable lack of taste:

“ for likest Gods they seemed,  
 Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms  
 Fit to decide the Empire of great Heav'n  
 Now wav'd their fierie swords and in the Aire  
 Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields  
 Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood  
 In horror”<sup>1</sup>

It is not exactly fair to the Hindu epic to compare the above not very representative passage, in its maltreated form in translation with the best of Milton. We will do well to notice another passage which is more characteristic of this type of Hindu poetry. In chapter XI of the Bhagavad Gita there is <sup>a</sup> passage, where Vishnu grants Aryuna's petition to behold God himself in his own form. There follows a theophany of terrific grandeur which seeks to give a feeling of the unapproachable essence of the Divine, before which the creature trembles and falls, by embodying the human and "natural" means of terror, majesty and sublimity. This is how Aryuna, with hair standing on end, smitten with amazement beholds Vishnu:

"I behold Thee bearing diadem, mace and disc, massed in radiance, on all sides glistening, hardly discernible, shining round about as gleaming fire and sun, immeasurable.-----

For this mid-space between heaven and earth and all the quarters of the sky are filled with thee alone. Seeing this Thy fearful and wonderful form, O great-hearted one, the threefold world quakes.----

Looking upon thy mighty form of many mouths and eyes, of many arms and thighs and feet, of many bellies, and grim with many teeth, O mighty armed one, the worlds and I quake.

For as I behold Thee touching the heavens, gathering many-hued, with yawning mouths, with wide eyes agleam, my inward soul trembles and I find not constancy, nor peace, O Vishnu.”<sup>2</sup>

It is <sup>in</sup> the expression of such vague 'numinous' dread, in its aspects of 'mysterium tremendum', akin to Coleridge's own "holy dread" of

1. Paradise Lost, VI. 301-307.

2. The Bhagavad Gita, 17-24, Chapter XI, p.138-139.  
 translated by Lionel D. Barnett, The Temple Classics.

Kubla Khan, or in flights of mystical and philosophical thought that the highest successes of Hindu poetry are achieved and not in the representation of concrete plastic shapes, or the dramatic portrayal of character. It was unfortunate of Wilkins to compare the Mahabharata with Paradise Lost; he should have been nearer the mark if he had compared it with the miscreate epics of Blake, or even some of the poetry of Coleridge and Shelley.

From what we have said above it is clear that there was no likelihood of Coleridge's attempting any pseudo-Oriental epics in the manner of Southey or Moore. Although in the Biographia Literaria Coleridge/Southey's poetry rather extravagantly, presumably for reasons of friendship with its author;- his private opinion of it was not very high.- True, he spoke of the "pastoral charm and wild streaming lights of Thalaba, in which sentiment and imagery have given permanence even to the excitement of curiosity",<sup>1</sup> or of the "full blaze of the "Kehama" (a gallery of finished pictures in one splendid fancy piece, in which notwithstanding the moral grandeur rises gradually above the brilliance of the colouring and the boldness and the novelty of machinery";<sup>2</sup> but all this praise is not for the Oriental colouring of Southey's poems, but for the merits which they possess inspite of their "excitement of curiosity" and fancifulness. On the other hand Coleridge said to P. Collier<sup>3</sup> in 1811 that he looked upon the Curse of Kehama, as a work of great talent but not of much genius. And H. C. Robinson records in his diary Coleridge's saying that Southey "was a jeweller".<sup>4</sup>

For Moore's poetry he cared even less. In a letter to H. C. Robinson he said: "I have read two pages of "Lalla Rookh" or whatever it is called. Merciful heavens! I dare read no more --- O Robinson! if I could or if I dared act and feel as Moore and his

1. Biographia Literaria. p. 46. vol. I. edit. Shawcross.

2. Ibid.

3. Preface to Payne Collier's edition of the Lectures on Shakespeare, 1859, pp. XXIV, XXV.

4. Diary, March 13, 1811.

set do, what havoc could I not make amongst their crockery -ware!" Arthur Symonds points out rightly that Coleridge is never fantastic in a frivolous and half-hearted sense, like Southey and Moore. "The fantastic is playing with the imagination, and Coleridge respects it. His intellect goes always easily as far as his imagination will carry it and does not stop by the way to play tricks upon its bearer. Hence the conviction which he brings with him when he tells us the impossible".<sup>1</sup> Hence, too the superiority of the Orientalism of Kubla Khan over that of the Curse of Kehama and Lalla Rookh.

The only other poem of Coleridge besides Kubla Khan that includes itself in our survey is the fragment of fourteen lines on Mahomet, in hexameters, published in 1834, but written in 1799 in collaboration with Southey. It is impossible to say what this poem on Mohammed, "Prophet and priest, who scattered abroad both evil and blessing", would have been if the partnership with Southey had been successful. Southey too, we shall see left a fragment. The disparity between Southey's painfully elaborate and Coleridge's broader, more abstract style, would alone have made the collaboration impossible. "Had I proceeded", Coleridge wrote later, "in concert with R. Southey with the "Flight and Return of Mohammed". I had intended to introduce a disputation between Mahomet as the representative of Unipersonal Theism with the Judaico-Christian machinery of angels, genii and prophets, an idolater with his gods, heroes and spirits of the departed mighty and of a fetish worshipper who adored the invisible one...."

But as the poem, like many another did not emerge from the limbo of half-conceived projects, we are left guessing what this poem on the founder of Islam would have been. Of Islam Coleridge once said. "That the prime article of Islamism, the unipersonality of God is one cause of the downfall, say rather of the merely meteoric rise of their literary age (in Spain), I am persuaded.." Evidently he had no more sympathy with Islam than with Hinduism.

1. The Romantic Movement in Eng. Poetry, Coleridge, p.141.

We shall find in the course of our survey that some critics have found it convenient to employ the word "Oriental" to convey all the idiosyncracies of the romantic writers, from Beckford's exoticism to Shelley's vague mysticism, from the warmth & sensuousness of Keats temperament the opium habits of Coleridge and De Quincey. A. Turnbull the editor of Coleridge's Biographia Epistolaris employs the word Oriental in this vague, comprehensive sense when he concludes: "In fact Coleridge's addiction to opium was temperamental as well as acquired. He contracted the habit to deaden pain, it is true; but his nature was of an Asiatic cast. He had in his infancy, as he tells us, been brought up on the Arabian Nights and his mind had been habituated to the Vast (Letter 4). Joined to a dreaminess of imagination was the love of warm climatic associations, betraying the Asiatic temperament. Kubla Khan with its slumberous melody and vague music, embodies the Asiatic sentiment. We feel in reading it on the borders of the Buddhistic territory. To those endowed with such a temperament the opium habit is easy to fall into, their dreamy soul is the seed-bed on which it fastens. Indolence, procrastination, vast ambitious unachieved accomplishments are the results; and we have in Coleridge and his brother genius Amiel, two examples in the Western world of the Asiatic Genius, one terminating his career in opium and the other in the Malady of the Ideal".<sup>1</sup>

Such a neat summing up conveniently avoids all the biographical and psychological difficulties that the study of a genius entails, as it also flatters one's superior sense of virtuous uprightness to speak of a poet's Oriental dreaminess and the Malady of the Ideal. But estimates like these must necessarily be false. In Coleridge there was no doubt a vein of dreamy exoticism; but it is deplorably to confuse the sequences of cause and effect to speak of his "Asiatic Cast". He enjoyed the Arabian Nights, ate opium and wrote Kubla Khan, because there was already an exotic vein in his

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1. Biographia Epistolaris, edit. A. Turnbull, Bohn's Standard Library, vol. II. p.

manysided temperament, a vein which fed on Orientalism, instead of being the result of Oriental reading. Not every child's mind is "Habituated to the Vast" by a reading of the Arabian Nights. If reading the Arabian Nights alone can impart an "Asiatic Cast" to a poet's mind, then nearly every English poet would have had an "Asiatic Cast"! Wordsworth and Southey, who enjoyed these tales equally well, remained thoroughly English in spite of them. It is important to distinguish that it is not the reading of Oriental or any other so-called exotic literature, that makes a poet romantic or exotic; but the way that he reads it and the way that his own temperament employs the fruits of his reading in poetry. "One of the most interesting characteristics of the Romantic temperament", says Hugh I'Anson Fausset, pertinently, in his study of Coleridge, "is, that its excessive individualism induces a longing equally excessive and uncritical, for self-escape. Suffocated <sup>by</sup> his own sensations, the Romantic seeks to project them into a system or a fiction or a creed. From childhood Coleridge had felt this need to an imperative degree and had sought to satisfy it in the vicious circle of miraculous tales, sentimental poetry and sublimary philosophy. He now threw himself into political and religious Radicalism ---." <sup>1</sup>

The Arabian Nights were only one of these "vicious circles" of "self escape" for the romantics.

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1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, by Hugh I'Anson Fausset, p. 53.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

Southey's two Oriental poems Thalaba and the Curse of Kehama were the direct result of that spirit of experimentation in poetry inaugurated by Wordsworth and Coleridge. In looking for the subjects of his epics in the world of travel and inquiry opening up to the imagination, rather than in the conventional past, Southey was doing an ambitious thing, and as his lack of competence was to prove, a fatal thing. But his adventurous desire to break away from an effete past into new regions of Oriental mythology and fiction is symptomatic of the attraction that the eternally mysterious East was exerting on the imaginations of contemporary Romantics.

In the year of the publication of Gebir (1798), Southey while he was residing at Westbury, a pretty village near Bristol was meditating about writing an "Arabian poem of the wildest nature ... The Destruction of the Dom Danyel," which later became Thalaba. By September 1799, Southey wrote to Cottle, "Thalaba the Destroyer is progressing. There is a poem called Gebir, of which I know not whether my review be yet printed (in the Critical Review,) but in that review you will find some of the most exquisite poetry in the language"<sup>1</sup>. Although Southey was admiring Gebir greatly while he was writing Thalaba, the real inspiration of his poem came to him while he was in Westminster School in 1788. In his school-master George Strachey's library, Southey came across Picard's Religious Ceremonies,<sup>2</sup> a semi-religious book full of curious information about the religions and customs of the various countries of the world.

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1. Letter to Cottle from Exeter, Sept. 22, 1799.
  2. Bernard Picard: Cérémonies et Costumes Religieuses de tous les peuples du Monde Représentées par des figures... avec une Explication Historique, et quelques Dissertations curieuses. Amsterdam 1723. Faithfully translated into English by a Gentleman, sometime since of St. John's college in Oxford, 6 vols. London, 1733.

3. Letter to Cottle, Sept. 22, 1799, Life and Correspondence of R. Southey, by G.C. Southey, 1850.

4. See letter to Wm. Gifford, July 23, 1800, ibid.

"The Book" said Southey later "impressed my imagination strongly; and before I left school, I had formed the intention of exhibiting all the more prominent and poetical forms of mythology, which have at any time obtained among mankind, by making each the groundwork of an heroic poem."<sup>1</sup> Such bookishness was part of Southey's sensitive and industrious rather than profound nature. Early reading of Spenser, Ariosto, Ovid, the Arabian Nights etc. had strengthened his appetite for romance, and while yet a boy he was writing stories to be engrafted upon Ariosto and Spenser. By Southey's time the eighteenth century canons of judgment which had condemned everything which was not 'Classic' as 'Gothic' were beginning to lose their force. The impulse to investigate the non-classical was developing and there had been attempts already to utilize other mythologies than those of the Greeks and Romans for poetry. Sir William Jones we have seen, had already written hymns to the Hindu gods and recommended the use of Oriental mythologies for poetry. Gray had gone to Runic mythology and Dr. F. Sayers<sup>2</sup> was attempting, however feebly, to "illustrate" Gothic religion and mythology in his poems. Southey took the suggestion of Madoc from Sayers and also tried to use his rimeless verse in Thalaba. In the use of mythology Southey was to do better than Sayers but not even he ever escaped from the semi-didactic notion that he must "illustrate" without vitalizing mythology or some other little known field of information.

Southey says that he had been "gutting the libraries" at Exeter in September 1799 and laying a stock of materials and notes for Thalaba, "arranged in a way that would do honour to any old bachelor."<sup>3</sup> Only eight books of the poem, however, were written before Southey embarked on his second trip to Portugal (April 1, 1800), taking with him Coleridge's poems, Lyrical Ballads and Gebir. It was in the beautiful and semi-tropical<sup>4</sup> surroundings of olive-hills,

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1. Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae, Letters to Charles Butler, Esq., London, pp.6-7.
  2. Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology, 1790-1792; also Moina & Starno.
  3. Letter to Cottle, Sept. 22, 1799, Life and Correspondence of R. Southey, by C.C.Southey, 1850.
  4. See letter to Wynn, Cintra, July 23, 1800, Ibid.

running streams and luxurious vegetation that the rest of Thalaba was written. It seems more than probable that the Arabian and Indian scenery, plants, fruits etc. which Southey described in his two poems, so far as they were not taken from books, had their counterpart in the actual scenery of Portugal, a country that Southey twice visited and praised all his life.

It was at Cintra too that while "dreaming of poem after poem", Southey had "some distant view of manufacturing a Hindu romance wild as Thalaba and a nearer one of a Persian story" from the mythology of the Zend Avesta. The Persian story was never written but the germ of the Hindu romance grew into the Curse of Kehama, first called the Curse of Keradon, the materials for which Southey collected from the Library at Lisbon, soon after finishing Thalaba. But the poem was not finished till 1809, for various reasons.

Thalaba was published in 1801, and was expected to be popular. If it succeeded Southey hoped to carry on his proposed work of illustrating the mythologies of the world.

In the preface to the first edition of Thalaba, its immediate source was acknowledged to be the continuation of the Arabian Tales, where Domdaniel is mentioned, "a seminary for evil magicians under the roots of the sea." There is an irony in the fact that the acknowledged source for the story of Thalaba came from a piece of spurious Orientalism. The "continuation of the Arabian Tales" mentioned was Suite des Mille et une nuits, contes Arabes, published as a part of the Cabinet de Fées (1788-99), and purporting to be translated from the Arabic by a certain Dom Chavis and M. Cazotte. Chavis was an Arab and Cazotte was a clever cleric but these tales were at most but very free versions of originals, which if they existed were scanty and have disappeared. In 1792 the book was translated into English by Robert Heron with the title Arabian Tales, or a Continuation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments. More than a mere conception of a seminary for evil magicians may have been suggested to Southey by this collection. One of its four volumes<sup>1</sup> is

1. Arabian Tales or a Continuation of Arabian Night's Entertainments translated by R. Heron, 1792, vol IV. pp. 61-357.

practically given up to the story of a wicked enchanter named Maugraby. He and his equally wicked parents "were the founders of the formidable Dom Daniel of Tunis, that school of magic whose rulers tyrannise over all the wicked spirits that desolate the earth, and which is the den where those monsters are engendered that have over-run the country of Africa"<sup>1</sup>. The master of all this is, of course, Zatan or Satan himself who had opened to Maugraby "the forty eight doors of science contained in the volumes which were deposited in the Dom-Daniel of Tunis, before that place was burnt and destroyed with all its contents by Zanate Khalife"<sup>2</sup>. Maugraby makes it his chief business to lure Kings to give him their first born sons, whom he educates, or in the event of their proving unworthy pupils in the black arts, tortures in the Dom-Daniel caverns, "the chief roots of which lie concealed under the waters of the ocean". In the course of time Habel-il-Rouman a prince of Syria is introduced as one of Maugrabi's victims. He gaining superior knowledge of magic destroys the enchanter's power, breaks the charms of the Dom Daniel and releases all its victims. The released victims - the princes of Persia, Katay, Tartary, Damascus etc. and Auheta -il-kaouakib, daughter of the king of Egypt, - tell their own stories, which are interwoven into the main story in the manner of the Arabian Nights. The Prince of Syria although he defeats Maugraby is unable to overthrow the Dom Daniel. "That great work" it is said, "is reserved for the powers of Mahomet"<sup>3</sup>.

This story though spurious has sufficient of the manner and the matter of the Arabian Nights to pass as a continuation of the genuine Oriental tales. All the paraphernalia of an Eastern tale, the magicians, the genii, the magic rings, the princes, the viziers, and the supposed Islamic colouring are there, but one is at once struck with a certain lack of finish and the absence of the genuine Arabian Nights atmosphere. As compared to the Arabian Nights these tales appear to

1. Ibid. pp. 308.

2. Ibid. pp. 74.

3. p. 339, Arabian Tales.

be lacking in significant detail and subtlety that make the Arabian Nights something more than a medley of comic tragic and heroic adventures, an authentic picture of the medieval Arab life. There is also a difference in spirit between these two collections of tales. One of the eternal charms of the Arabian Nights is their expression of that naive love of power which most men and nations at sometimes feel. To wave a wand, to cry "Sesame" and to have all one's desires satisfied, who has outgrown such boyishness? Therein lies one of the charms of the Arabian Nights. Magic may be had or good as the exigencies of the story demand but we are not interested in it for its badness or goodness, we are interested because it is magic and will do things. Not so with the eighteenth century European. In the tale of Maughrabi magic is all bad, it exists not to be enjoyed but destroyed. In Thalaba it is the same. The Syrian Prince, Habel-il-Rouman destroying the enchanted caverns of Maughrabi becomes in Southey's poem Thalaba destroying the magic Dom-Daniel of Moharab. The statue of Kokopilesob<sup>1</sup> in the Arabian tale and the Living Image of Eblis in Thalaba<sup>2</sup> are both the impersonations of Satan, the source of all evil, and Thalaba, the hero of single purpose and complete faith in himself (reflecting the moral character of Southey) in destroying the Dom-Daniel, represents good triumphing on evil.<sup>3</sup> "Oh, how I delight to see him trample on his enemies"; Mrs. Piozzi once wrote of Southey; "and that", said Southey "was worth all the panegyric in the world". The ideal perfection that Southey was trying to depict in Joan of Arc and Thalaba (Southey called Thalaba "a male Joan of Arc") was the same that Wordsworth depicted in his "Character of a Happy Warrior"; only Southey's aim was to show that warrior in action. This he did more under the influence of Spenser than of Wordsworth and failed because unlike Spenser,

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1. pp. 329. Arabian Tales, vol. IV.

2. Bk. XII, Lines 403 Thalaba.

3. For Southey's extensive preliminary notes for the poem together with suggestions for giving the story certain allegorical significance, see Southey's Common-place Book edited by J. W. Warter Lon. 1851. Series IV. pp. 181-189.

he made his hero inhumanly virtuous and the evil too hideous to have any semblance of reality.

We have seen that the Arabian Tales supplied Southey with the central idea of the poem the destruction of Evil in the shape of Dom Daniel by a virtuous hero of stern purpose and adamant faith. The sources for the leading episodes in Southey's plot are suggested in a letter to his friend W. Taylor of Norwich,<sup>1</sup> as well as in the copious notes to the poem itself. The story of the boy who has lost his father by murder, who is exiled with his mother in childhood and who grows up to return and take vengeance upon his father's foe is obviously but a stock theme. Southey decorated it with the Mohammedan traditions, and fables of the Garden of Irem, Haruth and Maruth, Bowers of Aloadin etc, thus garnering in poetry the results of his wide reading and conscientious research. Over a hundred authors<sup>2</sup> of Oriental and pseudo Oriental books, books of antiquarian and curious information, histories, books of travel etc. are referred to in the notes to Thalaba. Lord Jeffrey was not far wrong when he summed up Southey's method in the Edinburgh Review<sup>3</sup>, by saying that Southey, "has been as scrupulously correct in the citation of his authorities, as if he were the compiler of a true history and thought his reputation would be ruined by the imputation of a single fiction. There is not a prodigy, accordingly or a description for which he does not fairly produce his vouchers and generally lays before his readers the whole original passage from which his imitation has been taken..... The author has set out with a resolution to make an Oriental story and a determination to find the materials of it in the books to which he had access. Every incident therefore, and description, every superstitious usage, or singular tradition, that appeared to him susceptible of poetical embellishment, or capable of picturesque representation, he has set down for this purpose and adopted such a fable and plan of composition as might enable him to work up

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1. Robert Southey to William Taylor, Jan. 4, 1799. pp. 245-248.  
Memoir of William Taylor of Norwich, edited by J. W. Roberts, London, 1843.

2. For a full list of works referred to by Southey see his notes to the poem. *See also bibliography.*

3. Edinburgh Review, October, 1802 vol. I. 63-83.

all his materials and interweave every one of his quotations without any extraordinary violation of unity or order. When he had filled his commonplace book he began to write, and his poem is little else than his common-place book versified." That Southey was following the method thus shrewdly outlined by Jeffrey, a glance at his Common-place Book,<sup>1</sup> (which was not published till many years after Jeffrey's review) will show. In it Southey gives an outline of the plot of Thalaba and a list of striking incidents, fables, images etc. which he had collected from books. A typical note on the "red haired christian", for example, shows Southey's knowledge of obscure books and his method of reference:

"Poison from a red-haired christian - Garcilasso, 1, 3, Nieuhoff, 97, 2. 'Three ounces of a red haired wanch'. Dogs roll in a putrid carcase; yet the skin of man absorbs the poison - Garcilasso, 2, 3. Mad dogs perhaps analogous; yet red hair a beauty then - Absolm."<sup>2</sup>

Southey's conscientious thoroughness makes his Common-place Book a very tame catalogue of notes, on which no scholar need wrack his brain as Professor Lowes did on Coleridge's "Gutch Memorandum Book", with fascinating results. Everything is plain as daylight; there are no thrilling references to be followed from one book to another. The notes, with the book and the page number marked in each case with painful accuracy, reflect as characteristically Southey's method of working, as Coleridge's enigmatic note books reflect his. Where Coleridge was simply aiding the mysterious processes of his imagination by a few pregnant notes, Southey is transferring whole passages direct from the notes into his poem and the result in each case is characteristic. Southey's poems are catalogues of learning, while Coleridge's contain the quintessence of his marvellous and vivid adventures in book-land.

There are notes in Southey's Common-place Book, which contain some suggestions for giving an allegorical significance to the story

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1. Common-place Book Series IV. pp. 181-189.
  2. Ibid. p. 212. The books referred to in this note are Garcia Lasso de la Vega's "Los Comentarios, Reales, que tratan del origen de los yucas .... Lisboa 1609; trans. into English London 1688; & Jan Niehoff's Het Gezantschap der Neerlandtsche oost - Indiëse compagnie .... Amsterdam 1665, translated into French Leyden 1665; English 1669; also in Astley's and Churchill's collections of voyages.

of Thalaba:

"Can not," Southey asks, "the Dom-Daniel be made to allegorize those systems that make the misery of mankind?.... Can the evils of established systems be well allegorized? Can Thamama (Thalaba) see them in the realms where the Magicians govern? War may be a huge gladiatorian sport or sacrifice. How can the mental murder of half mankind be represented? Can the extremes of wealth and want be shown equally fatal to virtue and happiness - of course equally necessary to the powers of the Domdaniel? I do not think this can be done in a manner fit for poetry. The Domdaniel, should it be a nest of caverns - a labyrinth of apartments - where the Magicians unite the cruelties of inquisitors, or Mexican priests, with the vices of Tiberius? If I could make opinion, a giant, its dreadful guard. All this, the main end of the poem, will be most difficult to execute, and I fear the least interesting when executed..."<sup>1</sup>

Metaphysics had become anathema to Southey, and here we see that the evil sorcerers in the poem are none others but the metaphysicians of the School of Locke. Southey in his defence of revelation and innate truth was at one with the ideas commonly associated with the "lake school", but the more he allegorized Thalaba and denounced metaphysics and magic, the more he was getting away from the spirit of the Arabian Nights and of the Oriental literature in general. There is no moral allegory behind the magical machinery of the Arabian Nights; it does not concern itself with "the systems that make the misery of mankind" and "the mental murder of half mankind", - it is literature of romance at its purest, the story for its own sake. In Thalaba, on the other hand the moral allegory is one of the important factors.

Southey had neither the art and the sweetness of Spenser to make his allegory convincingly human nor the subtler magic of Coleridge to create a dream world like that of the Ancient Mariner with laws and logic of its own.

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1. Common-place Book. Series IV. pp. 182 - 183.

One thing however is quite clear from Southey's Common-place Book and his notes to his poems - that if he was not an Oriental scholar and did not know much about Oriental literature even in translations, he had slaved at the books of travels, histories, encyclopaedias of religion etc. with the patience and thoroughness of a professional antiquarian and was willing to lay his vouchers before the reader for every piece of curious information in his poems. But thoroughness and historical accuracy are not, and should not be, the distinguishing qualities of a poet. No mere mathematical addition or multiplication of detail, however accurate, will produce the poetic effect, if the selective and harmonising quality of imagination be not there to fuse and weld and shape the material into fresh forms of beauty. There is a caution in Southey's note book, which had he observed it, would have contributed greatly to the merit of his poems. "There will be much to avoid in this poem", says Southey, "Magnitude has been often mistaken for sublimity". This was exactly Southey's own failure; he mistook grandiosity for grandeur, historical antiquarianism for poetry.

It would be a futile task for anybody to refer all the episodes of Southey's poem to their various 'Sources'. We will confine ourselves to an examination of a few major incidents, of the poem, as examples of Southey's methods of description and the use of his sources.

One of the favourite devices of the poets, since Milton has been, (as we have seen in Wordsworth and shall have abundant opportunities of noticing in other poets who wrote on Oriental themes) to describe the luxury and the glory of Oriental paradises. Southey's descriptions of the Paradise of Irem (Thalaba, bk. I. 189-409), and the Paradise of Aloadin (Bk. VI, VII), constitute his ambitious contributions to this series, and we shall examine them both one by one.

Of the Paradise of Irem Southey had read in Sale's Preliminary Discourse to the Koran, D'Herbelot and Jonathan Scotts' translation of the Persian Bahar Danush or the "Garden of Knowledge" of Inayat Ullah of Delhi. In the notes he gives in slightly condensed form passages from the above three books which cover the incidents and descriptions of practically the whole of the first book.

In Sale's translation of the Koran,<sup>1</sup> and in his Preliminary Discourse,<sup>2</sup> Irem is described as a "magnificent Palace, adorned with delicious gardens," built by Shedad, the son of Ad in the deserts of Aden, and visible only to favoured mortals. D'Herbelot,<sup>3</sup> whom too, like Sale, Southey quotes in his notes, gives an account of this fabulous garden. But the source that supplied Southey with most of his knowledge about the Garden of Irem, is the prose passage from the Persian book, Tuh-fat-ul-majalis, ( تحفة المجالس ), which Jonathan Scott printed in an English translation, with Persian original, in the Oriental Collections of Sir William Ouseley. As the passage, in addition to its direct bearing on Southey's poem, possesses some intrinsic merit as a specimen of Oriental composition, we shall quote it here in full:

"They have related, that when Shuddand, who was Sovereign of Yemen, heard the description of Paradise, he said, "To me for Paradise there is no necessity; I myself, will make a Paradise of which any man the/like can not have beheld." Then he commanded his officers that they should explore a spot for forming a garden. They in search to every quarter hastened, until a spot of pleasant air, and elevated in the borders of Syria they found. Then an hundred chiefs of his courtiers he appointed that they might bring masters and skilful persons from every country and kingdom. Also the monarchs of Hind and Greece, and the Sovereigns of Ormuz etc, he commanded, that of gold and silver, and pearls, and precious stones, whatever in their countries was found, they should send. At length he began on the structure. A brick of red gold, and a brick of white silver, they laid alternately, and in the joining and divisions of them fixed pearls and precious stones. They say, daily, forty Kittar of Camels, fully laden with gold, and silver, and pearls, and precious stones were made use of. They erected a country palace, containing a thousand

1. Chapter, LXXXIX, "The Day-break", p. 492.

2. Ibid. p.6.

3. Bibliothèque Orientale op.cit. under Houd, p. 460.

4. Oriental Collections, (1799); London, 1800, III p. 32 ff.

Whether Arab, Persian or Moghal, have dreamed of making a paradise courts, and the walls and roofs all of gold and silver bricks, and round them two thousand rooms and one thousand vestibules were. Also all the walls they set with pearls, rubies, emeralds, amethysts and other gems. Before each room, having set trees of gold and silver, they made the leaves of amethysts. In the place of fruit, clusters of pearls having hung; and on the ground, like sand, musk amber, and saffron having strewed; between two trees of silver and gold they planted a fruit tree, that to amuse and this to be eaten. In short after five hundred years, it arrived at its completion. This they styled the rose garden of Irim, and informed the infidel-minded Shuddaud of its completion. Shuddaud, in the utmost pomp and splendour, with his attendants and forces, marched from his capital, with desire to view it. When he arrived near it, he detached two hundred thousand youthful slaves, whom he had brought with him from Damascus, in four divisions, and stationed them on four places, which they had prepared without the garden. He himself with his courtiers, mounted, proceeded towards the garden. As he was intending to gallop his horse, some one uttered a great cry, so that Shuddaud trembled within himself. When he looked up, he beheld a person of great fierceness and majestic figure, and said, "who art thou?" "I am", answered he, "the angel of death, and come that I may seize thy impure soul". Shuddaud exclaimed, "So much leisure give me, that I may enter my Paradise." The angel of death replied, "It is not my order". Shuddaud, from fear of him, endeavoured that he might descend from his horse. One foot in the stirrup, the other he attempted, that he might place on the ground; when the seizer of souls took away the unclean spirit of that guilty wretch, and he fell dead on the earth. Lightenings came forth; which having burnt the slaves with whatever was upon the plain reduced them to dust; and that rose garden became hidden from the sight of man".

Oriental literature is full of such gorgeous descriptions of earthly paradises; and it is characteristic of the epicurean nature of the Eastern people, that even in life the Eastern potentates

whether Arab, Persian or Moghul, have dreamed of making a paradise on earth that should surpass the most romantic dreams of the poets. The Alhambra, the Taj-Mahal, the Delhi Fort, the Shalimar Gardens in Kashmir are but a few instances of the material realizations of these dreams. It is interesting to note that on the walls of the Divan-e-khas in the Delhi Fort the following Persian verse is inscribed:

اگر فردوس بر روی زمین است  
 همین است و همین است و همین است

(If there is a Paradise on earth, )  
 (It is this, it is this, it is this.)

The historical descriptions of the building of the Taj are not very different from the above description of the Paradise of Irem - only instead of "the monarchs of Hind and Greece and the sovereigns of Ormuz", the Rajahs of Jaipur and Rajputana sent camel loads of marble and precious stones to Shah Jehan, the Moghul Emperor. The walls "set with pearls, rubies, emeralds, amethysts" are no mere fiction, as every visitor to the Taj knows. To Southey's mind, however all this magnificence appeared superfluous. In quoting the descriptions of the Garden of Irem he says "I have ornamented his (Shedad's) palace less profusely than the Oriental writers who describe it."<sup>1</sup> But Southey's description is none the less ambitious:

"A mighty work the pride of Shedad plann'd,  
 Here in the wilderness to form  
 A garden more surpassing fair .....  
 A kingly pile sublime,  
 The palace of his pride.  
 For this exhausted mines  
 Supplied their golden store,  
 For this the central caverns gave their gems;  
 For this the woodman's axe  
 Opened the cedar forest to the sun:  
 The silk worm of the East  
 Spun her sepulchral egg;  
 The hunter African  
 Provok'd the danger of the Elephant's rage;  
 The Ethiop keen of scent,  
 Detects the ebony,  
 That deep-inearth'd, and hating light,  
 A leafless tree and barren of all fruit,  
 With darkness feeds its boughs of raven grain.

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1. p. 44. vol. I. Thalaba the Destroyer, (1801). Note.

Here emerald Columns o'er the marble courts  
 Shed their green rays, as when amid a shower  
 The sun shines loveliest on the vernal corn,  
 Here Shedad bade the sapphire floor be laid,  
 As though with feet divine  
 To tread on azure light,  
 Like the blue pavement of the firmament,  
 Here self-suspended hangs in air,  
 As its pure substance loathed material touch,  
 The living Carbuncle;  
 Sun of the lofty dome, -----  
 -----here  
 Rose the gold branches, hung with emerald leaves,  
 Blossomed with pearls and rich with ruby fruit"<sup>1</sup>  
 etc. etc.

After these descriptive passages Southey goes on to describe Shedad's visit to the garden and its destruction. In the passage quoted above from Tuh fat-ul-Majalis, Shedad dies with one foot in the stirrup before he has time to dismount from his horse but in Southey's version he is able to visit the palace, admire it and flout the prophet Houd before he is killed by the "icy wind of death". In thus diverging from his source, Southey seems to have missed the ironic point of the original, where nemesis overtakes Shedad before he has time even to see the gorgeous realization of his impious dreams.

In the descriptive portions here as elsewhere, Southey summons to his aid all his vast and varied, though somewhat ill-digested knowledge, of remote and curious books, to elucidate and particularise his theme. One can not help feeling that there is something adventitious in Southey's far fetched similes of the silk-worm's sepulchral egg and the Ethiop detecting ~~atony~~ etc. The imaginative heat that welds, as it were, and makes such far-fetched similes of the Metaphysical poets, for example, a part and parcel of the emotional content of their poetry, is absent in Southey's case. All that we get is a rather pedantic parade of curious learning, and the effort to communicate impressions by a process of multiplication and addition rather than by a suggestive use of significant detail. In this haphazard enumeration Southey sometimes makes curious blunders. To make

1. Thalaba Bk. I. Lines 229-252, 380-393, 408-410.

1. Thalaba Bk. I. 272-274.

The Paradise of Irem correspond to his own hero-worshipping ideal Southey says:

"Here, frequent in the walks  
The marble statue stood  
Of heroes and of chiefs"<sup>1</sup>

But Southey's reading of Sale, Maracci etc. should have told him of the Mohammedan prohibition of human figures in sculpture - a prohibition that originated from the Prophet's injunctions against idol-worship. The genius of Islamic art has, consequently, been decorative rather than plastic; so much so that even in literature, the emphasis has been on romance or story-telling or moralizing rather than on individual characterisation or the portrayal of dramatic emotions. The Mohammedan gardens and palaces will have delicate arabesques, honey-combed cupolas, fabulous halls, slender columns, voluptuous baths, but, alas, no "statues of heroes and of chiefs."! Even the statues of the lions in the Alhambra are so "gloriously conventionalized" as to be the symbols of lions rather than lions. The other "purple patch", in Thalaba is the description of the Paradise of Aloadin (Bk. VI, VII.) Because of its similarity to the Garden of Irem, we shall pass on to it immediately although it comes later than many other episodes deserving of our attention.

This Aloadin or the Old Man of the Mountain, the Shaykhu'l-Jabal شيخ الجبل ("The Mountain Chief"), a term which the Crusaders, owing to a misunderstanding rendered "le Vieux", "the old one", or "The Old Man of the Mountain", was the seventh Grand Master of Alamut, Alauddin Muhammad b-al-Hassan who succeeded his father in A.D. 1221. Alamut was the stronghold of the Ismailis of Persia, a sect of the Shia Mohammedans, or to give them the name by which they are best known, "Assassins". This name was given to the sect because of the use they made of the drug Hashish (from the Arabic Hashishi), otherwise known as "Indian Hemp", "bang" or Cannabis Indica. The secret esoteric doctrines and practices of this sect attracted the attention of the early

1. Thalaba Bk. I. 272-274.

4. Thalaba The Destroyer, 1901, p. 68 ff.

European travellers, who gave extravagant descriptions of the Paradise of the Old Man of the Mountain. Southey had read the accounts of it in Purchas<sup>1</sup>, (who takes it from Marco Polo), Hakluyt<sup>2</sup> and Sir John Mandeville's travels,<sup>3</sup> and he quotes interesting passages from all three in his notes.<sup>4</sup>

We have already remarked how these very passages from Purchas and Mandeville had inspired Milton and Coleridge in Paradise Lost and Kubla Khan respectively, and nothing shows the inferiority of Southey's imagination more than a comparison of his lines with those of Milton and Coleridge.

Having got the idea of the Paradise in the above mentioned books Southey set out as usual in filling the outlines with elaborate detail gathered from other sources. All the conventional Oriental flora is brought together, "the odorous groves", "fluted cypresses", "broad leaved plane trees", "the ten thousand tendrilled vine", tulips, lilies etc. But amidst these patently Oriental flowers and trees, there begins most discordantly to sing a 'classical' nightingale, "so richly toned", that never

"Did Thracian Shepherd by the grave  
Of Orpheus hear a sweeter melody"...

Then come Oriental odours from "Jasmine bowers", "rose wilderness", "from clustered henna and from orange groves", the perfumes that "Peris to their Sister bear", Odours "that flowed upon the world at Mohammad's nuptials" etc.

Thalaba passes on to a banquet room where

"The very light came cool'd through silvering panes  
Of pearly shell, like the pale moonbeam tinged;  
Or where the wine-vase fill'd the aperture,  
Rosy as rising morn, or softer gleam  
Of Saffron, like the sunny evening mist.....

1. Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes by S. Purchas, London 1625. vol. XI, 208-9. There are accounts of the Old Man of the Mountains also in Purchas' Pilgrimage (1617), 249, 428; in Hakluyt IV, 438 - 39.
2. R. Hakluyt The Principal Navigations... of the English Nation, Glasgow, 1903-5 in 12 vols. vol. IV. p. 438-39.
3. The voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundevile, kt. edited by J.O. Halliwell, (represented from the edition of A.D. 1725) London, p 277 - 279.
4. Thalaba, The Destroyer, 1801, p. 68 ff.

Vessels of wine, alternate placed,  
 Ruby and amber, tinged its little waves  
 From golden goblets there,  
 The guests sat quaffing the delicious juice  
 Of Shiraz' golden grape."

Oriental fruits follow, "water-melons rough of rind",  
 "Pistachios from the heavy clustered trees  
 Of Malvert, or Halebs fertile soil,  
 And Casbins luscious grapes of amber hue,

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 Here cased in ice the apricot,  
 A topaz, crystal set:  
 Here on a plate of snow,  
 The sunny orange rests;  
 And still the aloes and the sandal wood,  
 From golden censers, o'er the banquet room  
 Diffuse their dying sweets.

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 Anon a troupe of females form'd the dance,  
 Their ankles bound with bracelet-bells,  
 That made the modulating harmony  
 Transparent garments to the greedy eye  
 Exposed their harlot limbs,  
 Which moved, in every wanton gesture skill'd.

Not a flower, not a spice, not a single Oriental fruit is missed, nor, of course the inevitable dancing girls! But <sup>the</sup> magical effect that Coleridge achieved by single lines and phrases

"And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
 Where blossomed many an incense bearing tree.

"A damsel with a dulcimer", "music loud and long", "honey dew", "milk of Paradise", Southey fails to achieve in a hundred lines after enumerating all the conventional constituents of an Oriental Paradise. The notes to this passage show that for all these splashes of 'local colour' Southey had rifled the description of the Persian garden as given in Olearius "The Voyage and Travels of the Ambassadors"<sup>1</sup>, where the tulips and the plane-trees (Tzinnar ) are mentioned; D'Herbelot who under Caherman Nameh mentions that the odours were the food of the Peris or fairies when they were imprisoned by the Dives or the demons; Maracci who describes the nuptials of Mohammed and Cadijah (Khadijah), when paradisaical odours were sent to earth; Tavernier who gives an account of the Persian King's wine banquet, and also describes how Indian dancing women danced with silver bells round their ankles; Chardin who says that Casbin produces the best grapes in Persia;

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 1. Adam Olearius, The Voyages and travels of the Ambassadors sent by Frederick Duke of Holstein to the Great Duke of Muscovy and the King of Persia...1633-1639.. faithfully rendered into English by John Davies, London, 1662.

Knolles,<sup>1</sup> Gemelli Careri,<sup>2</sup> Hakluyt, Fra Paolino da san Bartolomeo,<sup>3</sup> Sir W. Jones, Sonnini<sup>4</sup> etc. etc. who contribute one thing or another towards Southey's synthetic Paradise. But the synthesis is mechanical not imaginative. Coleridge too like Southey was a scholar and had read an enormous number of books on all imaginable subjects but his imagination knew how to distill the facts into quintessential poetry. With Southey however the facts merely swamped the imagination and remained unassimilated and untransformed. Accumulated facts however authentic merely convey information, not recreate and convey an experience as poetry does. In Southey the instinct of the scholar triumphed over the instinct of the artist; his elaborate devices fail to evoke the thrilling responses that Coleridge's naive single phrases produce in the reader. Southey's friend Sir H. Davy had "suggested a paradise wholly immaterial - trees of light growing in a soil of ether, - palaces of water refracting all rich colours ... The Mohammedan Paradise .... was only adapted to the gross conceptions of mankind"<sup>5</sup> But Southey's aim was that "the Paradise of Aloadin should mock Mohammed's as much as possible".<sup>6</sup> He had doubtless read in Sale's Preliminary Discourse, the description of the Mohammedan Paradise as having rivers that "flow with water, some with milk, some with wine and others with honey". "But all these glories", Sale adds, "will be eclipsed by the resplendent and ravishing girls of paradise, called from their large black eyes, Hur al oyun, the enjoyment of whose company will be a principal felicity of the faithful. These they say are created, not of clay, as mortal women are, but of pure musk; being as their prophet often affirms in his Koran, free from all natural impurities, defects

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1. Richard Knolles. The General History of the Turks...Lon. 1603; 1610.
  2. Gamelli Careri, Giovanni Francesco. Giro del mondo ...Napoli 1699-1700 trans. into English in Churchhill's Collection of Voyages Lon. (1704-32.)
  3. Viaggio alle Indie Orientali - Romae 1796; trans. into English from the German of B. Kayser (1798) by W. Johnston. Lon. 1800.
  4. Sonnini de Manoncourt, Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Egypte ... Paris 1799; trans. into English by Hunter, London, 1799.
  5. Common-place Book, Series IV. pp. 185.
  6. Ibid. pp. 186.

and inconveniences incident to the sex, of the strictest modesty, and secluded from public view in pavilions of hollow pearls..."<sup>1</sup> These "Corporeal enjoyments" of the Mohammedan Paradise disgust Sale who adds, that Christians, on the contrary, "are expressly assured that in the resurrection they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels of God in heaven"<sup>2</sup> a promise that must have appealed to Southey's puritanic heart. Thalaba who is no less than an angel of God, refuses the "delicious juice of Shiraz' golden grape", in the Paradise of Aloadin,

"For rightly he knew had the Prophet forbidden  
That beverage, the mother of Sins"

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Yet not uncourteous, Thalaba  
Drank the cool draught of innocence" i.e. water!

When the "troop of females" exposed their "harlot limbs" through the "transparent garments",

"With earnest eyes the Banqueters  
Fed on the sight impure;  
And Thalaba, he gazed,  
But in his heart he bore a talisman,  
Whose blessed alchemy  
To virtuous thoughts refined  
The loose suggestions of the scene impure.  
Oneiza's image swam before his sight  
His own Arabian Maid." <sup>3</sup>

(Italics mine).

Thalaba, like Southey himself, is almost quixotic in his idealism and bears a close resemblance in some respects to Richardson's Pamela and Sir Charles Grandison. Haller says rightly: "The respectable Englishman does not forsake him (Thalaba), even in Paradise, for he is met by but one Houri and that Oneiza, to whom the poet had taken pains previously to marry him and who has been patiently reserving her charms to reward him alone".<sup>4</sup> It is obvious why Byron hated Southey so much and vice versa.

The Paradise of Aloadin, if it has none of the rambling sweetness of Spenser's Bower of Bliss, bears at least this resemblance to it,

1. The Koran by George Sale (1734), Preliminary Discourse pp. 96-97.

2. Ibid, p. 101.

3. Ibid. Lines 368-376.

4. The early life of R. Southey by W. Haller pp. 246.

that Southey like Spenser lavished so much ornament and beauty on it, only to call it "impure" in the end and have it destroyed by the virtuous Thalaba!

Thalaba, besides being written with a strict moral purpose, also expresses the peculiar beliefs which Southey shared with Wordsworth and for which the Lake Poets were conspicuous. Thalaba grows up in the Arabian desert under the beneficent influence of Nature and Solitude, precisely as he would have done upon the shores of Windermere.

"It was the wisdom and the will of Heaven,  
That in a lonely tent had cast the lot of Thalaba,  
There might his soul develope best  
Its strengthening energies;  
There might he from the world  
Keep his heart pure and uncontaminate,  
Till at the written hour he should be found  
Fit servant of the Lord, without a spot....."

Southey wanted to flee like Rousseau from the society of the town into the retirement where he might worship the principle of good displayed in nature and to have a home to give him the relief that Pantisocracy failed to give. It is under the influence of this ideal of domestic happiness that Southey pictured the home in Moath's tent in the desert (Thalaba, Bk. III.). "Pastoral poetry", Southey says, "must be made interesting by story. The characters must be such as are to be found in nature; these must be sought in an age or country of simple manners."<sup>1</sup> It is in depicting the pastoral life of the Simple Arab, and expressing his own convictions of domesticity, that Southey came nearest to the desert idyll expressed in the Seven Arabian poems, the Mo'alla<sup>2</sup>kat or Mu'allaqat. Old Moath's tent is fixed on the desert sands:

"Within there is the embers' cheerful glow,  
The sound of the familiar voice,  
The story that lightens toil,...  
Domestic Peace and Comfort are within.  
Under the common shelter, on dry sand,  
The quiet Camels ruminate their food;  
The lengthening cord from Moath falls,  
As patiently the old Man  
Entwines the strong palm fibres, by the hearth

1. Common-place Book Series, IV. pp. 215.
2. Mo'allakat or more properly Mu'allaqat derived from the word ilq meaning a precious thing or a thing held in high estimation and not as Sir W. Jones believed "Suspended". The oldest of these poems is that of Imru'ul - Qays who died in 54) A.D. Collectively these poems convey a fine picture of Bedouin life and manners, frankly realistic, at times uncouth and grotesque.

The Damsel shakes the Coffee grains,  
That with warm fragrance fill the tent;  
And while with dextrous fingers Thalaba  
Shapes the green basket, haply at his feet  
Her favourite kidling gnaws the twig,  
Forgiven plunderer, for Oneiza's sake.

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Oneiza milks the goats and knits many coloured girdles for Thalaba, she grinds the grain in the handmill and bakes the thin cakes in the glowing oven "with bare wet arm and safe dexterity"; a mat is spread before their tent in the cool evening hour and the family stands in prayer under the blue sky; under the dim white moon Thalaba plays on the reed or "strings the pearls of poesy", reciting tales "of love and woe" in the manner of the Arabian Nights while Oneiza sits motionless listening. A love is growing between them, unheeded.

She call'd him Brother; was it sister love  
For which the silver rings  
Round her smooth ankles and her tawny arms,  
Shine daily brightened? for a brother's eye  
Were her long fingers tinged,  
As when she trimmed the lamp,  
And through the veins and delicate skin  
The light shone rosy? that the darkened lids  
Gave yet a softer lustre to her eye?  
That with such pride she trick'd  
Her glossy tresses, and on holy day  
Wreathed the red flower-crown round  
Their waves glossy jet."<sup>1</sup>

This is not great poetry but it is pretty and informed with a certain sentimental glow. The name "Oneiza" was taken by Southey from "Onaiza" the name of one of the Arab girls in Sir William Jones's translation of the Moallakát whose wonderfully realistic descriptions of desert life served Southey as an inspiration for this part of his poem. The image of Oneiza's fingers tinged rosy with the light of the lamp, was suggested to Southey from the Poem of Amriolkais in the Moallakát - where an Arab girl "dispenses gifts with small delicate fingers, sweetly glowing at their tips, like the white and crimson worm of Dabia, or dentrifices made of Esel wood,"<sup>2</sup> as well as by Bahar Danush, where it is said that an Indian girl's fingers "in

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1. Thalaba III, 356 - 368.

2. Works of Sir William Jones, 6 vols. 1799. IV. p. 295.

beauty and slenderness appeared as the yed-i-Beiza (the shining hand of Moses) or the rays of the sun, being tinged with Hinna, and seemed branches of transparent red coral." The warmth and glow of these descriptions of Oriental maidens, caught first by Southey from Oriental sources, was destined, as will be shown in our subsequent sections, to colour the descriptions of Shelley's Indian maid in Alastor<sup>1</sup> and through him of Keats' Indian maid in Endymion.<sup>2</sup>

Some other startling images from these Arabian poems were transplanted in-to his poem by Southey. In the Poem of Antara for example, the camel "turns her right side as if she were in fear of some large-headed screamer of the night."<sup>3</sup> Southey has:

"Forth from her shadowy haunt  
Flies the large-headed screamer of the night"<sup>4</sup>

In the Poem of Hareth we read: that "They surprised you not indeed by a sudden assault but they advanced and the sultry vapour of noon through which you saw them increased their magnitude"<sup>5</sup>, an image employed by Southey in the following lines:

".....thou hast seen the traveller in the sands  
Move through the dizzy light of hot noon-day  
Huge as the giant race of elder times;  
And his Camel, than the monstrous Elephant,  
Seem a vaster bulk."<sup>6</sup>

Needless to say that here, as elsewhere Southey supplements his knowledge drawn from other sources, Indian, Persian, and even Spanish. This excessive desire to hunt for curious similes and images sometimes makes Southey's poetry unconsciously grotesque. The lines describing Oneiza, quoted above provide a happy instance where the similes as well as the sentiment are Eastern. In the East where the avowal of open love between a young couple is difficult due to social and religious restrictions, the first glimmerings of love, especially in a girl are often charmingly disguised under the epithet "brother", by which she addresses her lover. So far Southey has

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1. cf. Alastor, 161-179ff.
  2. cf. Endymion, IV. 59-104.
  3. Works of Jones, op. cit. IV. p. 302.
  4. Thalaba, III, 505-506.
  5. Works of Jones, op. cit. p. 333.
  6. Thalaba, IV. 160.

faithfully and prettily depicted the love of the Arab maiden. But a few lines earlier, we find that Oneiza looks at Thalaba, with a "breathless tenderness", which Southey compares, "even with such a look as fables say, the mother Ostrich fixes on her egg"! The simile is not only far-fetched (it is from a sixteenth century Latin book of travels by J.M. Wansleben!) it is positively grotesque and spoils the effect of an otherwise good description. The Oriental poets often use similes that are laughable on account of their over-subtlety or exaggeration, but never in any Oriental poem is a lover spoken of as looking at his beloved with the gaze of an ugly, long-necked Ostrich! This is one of those instances where Southey carries his pedantic learning and the 'Lake' doctrine of sympathy for the animals, rather too far!

We need not discuss other episodes of Thalaba in detail. The story of Haruth and Maruth (Bk. IV.) was taken by Southey from Sale and D'Hebhelot, and inserted into his poem rather irrelevantly. After Bk. VII, the poem wanders off into a region, which is entirely unoriental both in its magical apparatus and its scenery. The episodes of the witches, Khawla, and Maimuna, though they contain some fine lines, especially Khawla's incantation (Bk. IX, 41-81.), which Coleridge said were "uncommonly lyrical indeed in versification and conception superior to anything I have seen of Southey"<sup>1</sup>, are modelled not on Oriental sources but on Spenser, Shakespeare, Coleridge, Landor's Gebir and much reading in demonology. There is a marked similarity in Landor's Dalica (Bk.V.) and Southey's Marthyr (Bk. IX) manufacturing magic potions.

Southey transplants the Dom-Daniel Caverns of the Arabian Tales from Tunis to the Arctic region suggested to him by the French traveller La Pérouse,<sup>2</sup> a change that affords him an opportunity of displaying some knowledge of Arctic scenery. But the change is not

1. Letters from the Lake Poets, edit. E. H. Coleridge p. 20-22; Coleridge also praises the passages from Bk. III. 16-25; Bk. VIII 286-383.

2. Galaup de la Voyage... rédigé par M.L.A.Milet - Maureau, Paris 1797; translated into English by J. Johnson, London 1798; 1799; and other translation London 1798. cf also the Memoir of William Taylor of Norwich, vol. I. p. 248.

very happy for the Oriental atmosphere of the poem. Like the rest of the poem, the magical apparatus of Thalaba is half Oriental and half Western. There is an abundance of magic rings, mysterious birds, Afreets etc. indeed the poem is too miraculous. One is inclined to agree with Southey's friend William Taylor who quoting a line from Thalaba said:

"Everywhere magic! The Arabian's heart  
Yearned after human intercourse".

(Thalaba X. 78-79).

"Such an exclamation might escape the reader of Thalaba ... Thalaba is a talismanic statue of whose joints capricious destiny pulls the strings who with a forging temper undertakes a work of vengeance and who is moved here and there, one knows not why or wherefore".<sup>1</sup> "There is in 'Thalaba' a sort of pantomime scene-shifting, harlequin touches the landscape with his wand, and it becomes a palace of flame or a desert of snow, but cui bono? Why this specific change and not another diametrically opposite?"<sup>2</sup> Thalaba is indeed full of miracles that Southey performs in too arbitrary and providential a manner. Abdaldar's ring, for example, behaves most unusually, sometimes it saves the life of its owner (Bk. IX. 353) and sometimes it doesn't (Bk. IV. 210). A wasp is introduced most providentially (Bk. IV. 353) to sting Thalaba's finger and prevent him from taking off the magic ring. Sandstorms arise at convenient moments to save Thalaba's charmed life and many another miracle happens at the right moment to the right person and not at another time to another person. Thalaba differs in this from the Arabian Nights, where the miracles happen with consistency under certain well defined laws. The slave of the ring or the lamp will obey its owner, whoever it is, with the same consistent devotion, while the wasps and sandstorms, if they occur at all, will act under

1. Taylor's letter to Southey, Aug. 2, 1802. vol. I. p. 273. Memoir of William Taylor of Norwich.

2. Taylor's letter to Southey Nov. 22, 1801, Ibid p. 390.

ordinary natural laws. What Lord Jeffrey calls in Thalaba "the exhibition of a harlequin farce ... the transformation of cauliflowers and beer-barrels, the apparition of ghosts and devils, and all the other magic of the wooden sword"<sup>1</sup>... is in the Arabian Nights a most fascinating and systematic order of machinery. It is indeed surprising that such an enthusiastic reader as Southey of the Arabian Nights and the Ancient Mariner, should employ his supernatural machinery in such a crude manner. It is Southey's fault and not the readers, if his poem fails to create that "willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith". Before leaving Thalaba and passing on to Southey's other Oriental poem, The Curse of Kehama, we might take into consideration a significant trait in Southey's character that was, to some extent, responsible for his early partiality towards Islam and inspired him to use the Mohammedan mythology in the first of his planned epics. Southey says in the preface<sup>1</sup> to the Curse of Kehama "I began with the Mohammedan religion, as being that/<sup>with</sup> which I was then best acquainted myself and of which every one who had read the Arabian Nights' Entertainments possessed all the knowledge necessary for readily understanding and entering into the intent and spirit of the poem. Mr. Wilberforce thought that I had conveyed in it a very false impression of that religion, and that the moral sublimity which he admired in it was owing to this flattering misrepresentation. But Thalaba the Destroyer was professedly an Arabian Tale. The design required that I should bring into view the best features of that system of belief and worship which had been developed under the covenant with Ishmael, placing in the most favourable light the morality of the Koran, and what the least corrupted of the Mohammedans retain of the patriarchal faith. It would have been altogether incongruous<sup>u</sup> to have touched upon the abominations engrafted upon it; first by the prophet himself, who appears to have been far more remarkable for audacious profligacy than for any intellectual endowments, and afterwards by the

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1. Preface to the eighth volume of the collected edition of the volumes of the works of Southey, published in 1837, 1838.

spirit of Oriental despotism which accompanied Mahomedanism wherever it was established."

It is clear that Southey had no high opinion of the Prophet and his Islam, and the moral sublimity that he had given to it was considered by orthodox christians to be a flattering misrepresentation on Southey's part. What he admired in Islam was an echo of his own ethical spirit, his Christian Stoicism. "Early admiration, almost adoration, of Leonidas, early principles of Stoicism derived from the habitual study of Epictetus and the French Revolution at its height, by these", Southey says, "my mind was moulded". And from these absorbed into Southey's very being came Joan of Arc and Thalaba.

It is not surprising then, that the qualities that Southey admired most in Islam were the absolute faith in God and patient resignation to His will in the face of all sorrow<sup>1</sup>. "Resignation", Southey said in one of his notes, "is particularly inculcated by Mohammad and of all his precepts that which his followers have most observed: it is even the vice of the East". And elsewhere Southey says the same thing. "I began with the religion of the Koran and consequently founded the interest of the story upon that resignation which is the only virtue it has produced."<sup>2</sup> "Fatalism is the corner stone of Mahometry".<sup>3</sup> The talisman that Thalaba learns from the fallen angels of Haruth & Maruth (Bk. V. 519) and which forms the crux of the whole poem is "The Talisman is Faith", a formula that could very well have come from the Koran. "The sixth great point of Faith", says Sale, "which the Mohammedans are taught by the Koran to believe, is God's absolute decree and predestination both of good and evil. For the orthodox doctrine is that whatever hath or shall come to pass in this world, whether it be good, or whether it be bad, proceedeth entirely from his will and is irrevocably fixed and recorded from all eternity in the preserved table".<sup>4</sup> Southey believed ~~something~~ <sup>Somewhat</sup> the

1. cf. Zeinab's speech, Thalaba I. 40-43 and Sale's Koran, p. 77.

2. Life of R. Southey, by CC. Southey, III 351-352.

3. Memoir of W. Taylor I. p. 502.

4. Sale's Preliminary Discourse to the Koran. p. 103.

same:

"Thus in their wisdom did the Gods decree  
 When they created man. Let come what will,  
 This is our rock of strength, in every ill,  
 Sorrow, oppression, pain and agony,  
 The spirit of good is unsubdued,  
 And suffer as they may they triumph still."<sup>1</sup>

But ideas however profound & true do not in themselves make great poetry. Southey lacked the imaginative power to embody these stoical doctrines into poetry. It was Southey's unfortunate belief that mere accumulation of curious images, remote mythologies and noble aphorisms would result in great poetry! Southey not only made Islam the groundwork of his first epic, but also thought of writing a hexameter epic on Mohammad. On his way through Devonshire towards the end of 1799 Southey had read the Koran and his friend William Taylor after the cue of his German poets had been suggesting the use of hexameters in English. Consequently on his visit to Stowey, Southey easily persuaded Coleridge to join him in an hexameter epic on Mohammad. On January 8, 1800 Southey wrote to Coleridge, "Marracis' Refutation of the Koran or rather his preliminaries to it have offered me much amusement and much matter. I am qualified in doctrinals to be a mufti.." It is, however, in a letter to Taylor that Southey outlines the schemes of his poem. "Whether Mohammad be a hero likely to blast a poem in a Christian country is doubtful; my Mohammed will be, what I believe the Arabian was in the beginning of his career, sincere in enthusiasm, and it would puzzle a casuist to distinguish between the belief of inspiration and the actual impulse. From Coleridge I am promised the half, and we divided the books according as their subjects suited us, but I expect to have nearly the whole work. His ardour is not lasting; and the only inconveniences that his dereliction can occasion will be, that I shall write the poem in fragments and have to seam them together at last.

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1. The Curse of Kehama Sect. XVIII 133-138.

1. Letter to Taylor, Feb. 3, 1800, Memoir of W. Taylor, vol. I, p

The action ends with the Capture of Mecca; the mob of his wives are kept out of sight and only Mary the Egyptian introduced. Ali is, of course, my hero, and if you will recollect the prominent characters of Omar and Abubeker and Hamza, you will see variety enough. Among the Koreish are Amro~~n~~ and Caled. From Marraci's curious prolegomena to his refutation of the Koran I have collected many obscure facts for the narrative; still however though the plan is well formed and interesting, I fear it would not give the hexameters a fair chance.!!  
 Southey and Coleridge both made beginnings and Southey expected to finish without Coleridge but neither left anything but fragments. Southey's "Mohammed; A Fragment, written in 1799" was published with Oliver Newman, a New-England Tale (unfinished) and other poetical remains in 1845. The fragment only numbers 109 lines and bears evidence of Southey's industrious scholarship in Islamic traditions rather than of any poetical merit. Like Gibbon in his Decline and Fall, Southey was enamoured of the heroic figure of Ali-ibn-e-Abu-Taleb, the son-in-law of the Prophet and the fourth Caliph, rather than of Abu-Baker, Umar or Othman the other three who preceeded Ali in the Caliphate. In this Southey's sympathies were more with the Shi'ite sect of Muhammedans, whose reverence of Ali and corresponding abhorrence of the other three caliphs, distinguish them from the orthodox sect, the Sunnites.

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We have seen that while Southey was still at Cintra in 1800 writing Thalaba, he had thought of composing a Hindu romance. "I have some distant view" he wrote to Taylor, "of manufacturing a Hindu romance, wild as Thalaba, and a nearer one of a Persian story, of which I see the germ of vitality. I take the system of the Zend

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1. Letter to Taylor, Feb. 3. 1800, Memoir of W. Taylor, vol.I. p 325.

Avesta<sup>1</sup> for my mythology and introduce the powers of darkness persecuting a Persian, one of the hundred and fifty sons of the great King, every evil they inflict becomes the cause of developing in him some virtue which prosperity had smothered."<sup>2</sup> The Persian story was never written but Southey plunged at once into the manufacture of the Curse of Kehama, or as it was originally called of Keradon. "I have planned a Hinduo romance of original extravagance and have christened it "The Curse of Keradon" ... the easy business of hunting out everything to be seen has taken up the small portion of my time .. I have ample materials for a volume of miscellaneous information, my work will be chiefly to arrange and tack together, here I have been glutting and go home to digest."<sup>3</sup> By April, 1801, this had "matured into a very good and very extraordinary plan which has become a favourite with me." Before Southey left Lisbon the ground plan had been "completely sketched" and the composition begun.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile Taylor who was kept informed of Southey's plans was suggesting original, if somewhat amusing subjects for an epic poem to Southey. Here is one of them:-

"Embassies to Thibet, to Ava, accounts of the war with Tippoo Sul-taun; Asiatic Researches, with the other branches of Oriental information form the most interesting side of present publication. What a shame to your Portuguese that they should so long have held possession on the coast of India and have told us so little of Sanscrit literature...

The taking of Serangapatam is a good subject for you epo-poets: I see Mahomet and all the monsters of the Koran confederated in its defence, and the ancient divinities of Hindostan, in alliance with the christian Sainthood, assisting the English army to conquer for the Tremourtee or Trinity new sanctuaries and plant its tricoloured

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1. On the 3rd. of Sept. 1799 Southey had received a copy of the Zend Avesta from John May. By the 27th Oct. he had "extracted the Kernel", "the outline of the mythology is fine and well adapted for poetry because the system is comprehensible. He compares it favourably with the Hindu fables which he thought were rendered un-poetical by their intricacy.
  2. Letter to Wynn, Cintra, July 23, 1800. Life and Corresp. cf. R. Southey, by C.C. Southey, 1850.
  3. Letter to Coleridge, Lisbon March 28, 1801.
  4. For a skeleton of the plot of the poem see Common-place Bk.IV. p. 12-15.

union flag on the sheltered battlements of the Unitarian Metropolis. David and Krishen compose in concert the hymns of triumph; St. Cecilia and the Gopia in sweeter concert execute the aerial harmonies; Vishnu undertakes another incarnation to fight beside Captain Campbell; and the two St. James' once more mount their coursers to announce a victory to Sir John Shore: to the Emperor of the British Isles St. Paul himself will have presented Brama and Sheva and Narayana and Rama, and all his own protectors and protectresses, especially Cuvra the Plutus of the land, Cama will promise husbands to his daughters, Ganga will offer his waters for a new and holier baptism."<sup>1</sup>

This suggestion though it seems ridiculous to us to-day, did not appear so to Southey's contemporaries, whose spirit of experimentation in poetry, allied to the current enthusiasm for the East did not see anything odd in making the doings of the East India Company a subject for an epic poem. We have seen how the episodes of the Mahratta war were providing materials for fiction to Meadows Taylor and other prose writers.

Southey did not lack friends who supported his choice of Oriental subjects for his epics. Scott, who saw in Southey's poetry the continuation of the historical and antiquarian tradition,<sup>2</sup> that he had himself popularised, reviewed the Curse of Kehama in the Quarterly, advocating the cause of fancy and change in literature, as opposed to the conservatism of the Edinburgh Review.

1. Letter from Taylor to Southey, oct. 5. 1800, Memoir of W. Taylor vol. 1. pp. 356-357.
2. Scott had himself contributed to the Orientalism of his time in The Tales of the Crusades and Talisman and his other stories are also full of references to the Arabian Nights and other Eastern Tales (cf. Introduction to Quentin Durward). The Surgeon's Daughter, published in the Chronicles of Canongate in 1827, deals with India, after the fashion of Meadows Taylor, Hockley and others. Of Scott's poetry only a small poem written in 1817 The Search after Happiness or the Quest of Sultaun Solimaun, may be mentioned- where the scene is laid in the Arabian Nights country of Serendib. Scott took the hint of the poem from G.B. Casti's novel Camiscia Magica & supplemented his knowledge from D'Herbelot, the Arabian Nights and Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia. The poem has however the merit of being humorous, rather than learned and pedantic.

"Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong  
 Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song  
 From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray  
 Where Virgil not where fancy leads the way."

"Popularity" Scott continued, is at present sought by varying from the classic subjects of the ancients, by describing Gothic Castles, modern cottages ... Indian pagodas; the painter who can no longer succeed by imitations of Raphael and Guido, gains the public applause by groups of peasants, fishers and smugglers. This may cost the antiquary a sigh and draw from the critic a stern rebuke; but after all it is but a specimen of the eternal operation of change to which literature, like the globe itself is necessarily subjected"<sup>1</sup>

The "stern rebuke" that Scott had anticipated came from Jeffrey who deplored the "childness" of Southey's imagination, the "gaudy and glittering" colours of his pictures, the "portentous finery" that resembled the "full lighted transparencies of the opera-house" and above all the "infantine" character of the personages of Southey's poems. "He (Southey) has come with his whistle and his gilded book of fairy tales into the assemblies of bearded men and audibly undervalued all other instruments and studies."<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to see now that there was more truth in Jeffrey's censures than in Scott's large-hearted tolerance. Time has proved that Southey's ambitious schemes of experimentation in poetry were founded neither on the broad humanity of Scott's lays and novels, nor on the deeper poetic and intellectual sense of Wordsworth and Coleridge; his shortcomings lay not <sup>in</sup> the unsuitability of his subjects but in his own lack of imaginative power to deal with them adequately.

In the Curse of Kehama, Southey proposed to do for Hinduism what he had done for Mohammedanism in Thalaba, an "illustration" of the religion, mythology and customs of the Hindus. The method adopted by him was similar to the one he used in Thalaba; instead of the Koran, D'Herbelot, the Arabian Nights, he extracted notes<sup>3</sup> from the

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1. Quarterly Review Feb. 1814.
  2. The Edinburgh Review, Feb. 1814.
  3. See notes to Kehama. Also Commonplace Book II, p.402-521; IV. 246-257.

sacred books of the Hindus, Ramayana and Mahabharata, Asiatic Researches and the various books of travel about India; and incorporated them into a story in much the same way as he did for Thalaba. Indeed there is such a striking resemblance between the two poems, both in the irregularity of their measures, the wildness of their fictions, the splendour of the Oriental scenery, the eternal enchantments and the fewness of their human characters, that the poorness of invention imputed to Southey by Jeffrey appears justifiable to some extent. The general outline of the story and the kind of interest that it excites is practically the same in the two poems. The subject of both is the adventures of an innocent girl with her father and lover, persecuted by a host of witches and evil spirits, and finally triumphing over them, in a great measure by the help of the very enchantments that threaten their destruction. The same ethical spirit, the admiration of something elevated in the character of man or woman - generosity, gentleness, loyalty, fortitude, faith,<sup>1</sup> the qualities that Southey admired, constitute the groundwork of all his poems, Joan of Arc, Thalaba and the Curse of Kehama. But as Edward Dowden says "in Kehama, a work of Southey's mature years, the chivalric ardour of his earlier heroes is transformed into the sterner virtues of fortitude and an almost despairing constancy. The power of evil as conceived by the poet, has grown more despotic; little can be achieved by the light-winged Glendoveer - a more radiant Thalaba - against the Rajah; only the lidless eye of Seeva can destroy that tyranny of lust and pride"<sup>2</sup>

The Curse of Kehama, is, in short, a more finished Thalaba, more detailed and elaborate in its construction, more extravagant in its marvels. The latter of these facts is due partly to the new system of mythology that Southey was employing in Kehama. In Mohammedanism there is no recognized system of mythology that can be compared to the Greek or Hindu hierarchy of gods. The strict monotheism of Islam and the absolute prohibition of idol-worship are not

1. cf. Thalaba, V. 519 and Kehama, XIII, 134 ff.

2. E. Dowden's Southey, E.M.L. p. 191.

conducive to the formation of an elaborate pantheon. The supernatural agencies employed in the Arabian Nights and other works, like the epic Shahanameh of Firdausi are not a product of Islam but a relic of pre-Islamic religions & do not constitute an elaborate religious system. Consequently Southey was more at ease in the choice of a few Mohammedan fables, like the Garden of Irem, Haruth and Maruth, Paradise of Aloadin etc. to decorate his Thalaba. But, the religion of the Hindus, which Southey says is "of all false religions the most monstrous in its fables and the most fatal in its effects,"<sup>1</sup> the mythology forms a part and parcel of the religion and its complicated ceremonial. "No figures", Southey says, "can be imagined more anti-picturesque, and less poetical than the mythological personages of the Bramins. This deformity was easily kept out of sight:- their hundred hands are but a clumsy personification of power; their numerous heads only a gross image of divinity 'whose countenance', as the Bhagvat-Geeta expresses it, 'is turned on every side'.<sup>2</sup> It would not be out of place here to make a few general remarks on the character of Hindu Mythology, its origin and its so called "deformity" alluded to by Southey.

<sup>3</sup>The Origin of Hindu mythology might be sought in the Vedas (1500-600 B.C.) the oldest literary documents in existence. The foundation of Vedic mythology rests on the belief that all objects and phenomena of nature with which man is surrounded are animate and divine. Everything that impressed the soul with awe or was regarded as capable of exercising a good or evil influence on man became in the Vedic age a direct object not only of adoration but of prayer. Heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, plants were supplicated as divine powers; the horse, the cow the bird of omen and other animals were invoked; even objects fashioned by the hand of man, weapons, the war car, the drum, the plough as well as ritual implements, such as the pressing stones and the sacrificial post, were adored.

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1. Preface to the Curse of Kehama, 1810.
  2. Ibid.
  3. See Vedic Mythology by A.A. Macdonell, Strasburg, 1897; Literary Remains of T. Goldstücker, London 1879; Sanskrit Literature, A.A. Macdonell, 1900, and Max Müller's various essays on Mythology etc.

The lower form of worship, however, occupies but a small space in Vedic religion. The true gods of the Veda are glorified human beings, inspired with human motives and passions, born like men, but immortal. They are almost without exception the deified representatives of the phenomena or agencies of nature - Agni, the fire of the sun and lightning, Indra; the bright cloudless firmament, the Maruts and winds; Surya the sun, Usha the dawn. The degree of anthropomorphism to which they have attained, however, varies considerably. The personification has nowhere in Vedic mythology attained to the individualized anthropomorphism characteristic of the Hellenic gods. In addition to the hymns describing the worship of these elemental gods there are other hymns in the Rig-Veda where this instinctive utterance of feelings makes room for the language of speculation, the allegories of poetry yield to the mysticism of the reflecting mind. In the portions of the Vedas called Brahmana and the Upanished these mystical allegories are not only developed to a considerable extent but gradually brought into a systematic form. Epithets given by the Rig-Veda poets to the elemental gods are spun out into legends assuming the shape of historical narratives. The simple and primitive worship mentioned in the hymns becomes highly complex and artificial, and a ponderous ritual is founded on those legends. Instead of the glorification of the visible manifestations of the elemental gods, in the Brahmanas, their ethical qualities are put forward and their ranks are determined; as a consequence, prominence is given to one special god over the rest. In the Epic period of Hinduism (600 B.C. - 200 A.D.) a similar development continues. In Ramayana the superiority of Vishnu is admitted while in the Mahabharta there is a rivalry between the claims of Vishnu and Siva to occupy the highest rank in the pantheon. In Vedic hymns the immortality of the gods is never a matter of doubt but in the Epic poems we find the inferior gods as mortal in the beginning and becoming immortal through exterior agency - by drinking the juice of the Soma plant, Amrita, for example. We must look upon these gods as gods of poetry rather than of religion; nor do we find they enjoyed any of the

worship which was allotted to the two principal gods, Vishnu and Siva. In the third or the Puranic period of Hinduism (200 A.D.) the pantheon is nominally the same as that of the Epic period. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva remain still at the head of its imaginary gods; but whereas the Epic time is generally characterized by a friendly harmony between the higher occupants of the divine spheres, the Puranic period shows discord and destruction of the original ideas whence the epic gods arose. The legends of the Epic poems relating to the gods become amplified and distorted according to the sectarian tendencies of the masses, and the divine element which still distinguishes these gods in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata is now more and more mixed up with worldly concerns and intersected with historical events. The unbridled imagination which prevails the Puranas is neither pleasing from a poetical, nor elevating from a philosophical point of view.

It is not a matter of surprise, then, that Southey who was acquainted only with the sectarian, unpoetical gods of the Epic and Puranic period should be struck by their "deformity" and anti-picturesque nature. The animistic and philosophic gods of the Vedic period were comparatively unknown in Southey's time; at least Southey in his notes makes no reference to the scholarly work of Colebrooke on the Vedas, whose "Essay on the Vedas" appearing in 1805 contained the first authentic account of these ancient scriptures of the Hindus. Southey's information about Hindu mythology was drawn mainly from the French traveller M. Sonnerat, Sir Charles Wilkins the first Sanskrit scholar, Sir William Jones and the various articles in the Asiatick Researches, especially those of Captain Wilford. Sonnerat's travels<sup>1</sup> into India and China, between 1774-81, were translated into English by F. Magnus at Calcutta (1788-89). Southey possessed a copy of the English translation and makes copious references to it in the notes to Thalaba and the Curse of Kehama.

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 Sonnerat's information though picturesque and interesting

1. Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine, fait par ordre du Roi depuis 1774 jusqu'en ... 1781 par M. Sonnerat ... Paris 1782 translated into English by F. Magnus, Calcutta 1788-89.

is hardly exact. Wilkin's translation of the Bhagvat-Geeta,<sup>1</sup> the philosophical poem from the Hindu Epic Mahabharta, supplied Southey with the meagre knowledge of Hindu philosophy that he possessed and did not properly understand. There is a remarkable lack of the philosophical element in Kehama, which forms an integral part of all Hindu writings. Sir William Jones' writings which supplied Southey the information about Hindu gods, especially his famous essay "On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India",<sup>2</sup> though full of the zeal of a pioneer are superficial and inexact in establishing analogies between the gods of the various nations. Captain Wilford who carried on Jones' work in this line, and whose articles in the Asiatick Researches,<sup>3</sup> formed the basis of Southey's information was the victim of a clever forgery by the Pandits, when trying to establish the ancient character of Hindu scriptures. Erroneous notions such as these formed the basis of other books on the subject of Hindu mythology e.g. Edward Moor's Hindu Pantheon<sup>4</sup> to which Southey makes many references. Moor's book remained for more than fifty years the only book of authority in English upon its subject. A collection of pictures and engravings of Hindu deities formed the nucleus of the book. Moor knew no Sanskrit; the mass of information in his book was chiefly derived from the works of Wilkins, Jones, Wilford and Colebrooke. Though prolix and heavy in style and overweighted with classical parallels the book still possesses some intrinsic value. Other books which Southey consulted on Hindu Mythology were the Hindu Epic Ramayuna<sup>5</sup> as translated by the Baptist missionaries W. Carey and J. Marshman, Kalidasa's Sacotala translated by S. William Jones, T. Maurices History of Hindostan, N.B. Halhed's A Code of Gentoo Law, N. E. Kindersley's Specimens of Hindu Literature, Institutes of Manu

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1. The Bhagvat-Geeta or dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon... by Charles Wilkins, London, 1785.
  2. Asiatick Researches, vol. I. p. 221, Calcutta 1801,
  3. "An Essay on the sacred Isles of the west with other essays connected with the work". Asiatick Researches, vol. VIII pp 245ff; vol. V. pp. 32ff. vol. X. pp. 27ff; vol. XI, p. 11 ff.
  4. The Hindu Pantheon by Edward Moor, F.R.S. London, 1810.
  5. The Ramayuna of Valmiki in the original Sangskrit with a prose translation by W. Carey & J. Marshman vol. I. containing the first book, Dunstable 1808.

translated by Sir W. Jones and many others too numerous to relate.<sup>1</sup> Sir William Jones' works and his hymns to Hindu gods mentioned in the previous chapter were, of course, the main source of Southey's inspiration. "Sir William Jones' works," Southey writes in a letter to Neville White (June 20, 1808), "are placed opposite my usual seat and on the most conspicuous shelf in the room,"<sup>2</sup> while in another letter to Landor Southey says, "Sir William Jones has done nothing in introducing it (Hindu Mythology) so coldly and formally as he has done. "They who read his poems do not remember them and none but those who have read them can be expected to have even heard of my divinities. But for popularity I care only as regards profit and for profit only as regards subsistence..."<sup>3</sup> Southey's use of Hindu mythology was, if anything, more cold and formal than that of Sir William Jones. Although Jones was a lesser poet than Southey his knowledge of Hindu mythology was based on exact scholarship in Hindu literature in its original Sanskrit and he was able to understand the abstract nature of Hindu thought and philosophy better than Southey. There is also a glow of enthusiasm and sympathy in Jones' poems which Southey's poems lack. The deformity that Southey deplored in the Hindu gods, their hundred hands and numerous heads, however clumsy they may be, constitute an essential part of the symbolic nature of Hindu mythology. In eliminating the physical characteristics and the fabulous paraphernalia which constitute the national 'costume' of the Hindu deities, Southey changed them beyond recognition. There is nothing in Southey's Indra, Ganesh, Yamen or the Glendoveers to remind a Hindu of the deities that he worships. Indra the thunder god of the Vedas, tawny-haired and tawny-bearded who is continually at war with Vritra or Ahi, the demon of draught and inclement weather, whom he overcomes with his thunderbolts and compels to pour down the rain, or Indra the Soma-drinking, sensual

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1. For a full list of books see Southey's notes to Kehama.
  2. Life of R. Southey by C.C. Southey p. 152-153.
  3. Letter to W.S. Landor, May 20, 1808. Ibid. p. 145-147.

god of the Mahabharata who reigns over Swarga in splendour surrounded by Gandharvas and Apsaras, the heavenly nymphs, is altogether a very feeble and unpicturesque deity in Southey's poem. Although there is a beautiful description of the rivers of the Swarga, Indra's abode, issuing from the Raining tree (Kehama, VIII 135-168) (The tree by the way being taken from John Albert de Mendelslo's<sup>1</sup> description of the Canary Islands!) the person of the god Indra and his revels are no more than hinted at

"There Indra sate upon his throne reclined  
 Where Devetas adore him;  
 The lute of Nared, warbling on the wind,  
 All tones of magic harmony combined  
 To sooth his troubled mind  
 While the dark eyed Apsaras danced before him"<sup>2</sup>

Whereas in the Mahabhartas, all the physical attributes of Indra, "his round and plump arms," "his perfumed hands which bore the marks of the thunderbolt" are described in detail without lowering the character of the deity. A band of Gandharvas "skilled in music sacred and profane" is entertaining Indra with songs; nymphs "possessed of eyes like lotus leaves, who were employed in enticing the hearts of persons practising rigid austerities danced there. And possessing slim waists and fair large hips, they began to perform various evolutions, shaking their deep bosoms, and casting their glances around, and exhibiting other attractive attitudes capable of stealing the hearts and resolutions and minds of the spectators"<sup>3</sup>. Southey's other gods Palliar (V, 205), a name which Sonnerat gives to Ganesh, the god with the elephant's head; Kasyapa, (VI, 41) the Kasyapa of the Mahabhartas; Surya (X, 254) the sun-god; Seeva (XIX 70) the third deity of the Hindu triad, Yamen (XXIV) 168) or Yama, the god of the departed spirits and judge of the dead and many other minor deities, while they possess some of the qualities

1. A. Olearius.

2. Kehama, VII. 195 ff.

3. The Mahabharata, translated by P.C. Roy, Calcutta 1884. Vana Parva, p. 138 The Mahabharata was, of course, translated later than Southey's poem, but the quotation is given not as a source of Southey's poem but as showing the general character of Indra's heaven.

attributed to them in Hindu mythology, lack the half human, half divine qualities and physical attributes that are so characteristic of Hindu mythology of the Epic and Puranic period. Divorced of all their extravagant fables and original context they are planted haphazardly in Southey's poem to work miracles at opportune moments and save the lives of Ladurlad and Kalyal.

Among other supernatural beings in Southey's poem the Glendoveer, named Ereenia by Southey, plays an important part. The word Glendoveer Southey says "is altered from the Grindouvers of Sonnerat who describes these celestial children of Gas yapa as famous for their beauty; they have wings he adds and fly in the air with their wives".<sup>1</sup> Grindouvers of Sonnerat are in turn the Gandharvas of Hindu mythology. In the Vedas the Gandharvas were the personification of the fire of the sun and had their dwelling in the sky or atmosphere, and one of their offices was to prepare the heavenly soma juice for the gods. They had a great partiality for women and had a mystic power over them. The Gandharvas of later time are similar in character to their Vedic originals. The Apsarases were their wives or mistresses.

These celestial beings receive a characteristic treatment from Southey. "The wings with which they are attired in the poem", Southey says, "are borrowed from the neglected story of Peter Wilkins,<sup>2</sup> a work of great genius. Whoever the author was, his winged people are the most beautiful creatures of imagination that were ever devised. I copy this minute description of the graundee, as he calls it; Stothard has made some delightful drawings of it in the Novelists Magazine". Southey then proceeds to quote the elaborate description of the wings in Peter Wilkins' which is too long to be quoted here. Southey describes this "immortal youth of heaven", ambitiously as having "glorious pennons", whose "swelling web, richer

1. P. 285, Notes Curse of Kehama, 1810

2. The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins a Cornish man... By R.S. a passenger in the Hector (with a dedication signed R.P. the author R. Patlock) 2 vols. London, 1751, 1783, Berwick 1784

than robes of Tyrian dye" reached from the neck down to the ankles; whose colour was "like the juice that flows from Duora's generous wine" and so on, till we reach the "broad membrane" and "a branched pliant bone".<sup>1</sup> One is inclined to agree with Jeffrey when he summed up Southey's description of the wings of this strange creature by saying that they "were leathery it seems, like the bat's without feathers, very transparent, coloured like good port-wine, divided into compartments by fibres of pliant bone of a silver hue, and folding up when his flying was over into the form of a very becoming drapery".<sup>2</sup> This is one of the many instances where Southey, instead of leaving his picture in a state of dignified and suggestive vagueness, spoils the whole effect by an exaggerated and intrusive sense of realism. The Tyrian dye and Douro's wine are curiously out of place in the description of the Hindu Gandharva.

The pure love of the celestial Ereenia for Kalyal, Ladurlad's daughter, is equally inconsistent with the character of Hindu mythology. Although the Gandharvas are said to have a partiality for women, that partiality is of a different sort than that imagined by Southey. "The Gandharva Visvavasu in the first days of wedlock is regarded as a rival of the husband, and the Gandharvas' love of women is prominent in later texts. The Gandharvas and Apsarases thus preside over fertility and <sup>are</sup> prayed to by those who desire offspring."<sup>3</sup> Southey's Gandharva however resents the love shafts of the Indian Cupid, Camdeo.

"Ah, Wanton! cried the Glendoveer,  
Go aim at idler hearts  
Thy skill is baffled here!  
A deeper love I bear the Maid divine,  
A love that springeth from a higher will,  
A holier power than thine!"<sup>4</sup>

Not till Kalyals earthly body "melts" away through the effect of Amreeta, the drink of immortality, does the Glendoveer make his avowal of love in such banal Della Cruscan terms as the following:

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1. The Curse of Kehama VII. 53-78.
  2. The Edinburgh Review. Feb. 1811.
  3. Vedic Mythology by A.A. Macdonell, p.137.
  4. Kehama X, 322-327.

"Mine! mine! with rapturous joy

Ereenia cried,

Immortal now, and yet not more divine,

Mine, mine, ... for ever mine!

The immortal Maid replied,

For ever, ever thine!"<sup>1</sup>

"The love of Glendoveer", Scott said with sound common sense, "reminds us of the *Compte de Gabalis* and of Pope, who adopted to comic machinery the attachment of his airy beings. It is perhaps less fitted to serious poetry; for so inseparable are our ideas even of sentimental affection from the pangs of jealousy and the tumults of desire that we can hardly conceive love .... existing between two beings of different natures any more than between two persons of the same sex."<sup>2</sup> In Southey on the other hand the love even between persons of opposite sex is nothing but a high souled Platonism. A word or two may be also said here about *Camdeo* of *Kama-Deva*, the Hindu Cupid of *Eros*. This god is connected like *Eros* of the Greek mythology with the creation of the Universe. In the *Rig-veda*, *Kama* or the desire is said to have been the first movement that arose in the One. "Desire first arose in it, which was the primal germ of mind; (and which) sages searching with their intellect have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with non-entity." In later mythology *Kama-Deva* becomes the emblem of love, armed with a bow of sugar-cane or flowers, with a string of bees and his arrows are pointed with an Indian blossom of a heating quality. In Southey's poem *Camdeo* loses his allegorical character; he comes "riding on a lorry" shooting vainly his arrows of bees on *Kalyal* and the *Glendoveer*. Of *Camdeo* Scott, rightly says, "Accustomed as we are to the Grecian Cupid we can not reconcile ourselves to *Camdeo's* bow string which being composed of live bees must have been singularly ill adapted to the purposes of archery....!"

Among other mythological contrivances of Southey's poem are the *Ship of Heaven* (VII, 192ff) the *Vimanas* mentioned by Wilford

1. *Ibid*, XXIV, 279-283. 19, 1801, *Memoir of N. Taylor* I, p. 336.

2. *Quarterly Review*, Feb. 1811. 1801, *Ibid* I, p. 320.

- the infernal car (XXII, 200), a precarious vehicle traversing the edge of a 'scymetar', the magic crystal used by the witch Lorrinite, "a thousand eyes were quenched in endless night to form that magic globe" (XI,143)- and many other similar improbable instruments. The episodes of the Enchantress Lorrinite (XI) and the eight days struggle of Ladurlad with the monster (XVI) which ends curiously with the monster getting overpowered with sleep after the long struggle, are more Spenserian than Oriental, while Milton's influence is obvious in the description of the Glendoveers flight to Mount Calasay, "the Heaven of Heavens where Seeva's self doth dwell" (XIX, 70-150), as well as in the descriptions of the sufferers in Hell, the Hindu Pedalon (XXIII, 55-108).

Milton was Southey's model not only in the descriptions of infernal regions but also in the use of mythological machinery. Southey wrote to Taylor in 1801, "you and I differ upon one great article of poetical belief, - the use of machinery. In Milton and in Klopstock, (God forgive me for yoking two such names together..) the supernaturals are the agents, the figures, not the wires. Thus also in the romance of my future manufactory Indra, Yamen and the Sorgon spirits, the two families of light and darkness, the gods and heroes of Valhalla, these are to be acting as well as aiding personages of the Tale."<sup>1</sup> Here Southey was also at one with the Mahabhartas and the Ramayana, where the half human gods are the characters as well as the helpers of the human personages of the epics. But Southey did not go far enough. Taylor was right in answering to the above, "The personages of your Hindoo romances whether you call them gods or men must not be mere pegs to hang descriptions upon, but must have human characters and passions, and the more vulgarly unrestrained, unbroiled and boistrous, the more free-agent and unpolished like the barons bold of the heroic ages, the more direct and obvious and sensual their wants and their wishes, the more will those personages secure sympathy."<sup>2</sup> What

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1. Letter to Taylor, Nov. 19, 1801, Memoir of W. Taylor I. p.386.  
2. Letter to Southey, Nov. 22, 1801, Ibid I, p. 390.

Taylor objected to was not the inclusion of the gods as characters in an epic but to "the unmotived in action, the marvellous in conduct, the extravagant in behaviour, - in a word, the insane.." The supernatural personages if they have to be included in a work of art, must be humanized. "Milton only obtains an interest in behalf of his supernatural personages in as much as he humanizes them; his devils are more manlike than his Adam and Eve."<sup>1</sup> Southey's gods fail to interest us because they are neither sufficiently unbroiled, boistrous and sensual like the gods of the Hindu epics nor are they humanised enough like the Satan of Milton. The Supernatural and marvellous in Southey's poem has, as Jeffrey said a "childish", and "infantine" quality. There is no law or limit set to the miracles. "The familiar use of prodigies makes us impatient of any ordinary occurrences; we will not submit to any difficulties or obstructions arising merely from the laws of nature, or the infirmity of human nature, and feel it as a sort of stinginess in the author when he allows his favourites to be embarrassed for want of a miracle or an angel."<sup>2</sup>

Taylor, on receiving an extract of Kehama, wrote once more with a finer judgement than Southey's: "...I think the plan has the very fault of 'Thalaba' and busies men about what men take no interest in - the fulfilment of destinies beyond their foresight or control.... Mythology should allegorize a moral or a physical cause, and, however boldly employed should never supersede the human effort or natural contingency requisite to produce the same effect...it (Mythology) should aggrandize and embellish the action by perpetual circumfusion and only seem to stimulate and partake a bustle which has its appropriate natural causes."<sup>3</sup> Such sane advice had, however no effect on Southey, with what result we have seen.

Kehama, who partakes of Satan's haughty and ambitious character and portrays the conception of a human being approaching in power to divinity and in malignity to the evil principle (Southey

1. Memoir of W. Taylor I p. 389.

2. Edinburgh Review, Feb. 1811, p. 451.

3. Taylor to Southey, Nov. 22, 1801. Memoir of W. Taylor, vol. I. p. 390.

had probably the conclusion of Vathek also in mind; immortality proves a curse for Kehama as well as Vathek) is overthrown in the end in too arbitrary a manner. The dignity of his powers seems inconsistent with the conclusion of his career. Nor had Southey the sneaking, romantic sympathy with Kehama's inordinate lust for power, which, gives such a complex timbre to the glorious damnation of Milton's Satan and Beckford's Vathek. Instead of being "of the devil's party without knowing it," Southey was too blatant an advocate of conventional morality and too vindictive a denouncer of Satanism.

The only two human characters in Kehama are Ladurlad and Kalyal who like the gods of the poem suffer from too much piety and purity. "No eye probably ever shed a tear over the misery of Ladurlad and his persecuted daughter. She, like the lady in Comus, is set above our pity and perhaps our love."<sup>1</sup> Ladurlad who is the victim of a curse, from which the poem takes its name has that quality of long-suffering endurance and faith which every one of Southey's heroes and heroines have:

O force of faith! O strength of virtuous will!  
Behold him in his endless martyrdom,  
Triumphant still!  
The curse still burning in his heart and brain,  
And yet doth he remain  
Patient the while and tranquil, and content!  
The pious soul hath framed unto itself  
A second nature, to exist in pain  
As in its own allotted element."<sup>2</sup>

Pain does in fact become a "second nature" to Ladurlad and he exists in pain as in his own allotted element. The imagination of the reader, however is unable to conceive the idea of intolerable torture existing for such a long time; the pain, one assumes, has become sufferable by endurance. Furthermore the portentous curse which Kehama the Man-Almighty, pronounces on Ladurlad, uttering "from the heart, with the whole feeling of his soul the gathered vengeance", has the mixed qualities of a blessing and a curse; since it charms its object from the effects of wounds and violence and sickness and

1. Edward Dowden, Southey, E.M.L.

2. Kehama, XIII, 134 ff.

3. Letter to Taylor, June 27, 1806, Remoir of R. Taylor, II, p. 139.

infirmity and old age and dooms him not to be wet with water nor fanned with wind and pass his days without sleep with a fire in his heart and in his brain. The Curse forms a cardinal point in the machinery of the poem and deserves to be quoted:-

"I charm thy life  
From the weapons of strife,  
From stone and from wood,  
From fire and from flood,  
From the serpent's tooth  
And the beasts of blood:  
From sickness I charm thee  
And time shall not harm thee;  
But Earth which is mine,  
Its fruit shall deny thee  
And water shall hear me  
And know thee and fly thee  
And the winds shall not touch thee  
When they pass by thee,  
And the dews shall not wet thee  
When they fall nigh thee,  
And thou shalt seek death  
To release thee in vain;  
Thou shalt live in thy pain,  
While Kehama shall reign,  
With a fire in thy heart,  
And a fire in thy brain  
And sleep shall obey me,  
And visit thee never  
And the curse shall be on thee  
For ever and ever."

Jeffrey called it "miserable doggerel" and "a specimen of those terrible failures to which Mr. Southey is liable." That might be strong language but the curse, as Southey himself admitted, does lack "force and appropriate dignity, and suits a witch better than the Man-Almighty who is to endanger Trimourtee and drag the gods of the Sorgon through hell (Pedalon) at his chariot wheels"<sup>2</sup>. Southey's Coleridgean and Wordsworthian attempts at simplicity of diction have neither the 'natural magic' of Coleridge, nor the penetrating simplicity of Wordsworth. As in this passage they frequent/ degenerate into doggerel.

The effective passages in Kehama, as in Thalaba, are those where Southey depicts his favourite ideal of domestic happiness and pastoral charm, Home Scene (IX), and The Retreat (XIII). Kalyal and Ladurlad, like Thalaba and Moath, dwell in pastoral simplicity imbibing the beneficent influence of Nature and Solitude.

1. Kehama, II, p. 144 ff.

2. Letter to Taylor, June 27, 1806, Memoir of W. Taylor, II, p. 139.

Southey at the time of writing Kehama was thoroughly acquainted with at least two masterpieces of Hindu literature, Sakuntala of Kalidasa and Gitagovinda<sup>1</sup> or the Song of Jayadeva, both translated by Sir William Jones. Out of both these works Southey copied extracts in his notes to Kehama and also in his Common-place book.<sup>2</sup> Now in these two works, as in nearly all Sanskrit literature, Nature occupies an important place. The characters are surrounded by nature, with which they are in constant communion. The mango tree, creepers, lotuses, and trumpet flowers, gazelles, flamingoes, bright hued parrots and Indian cuckoos, in the midst of which they move, are often addressed by them and form an essential part of their lives. In Sakuntala in particular where the scene is laid in a forest, the tender influence which Nature exercises on the mind of the lovers Dushyanta and Sakuntala is much dwelt on. Something of the same pastoral lyricism is present in the two sections of Southey's poem - "The Home Scene" (XI), and "The Retreat" (XIII) and Southey has borrowed many similes and images from Sakuntala, as he did from the Mollakat<sup>2a</sup> in the corresponding episodes of Thalaba. Although Southey was extending Wordsworth's doctrines to suit his Oriental poems, he could have noticed, had he been a better student of Hindu literature, that similar views about Nature prevail in that literature. According to the Upanishads<sup>a</sup> the emancipation of the soul lies in its realization of the ultimate truth of unity: "know all that moves in this world as enveloped by God and find enjoyment through renunciation not through greed of possession." Those who have attained to the Infinite Soul, do not care for the multiplicity of things - "Sarvain eva vishanti" - "they enter into things." Their view of truth is not of difference but of unity of all things - "Yadidham kinch Sarvam prana ejati nihsratam" - "all that is vibrates with life, having come out from life." Wordsworth never becomes entirely a Pantheist, he never quite gives up his

1. The works of Sir W. Jones, 6 vols. Lond. (1799), p. 463-484.

2. Common-place Book, IV. p. 255, 257; II, 470.

1. The Curse of Kehama, III 70 ff.

belief in a personal God or merges Him in the universe, but still even for him the universal spirit tends to shade off into the im- personal:

The gross and visible frame of things  
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense  
Yea almost on the mind itself and seems  
All unsubstantialized.

It is in regarding Nature alive as one Mighty Being and the recognition of the kinship of man, with conscious and unconscious creation alike, that Wordsworth's, view of life comes nearest to Hinduism. And Southey, as we have seen, attempts to illustrate in his Oriental poems the doctrines that he held in common with Wordsworth. Kalyal and her father Ladurlad in Kehama, (XIII), live in a bower of jointed cane, with walls made of creepers & roof of jungle grass, and Kalyal pours forth libations to the spirits of her dead sires in open glades beside clear streams and solitary shades:

Such strength the will reveal'd had given  
This holy pair, such influxes of grace

that they live in absolute harmony with nature; even the ferocious tropical animals crouch submissive before them. The leopard when he enters that "mystic glade" forgets to prey and even the wild elephant on approaching Kalyal:

"Reverent he kneels, and lifts his rational eyes  
To her as if in prayer;  
And when she pours her angel voice in song  
Entranced he listens to the thrilling notes,  
Till his strong temples, bathed with sudden dews  
Their fragrance of delight and love diffuse."<sup>1</sup>

However admirable the kinship with Nature and animal-life may be in the abstract, it is surely idealizing a wild Elephant too much to make him listen with gallant attention to a girl's "angel voice in <sup>response</sup> song"; and as for the elephant's eloquent/to music through sudden dews emitting from his temples, diffusing "fragrance of delight and love", it would have been a dangerous experiment for Southey to trust a wild elephants' musical taste so far as to smell the obnoxious dew that real elephants emit from their temples! Like the mother Ostrich's gaze, noticed in thalaba, this is an instance of the ridiculous limits to which Southey carried the Lake doctrines, in an effort to make them fit his Oriental poems.

1. The Curse of Kehama, XIII 70 ff.

Sakuntala also supplied Southey with the notion of transforming the scene from earth to heaven, by causing Kalyal to be transported by the Gandoveer to the holy Mount Himakoot. Sakuntala in Kalidasa's play is taken to the same mountain abode of the Gandharvas by a heavenly nymph. But Sakuntala relates the love adventures of a king of ancient epic/and represents scenes in which heaven, and earth are not separated and men, demigods, nymphs and saints are intermingled without spoiling the homogeneous atmosphere of the play. In Kehama on the other hand, the mundane is in sharp contrast with the divine and the transition from one to the other is miraculous and imposed. The realistic descriptions of the Rajah's funeral and the Suttee, the crushing of Jagan-nath's car seem out of harmony with the serene abodes of the gods. For the knowledge of contemporary India Southey was indebted to books of travel by Bernier, Craufurd, Stavorinus, Buchanan and as host of other writers, and as in Thalaba, the poems bears evidence of Southey's conscientious research and scholarly handling of a vast amount of material, rather than of any intuitive apprehension of an Indian scene or an Indian character. Whatever skill he might display in collecting and arranging his material, Southey remains, as Dowden has said, a finder rather than a maker.

Southey's moral and religious preoccupations were too strong to allow him to imbibe the true spirit of a foreign literature. His reading merely confirmed his prejudices and fears, without broadening his intellectual horizon. In Islam he found a congenial spirit of resignation and fatalism but Hinduism he was utterly unable to understand. Bhagvad Gita, the Hindu philosophical poem, did not move him, even to a denunciation, as it did Coleridge. Southey's Hindu poem in its utter lack of the philosophical element, offers a remarkable contrast to Sir Edwin Arnold's The Light of Asia, where the Buddhistic doctrines are expounded with remarkable sympathy and insight. Southey who was always trying to curb his emotions and his "Mimosa sensibility" by the use of "philosophy" could find no answer to his spiritual problems in the Hindu philosophy of desirelessness,

detachment and pure action. He found refuge, rather, in Christian stoicism and an ultimate faith in God in the face of sorrow and death - admirable beliefs in themselves, but rather shallow and comfortable in southey.

Transferring this stoical doctrine to art, southey held that poetry ought rather to elevate than to effect and went on planning, in self-satisfaction, his ambitious epics to illustrate the various mythologies of the world: "My aim has been to diffuse through my poems a sense of the beautiful and the good, rather than to aim at the exemplification of any particular moral precept. It has however so happened that both in Thalaba and Kehama the nature of the story led me to represent examples of faith....My next mythological poem, should I ever write another would be founded upon the system of Zoroaster, I should represent the chief personages as persecuted by evil powers and make every calamity they brought upon them, the means of evolving some virtue which would never have been called into action. In the hope that the fables of false religion may be made subservient to the true by exalting and strengthening Christian feelings."<sup>1</sup>

Happily for Zoroaster, and for us, Southey did not write a Persian epic.

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1. Letter to the Rev. John Martyn, Longmin, Nov. 4. 1812.  
Life and Corresp. of R. Southey by C.C. Southey, III, 351, 352.  
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the comparative oblivion to which his works have now been relegated, is striking and exact.

T H O M A S M O O R E .

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The bookish method of Orientalising started by Southey reaches a point of culmination in the Oriental poems of Thomas Moore. The popularity achieved by Lalla Rookh and The Loves of the Angels far surpassed that of Thalaba and the Curse of Kehama; in fact, Moore's reputation both as a man and a poet was surpassed in his day only by that of Scott and Byron. Everywhere Moore went he was feted and crowned with laurel at dinner parties. His poems rapturously received in England, were soon translated into all European languages, and even it is said, into Persian:

"I'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung  
(Can' it be true, you lucky man?)  
By moonlight, in the Persian tongue  
Along the streets of Ispahan."<sup>1</sup>

Lalla Rookh translated into German by Fouquet was made into a play and acted at a Berlin fete by Royalty.<sup>2</sup> The Prince Royal of Prussia always slept with a copy of the poem under his pillow; the Grand Duchess of Russia who acted as princess Lalla Rookh, always carried two copies of the poem with her, magnificently bound and studded with precious stones. Nor was Moore's fame based only on the doubtful excellence of Royal taste. Madame de Staël, the Begum of literature, as Moore called her, was always proclaiming her passion for his poetry; Landor thought he had written a greater number of beautiful lyrics than anybody else; Shelley seems genuinely to have thought him a greater poet than himself; and Byron in the dedication to The Corsair called him "the poet of all circles and the idol of his own".

The contrast between Moore's reputation in his own day and

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1. Verses on Lalla Rookh by Henry Luttrell, p. 302, vol. III of the Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore, edit. by Lord John Russell, Lon. 1853. (Hereafter referred to as Memoirs). Moore also mentions one Mr. Fraser, who in his travels in Persia came across a copy of Lalla Rookh, presumably in Persian. It would be interesting to know, (if one could get the translation), how the poem reads in Persian.

2. Memoirs, III, p. 217.

and pave the path for you." Stick to the East the comparative oblivion to which his works have now been relegated, is striking and excites a certain curiosity about his works. The political basis of much of the criticism of the time, does, of course, partly explain the enthusiasm with which the Whigs greeted Moore's poetry. The other factor appears to be one of the prevalence of a literary fashion. The vogue of the romantic verse-tale started by Sir Walter Scott, was the raging fashion of Moore's day. Presently Byron came on the scene and usurping Scott's fame transferred the medieval scenery to the East in his verse tales, The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos<sup>1</sup> etc. It was to "those quarto dimensions which Scott's successful publications in that form had then rendered the regular poetical standard"<sup>2</sup> and to Byron's Oriental verse tales, that Moore owed his main inspiration for Lalla Rookh and the Loves of the Angels. In 1813, four years prior to the publication of Lalla Rookh when Moore's fame rested entirely on his Irish Melodies Byron wrote to him: "(I) have always regretted that you don't give us an entire work, and not sprinkle yourself in detached pieces - beautiful, I allow, and quite alone in our language, but still giving us a right to expect a Shah Nameh (is that the name?) as well as gazelles. Stick to the East; - the Oracle, Stael, told me it was the only poetical policy. The North, South, and West, have all been exhausted; but from the East, we have nothing but Southey's unsaleables, - and these he has contrived to spoil, by adopting only their most outrageous fictions. His personages don't interest us, and yours will. You will have no competitor; and if you had you ought to be glad of it! The little that I have done in that way is merely a 'voice in the Wilderness' for you; and if it has had any success, that also will prove that the public are Orientalising,

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1. Although Byron's Eastern Verse-tales preceded Lalla Rookh, they mark a new departure in Oriental poems and will be treated in a subsequent chapter. Moore is more in the Oriental tradition of Southey than Byron and deserves to be dealt with first.
2. Preface to Lalla Rookh in vol. VI of the Poetical works of T. Moore collected by himself, London, 1841.
3. Aladdin, a dramatic poem - translated by Theodore Martin London 1857. Some portions of Aladdin translated by R. F. Gillies appeared in Blackwoods Magazine in 1816.

and pave the path for you."<sup>1</sup>

Stick to the East!

The advice passing from Madame de Stael to Byron and from Byron to Moore, is significant. There was an enthusiasm at this time in France and Germany<sup>2</sup> about Oriental literature which far exceeded the feeble stir produced in England by the epoch making discoveries of Sir William Jones, Byron and Moore who were closely in touch with the continent could scarcely have escaped the current 'Orientalising' influence. A few words here about the Orientalising tendency in France and Germany, may not be out of place.

The publication of Sir William Jones' Latin Commentaries on Asiatic Poetry in 1774 made it possible for the first time for classically-educated circles of Western Europe to understand and appreciate the qualities of Arabic and Persian poetry. But the weight of tradition lay heavy on the literature of France and England and it was left for the leaders of the new German movement to grasp their possibilities. The literature of the eighteenth century in Germany could not but reflect the current French 'Orientalism'. Lessing followed Voltaire in giving an Oriental setting to his didactic work, and such early production of the Romantic school as Oehlenschläger's Ali und Gulhyndi<sup>3</sup> are typically eighteenth century fantasies, while his later play Aladdin<sup>4</sup> (1808), inspite of its mixture of Arabian Nights, fairies, elves, and Indian apologues already shows glimpses of that better apprehension of the East which was eventually to relegate all such things to pantomime.

For this real understanding Germany was indebted to a remarkable line of poet-scholars, who continued the work begun by Sir William Jones. Through Herder's influence the passion for study, which was characteristic of the German Romantic Movement, extended also to

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1. Letter from Byron to Moore, Aug. 28, 1813. p. 193, Life of Lord Byron --- by Thomas Moore in one volume, London 1851.
  2. On the Orientalist element in the German Romantic movement see A. J. F. Remy, Columbia University, Germanic Studies, vol. I. No. IV. New York. (1901).
  3. Ali und Gulhyndi (A Tale) in J. Oxenford and C.A. Fieldings', Tales from the German, 1844, was the earliest English translation.
  4. Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp, a dramatic poem - translated by Theodore Martin London 1857. Some portions of Aladdin translated by R. P. Gillies appeared in Blackwoods Magazine in 1816.

Oriental literature and Thought. Schlegel and Hammer in the first generation, and Rückert in the second, revealed to the poets and writers of the West new and almost unsuspected treasures. The literature of the East, Indian, Persian, and Arabic was thus able to enter into nineteenth century German literature to a degree unparalleled in Europe since the literature of medieval Spain. The fairest fruit of this movement was Goethe's Westöstliche Divan (1819). Goethe found in Oriental poetry a means of escape into the world of imagination from the brutal realities of the age. By yoking the art and ideals of Persian poetry with those medieval and 'romantic' elements in the European tradition, with which they were in harmony, he created a new idiom to express his own thought and at the same time emphasized the cosmopolitanism which it was his aim to impress on German literature.

For a time the Persian and Indian fashion held the field. Even Heine, though he did not spare his satire on it, could not keep the Oriental note out of his lyrics. But it failed as it was bound to fail. It was a hothouse plant and could not take root in European soil without hybridising. In France the Romantic movement, less exuberant and less allied with scholarship than in Germany, more under the influence of Scott and Byron than of Goethe and Schiller, showed few traces of the new Orientalism. "In the age of Louis XIV," wrote Victor Hugo, in his preface to Les Orientales (1829), "all the world was Hellenist, now it is Orientalist". And he confessed to strong poetic sympathies for the Oriental world. But with Victor Hugo the Orient was still in essentials the glittering and barbaric Orient of the eighteenth century tradition or a decorative Byronic Orient. He used it for the artistic effect of its glowing colours, somewhat in the same manner as Moore did in Lalla Rookh. The same may be said of almost all the French romantics. Some like Gerard de Nerval and Gautier, more under the influence of the German school, felt a real attachment to the East, but their Orientalism is too often patently at second hand. The things of the East, in Brunetière's phrase, while becoming familiar, did not become 'interior'.

English literature in the nineteenth century stood substantially on the same footing as that of France. The effect of the new Orientalism was more marked, as might have been expected, but the East continued to serve as little more than decorative background, enriched by the romantic insistence on 'local colour', a legacy of Scott and the German movement. It was Byron who made this other Orient popular, and its classic example is Moore's Lalla Rookh.

In 1812 we find Moore settled down to quiet domesticity at Mayfield Cottage, Ashbourne, where most of Lalla Rookh was composed. Moore had decided to live in seclusion during the composition of the poem, especially to keep his Orientalism unadulterated. How far he succeeded in his aim we shall see presently.

"It was about the year 1812", Moore says in the preface to vol. VI of his collected works (1841), "that, far more through the encouraging suggestion of friends than from any confident promptings of my own ambition, I conceived the design of writing a poem upon some Oriental subject"; the friends most probably being Byron and Rogers. Lord John Russell, Moore's biographer, believed that it was Rogers who furnished Moore with the subject of the poem<sup>1</sup>, but it was from Byron that Moore was receiving encouragement and suggestions during the composition of Lalla Rookh. The year 1813, however found Moore "downhearted" about his poem. Byron's first Oriental poem, Giaour appeared and Moore writes: "Never was anything more unlucky for me than Byron's invasion of this region, which when I entered it, was yet untrodden, and whose chief charm consisted in the gloss and novelty of its features, but it will now be over-run with clumsy adventurers, and when I make my appearance, instead of being a leader as I looked to be, I must dwindle into an humble follower - a Byronian. This is disheartening and I sometimes doubt whether I shall publish it at all; though at the same time, if I

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1. p. XXIV, Memoirs.

may trust my own judgment I think I never wrote so well before."<sup>1</sup>

In believing the Oriental region to be untrodden before Byron's invasion of it, Moore was completely ignoring poor Southey's 'un-saleables', a fact that becomes ironical. Moore's Oriental poems, although they had a far greater success than Southey's, are, after all, in the same bookish tradition and are read as little to-day as Southey's.

Moore was forestalled by Byron again in the choice of subject matter when Byron wrote that he was "thinking of a story grafted on the amours of a Peri and a mortal"<sup>2</sup> Moore had anticipated the suggestion "by making the daughter of a Peri the heroine" of one of his stories and "detailing the love adventures of her aerial parent in an episode".<sup>3</sup> Ridiculous as it may seem, the same thing happens the third time. On the appearance of Byron's Bride of Abydos in ( 1813 ) Moore found that this story too contained "such singular coincidences "with his story, "not only in locality and costume but in plot and characters"<sup>4</sup> that he had to give up his story altogether and begin another on an entirely new subject, the Fire-worshippers!

Besides being a matter of luck and coincidence, it appears from the above that the minds of Byron and Moore were working in surprisingly similar directions. Both were thinking of the same obviously romantic Oriental themes.

Moore was a slow writer and his sense of rivalry with Byron made him all the more conscientious. In 1815 he wrote to Rogers, that his aim was to have five tales; "no urgings or wonderings nor tauntings shall induce me to lift the curtain till I have grouped these five subjects in the way I think best for variety and effect. I have already suffered enough by premature publication. I have formidable favourites to contend with, and must try to make up my

1. p. 134, VIII, Memoir.

2. p. 193, Life of Lord Byron by Thomas Moore, in one vol. 1851.

3. Ibid, note (1), p. 194.

4. Ibid, note (2), p. 197.

my deficiencies in dash and vigour, by a greater degree, if possible, of versatility and polish"<sup>1</sup>

At last in 1816 the poem was ready but was not published till 1817. The story of Longman's paying three thousand guineas "no less a sum than the highest that had ever been paid for a poem",<sup>2</sup> for the copyright of Lalla Rookh, is too well known. It shows the estimation in which Orientalism was held in the literary world of Moore's day. The poem proved an enormous success, dazzling the readers of the day with its gorgeous Eastern illustration and imagery. Within a fortnight of its issue the first edition was sold out; and within six months it had reached a sixth edition. Moore's aristocratic circle of admirers especially female admirers, went into hysterics at something so 'amorous', so 'glowing'. Lord Strangford wrote the following to Moore on the receipt of a copy of Lalla Rookh:

"My mother is a bit of a saint; she is reading your book at the other end of the room. The following dialogue has just passed between us:-

"Sinner. 'I am writing to Moore!

"Saint. 'I am reading Moore!

"Sinner. 'What shall I say to Moore?

"Saint. 'That I am shocked at my own wickedness in admiring anything in this world so much as I do his poem!"<sup>3</sup>

It was this kind of guilty pleasure that Moore's excessively sentimental poems produced in their readers who wanted to feel 'amorous' yet 'pure'! Apart from the thrilling glow of sentiment which Moore's Irish temperament imparted to his poem, the Oriental machinery, style and imagery, familiar to the readers of Arabian Nights, Southey & Byron, proved an added attraction. In the seclusion of Mayfield Cottage, Moore says, "for a long while the sole object of my studies --- was to form a store-house, as it were, of illust-

1. p. 205, VIII, Memoirs.  
2. p. 110, II, Memoir.  
3. p. XVIII, Preface, Works, 1841.  
3. p. 225, VIII, Memoirs.

ration purely Oriental-. So that as quick as Fancy required the aid of fact, in her spiritings, the memory was ready, like another Ariel, at her "strong bidding", to furnish materials for the spell-work.---"<sup>1</sup> Not only did Moore's 'Ariel memory' supply him with the Oriental 'local colour' of the poem, it was responsible also for the pedantic, Southey-like notes at the bottom of each page, which instead of helping the reader, destroy that "willing suspension of disbelief" in the Oriental nature of the poet's Muse, which the reader is struggling to preserve. Southey and Moore, in their efforts to the reader "of what great value, even in poetry, is that prosaic quality, industry"<sup>2</sup>; overlooked the fact that by laying bare the raw material of their poetry before the reader they were also shattering the mysterious illusion that their poetry was trying to establish. It was like a magician trying to perform a trick with all his back-stage apparatus in full view of the audience!

As a testimony to the accuracy of his Oriental learning Moore proudly quotes Colonel Mark Wilks, the historian of India, who is reported to have expressed surprise at knowing that Moore had never been to the East. "Well, that shows me", said Wilks, "that reading over D'Herbelot is as good as riding over the back of the camel."<sup>3</sup> Sir John Malcolm, J. S. Buckingham and many other authorities of the day also bore testimony to Moore's truth as a historian.

Whatever Moore's contemporaries may have thought, a native of the Punjab can not help smiling at the following description of the sunburnt dusty plains of his province:

In the road from Delhi to Lahore the heroine "found enough in the beauty of the scenery through which they passed to interest her mind and delight her imagination; and when at evening or in the heat of the day they turned off from the high road to those retired and romantic places which had been selected for encampments, sometimes on the banks of a small rivulet, as clear as the waters of the Lake of Pearl, sometimes under the sacred shades of a Banyan tree, from

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1. p.XVII, preface to 1841 edition of Thomas Moore's Poetical works, collected by himself (Hereafter referred to as Works)
  2. p.XXII, Ibid.
  3. p. XVIII, Preface, Works, 1841.

which the view opened upon a glade covered with antilopes - wild peacocks and turtle doves --- she felt a charm in the scenes so lovely and so new to her ----".

It is needless to say that the country from Delhi to Lahore has no beauty of scenery, except the sunbaked, monotonous plains, and the "retired and romantic places on the banks of the rivers as clear as the waters of the Lake of Pearl", may only correspond to the treeless sandy banks of muddy rivers, whose water is not fit even for drinking. As for the herds of antelopes, wild peacocks and turtle doves, they are as much the products of Moore's fancy as the rest of the fauna and flora, which constitute the formula of his synthetic Orient.

The description of the city of Lahore and Kashmir are as fictitious as the rest of the poem.

Moore in his Diary attributes to himself, "that kind of imagination which is chilled by the real scene and best describes what it has not seen, merely taking it from the descriptions of others", and quotes Milton and Dante as instances where this kind of imagination produces the noblest work. It would be absurd to compare Moore's imagination with that of Milton and Dante; a comparison with Scott and Byron, whose verse-tales supplied him with the models of his poem, would be more apt. Scott, like Moore, wrote of persons, places and scenes, he had not seen. But the reason of Scott's supremacy lies not only in the fact, that he was conjuring up a past of his own country and that his mind had been saturated with the ballads and tales of his native land, from very childhood, but that he was a greater imaginative artist, that he knew human nature more deeply and could portray it more convincingly. As Professor Elton has said, "In Scott life and books interpenetrate; their call to him is a harmonious one; and together they make for him a third thing, which may be described as experience ---- He read enormously not in order to be learned, but to lengthen backwards his vivid perception of the

present ---".<sup>1</sup> It is precisely this vivid sense of life that Southey and Moore lack, without which all their learning and their paraphernalia of decorative ornament is as dead tinsel. What has been said of Southey's imagination applies with equal truth to Moore's. Theirs is that inferior, less dynamic form of imagination, which Coleridge called Fancy. True imagination is vital, it diffuses, dissipates and assimilates its raw material, before it is shaped into fresh and startling forms. Fancy on the other hand, deals with "fixities and definites", which are merely amassed together by memory without being harmonised into a unity. Although Imagination and Fancy differ only in the degree rather than in kind, a comparison of the Ancient Mariner, and Kubla Khan with the Curse of Kehama and Lalla Rookh, can not fail to convince one of the truth of Coleridge's distinction.

It would be a dull and unprofitable job to enumerate all Moore's sources. He like Southey and unlike Coleridge, offers no thrills to the source-hunter. Every book that he consulted is noted down with painful accuracy in the footnotes, that nobody need read. The books are practically the same, as Southey consulted, only Southey's notes were more copious and sometimes interesting from a merely antiquarian point of view. D'Herbelot, Sale, Sir William Jones, Richardson, Sir William Ouseley, among the scholars, Chardin, Bernier, Tavernier, Thevenot, Bruce, Morier, Alexander Dow, Niebuhr etc among the travellers and historians, constitute the chief sources of Moore's information, while the actual Oriental works with which he was acquainted in translation constituted Champion's Shah Nameh of Ferdousi, an imperfect and free translation of the great Persian epic, the Mo'a'llaqat, translated by Sir William Jones, J. Scott's translation of the Bahar-Danush, Nott's translation of Hafiz, Songs of Jayadeva translated by Sir William Jones and the geographies of Ebn Haukal & Abulfeda.

The frame story of the princess Lalla Rookh and the poet Framorz

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1. A survey of English Literature 1780-1830, vol. 1. p. 298.

2. Works, VI. p. 10-11.

3. Ibid. p. 146.

has a faint resemblance to the frame story of the Arabian Nights. The historical elements about Aurungzebe's visit to the valley of Cashmere are taken from Dow's History of Hindostan<sup>1</sup> and other sources. The prose part connecting the four stories, which Byron disliked greatly, is written in a lively picturesque style, not so polished as that of the later Eastern tale The Epicurean but full of quiet humour, at times, levity, presaging the Fudge Family in Paris. The "critical and fastidious Fadladeen", the chamberlain of the Haram, in whom Moore was revenging himself on Jeffrey for the adverse criticism of his earlier poems, supplies the much needed 'comic relief'.

"Fadladeen was a judge of everything - from the pencilling of Circassians' eyelids to the deepest questions of science and literature; from the mixture of a conserve of rose leaves to the composition of an epic poem: and such influence had his opinion upon the various tastes of the day that all the cooks and poets of Delhi stood in awe of him".<sup>2</sup>

Fadladeen's criticisms of the tales "in that strain (so well known to the unfortunate bards of Delhi) whose censures were an infliction from which few recovered and whose very praises were like the honey extracted from the bitter flowers of the aloe,"<sup>3</sup> resemble Jeffrey's strictures also in being frequently shrewd and true. This one, for example, on the last of the four poems The Light of the Haram appears to be not an unjust criticism of the tale, in fact/<sup>of</sup> the whole of Moore's poetry. The tale resembled one of those "Maldivian boats", "a slight gilded thing, sent adrift without rudder or ballast, and with nothing but vapid sweets and faded flowers on board. The profusion indeed, of flowers and birds, which this poet had ready on all occasions, - not to mention dewy gems etc - was a most oppressive kind of opulence to his hearers; and had the unlucky effect of giving to his style all the glitter of the flower garden without

1. Vol. VIII. p. 392.

2. Works, VI. p. 10-11.

3. Ibid. p. 146.

its method and all the flutter of the aviary without its song."<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey recognising his portrait in that of the Grand Chamberlain, wrote again of Moore's narrative style, not unjustly: "His lights dazzle the eye, his perfumes soothe the smell, his sounds ravish the ear: but then they do so for and from themselves, and at all times and places equally - for the heart has nothing to do with it. Poetry in his hands, becomes a kind of cosmetic art, it is the poetry of the toilette. His Muse must be as fine as the Lady of Loretto".<sup>2</sup>

The first story of The veiled Prophet of Khorasan, Moore based on the account of the false prophet Mocanna (Al-Muqanna or Hashim B. Hakim) in D'Herbelot.<sup>3</sup>

About A.D. 777-780, at the beginning of the reign of Al-Mahdi took place the serious rising in Persia of Al-Muqanna "The veiled Prophet of Khorasan". The active life of the pre-Muslim creeds of Persia, as opposed to outwardly Muhammadan heresies, embodying and reviving in new forms pre-Muslim and non-Muslim ideas, found many expressions in such pseudo-prophets in Persia in the eighth and ninth centuries. The rising of Al-Muqanna was the most serious of these. The account of it as given in the celebrated Biographies of Ibn Khallikan<sup>4</sup>, the Muslim historian is as follows:

"Al-Muqanna 'al Khurasani --- began his life as a fuller at Merv. Having acquired some knowledge of Magic and Incantations, he pretended to be an incarnation of the Deity, which had passed into him by Metempsychosis, and he said to his partisans and followers: 'Almighty God entered into the figure of Adam; for which reason He bade the angels adore Adam, "and they adored Him, except

1. Lalla Rookh

2. Edinburgh Review, February 1823.

3. See under Hakim and Mocanna in D'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale. p. 186 and 630, Tome Second, Hays.

4. Ibn Khallikan's Wafayatul-A'yan, English trans. by Baron MacGuckin de Slane (4 vols. Paris and London 1842-71). vol. II. p. 205-6.

Iblis, who proudly refused,<sup>1</sup> whereby he justly merited the Divine Wrath. Then from Adam He passed into the form of Noah, and from Noah into the forms of each of the prophets and sages successively, until He appeared in the form of Abu Muslim al-Khorasani ---, from whom He passed into me'. His pretensions having obtained credence with some people, they adored him and took up arms in his defence, notwithstanding what they beheld as to the extravagance of his claims and the hideousness of his aspect; for he was ill-made, one-eyed, short in stature (and a stutterer), and never uncovered his face, but veiled it with a mask of gold, from which circumstance he received his appellation of 'the veiled' (al-Muganna) ---- One of the deceptions which he exhibited to --- (his followers) --- was the image of a moon, which rose so as to be visible to the distance of a two month's journey, after which it set; whereby their belief in him was greatly increased --- When the doings of al-Muganna became notorious, and his fame was spread abroad the people rose up against him and attacked him in his castle wherein he had taken refuge, and besieged him there. Perceiving that death was inevitable he assembled his women and gave them a poisoned drink, whereby they died; after which he swallowed a draught of the same liquor and expired - This happened in the year S.H. 163, (A.D.779-780): may God's curse rest upon him, and with God do we take refuge from such deceptions!"

Other accounts say that al-Muganna burnt himself so that his body might be annihilated and his partisans might believe that he had disappeared and would return again. His followers were called Mubayyida, or "white clad" and he himself was known by the Persians as Mah-sazanda, "the moon-maker."

D'Herbelot sums up all these details in his articles which Moore freely used in his poem, embellishing them greatly, of course. As is usual in such cases Moore incorporated a love-story into the account of the false prophet and also took the 'romantic' license of

1. Koran, II, 31.

1. Works, VI, p.22-3.  
 2. Works, VI, p.24.  
 3. Koran, IV.

introducing Mocanna's international Haram which he describes with characteristic gusto:-

"And every beauteous race beneath the sun,  
From those who kneel at Brahma's burning founts,  
To the fresh nymphs bounding o'er Yemens' mounts;  
From Persia eyes of full and fawn-like ray,  
To the small half-shut glances of Kathay;  
And Georgia's bloom, and Azabe's darker smiles,  
And the gold ringlets of the Western Isles;  
All, all are there; each land its flower hath given  
To form that fair young Nursery for Heaven!"<sup>1</sup>

The description of Mocanna's palace and Azim's temptation, are after Southey. The influence of Byron's romantic manner as embodied in The Corsair, is more apparent in this poem than in any other. The hero of Moore's poem Azim who has been a captive in Greece, though supposed to be a Persian, has true Byronic ideas about Greece and liberty:

"Oh! who could e'en in bondage, tread the plains  
of glorious Greece, nor feel his spirit rise  
Kindling within him?"<sup>2</sup>

Moore's second tale The Paradise and the Peri is more characteristic of his style of writing than the Veiled Prophet. It is somewhat of a moral apologue, expanded and adorned by the exuberant fancy of the poet, dealing with the efforts of a Peri to regain its original home, the paradise. The Peris are a kind of half-fallen female angels who dwell in air and live on perfumes, and though banished for a time from Paradise, go about in the world doing good. The origin of the Persian word پری, pari or peri lies in Pehlevi parik, evil genius, malevolent elf or sprite. In Avestan mythology parika stood for several beautiful but malevolent female demons employed by Ahriman, the Evil Principle, to bring comets and eclipses, prevent rain, cause failure of crops and death. Later they came to mean 'Spirits of seduction', good genii or fairies, endowed with grace and beauty. Mohammedanism borrowed most of its supernaturalism from Talmudic or Iranian sources. It is said in the Koran that after creating the earth God peopled it with Jinn (Persian Div) or demons, and Peris, before placing Adam there; "He created them of fire clear from smoke".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Works, VI, p.22-3.
  2. Works, VI, p.24.
  3. Koran, LV.

J. Richardson in his very useful Dissertation on the languages, Literatures and Manners of Eastern Nations, prefixed to his Persian Dictionary to which Moore makes many references, gives the following account of the Eastern Supernatural beings.

"The fabulous Asiatic ages stretch far beyond the creation of man. They suppose the world to have been repeatedly peopled by creatures of different formation, who were successively annihilated or banished for disobedience to the Supreme Being --- Those beings who inhabited the globe immediately before the creation of man they call Peris and Dives; and they form a perfect contrast. The Peris are described as beautiful and benevolent; and though guilty of errors which had offended Omnipotence, they are supposed in consequence of their penitence still to enjoy distinguished marks of divine favour. The Dives, on the contrary are pictured as hideous in form, and malignant in mind --- roaming forever around the world to scatter discord and wretchedness among the sons of Adam--- The residence of those beings was imagined to be on the mountains of Kaf (Caucassus); which in the East was long supposed to surround the earth, as a ring does the finger --- The whole of this visionary country is called Jinnistan; and the respective empires are divided into many Kingdoms and cities. Those of the Peris bear the names of Shadukam (pleasure and desire), Gouherabad (the city of jewels), Amberabad, (the city of Ambergris); the metropolis of the Dives being called Abermanabad (the city of the Principle of Evil) --- The Peris and Dives are supposed to be formed of the element of fire: They live long, but are subject to death and though possessed of superhuman powers have in many respects the sentiments and passions of mankind --- Perfume is the only food of the Peris; and while it serves as nourishment to the captives, it has also the virtue of keeping at a distance the insulting Dives; whose malignancy of nature can bear nothing fragrant.

When the Peris are in danger of being overpowered by their foes (The Dives), they always solicit the assistance of some mortal hero which furnishes a wonderful fund of fanciful machinery for

Eastern Poetry and Romance."<sup>1</sup>

Moore, however, inverted the relationship of the Peris and the human beings. His Peri has to wander on the face of the earth in search of a "Gift that is most dear to Heaven", which would enable her to re-enter Paradise, her original home. The poem opens with the characteristic lines:

"One morn a Peri at the gate  
Of Eden stood, disconsolate;  
And as she listened to the springs  
Of Life within, like music flowing  
And caught the light upon her wings  
Through the half open portal glowing  
She wept to think her recreant race  
Should ever have lost that glorious place!"<sup>2</sup>

The weakness of the epithets, "music flowing", "portal glowing", and finally "glorious place", is at once apparent.

The wanderings of the Peri in search of the gift afford Moore an opportunity to describe the various countries she visits - India, Egypt, and Syria. It is interesting to note Moore's conception of the three countries, in relation to Colonel Wilke's remark that "reading D'Herbelot is as good as riding on a Camel". Here is the glittering barbaric India of the eighteenth century tradition:

.....That Sweet Indian land,  
Whose air is balm, whose ocean spreads  
O'er coral rocks and amber beds;  
Whose mountains pregnant by the beam  
Of the warm sun, with diadems team;  
Whose rivulets are like rich brides,  
Lovely with gold beneath their tides;  
Whose sandal groves and bowers of spice  
Might be a Peri's paradise?  
But crimson now her rivers ran  
With human blood the smell of death  
Came reeking from their spicy bowers  
And man, the sacrifice of man....."<sup>3</sup>

One would think from Moore's description that India contained nothing but precious stones and blood shed, Maharajahs and assassins! Byron's conception of the East, we shall see is not very different from this.

Egypt to the Oriental writers of the nineteenth century was synonymous with the Mountains of the Moon and the mysterious sources of the Nile. Bruce's Travels to discover the Sources of the Nile

1. J. Richardson's Dissertation, (1787), p. 166-9.

2. Works, VI, p. 156.

3. Ibid, p. 160-1.

( 1790 ) was one of the most popular travel books of the century and echoes of Bruce's marvellous adventure are heard in nearly every romantic poet. Of Coleridge's use of it we have already spoken. Here are Moore's lines referring to the same source:

"Now among Africs Lunar Mountains,  
Far to the south, the Peri lighted;  
And sleeked her plumage at the fountains  
Of the Egyptian tide whose birth  
Is hidden from the sons of earth,  
Deep in those solitary woods,  
Where oft the Genii of the floods  
Dance round the cradle of their Nile  
And hail the new-born Giants' smile!"<sup>1</sup>

Although it is highly unfair to compare the above lines to Coleridge's somnambulistic poem, which is unique, perhaps in any literature, the difference however between the truly romantic and pseudo-romantic imagination of the two poets is at once apparent.

The puerility of Moore's imagination is equally obvious from the sentimental quality of the three characteristic 'gifts' that the Peri brings to gain re-admission into Paradise. The first gift is a drop of blood shed by a patriotic youth in defence of his country. Moore might have been quite sincere in his patriotic feelings about Ireland but he lacks the thundering rhetoric of Byron to make it convincing in his poetry. The Peri

".....caught the last  
Last glorious drop his heart had shed,  
Before its free-born spirit fled!"<sup>2</sup>

The re-iteration of the word last is intended to be very pathetic. The second gift is that of a "precious sigh of pure self-sacrificing love" which a maiden gives to her lover, literally "drinking his tears"

"One kiss the maiden gives, one last,  
Long kiss, which she expires in giving!"<sup>3</sup>

Last, long again enhance the preciousness of the gift! No wonder the angel at the door of Paradise behaves like an exacting janitor and the "Crystal bar of Eden moves not"!

1. Works VI. p. 165.

2. Works VI. p. 163.

3. Ibid, p. 173.

1. Ibid, p. 181.

2. Ibid, p. 179-180.

3. Works, VI. p. 162.

4. Ibid, 184.

The third gift of "blest tears of Soul-felt penitence!" is somewhat of an anticlimax, even as compared to the previous two. "A child at play" chasing "damsel-flies", (which are like "winged flowers or flying gems"), suddenly becomes precocious and begins

"Lisping the eternal name of God  
From purity's own cherub mouth".<sup>1</sup>

Along comes a sort of feeble Glaour or Corsair, in whose aspect

".....the Peri's eye could read  
Dark tales of many a ruthless deed,  
The ruined maid - the shrine profaned-  
Oaths broken ...."etc."<sup>2</sup>

The sight of the boy praying melts his heart with repentance:

".....each nobler aim  
And hope and feeling, which had slept  
From boy-hood's hour, that instant came  
Fresh o'er him, and he wept-he wept!  
Blest tears of soul-felt penitence!"<sup>3</sup>

One agrees with old Fadladeen when he speaks of "the puerile conceitedness of the Three Gifts". The guardian Angel of Paradise is however not so critical this time and lets the Peri in.

'Joy, joy for ever! my task is done-  
The gates are passed and heaven is won!  
Oh! am I not happy? I am, I am-  
To thee sweet Eden! how dark and sad  
Are the diamond turrets of Shadukiam  
And the fragrant bowers of Amberabad!"<sup>4</sup>

Shadukiam (or Shadukam) and Amberabad are, as we have seen, the provinces of fairyland mentioned in Richardson's dissertation and whatever merit the above lines possess is due to the musical sound of these two Eastern words.

During the composition of Lalla Rookh, Moore was conscious that his stories did not come from any inner personal impulse, he was writing because Byron's and Scott's verse-tales had created a fashion for such writings. He had no firm grasp over the East - "finding my subjects so slow in kindling my own sympathies, I began to despair of their ever touching the hearts of others; and felt often inclined to say, (rightly)

"Oh no, I have no voice or hand  
For such a song, in such a land.

1. Ibid. p. 181.

2. Ibid. p. 179-180.

3. Works, VI. p. 182.

4. Ibid. 184.

Sympathy and a certain amount of idealisation are necessary in a  
 .....But at last, fortunately, as it proved, the thought occurred  
 to me of founding a story on the fierce struggle so long maintained  
 between the Ghebers, or Fireworshippers of Persia and their haughty  
 Muslim masters. From that moment, a new and deep interest in my  
 whole task took possession of me. The cause of tolerance was again  
 my inspiring theme, and the spirit that had spoken in the melodies  
 of Ireland soon found itself at home in the East."<sup>1</sup>

Moore found the precedent for his tale in Voltaires tragedy of Les Guèbres, which was "written with a similar under-current of meaning".  
 Sympathy with the weaker nations formed an essential element of the Romantic movement. In a poem entitled, "The Parallel" (one of the Irish Melodies) which Moore composed in answer to an anti-Irish pamphlet, written to prove that the Irish were originally Jews, he compared the fate of the two nations:-

"Like thee doth our nation lie conquered and broken,  
 And fallen from her head is the once royal crown;  
 In her streets, in her, halls desolation hath spoken,  
 And 'while it is day yet, her sun hath gone down'"

The same 'parallel' is intended in the story of the Fireworshippers. It is interesting to note that in our own day Indian & British politicians are fond of citing the "Irish Parallel" in place of the "Oriental Parallel" of Moores' day.

Moore's sympathies were, however, not entirely with the Gebers of Persia. In a note to Paradise and the Peri where an Indian youth dies for the cause of liberty, Moore says, "Objection may be made to my use of the word liberty, in this, and more especially in the story that follows it (Fireworshippers), as totally inapplicable to any state of things that has ever existed in the East; but though I can not of course mean to employ it in that enlarged and noble sense which is so well understood at the present day, and, I grieve to say, so little acted upon, yet it is no disparagement to the word to apply it to that national independence, that freedom from the interference and dictation of foreigners, without which, indeed, no liberty of any kind can exist, and for which both Hindoos and Persians fought against their Mussulman invaders, with, in many cases, a bravery that deserved much better success".<sup>2</sup>

1. Works, VI. Preface, XV.-XVI.

2. Works, VI. p.163, Note.

Sympathy and a certain amount of idealisation are necessary in a poet if he wants to comprehend the spirit of a foreign country and convey it in his writings. The failure of Southey and Moore can partly be traced to this condescending tone they adopted towards a people whose passions and struggles they were trying to depict. Moore's patriotism, even for Ireland, was somewhat of a sentimental and theatrical kind. The tragic memories of the Irish Revolution of 1798, the Irish conspiracy and of the death of Robert Emmet, the young Irish patriot in 1803, who was Moore's friend and school-fellow, lay buried in Moore's mind under Anacreonic sentiments, reminiscences of travel and the fashionable gay life of London society, till in 1808 he published the first number of the Irish Melodies. Here for the first time we find scattered about in songs which are written in a mood of half gay, half mournful levity and amorousness, those well-known lyrics commemorating the death of Emmet and the sufferings of Ireland in her struggle for freedom. The timid and half allegorical vein of these patriotic songs is carried on under an Oriental disguise in The Fireworshippers. The loves of Emmet and his betrothed Sarah Curran form the basis of the tragic romance of Hafed and Hinda, while Sarah's father John Philpot Curran is the prototype for Al-Hassan the fierce Muslim chief. The poem is in fact the "glorification of rebellion", as the following stanza which became a motto for the collection of documents relating to the Irish Rebellion, shows:-

"Rebellion! foul dishonouring word,  
Whose wrongful blight so oft has stained  
The holiest cause that tongue or sword  
Of mortal ever lost or gained.  
How many a spirit born to bless  
Hath sunk beneath that withering name,  
Whom but a days' an hours success  
Had wafted to eternal fame!"<sup>1</sup>

The Arab conquest of Persia and the overthrow of the Zoroastrian religion which may be said to have begun with the battles of Buwayb and Qudisiyaya (A.D. 635-637) and to have been completed and confirmed by the death of the last Sasanian King, Yazdigird III, (A.D. 651 or 652), appeared to Moore to have sufficient analogy to the establishment of

1. Works, VI, p. 235.

English power in Ireland. When he wrote of the Arab invaders as:

"One of that saintly, murderous brood,  
To carnage and the Koran given,  
Who think through unbelievers' blood  
Lies their directest path to heaven"<sup>1</sup>

and spoke of Islam as the "creed of lust and hate and crime"; he was thinking more of the English than of Persia or Iran. The word Iran itself had sufficient resemblance to Erin to convey Moore's veiled patriotism in an Oriental allegory. Moore's knowledge of Zoroastrian religion and of the Mohammadan conquest of Persia was confined to a few early books of travel like J. Henry Grosé's Voyage to the E. Indies, Henry Lords' Religion of the Parsees (1630) and a few other sources, the chief among them being D'Herbelot. The tyranny attributed by these writers and after them by Moore, to the early Mohammadan conquerors, has not been justified by later research.<sup>2</sup> This is however beside the point. The notion though historically erroneous offered sufficient analogy to Irish conditions to serve Moore as a basis of his poem. Besides, the worship of fire and Mithra, the sun, by the Zoroastrians,

...Who morn and even  
Hail their creators dwelling-place  
Among the living lights of heaven!"

was poetical enough to attract Moore's attention.<sup>3</sup> Byron considered Fireworshippers the best tale of the four that make up Lalla Rookh, and his influence is again obvious in the heroic character of Hafez who is clearly a prototype of the Giaour and the Corsair, one of those in whose hearts "the seeds of vengeance ripen into deeds,"

"Who, though they know the strife is vain  
Who, though they know the riven chain  
Snaps but to enter in the heart  
Of him who rends its links apart,  
Yet dare the issue, - blest to be  
Even for one bleeding moment free  
And die in pangs of liberty!"<sup>4</sup>

1. Works, VI. p. 204.

2. See E.G. Browne's Literary History of Persia vol. I. p. 200-2, also T.W. Arnold's Preaching of Islam, Lond. 1896. p. 177-184.

3. Besides Voltaire's Les Guebres, mentioned before Goethe, also attracted by the Zoroastrianism of ancient Persia, called one of the books of his Westöstliche Divan, The Book of the Parsees.

4. Works, VI. p. 234.

Though the love episodes of Hafed and Hinda tend to become too sentimental, the tragic story of the rebel's unwavering faith in his cause and his heroic end is told with a dignity unusual in Moore. A false note is again struck in the concluding sentimental song,

"Farewell - farewell to thee, Araby's daughter,  
(Thus warbled a Peri beneath the dark sea)...<sup>1</sup>

Moore was too enamoured of his "warbling Peris" to let go an opportunity of bursting into one of those facile songs that spoil the effect of even his good poetry.

The fourth story in Lalla Rookh is a flimsy rhapsody relating "to the reconciliation of a sort of lovers' quarrel" which took place between Sultana Nourmahal and the Emperor Jehangeer during a feast of Roses at (Kashmir). It was based on the accounts of the visits of the Moghul Emperors to the "terrestrial Paradise" of Kashmir mentioned by Dow, Forster and other travellers. Moore was also acquainted with the translations of some parts of the Royal autobiography Toozek Jehangeery and Ayin-Akbari by Abul-Fazil. Moore was utterly deficient in the characteristic English, feeling for nature. His descriptions of the flowers and groves and valleys of Kashmir are artificial to the extreme, are, in fact, mere verbal ingenuities.

Byron in the preface to The Corsair attributed to Moore an Oriental temperament and the ability to write an Eastern poem adequately:

"It is said among those friends, I trust truly, that you are engaged in the composition of a poem whose scene will be laid in the East; none can do those scenes so much justice. The wrongs of your own country, the magnificent and fiery spirit of her sons, the beauty and feeling of her daughters, may there be found; and Collins, when he denominated his Oriental his Irish eclogues, was not aware how true at least was part of his parallel. Your imagination will create

1. Works, VI. p. 319.

a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness and originality, are part of your national claim of Oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's Antiquarians."<sup>1</sup>

We may safely say of this rather extravagant passage that Byron's personal friendship of Moore had more to do with it than his critical sense. Yet "how true at least was part of his parallel!" It may not be true that the Irish are of Oriental descent, yet there is some element of truth in Byron's comparison of the "wildness tenderness and originality" of the Irish people to that of the inhabitants of the warmer East. The comparison can not be carried much further. While Moore believed, partly due to the political parallel mentioned before, that he possessed the warmth and effusion requisite of an Eastern poet he had no true sympathy with, or an understanding of the spirit of the East. The sentiment and the morality of Lalla Rookh like those of Southey's poems are wholly Western; only the metaphors and the images are Eastern. The superimposed Oriental Ornament of the tales, the nightingales, roses, cypresses and gazelles, fail to hide their wooden artificiality and sloppy sentimentality. An Oriental poet is frequently dull and moral, or frank and sensual or abstract and mystical but seldom sentimental.

If Moore did not succeed in catching the true spirit of the East, he caught at least a certain artificiality of style, a sort of literary rhetoric common to Oriental poetry. E.J.W. Gibb in his excellent History of Ottoman Poetry says the following about Persian poetry, which can apply to Moore's poetry with some modification:

"Persian rhetoric is the counterpart of Persian art, and that every one knows, is essentially decorative. Its merits, and they are great lie exclusively in the beauty of its detail; the principle of the subordination of the parts to the whole is unknown. In like manner is Persian poetry enveloped in a mass of incongruous and unconnected ornament. Metaphors and similes, homonyms and anagrams and a host of other rhetorical embellishments, for many of

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1. Preface to The Corsair.

which we have no names in English, crowd on one another's heels and seem to jostle each other in their eagerness to amaze the reader. Individually these figures may be, and very often are both graceful<sup>r</sup> & ingenious, but they are thrown together without so much as a thought being given to their effect as a whole. The result is certainly brilliant, some times dazzling, but the dignity which comes of restraint and orderly procession is not there. A poetry which wantons, as does the Persian in every kind of ambiguity of expression and far fetched conceit must inevitably be extremely artificial; and artificiality is in fact one of the most prominent characteristics of this poetry."<sup>1</sup>

Moore's poetry is doubly artificial because it is an imperfect imitation of a fault in Eastern poetry. Besides Moore's similes and metaphors have not got that verbal dexterity and formal perfection which are the saving grace of some of their Persian counterparts. The simile of the nightingale and the rose so common in Persian poetry is used tamely by Moore as follows,

".....though rich the spot  
With every flower this earth has got,  
What is it to the nightingale,  
If there his darling rose is not."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to compare the use made by Goethe of the same simile in his Westoestlicher Divan.

"Ist's möglich dass ich Leibchen dich kose!  
Vernehme der göttlichen stimme Schall!  
Unmöglich scheint immer die Rose  
Unbegreiflich die Nachtigall."

The verse has been well translated by E. Dowden as:

"Is it possible, sweet love, I hold thee close,  
Hear the divine voice pealing musical?  
Always impossible doth seem the rose,  
And inconceivable the nightingale!"<sup>4</sup>

No better instance can be given of a successful and an unsuccessful borrowing of the same simile from Persian. While Moore was simply decorating his poem with quaint Eastern ornament, Goethe was

(1900)

1. E. J. W. Gibb, History of Ottoman Poetry,/vol. I. p. 26ff.
2. Works VII, p. 25.
3. P. 126, Goethe's , Westoestlicher Divan, Stuttgart, 1819.
4. p. 101, Göethe's West-Eastern Divan, translated by E. D. Dowden, London, Toronto (1914).

expressing his deep personal emotion in Oriental symbols. The artificial nature of Moore's decorative similes is also evident from the following:-

Hafed and Hinda drop "their tears like moonlight rain".

Wine is called "the red weepings of the Shiraz vine".

A Peri is spoken of "whose very soul is made of floweret's breaths and lovers' sighs".

Young Mirzala has "blue eyes whose sleepy lid like snow on violet lies." And so on, the examples can be indefinitely multiplied.

Jeffrey, we remember, called Moore's poetic art "cosmetic art". Hazlitt calls it "meretricious and effeminate", "vitiating", "immoral"- "it seduces the taste and enervates the imagination". There is in Moore's style "a play of fancy, a glitter of words, a shallowness of thought, and a want of truth and solidity that is wonderful and that nothing but the heedless, rapid glide of the verse could render tolerable."<sup>1</sup> One more example may be given of Moore's more ambitious descriptive style and his use of Oriental sources. He is describing the false prophet Mocanna's pleasure palace where the virtuous Azim has been summoned for temptation.

..... Lightly latticed in  
 With odoriferous woods of Comorin,  
 Each brilliant bird that wings the air is seen;-  
 Gay sparkling loories, such as gleam between  
 The crimson blossoms of the coral tree  
 In the warm isles of India's sunny sea:  
 Mecca's blue sacred pigeon, and the thrush  
 Of Hindostan, whose holy warblings gush,  
 At evening, from the tall pagoda's top;-  
 Those golden birds that in the spice time, drop  
 About the gardens, drunk with that sweet food  
 Whose scent hath lured them o'er the summer flood,  
 And those that under Araby's soft sun  
 Build their high nests of budding cinnamon....."<sup>2</sup>

Six notes at the bottom of the page from Turner's Tibet, D'Herbelot, Barrow, Pitt's Account of the Mohometans, Pennant's Hindostan, and Brown's Vulgar Errors, faithfully explain the sources of all the strange birds enumerated in this "very rich plum cake" of a passage.

1. p. 296, Spirit of the Age or contemporary Portraits by W. Hazlitt, London, 1858.
2. Works. VI. p. 69-70.

1. p. 296, Spirit of the Age by W. Hazlitt, London, 1858.

It is certainly better than anything of Southey's in the same line, on whose Garden of Irem and the Paradise of Aloadin, the description of Mocanna's palace is obviously based. Yet one feels that the individual images are not subordinated to the effect of the whole; the "mass of incongruous and unconnected ornament" is not fused together by that final spark of the imagination which gives a harmonious and suggestive character to such passages, in Keats, for example. Hazlitt describes Moore's descriptive style aptly in the following words:- "He does not compare an historic group, or work out a single figure; but throws a variety of elementary sensations, of vivid impressions together and calls it a description. He makes out an inventory of beauty - the smile on the lips, item, the dimple on the cheeks, item, golden locks, item, a pair of blue wings, item, a silver sound, with breathing fragrance and radiant light, and thinks it a character or a story. He gets together a number of fine things and fine names, and thinks that, flung on heaps, they make up a fine poem. This dissipated, fulsome, painted, patchwork style may succeed in the levity and languor of the boudoir, or might have been adapted to the pavilions of royalty, but it is not the style of Parnassus, nor a passport to Immortality."<sup>1</sup>

Even if we make a provision in the above passage for Hazlitt's political differences with Moore, the estimate remains substantially correct.

In 1823 Moore published another poem in verse, Loves of the Angels, founded on the Eastern story of the angels Harut and Marut, and the Rabbinical fictions of the loves of Uzziel and Shamchazai. As we have seen, Southey had already introduced the story of Harut and Marut in Thalaba, but Byron, to Moore's chagrin, forestalled him again in the subject by founding his Heaven and Earth on the passage in the Genesis, (chap. VI.); "And it came to pass ... That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." But Byron treated the subject in a vastly different form and there was no competition between the

1. p. 294, Spirit of the Age by W. Hazlitt, London, 1858.

two writers.

In its first edition Moore's angels were scriptural angels. But numerous protests against the application to profane purposes of the scriptural legend, and the consequent sensitiveness of the publishers made Moore turn over his "D'Herbelot etc. for the project of turning the poor 'Angels' into 'Turks'",<sup>1</sup> for the fifth edition of the poem. The 1841 edition of Moore's works collected by himself contains this Oriental recension, where, changing only a few words, e.g. "God" to "Allah", "Lucifer" to "Eblis", "Hell" to "Gehim's pit", the metamorphosis of the poem was effected. But later Moore abandoned the disguise and the poem appears in its original form in later editions of his works.

Moore's purpose was to use the story of the fallen angels given in D'Herbelot, Hyde, Prideaux and Mariti as "an allegorical medium, through which might be shadowed out the fall of the soul from its original purity - the loss of light and happiness which it suffers in the pursuit of this world's perishable pleasures - and the punishments, both from conscience and Divine justice, with which impurity, pride, and presumptuous inquiry into the awful secrets of Heaven are sure to be visited"<sup>2</sup>

But this moral purpose is obscured in treatment. The whole poem is about Moore's favourite theme, love-making. The three angels recall the loves for which they lost heaven, thus furnishing three types of love-story in Moore's usual mellifluous style. The poem has the merit of not being overloaded by Oriental ornament but otherwise it is an inferior poem to Lalla Rookh.

Moore's fascination for Oriental subjects still continued. In 1827 he brought out his prose romance The Epicurean, part of whose scene is laid in Egypt. The graphic accounts of the Egyptian catacombs are reminiscent of Vathek and Gebir. Moore handled the same theme in verse in the fragment Alciphron; but his prose version is much better.

1. Memoirs. IV. p. 40-41.

2. Preface vol. VVII, Works p. 3.-4.

BYRON.

With Byron we come to an entirely new type of Orientalism, that does not depend for its effects on any elaborate apparatus of exoticism gathered from books, but on the author's own observations of the Eastern countries that he had visited and on his admiration for what he regarded as the soul of those countries, their passion and their energy. Consequently Byron's Oriental verse-tales, owe their local colour primarily to their author's own reminiscences and memories of his Eastern tour and only secondarily to books about the Orient. These tales are also remarkable because one can notice in the Byronic hero the union and culmination of the two popular literary tendencies of the time - "Horror - romanticism" and Orientalism. The importance of Don Juan, on the other hand, lies in its introduction of the satirical and comical style that Byron employed as a corrective against the extravagances of his own earlier tales and those of his contemporaries. For all these reasons and also on account of their enormous influence on the subsequent writers of Oriental tales, Byron's poems deserve a greater attention than their limited pre-occupation with the Near East deserves.

Byron's visit to the Near East was influenced by contemporary political conditions. We have seen that interest in India and Persian, both literary and political, was widespread in the early years of the nineteenth century. No less was the interest in the Ottoman Empire in Turkey. Ever since the Crusades the struggle of the East and the West, of Islam and Christianity on the shores of the Mediterranean, had been occupying the attention of Europe. Morea and Greece had been the fighting ground of the Turks and the Venetians ever since the invasion of Mohammed II in 1453, and had passed in and out of the hands of the combatants several times. In 1715 the Ottoman had attacked Morea again and conquered it. In the beginning of the nineteenth century Greece was still under the Turkish dominion but the decadence of the Turkish Empire and the establishment of practically independent fiefs such as Ali Pasha of Yanina, coupled with the enthusiasm for liberty aroused

by the French Revolution, formed a prelude to the Greek uprising against the Sultan in 1821. Great interest was aroused throughout Europe by the Greek War of Independence which lasted till 1827, an end being put to it by the intervention of Great Britain, France and Russia. On both sides the combatants were barbarians without discipline and organisation but the Cause of Europe was believed throughout Europe to be the Cause of Christendom against Islam, civilization against barbarism. This naturally, gave rise to some ephemeral literature, dramatising the struggle of the two civilizations and celebrating the triumph of Greece, a literature heralded by Byron's Childe Harold, where a powerful and passionate expression was given to the idea of liberty. Some minor writers on the same subject will be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

Byron's interest in Greece was, however, not synonymous with a hatred of the Turks, as it was with some of his contemporaries. He was interested in the emancipation of Greece for reasons compounded of classical memories and heroic legend, and also because he believed himself to be a man of action and wanted to do something "that would puzzle the philosophers of all ages." Above all it was salvation of Byron in Byron's own soul - and perhaps his redemption in the eyes of the world.

For the beginning of Byron's interest in the East we must go back to his school days. Moore, in his Life of Byron,<sup>1</sup> gives a remarkable list of Byron's early reading in various departments of knowledge which includes Knolles's, Rycaut's, and Cantemir's histories of Turkey; Orme's History of India, translations from Ferdousi; Sadi and Hafiz, and the Koran, which Byron says "contains most sublime poetical passages far surpassing European poetry." A note by Byron on a copy of D'Israeli's Literary Characters, cited by Moore, reads: "Knolles, Cantemir, De Tott, Lady M.W. Montagu, Hawkins' translations from Mynot's History of the Turks, the Arabian Nights, all travels, or histories or books upon the East I could meet with, I had read as well as Rycaut before I was ten years old." Rycaut's history Byron believed "had much influence on my subsequent wishes to visit the Levant, and gave perhaps the

1. Pp. 46-49, one vol. edition of 1851.

the Oriental colouring which is observed in my poetry."

To the East Byron had looked with the eyes of romance from his very childhood and it was to the East that he turned, when in June 1809 he was characteristically seeking escape from the painful memories of his first love (Mary Chaworth), and from his creditors. Byron's original project was to travel to India, Persia and perhaps the Tropics, but for some obscure reasons, he got only as far as Turkey, visiting Portugal, Spain and Albania on the way.

Byron had more than an average share of the emigré spirit and the thirst for adventure and action to counterbalance the hardships of travel in those days. We need not recount here the marvellous adventures, intrigues, encounters, loves and escapades attributed by eye-witnesses<sup>1</sup> to Lord Byron in this trip. It would suffice us only to note the impressions produced on Byron by his first visit to a Mohammedan country, Albania.

Albania<sup>2</sup> at this time was an almost unknown country. Its wild mountains reminded Byron of the Scotland he had known in his childhood. He was enchanted as much with the broideder tunics of the Albanians, the high caps of the Tartars, the black slaves, the drums, the Muezzin's call of "Allah-o-Akbar" from the minarets of the mosques in the evening, as he admired the character of the Albanians. These men of violent passions, adepts in murder and friendship, who cared little for their religion, "always strutting about with slow dignity though in rags," appeared far more noble to Byron than his own civilized companion, William Fletcher, plodding wearily on the Albanian mountains under an umbrella. Byron's disillusionment with civilization had already begun. In his emotional misanthropy, he liked to escape into the worship of wild nature.

1. See the Life, Writings, and Opinions and times of Rt. Hon. G.G. Noel Byron, by an English gentleman in the Greek Military Service . . . 3 vols. 1825.

2. Byron's friend J.C. Hobhouse described the same journey in his heavy conscientious Travels in Albania, etc. 2 vols, London, (1813).

"Oh she is fairest in her features wild,  
 Where nothing polished dare pollute her path:  
 To me by day or night she ever smiled  
 Though I have marked her when none other hath  
 And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath" <sup>1</sup>

Thus Nature herself assumes a sort of Byronic gloom and her Albanian children are not innocent Arcadians but noble outlaws. Yet these fierce men possess great courage and physical endurance. Though terrible in vengeance they feel the claims of gratitude and obligations of hospitality.

The high spot of Byron's Albanian tour was his interview with the renowned Ali Pasha, the "Mahometan Buonaparte."

"Whose dread command  
 Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand  
 He sways a nation, tubbulent and bold," <sup>2</sup>

Byron described him in his letters in his incisive, critical language as "old, very fat and not tall, but with a fine face, light blue eyes, and a white beard" . . . "He is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties." <sup>3</sup> But the romantic Childe Harold sees him with different eyes:

"In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring  
 Of living water from the centre rose,  
 Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,  
 And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,  
 ALI reclined, a man of war and woes;  
 Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace  
 While Gentleness her milder radiance throws  
 Along that aged venerable face,  
 The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace" <sup>4</sup>

Here was the flesh and blood prototype of all the Byronic heroes. Ali's love of power, scorn of moral and social laws, a taste for enwrapping mystery - all these appealed to Byron. In fact the whole outlaw class appealed to him, through reaction against hypocrisy and through his appreciation of courage.

Byron's Albanian tour supplied him with numerous impressions, details of costume, colour and character which he was to utilize for his *Oriental Tales*. It was also responsible, perhaps, in deepening his vein of fatalism. The Voltairian deism of Byron's

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1. *Childe Harold*, Canto II; XXXVII.
  2. *Ibid*, XLVII.
  3. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, edit R.E. Prothero vol. I, p. 250-252 (Hereafter referred to as L.J.)
  4. *Childe Harold*, 1821. L.J. V. p. 175.

youth, superimposed on the gloomy and narrow religion of his childhood, the belief that all was vanity save pleasure, was strongly confirmed by Byron's journeying in the Orient. The stern conditions of life, omnipresence of vice and a complete absence of the fear of death, which Byron noticed in the Albanians, must have reinforced his own fatalism. Islamic treatment of women satisfied him. Many years later he admired in the Greek women the same qualities that he had praised in the Albanian women. "They ought to mind home, and be well fed and clothed but not mixed in Society. Well educated too, in religion - but to read neither poetry nor politics - nothing but books of piety and cookery." <sup>1</sup> This in substance is, or was, the view held all over the East about women. With Byron, one suspects, it was a mere cynicism and a reaction; at heart he had a deeply romantic view of women. The simple unsophisticated ideal of womanhood, that Byron was so fond of, he depicted beautifully in *Haidee*, in *Don Juan* and in *Nauha in the Island*. And that is neither cynical nor sensual.

We pass on now to Byron's second phase of composition when the impressions of his Albanian tour which had but imperfectly and stiffly been expressed in the second canto of *Childe Harold*, now find a fuller and more melodramatic expression in a series of Oriental tales. In this phase of revolt we find Byron taking pleasure in melodramatic isolation from Society, exulting in moody revenge and unutterable mysteries, stalking before the world in gorgeous Oriental disguise. Between 1813 and 1816, Byron poured out at headlong speed the six tales, *Giaour* (1813), *Bride of Abydos* (1813), *Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), *The Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina* (1816) and deliberately outrivalled Scott in the popularity of his verse-tales. The reasons of Byron's enormous popularity are not hard to see. In 1814 the aristocratic society of the London of the Regency was celebrating the apparent end of the Napoleonic Wars and its triumphant political position. Drinking

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1. Diary, Jan. 6, 1821. L.J. V, p. 155.

gambling and loose morals were the 'correct' things<sup>1</sup>. The dissipated aristocrats, feigning outward cynicism, were deeply sentimental at heart. Being romantic and bored and long denied the pastime of Continental travel due to Wars, they were hungry for foreign parts where Byron had been and for foreign titillations which Childe Harold had enjoyed and reported. Byron's and Moore's Oriental poems opened up a new world of excitement.

What could be more thrilling than Byron's question:

"Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle  
 Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?  
 Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle  
 Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?  
 Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,  
 Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;  
 Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume  
 Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom;  
 Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,  
 And the voice of nightingale never is mute;  
 Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,  
 In colours though varied, in beauty may vie;  
 And purple of ocean is deepest in dye;  
 Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,  
 And all, save the spirit of man is divine -  
 'Tis the clime of the East - 'Tis the land of the sun-  
 Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?  
 Oh! Wild as the accents of lovers' farewell  
 Are the hearts which they bear and the tales which they tell

This somewhat unpoetical passage sums up fully the appeal that Byron's East, (to some extent also Southey's and Moore's East) had to their generation - an appeal whose potency lay in its subtle mixture of luxuriant beauty and melodramatic terror. The East is not only the land of the Cypress and myrtle, the Gul and the Bulbul, but also a land of violent passions and mysterious crime. A generation brought up on Percy's Reliques and Macpherson's Ossian and their numerous descendants was, of course, not unaware of this heavy colouring of style and this wailing note of passion and tragedy; and after the Reliques and Ossian, Scott's lays had popularised romance, the chivalrous and supernatural elements of Scotch and German folk-ballad and also the stirring life of real but remote history<sup>3</sup>. Scott's lays, though they wear better as

1. See also Prof. Grierson's Byron and the English Society, in Background of English Literature, p. 167-199.

2. The Bride of Abydos, Canto I, lines 1-20. Byron was accused of plagiarising the lines from Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, through Madame de Staël's Épître sur Naples. But as the Épître was not printed until 1821, it is more likely that Byron had in mind an English translation of Goethe's poem.

3. Cf. Chap. X. A survey of English Literature, 1780-1830, vol I by Prof. O. Elton.

stories, and convey the picturesque and legendary quality of natural scenes more effectively, emphasize the rhetoric, so to say, of landscape and action. In Byron, on the other hand, it is the mood that is romantic; there is the rhetoric of feeling and passion. The popularity of these narratives was due to the new and striking personality they embodied and their unprecedented rapidity of action. Byron gave to his characters emotions which had gained reality, inevitability and mystery from his own experiences and he supplied the Oriental and Eastern background to reflect or sanction these emotions. Thus Byron's Oriental tales not only thrilled the jaded aristocracy of his day out of its romantic ennui; they were read and enjoyed by everybody; "Men and women who were accessible to no other poetry were accessible to his, and old sea-captains, merchants, tradesmen, clerks, tailors, milliners as well as the best judges in the land, repeated his verse by the page."<sup>1</sup> It was the liberalism, the love of liberty, the energy, the wildness, the charm of remoteness and the vital passionate nature of these tales that captured the imagination of everybody and served as an escape from the sordid monotony of everyday life. Even the Oriental costume in which all Byron's passion and energy was clad, was not a banality for his readers of 1813-1814. It had that touch of outlandish picturesqueness, which was just in keeping with the high flown sentiment of these tales.

The readers of the Arabian Nights and other Oriental tales were not loth to associate a sense of mystery and romance with turbans and scimitars and loose flowing garments. Byron had carefully observed the customs, superstitions and costumes of the Near East and could speak confidently of Comboloio, Galiongee, Calpac, Caftan, Capote and a hundred other details of local colour.

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1. The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, by Mark Rutherford, edit. R. Shapcott p. 24. Prof. Grierson in his two valuable articles in The Background of English Literature, to which I am indebted here and elsewhere, quotes from Mark Rutherford's book, a passage that sums up very adequately the deep appeal that Byron's tales had for his contemporaries. I have tried to convey the gist of that passage.

Exasperated at his publisher Murray's ignorance of things Oriental Byron wrote, "I don't care one lump of sugar for my poetry, but for my costume and my correctness on these points (of which I think the funeral <sup>1</sup> was a proof) I will combat lustily." <sup>2</sup> Southey had set high standards for such accuracy of detail in his Oriental poems and Byron was not willing to be beaten by him in this or any other line. Byron also well knew, that to write a successful Oriental poem in his day, it was not enough merely to lay the scene in an Oriental country, to describe Oriental landscapes, feasts and customs, and to give the characters Oriental names. It was necessary, above all, for creating an illusion of verisimilitude and impressing the readers, to adorn the Oriental tales with certain well known fables, fairy tales and sagas which reflect the whole life of the Oriental people. Byron had not the patient, antiquarian industry of Southey and Moore to hunt for such fables in the vast Oriental literature of his time; but he knew enough to suit his purpose. When Murray expressed some doubt as to the propriety of putting the name of Cain into the mouth of a Mussulman, Byron could write to him with proud superiority: "Do you suppose that no one but the Galileans are acquainted with Adam and Eve and Cain and Noah? . . . When you knew that Zuleikha is the Persian poetical name for Potiphar's wife, on whom and Joseph there is a long poem in Persian, this will not surprise you. If you want authority look at Jones, D'Herbelot, Vathek, or the notes to the Arabian Nights . . ." <sup>3</sup> These were Byron's chief sources for Oriental fables, but most of all it was Vathek, or rather S. Henley's notes on Vathek. These rather pedantic notes served Byron well and saved him the trouble of burrowing into Oriental literature himself. In <sup>the</sup> Giaour alone the similes <sup>4</sup> of the rose and the nightingale, of the insect Queen of Kashmeer,

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1. The funeral in The Bride of Abydos, Canto II, lines 1103 ff.
  2. Letters and Journals, II; p. 283.
  3. L.J. II, p. 282-283.
  4. Giaour, lines 20-22; Vathek (1893), p.222.

of the jewel of Giamschid<sup>1</sup>, of Al-Sirat's arch<sup>2</sup>, and of the pomegranate blossoms<sup>3</sup>, are all taken from Vathek. "For the contents of some of the notes", Byron says in an oft-quoted note to Giaour, "I am indebted partly to D'Herbelot, and partly to that most Eastern, and as Mr. Weber justly entitles it, 'Sublime Tale,' the 'Caliph Vathek.' . . . For correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations, and bears such marks of originality, that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation. As an Eastern tale, even Rasselas must bow before it; his Happy Valley<sup>4</sup>, will not bear a comparison with the Hall of Eblis."

Apart from the rather absurd comparison of Vathek and Rasselas this is not too high a praise for Beckford's Vathek. This remarkable tour de force of the imagination, as we have already remarked, has been rather under-estimated both in its merit and influence by its constant association with the vastly inferior effusions of the "Terror School". Nor is Vathek Beckford's sole claim for remembrance. The publication of his Life and Letters<sup>5</sup>, and The Episodes of Vathek<sup>6</sup>, and the recent biography by J.W. Oliver<sup>7</sup> prove that Beckford was a figure of considerable importance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. His early letters teem with suggestions of Rousseau and Werther and Ossian and Chateaubriand while his Vathek was one of the main sources of the Orientalism of the early romantic poets. But his life was even more influential than his books. Being the richest commoner of England he had the means to carry into practice what other men were merely dreaming. The Hall at Fonthill, the prototype of the Hall of Eblis in Vathek, on which Beckford squandered his enormous

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1. Giaour, lines 390; Vathek, p. 220; D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, (1781) III, p.27.
  2. Giaour, line 483; Vathek, p.237.
  3. Giaour, line 494; Vathek, p.208.
  4. Giaour, Byron's Works, edit. Prothero, vol. III, p. 145.
  5. Life and Letters of William Beckford by L. Melville, 1910.
  6. Vathek, with Episodes of Vathek, by W. Beckford edited by Guy Chapman, 2 vols. 1929.
  7. The Life of William Beckford, by J.W. Oliver, 1932.

wealth, was itself like a magic palace in Coleridge's Kubla Khan.

Byron was not unaware of the author of Vathek and the builder of Fonthill Abbey, who was also like Byron himself the victim of various scandals. In June, 1809, the year of the second edition of the English Vathek, while Byron was setting out on his Albanian tour, he "tried in vain to see the martyr of prejudice," of the Great . . . Beckford,"<sup>1</sup> at Falmouth, but could not. On reaching Quinta da Monserrate, where Beckford had spent two years in retirement (1794-96) Byron wrote the two stanzas (XXII, XXIII) in Childe Harold, Canto I, moralising on the deserted and decayed paradise of "England's wealthiest Son." There was a third stanza about Beckford's "deeds accurst" and "the unhallowed thirst of crime unnam'd," which Dallas induced Byron to omit. The laudatory note from Giaour has already been quoted. In The Siege of Corinth,<sup>2</sup> Byron acknowledged his indebtedness to Vathek, "a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification."<sup>3</sup> In 1823 when Byron was setting out for his last journey to Greece he gave instructions for all his books to be sold but a copy of Vathek was ordered to be retained, along with two prints of his daughter Ada.<sup>4</sup> Not only was Byron interested in Vathek, the unpublished Episodes, which Beckford had read out to Rogers and which the latter described in glowing terms in a letter to Byron, "the stories related in that small chamber in the Palace of Eblis," "full of unimaginable horrors,"<sup>5</sup> raised Byron's curiosity to the highest pitch. In reply he begged Rogers to obtain for him the MS of the tales from Beckford. "I think I<sup>6</sup> deserve them, as a strenuous and public admirer of the first one". Rogers, however, did not succeed in his mission. This did not stop Byron from trying in other ways to get a glimpse of the

1. L.J. I; p. 230.

2. Poetical Works of Lord Byron, edit. E.H. Coleridge, 1905, p. 1016, To Dives.

3. The Siege of Corinth, lines 642-650, inspired by Vathek.

Note p. 478, III; Poetical Works, edit. Prothero.

4. L.J. IV; p. 284.

5. Ibid, IV; p. 207.

6. Ibid, p. 209.

mysterious, objectionable Episodes. He called on Beckford's daughter in Italy, with Vathek in his pocket, which he said was his 'gospel'<sup>1</sup>, and asked her to intercede for him. He is also reported to have written to Beckford for an interview to which Beckford said, in a tone not unlike Byron's own: "Oh to what good could it possibly have led? We should have met in full drill - both talked at the same time - both endeavoured to have been delighted - a correspondence would have been established, the most insufferable and laborious that can be imagined, because the most artificial." And he added subsequently, with perfect truth, "Byron is a splendid bouquet of intellectual voluptuousness - a genius - a great genius - but an irregular one, his poetic flight is like that of a firefly, alternate flashes of light and dark"<sup>2</sup>.

I have dwelt at some length on Byron's relationship with Beckford, because I consider it a factor of great importance in Byron's Oriental leanings and also in the conception of the 'Byronic hero'. Byron and Beckford had a great deal in common. In both writers there is the predominance of unbridled passions leading them to reckless self-indulgence in "deeds eternity cannot annul." the same fatal lack of self-control in emotions and actions, that "half mistook for fate the acts of will." In both there is the same vein of satire and irony at war with passion and resulting in melancholy self-pity or cynical contempt. Both had a passionate feeling for the grander aspects of nature and a taste for Oriental magnificence - their two means of escape from an inner conflict of the mind. In both the sense of strangeness and wonder in things proceeded from or verged towards, that morbid egotism which is born of the union of an intensely felt personality with the notion of infinity as an escape from limitations<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Recollections of the Late William Beckford of Fonthill, Wilts, and Landown, Bath, 1893.

2. The Life and Letters of W. Beckford by L. Melville, 1910, p. 146-147.

3. There is a parallelism not only in the nature of the two men but also in the outward circumstances of their lives. They were both rich, spoiled by over-indulgence when young, fond of travelling, both hated English Society and English climate; both led the lives of reckless libertines at Venice, both were driven into marriage through a sense of respectability and finally both had scandals about their unlawful loves, Byron with his half-sister Augusta Leigh and Beckford with his cousin's wife Louisa Beckford.

To say this is not to exalt Beckford or under-rate Byron. Byron was a far greater writer than Beckford; he had a finer sense of words and technique in poetry than Beckford had, even in prose. Moreover Byron in Beppo, Vision of Judgement, and Don Juan, achieved a fine balance of passion and satire, reason and emotion, to which Beckford at no time in his life showed the least sign of approaching. Byron in the heyday of his Oriental tales could have written Vathek, but one cannot imagine Beckford writing even Giaour at any time of his life. Yet the essence of the romanticism of the two writers, their inner restlessness, was the same in quality, if not in intensity. The theme of Vathek is the insatiable craving for experience and self torturing egotism, which were beginning to run like wildfire through the literature of Europe and which reached their consummations in Faust. Vathek like Faust has the thirst for knowledge that cannot be quenched, "for he wished to know everything, even sciences that did not exist"<sup>1</sup>. His appetite for pleasure cannot be satisfied even with the quintessential luxury of the five Palaces of the Senses. The one thing that the Caliph cannot command in his earthly paradise is - content. This inordinate lust<sup>for</sup> knowledge and pleasure leads him in the end to the Great Hall of Eblis full of a vast unresting multitude wandering ceaselessly with their right hand pressed upon their breasts, where he too is doomed to wander like other votaries of Eblis, "with his heart enveloped in flames"<sup>2</sup>. Is there not in Beckford's vision of the restless throng, moving ever with hand pressed upon flaming hearts, the essential type and image of the romantic life and literature?

Byron was quick to perceive the affinity, not only between himself and Beckford, but Beckford's creations and his own. With his dangerous habit of modelling life on literature, as well as literature on life, he was influenced in transferring the attributes

1. Vathek: An Arabian Tale by W. Beckford, edit. by R. Garnett, 1893, p. 4

2. Ibid, p. 150-158.

of a Vathek or an Eblis to Byron and the indulging in egotistic self-representation in his own Giaouss, Corsairs, Laras, and Manfreds. Byron's earlier notion of his heroes and himself is foretold and influenced, as has often been remarked by the figure of Eblis in Vathek:

"His person was that of a young man whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours; in his large eyes appeared both pride and despair; his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light"<sup>1</sup>.

This picture resembles Byron as well as the various incarnations of the Byronic hero:

"Sun-burnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale  
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;  
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals  
The haughtier thought, it curbs, but scarce reveals . . ."<sup>2</sup>

But that perhaps is not the whole truth. The differences between the Byronic hero and Byron are as striking as the resemblances. The Byronic hero lived dramas which Byron only dreamed. Byron, the real Byron of the letters and journals, witty, sardonic and gay, never really became Conrad or a Lara, he feared he might become one.<sup>3</sup>

Beckford's personal character and Vathek, represent only one element, but in the opinion of the present writer, an important one, of the numerous influences that went to the composition of the Byronic hero.<sup>4</sup>

We shall pass on now to a brief consideration of the individual Oriental tales of Byron in which the Byronic hero appeared in one form or other.

The story of the Giaour, Byron wrote to Moore had "some foundation on facts"<sup>5</sup>. According to a letter written by the Marquis

1. Vathek, An Arabian Tale by William Beckford, edited by R. Garnett, 1893, p. 145-146.

2. The Corsair, Canto I; lines 204-207.

3. Cf. Byron by E.C. Mayne, 1912, vol. I; p. 157-

4. For literary origins of the Byronic hero see the bibliography in Prof. Elton's Survey 1780-1830, vol. II; p. 419 and also the chapter on the Byronic hero, by E. Railo, in the Haunted Castle, 1927; p. 219-241.

5. Life by J. Moore (1851) p. 545. (For a further discussion of the sources see Byron's works, edit. Prothero, III, p. 75-76).

of Sligo<sup>1</sup>, Byron is said to have interposed, at Athens on behalf of a girl who "in compliance with the strict letter of the Mohammedan law" had been sown in a sack and was about to be thrown into the sea, for infidelity. Byron's subsequent references in his journal and Letters<sup>2</sup> prove that Lord Sligo's story is by no means conclusive.

There is no doubt that Byron was recounting some memories of his Eastern tour in this poem as in the others, but it is not sure<sup>4</sup> that the girl whose life Byron saved was the object of his own attachment. Nevertheless Byron took delight in mystifying his readers by suggestive remarks in Hamlet's style, such as "the circumstances which are the ground-work make it . . . heigh-ho!"<sup>5</sup> and "the feelings of that situation were impossible - it is icy even to recollect them"<sup>6</sup>, and so on. These helped no doubt in making the poet popular.

For the allusive and fragmentary style of the poem Byron was indebted to Rogers's Voyage of Columbus (1812). This style, sudden in transitions, devoid of dull connecting narrative necessary in a long poem, was designed to reduce the poem to its quintessence and thus promote the unity of effect so desirable in a tragic tale. Whatever the theory<sup>7</sup>, it is questionable whether Byron succeeded in producing the desired effect. The connecting link, apart from the Poet's mood, is supposed to be a Turkish fisherman who "becomes the eye witness of nearly all the incidents of the story, and in one of them is a principal agent. It is to his feeling and partly to his religious prejudices (against the "accursed Giaour", lines 610-620) that we are indebted for some of the most forcible and splendid parts of the poem"<sup>8</sup>. But after

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1. Life by T. Moore p. 178. L.J. II, 257
  2. Nov. 16. and Dec. 5.
  3. L.J. II, 321, 361, 311.
  4. J. Hobhouse, Westminster Rev. Jan. 1825, III, 27.
  5. L.J. II p. 321.
  6. Ibid p. 361.
  7. The theory has a striking resemblance to E.A. Poe's theory of the impossibility of the long poem.
  8. G.A. Ellis in the Quarterly, Jan 1814, p. 334. vol. X.

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Giaour's encounter with Hassan and the death of Hassan, there is a total change of scene and a lapse of six years before the same fisherman meets a catholic priest and hears from him the story of the Giaour's confession. Of this obscure device or even of the part played by the fisherman, the author gives no explanation. This plan of a series of fragments - "a set of Orient pearls at random strung" left Byron free to introduce without reference to more than the general complexion of his story, whatever sentiments or images his fancy could collect. Writing to Murray, Byron said "I have with some difficulty, not added any more to this snake of a poem which has been lengthening its rattles every month". From six hundred lines in the first copy, the poem grew to fourteen hundred in its final shape. The additions consist chiefly of descriptive and reflective passages such as, "Fair clime! where every season smiles." (lines 10-20) which is an improvement on the original lines, and the well-known lines, "He who hath bent him o'er the dead" (lines 63-78), the finest lines in the poem. That Byron did not add anything to the Oriental ornament of the poem, proves, that unlike Southey and Moore, he attached more importance to the substance of thought and emotion in his poems, than to mere ornament. For Byron the importance of the East lay mainly in the fact that he could give free rein to his passions, by placing his characters in a more congenial land. Even the Giaour, who is a Venetian and a Christian can say:

"The cold in clime are cold in blood  
 Their love can scarce deserve the name;  
 But mine was like the lava flood  
 That boils in Aetna's breast of flame."<sup>2</sup>

In this turbulent region the women are as radiantly beautiful as men are free and passionate. Leila has eyes like the gazelle,

"As large, as languishing dark  
 But soul beamed forth in every spark  
 That darted from beneath the lid  
 Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.  
 Yea, Soul, and should our prophet say  
 That form was nought but breathing clay  
 By Alla! I would answer nay;

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1. Lines 787 onwards.
  2. Giaour, lines 1099-1102.

Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood  
Which totters o'er the fiery flood  
With Paradise within my view,  
And all his Houris beckoning through."<sup>1</sup>

No Oriental poem could be complete without the houris! The sly, half-humorous style of these and the following few lines is, however, curiously at variance with the heavy passion and the roundabout eighteenth-century diction of the rest of the poem, which along with the simple octosyllabic metre, Byron took from Scott, (cf "pale Phingari's trembling light"). Passages like these foreshadow the later Byron of Don Juan.

From the union of untrammelled passion and innocent beauty in Byron's poems, is inevitably born tragedy.

"The leafless desert of the mind<sup>2</sup>  
The waste of feelings unemployed."

Byron's heroes, though they are guilty of nameless crimes, are highly idealistic in love:

"But this was taught me by the dove  
To die and know no second love."<sup>3</sup>

They wander joyless in unconsolable grief:

"My memory is but the tomb  
Of joys long dead."<sup>4</sup>

The only consolation that the Giaour can find is by unburdening his soul by a confession of the "guilty woes", and uttering the final cry of despair:

"I would not, if I might be blest;  
I want no Paradise but rest."<sup>5</sup>

Byron's second Turkish story, like the first, was drawn from "observations" of his own, "from existence". He had intended to make the story turn on the guilty love of a brother for a sister as "none else could" in the East "obtain that degree of intercourse leading to genuine affection." "Though the wild passions in the East and some great examples in Alfieri, Ford and Schiller . . .

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1. Giaour, lines, 476-486.
  2. Ibid, lines, 959-60
  3. Ibid, lines 1165-66.
  4. Ibid, lines 1000-1001.
  5. Ibid, lines 1269-1270

might plead in favour of a copyist, yet the time and the North (not Frederic, but our climate) induced me to alter their consanguinity and confine them to cousinship"<sup>1</sup>. On the personal side the motif of composition was to divert his mind, "to distract his dreams from . . ."<sup>2</sup>; "it wrung my thoughts from reality to imagination - from selfish regrets to vivid recollections - and recalled me to a country replete with the brightest and darkest, but always the most lively colours of my memory"<sup>3</sup>. The poem was written in four nights. "The undoubted fact", says E.H. Coleridge, Byron's editor "that the Bride of Abydos, as well as the Giaour, embody recollections of actual scenes and incidents which had burnt themselves into the memory of an eye-witness, accounts not only for the fervent heat at which these Turkish tales were written, but for the extraordinary glamour which they threw over contemporary readers, to whom the local colouring was new and attractive, and who were not out of conceit with "good Monsieur Melancholy"<sup>4</sup>.

"The Bride," Byron wrote, "such as it is, is my first entire composition of any length (except the Satire, and be damned to it) for the Giaour is but a string of passages and Childe Harold is, and I rather think always will be, unconcluded." The Bride of Abydos is in fact different from Byron's other Oriental tales. It has a better story than the Giaour and "a wan, ethereal pathos", which at some places comes dangerously near to sentimentality. There is tragedy but not the typical Byronic gloom. Selim loves his cousin Zuleika, who supposes him to be her brother. Old Giaffir, the tyrannous father of Zuleika, wants her to marry some rich Bey, and hates Selim, the son of his own brother, whom he has poisoned. Selim declares his love for Zuleika and tells her that he is not her brother. Both lovers perish.

Byron shirked the complex and more difficult theme of love between brother and sister on the grounds of 'climate', and also

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1. L.J. II; p. 309.
  - 2.
  3. L.J. II; p. 361-362.
  4. Poetical Works, Edit. E.H. Coleridge. p. 150.

because he thought himself "two centuries at least too late for the subject"<sup>1</sup>. But the same theme he handled successfully in Parisina. Various deductions have been drawn from these tales<sup>2</sup> to prove Byron's incest with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh<sup>2</sup>. In Zuleika, Byron admitted he had "endeavoured as far as the grossness of our masculine ideas will allow to preserve her purity without impairing the ardour of her attachment"<sup>3</sup>. In fact in her ardour of attachment, she "protests too much" in the earlier part of the poem when she still believes Selim to be her brother. Prattling about Bulbul and roses she says:

"Oh, Selim dear! Oh, more than dearest!  
Come lay they head upon my breast,  
And I will kiss thee into rest."<sup>3</sup>

But at the crucial moment of the tale when she knows Selim is not her brother, Byron's dramatic sense is inadequate to the situation. On the other hand Byron lingers too long in sentimentalising over the result of the tragedy. A miraculous rose springs from the virgin grave of Zuleika:

A single rose is shedding there  
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale,  
It looks as planted by Despair -  
So white - so faint . . . . ."<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .  
To it the livelong night there sings  
A Bird unseen - but not remote:  
Invisible his airy wings  
But soft as harp that Houri strings,  
His long entrancing note."<sup>5</sup>

This is more in the "namby pamby" style of Moore's Lalla Rookh, "Last rose of summer" etc. The pathos is overstressed and too obvious. "Tenderness is not my forte", Byron had written to Moore and Moore had said the same thing in different words: "To aim at vigour and strong feeling after you is hopeless - that region was made for Caesar"<sup>6</sup>. In The Bride one suspects, Byron was encroaching on Moore's region of 'tenderness'. The coincid-

1. L.J. II; p. 305.

2. For the latest contribution to this controversy see Byron and the Need for Fatality, by Charles du Bos (1932)

3. The Bride of Abydos, lines 299-302

4. Ibid, lines 1154 -1157

5. Ibid, lines 1171-1175.

6. L.J. II; 302.

ence of the Bride, "not only in locality and costume but in plot and characters"<sup>1</sup>, with some story that Moore was writing at the time for Lalla Rookh, is also not without some significance.

Byron's imagination is, however, not as sensual as Moore's so far as the taste for Oriental decoration is concerned. The following picture of the Turkish boudoir, though full of outlandish Eastern epithets, is not as elaborate as Moore's, nor as glawingly amorous:

"And o'er her silken ottoman  
 Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,  
 O'er which her fairy fingers ran;  
 Near these, with emerald rays beset  
 . . . . .  
 Her mother's sainted amulet,  
 Where engraved the Koorsee text  
 Could smooth this life and win the next;  
 And by her Comboloio lies  
 A Koran of illumined dyes;  
 And many a bright emblazoned rhyme  
 By Persian scribes redeemed from time.  
 And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,  
 Reclines her now neglected lute;  
 And round her lamp of fretted gold  
 Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;  
 The richest work of Iran's loom  
 And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;  
 All that can eye or sense delight<sup>2</sup>  
 Are gathered in that gorgeous room".

Very rarely does Byron indulge in such catalogues of luxury. Even in this passage, it should be remarked that Zuleikha's taste is not so trivial as that of Moore's heroines. The sainted amulet, Koorsee text and the Koran, in juxta-position with Persian poetry, the flute and the perfumes satisfy the demands of the sense as well as the spirit, can "smooth this life" as well as "win the next." Moore is a true voluptuary, but Byron, one suspects, had too active and virile a temperament to be truly voluptuous or exotic<sup>3</sup>.

In The Corsair we see Byron getting away from excessive Orientalism. The scene of the poem is laid in one of the islands of the Archipelago, which Byron had visited during his Albanian tour. On leaving Constantinople and reaching the island of Zea (it is said in Byron's anonymous Life, published by "An English

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1. L.J. II; 302.
  2. The Bride, lines 546 -566.
  3. Compare also the descriptions in Sardanapalus.

Gentleman in the Greek Military Service" in 1825<sup>1</sup>) Byron had strolled about the islands of Archipelago in Company with a Venetian buccaneer whose life Byron had saved at Constantinople. The adventures, amatory and piratical of this Venetian, it is argued, formed the basis of The Corsair - a contention which we must accept with reservations. On the other hand, there is no doubt that during Byron's travels in Greece (1809-1811), the exploits of Lambros Katzones and other Greek pirates were occupying the attention of the people and might have suggested the idea of the poem to Byron.<sup>2</sup>

There is in the Corsair a sense of zest and adventure, and a whole hearted abandon of rhetoric and declamation, that is not too high-pitched for this tale of strange lands and fierce passions. And there is a genuine pathos in Medora's sad songs and her tragic end.

"Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells  
Lonely and lost to light for evermore  
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,  
Then trembles into silence as before."<sup>3</sup>

The brief Oriental episode<sup>4</sup> is introduced when Conrad ventures into the very den of his inveterate enemy, the "stern Syed". This venerable gentleman is cast in Byron's usual type of the Turkish Pasha. A tyrant and a hypocrite he sits drinking "the forbidden draughts", while to the more rigid Moslems he offers only "sober berry's juice" (coffee!) The "long chibouques" are there and the "Almas" or dancing girls "dance to wild minstrelsy". The manly Conrad bursts into these banquetings, disperses the revellers and sets fire to the Harem. But he rescues the "Harem Queen", the "dark eyed lady, young Gulnare," who already sick of her tyrannical master's passion, falls in love with the gallant pirate. She asks Conrad, who is finally captured by the Syed, not to "fear the

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1. The Life, Writings, Opinions and Times of the Rt. Hon. George Gordon Noel Byron, by an English Gentleman in the Greek Military Service, and comrade of his Lordship.. in three volumes, 1825. See page 197 ff for the facts on which the Corsair was founded
  2. Poetical Works of Lord Byron, edit. E.H. Coleridge, 1900, vol. III; Introductions to The Corsair by E.H. Coleridge.
  3. The Corsair, Canto I, lines 347-350.
  4. The Corsair, Canto II, lines 635 ff.

fire that lights an Eastern heart", and contrives his escape by murdering the Syed. But the sight of blood that makes "Gulnare, the Homicide," sends a shudder through Conrad, this man of "a thousand crimes."

"Blood he had viewed - could view unmoved, but then  
It flowed in combat, or was shed by man."<sup>1</sup>

This is perhaps an evidence of the fact that Byron's heroes, however rough in appearance and guilty of mysterious crimes, still retain the soft superciliousness of their creator whose idealistic view of women is unable to associate crime or blood with their angelic natures.

In The Corsair and especially in its sequel Lara, where Byron completely discarded the Oriental ornament, one notices the diminishing importance attached by him to the Orient for its own sake. What is of importance in these tales is not their Oriental character, as in Southey's and Moore's poems, but the relief these exotic heroes afforded to their creator, by serving as models in which he could conveniently pour<sup>the</sup> restlessness and passion of his romantic temperament. In this respect Conrad and Lara are the very quintessence of Byronism. Byron assigns to them traits which set him dreaming. The thirst for adventure, reflecting the restlessness of the mind and the body,

"The exulting sense - the pulse's maddening play,  
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way"<sup>2</sup>

ennui and despair, the consequences of an immoderate thirst for sensation; morbidity making the mind more and more solitary,

"Lone, wild and strange, he stood alike exempt  
From all affection and from all contempt."<sup>3</sup>

These are the characteristics of the Byronic hero, the "man of loneliness and mystery". "He knew neither repentance nor penitence nor expiation; what is done cannot be undone; the undelible can not be wiped out; he will find no peace this side the tomb. Most often he is a renegade or an atheist -

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1. The Corsair, Canto III. 1595-1596.
  2. Ibid, Canto I, lines 15-16.
  3. Ibid, lines 271-272.

"I would not if I might be blest  
I want no Paradise but rest " "

To find distraction from himself he rushes into action, into struggle; Corsair or brigand, he declares war upon society, and chases after violent emotions. Even though he must die in this struggle, he must at all costs escape the ennui of life"<sup>1</sup>.

In Lara the portrait is still more elaborate and fatalistic:

"There was in him a vital scorn of all:  
As if the worst had fallen which could befall,  
He stood a stranger in this breathing world  
An erring spirit from another hurl'd . . ." <sup>2</sup>

This idea of the fallen angel, of a being born of superhuman existence but guided by destiny to deeds of evil, which haunted Byron persistently, he is said to have taken from some Oriental source. Thus the Earl of Lovelace in his controversial book Astarte, says about Byron: "He was in turn dominated by frenzy and master of his frenzy, able to direct it to a purpose. He had a fancy for some Oriental legends of pre-existence and in his conversation and poetry took up the part of a fallen or exiled being, expelled from heaven, or sentenced to a new Avatar on earth for some crime, existing under a curse, pre-doomed to a fate really fixed by himself in his own mind but which he seemed determined to fulfil"<sup>3</sup>.

Charles du Bos bases his psychological analysis of Byron's character in his book "Byron and the Need of Fatality,"<sup>4</sup> entirely on this notion of Byron as the sincere and authentic fatal being. But as the legends of pre-existence referred to here are Biblical rather than Oriental, we need not enter into a discussion of the matter. It was Byron's early Calvinistic training that was responsible, to a great extent, for his doctrine of predestined sin and predestined guilt.<sup>5</sup> His inability to accept these doctrines, or to reject them completely, was the source of eternal conflict in his mind, explaining, in some measure, the affinity and sympathy

1. Byron et Le Romantisme Français by Edmund Estève, Paris, 1907 p. 18-19.
2. Lara, Canto I, Lines 313-316.
3. Astarte, by Ralph Milbanke, Earl of Lovelace, (edit 1921) p.117
4. Byron and the Need of Fatality, by Charles du Bos, trans, by E.C. Mayne, 1932, p. 15-20.
5. On this see Prof. Grierson The Background of English Literature p. 167-199.

236  
which he felt for all rebels, outlaws, pirates and fallen angels, It was the perpetual awareness of this conflict that made him admire and emulate Milton's Satan and Beckford's Eblis, to the latter of which we have seen, he bore also a physical resemblance. The relentless doom that overhangs Vathek and Carathis, the "votaries of Eblis", as a punishment for their "curiosity that could not be restrained by sublunary things<sup>1</sup>", must have struck a responsive chord in Byron's breast, whose own thirst for strong and unlawful sensations was as strong as Vathek's and to whom it gave a romantic sense of dignity and consolation to regard himself as a fallen Lucifer, a magnificently damned "votary of Eblis".

We have seen that Southey, following Beckford and some Hindu sources had handled the theme of the fallen Superhuman Being in the Curse of Kehama, in an unsympathetic, moralistic manner, and Thomas Moore, also, had depicted in his Veiled Prophet of Khorasan the misanthropic being who regarded himself as the incarnation of the Deity. Numerous other productions of the Horror-School<sup>2</sup>, including Shelley's Wandering Jew, in collaboration with Medwin, dealing with the never ending life bestowed as a punishment (the Wandering Jew Legend), and of selling the soul to the devil as an exchange of eternal bliss for temporal sensual pleasures (the Faustus legend), found great favour with the early romanticists, chiefly because these legends were capable of giving rise to a mystical chain of ideas. But the preoccupation of these writers for such exotic legends was also due, to some extent, to their Oriental or semi Oriental nature.

Of Byron's remaining verse-tales only The Siege of Corinth need be mentioned. Lara and Parisina, though they deal with the same kinds of subjects as The Corsair and The Bride of Abydos, have nothing Oriental about them. Byron was discarding the Oriental ornament as his narrative style was getting more and more mature;

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1. Vathek, edit, R. Garnett, 1893, p. 149.

2. Cf. M.G. Lewis' The Monk where Ambrosio sells his soul to the devil. The tale in the Guardian (148), the immediate source of The Monk, has been traced back to the tale of Santon Barisa in Petis de la Croix's Turkish Tales. Similarly the legend of the Wandering Jew is also supposed to be of Oriental or Buddhistic origin. For other variants of the Wandering Jew theme see E. Railo The Haunted Castle, 1927, p. 191 ff.

it is significant that his best verse tales, The Prisoner of Chillon and Mazeppa, though they retain the energy and passion of his earlier tales, have completely dispensed with the merely external trappings of the Oriental costume.

The Siege of Corinth, Byron tells in the advertisement to the poem, is founded on the historical account of the attack of Corinth by the Turkish army in 1715<sup>1</sup>. Byron had visited Corinth several times and had an intimate knowledge of the place and the tales and legends connected with it; so that the poem, Byron's editor assures us, was not a mere "poetical expansion of a chapter in history, but a heightened reminiscence of local tradition"<sup>2</sup>. It is this method of depending on personal impressions for local colour, rather than on books, which gives to Byron's tales a superior vercaity over Southey's and Moore's Oriental tales.

The Siege is full of "splendid and energetic descriptions of hard fighting and forlorn defending." the picture of a desperate struggle between the Crescent and the Cross. There are crackling domes and exploding bombs, the noise of the trümp and the drum, the blowing of the horns, the flap of banners, the clash and the clamour, followed by occasional lulls when the Muezzin's voice is heard "musical but sadly sweet", or when Alp stands alone

" . . . . . a renegade  
Against the country he betrayed."

musings o'er Greece and Freedom and the destroyer Time. In the lines describing the meeting of Alp and Franscesca there is an echo of Vathek<sup>3</sup>.

It is refreshing to notice in Byron's tales, especially in The Siege, that unlike Southey and some other of his contemporaries, he does not take sides, either with the Moslem, or the Christian; his sympathies are with heroism, whether it be in Alp, the renegade Moslem, or Minotti, the Christian.

Before passing on to the Oriental episodes in Don Juan, we

1. Advertisement to The Siege of Corinth.
2. Poetical Works edit. E.H. Coleridge III, p. 440-444.
3. Cf. The Siege of Corinth, 643-650 and Vathek, (1786), p. 183-185

must make at least a passing mention of two other compositions of Byron, Sardanapalus (1821) and The Island (1823) which, though they do not come strictly under our definition of Oriental, contain some elements deserving of our attention. In Sardanapalus, at least, the scene is laid in Nineveh and Assyria, the ancient East as described by Diodorus the Sicilian, the contemporary of Cicero, who derived his knowledge of Assyrian History from the Persica of Ctesias who, in his turn derived his from the "Persian authorities". But the sources are unimportant. Sardanapalus is interesting because like the rest of Byron's works, it is autobiographical. Sardanapalus, the debauched and effeminate Eastern monarch, brought up to the sound of

"the lute

The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings  
Of lulling instruments, the softening voices  
Of women, and of beings less than women . . ." <sup>2</sup>

depicts another aspect of the East that appealed to Byron. In the early tales the East was the land of unrestrained passions and instincts, in Sardanapalus it is the land of sloth and ease and the Epicurean enjoyment of the senses; "Eat, drink and love; the rest's not worth a fillip" <sup>3</sup>. Byron was not a true voluptuary whether in life or in imagination, his catalogue of luxuries are cold compared to Coleridge's and Moore's, but when interfered in his healthy enjoyment of the senses and accused of

"The despotism of vice  
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury,  
The negligence, the apathy, the evils  
Of sensual sloth . . . . ."

he liked to get up and defend himself. "Sardanapalus", in the words of Prof. Grierson, is Byron's "apologia for his life at Venice, through the wreck of his marriage and through the influence of Shelley, the Byron of the later Childs Harold unburdening his soul of its tortures in solitary communion with nature and in pro-se plea for liberty, love and the right to lead a free, untrammelled life. All his life Byron

In Island, Byron's last of the verse tales, there is the same plea for liberty, love and the right to lead a free, untrammelled life. All his life Byron

1. Poetical Works, edit. E.H. Coleridge, V. p. 3-5.

2. Sardanapalus, lines 28-32, Act. I, scene I.

3. Ibid, line 253, Act I, Scene II.

4. Ibid, lines 67-70, Act I, Scene II.

5. The Background of English Literature, p. 189.

" . . . . languished for some sunny isle  
Where summer years and summer women smile"<sup>1</sup>

The South Sea Island of Toobonai was such an Island and Neuha one of the "summer women" - "lovely, warm and premature; dusky like night", "this daughter of the Southern Seas", with the "sunborn blood" and "clear nut brown skin".<sup>2</sup> It was the same sensuous and dark beauty of Eastern women and the temperate and warm climate of the Southern regions that had such a fascination for Byron, when he contrasted it with the coldness of the women of his own country and the dreariness of its climate. Added to it was the idea, common to <sup>the</sup> times, of a Rousseauistic dream of a land of heart's desire, where one could lead the life of a Noble Savage<sup>3</sup>, away from the hypocrisy and the narrowness of contemporary life. But Byron's nostalgia cannot strictly be called exoticism in the same sense as Beckford's, and Moore's Orientalism, because Byron gave more attention to what he considered the soul of the South and the East, its energy, than to its exterior aspect, its pageantry and the curiosities of cultural surroundings. As has been remarked before Byron was too active, to loose himself in the contemplative sensualism of a Moore or a Beckford or the patient antiquarianism of a Southey.

We come now to Byron's last phase of writing, the period of Beppo, Don Juan, and the Vision of Judgement. Out of the extravagant and melodramatic writer of the exotic Eastern tales, was born, through the wreck of his marriage and through the influence of Shelley, the Byron of the later Childe Harold unburdening his soul of its torture in solitary communion with nature and in profound reflections on the grandeurs of the past. But even this failed to satisfy him for long. The self-mocking Don Juan with

1. Island, Canto I, line 28.

2. Ibid, Canto II, lines 122 ff.

3. For a witty and detailed discussion of this idea see The Noble Savage, by H.N. Fairchild, (1928).

his strange mixture of sweet and better, infinitely heavy-hearted at bottom, cries out in the end:

"Now - Imagination droops her pinion  
And the sad truth that hovers over my desk  
Turns what was romantic to burlesque."

Don Juan is the fullest and completest expression of Byron's personality because the form and the unlimited scope of this poem gave him the fullest liberty to indulge in his swiftly changing moods of gaiety, passion, satire, pathos, gruesome realism, and irresponsible fun.

Though there are deeper meanings and subtler tones in Don Juan than one suspects at first sight, the prevailing tone is one of mockery and satire. The spirit of criticism which in Byron's early tales was tinged with wonder and which he employed only for self-analysis and self-portraiture, "rolling back on himself his scrutiny", becomes wider and more objective in Don Juan and tends to partake more and more of irony and satire. Byron begins to distrust his emotions and though he does not entirely become un-sentimental and unromantic, he can mock at his more romantic self that he has outgrown. He satirises the "exaggerated and false taste", which he had himself created by his earlier tales. In The Bride of Abydos, we remember, he spoke of the East solemnly as the land of mysterious crimes and violent passions:

"'Tis the clime of the East - 'tis the land of the sun  
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?  
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell  
Are the hearts which they bear and the tales which they tell." 1

In Don Juan, it is a different East altogether. The effect of the sun described in unromantic tones becomes:

"'Tis a sad thing, I cannot choose but say  
And all the fault of that indecent sun  
Who cannot leave alone our helpless clay  
But will keep baking, broiling, burning on,  
That howsoever people fast and pray  
The flesh is frail, and so the soul undone:  
What men call gallantry and gods adultery  
Is much more common where the climate's sultry". 2

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1. The Bride of Abydos, Canto I, 16-19.
  2. Don Juan, Canto I. LXIII.

No greater contrast can be imagined both in manner and mood.

In the Juan - Haidee idyll of Cantos II, III and IV, perhaps the most consistently beautiful of all Byron's compositions, the situation is the same as in The Corsair etc., the islands of the Cyclades and the characters have the same of the charm and freshness of a simpler civilization, but there are no dark lowering heroes, brooding on mysterious crimes. The style has become so light and realistic as to allow Byron to speak freely of eggs, oysters and

"a most superior mess of broth  
A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,"<sup>1</sup>

in place of the "swarthy visages", "dark coursers" and "pale Phingari's trembling light" of his earlier tales. Haidee, "Nature's bride" and "Passion's child"

"born where the sun  
Showers triple light and scorches even the kiss  
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters:"<sup>2</sup>

though she has something in common with the Leilas and Zuleikhas and Mederas of earlier tales, is not so mild and long-suffering as her early prototypes.

"Her mother was a Moorish maid from Fez  
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness."<sup>3</sup>

On the principle that "as the soil, so the heart of man", Haidee had inherited a passionate temperament from her mother:

"Afric is all the Sun's and as her earth  
Her human clay is kindled; full of power  
For good or evil, burning from its birth,  
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour  
And like the soil beneath it, will bring forth:  
Beauty and love were Haidee's mother's dower;  
But her large dark eye showed deep Passion's force  
Though sleeping like a lion near a source."<sup>4</sup>

Byron's own passionate nature "was full of power for good or evil, burning from its birth," and it is <sup>on</sup> this quality of the Southern and Eastern people that he dwells repeatedly, sometimes in joke, sometimes in earnest. In Lambro, Haidee's pirate father, "our

1. Don Juan, Canto II, CXXIII.
2. Ibid, II, CCII.
3. Ibid, IV, LIV.
4. Ibid, IV, LVI.

sea-solicitor", as Byron calls him, the earlier pirate heroes are half parodied. When he comes back to his island and finds Juan and Haidee feasting and enjoying, supposing him to be dead, his behaviour is most unlike the early Byronic heroes:

Perhaps you think, in stumbling on this feast  
He flew into a passion . . . .  
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act  
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least . . . 1

and the reader does expect such things of a Conrad or a Lara, but, says Byron

"You're wrong - He was the mildest manner'd man  
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat  
With such true breeding of a gentleman . . . ." 2

He takes a less melodramatic revenge than we expect; Juan is simply deported in a boat, bound hand and foot.

As we have seen in the earlier tales, Byron's chief interest in the South and the East was prompted by a desire to escape into a simpler, freer, state of civilization. That<sup>is</sup> was not the idle dream of an imagination heated by a reading of romances and tales, but the natural demand of a genuinely passionate and restless temperament, one need not doubt in Byron's case:

"This is in others a fictitious state,  
An opium dream of too much youth and reading  
But was in them their nature or their fate:  
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,  
For Haidee's knowledge was by no means great  
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding  
So that there was no reason for their loves  
More than for those of nightingales and doves." 3

That Byron would not have remained satisfied for long with a love like that of nightingales and doves is another matter which does not interfere with the wish and its repeated expression in his poetry. How far the conditions in the South and the East corresponded to Byron's ideal picture, and how far the love of a person like Ali Pasha, for instance, corresponded to the love of Conrad or Juan is also another matter. It was enough for Byron to conjure up an imaginary East with the conventional splendour associated

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1. Don Juan, Canto III, XL.
  2. Ibid, XLI.
  3. Ibid, Canto IV, XIX.

with it - the sumptuous feasts of pilaus and lamb and pistachio nuts, of cloves, cinnamon and saffron, the sherbets of raisin, orange and pomegranate juice cooling in the porous vases; gorgeous rooms decorated with Oriental sentences embroidered on the walls, Indian mats, Persian carpets, ebony, pearl and ivory; the jewelled dresses of Haidee and Juan - in fact all the paraphernalia which Southey's conscientious labours had rendered indispensable for an Oriental poem. Byron's use of all this ornament is neither as pedantic and solemn as that of Southey nor as effeminate and cosmological as that of Moore; he uses it carelessly and lightly with an occasional witty twist at the end:

"Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales  
To a sedate grey circle of old smokers  
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales  
Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers  
Of charms to make gold and cure bad ails  
Of rocks bewitched that open to the knockers,  
Of magic ladies, who by one sole act,  
Transformed their lords to beasts (but that's a fact).<sup>1</sup>

Or to convey a satirical thrust, as in the following description of an Eastern poet:

"He praised the present, and abused the past  
Reversing the good custom of old days  
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last  
He turn'd, preferring pudding to no praise -  
For some few years his lot had been o'er-cast  
By his seeming independence in his lays,  
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pasha  
With truth like Southey and with verse like Crashaw,"<sup>2</sup>

The following is intended as a hit at Southey and other writers on Oriental themes, including Moore who laboured at books for Oriental colour:

"As they were plodding on their winding way  
Through orange bowers, and jasmine and so forth,  
(Of which I might have a good deal to say  
There being no such profusion in the North  
Of Oriental plants, "et cetera"  
But that of late your scribblers think it worth  
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in their works<sup>3</sup>  
Because one poet travell'd 'mongst the Turks:)"

The Oriental travellers, of which there was a profusion at the time, fare no better:

1. Don Juan, Canto III. XXXIV.

2. Ibid, III. LXXIX.

3. Ibid, V, XLII.

"I won't describe; description is my forte,  
 But every fool describes in these bright days  
 His wondrous journey to some foreign court,  
 And spawns his quarto and demands your praise -  
 Death to his publisher, to him 'tis Sport; " <sup>1</sup>

In the second Oriental episode in *Don Juan*, (Cantos V and VI) beginning with Juan's sale in the slave market, and ending, after his voluptuous adventures in the Turkish Harem of the Sultan, in a narrow escape from death by drowning, there is a predominance of Rabelaisian comedy, daring, impudent and voluptuous. Here Byron rises to his full power as a narrator; the tale itself provides the irony and he feels that he need not comment much.

We are introduced to Gulbeyaz, the Sultan's bride, "the favourite of the four" in whose eyes

"A mixture of sensations might be scanned  
 Of half voluptuousness and half command." <sup>2</sup>

"Never having met in all her life with aught save prayers and praise," this headstrong, sensual and somewhat pathetic Sultana is infatuated over Juan's youth and handsomeness. In spite of embarrassing and humiliating efforts she fails to win over Juan, who is unable to forget Haidee and whose ideas of liberty and love are Greek, not Turkish: "Love" he says "is for the free! "

"The prison'd eagle will not pair, nor I  
 Serve a Sultana's sensual phantasy." <sup>3</sup>

He won't "sin - except for his own wish." <sup>4</sup>

Nothing was more distasteful to Byron than a too importunate woman, and if he valued one thing more than any other in the world it was his sense of liberty, even in love. In his desire to preserve his hero's pride, he seems to be somewhat hard on Gulbeyaz.

The Sultan, with his "four wives and twice five hundred maids," "fifty daughters and four dozen sons," is the usual type of the debauched, Eastern monarch,

" . . . as good a sovereign of the sort  
 As any mentioned in the histories  
 Of Contemir, or Knolles, where few shine  
 Save Solyman, the glory of their line."

The approach of the Sultan is heralded by true Oriental bombast,

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1. *Don Juan*, Canto V, LII.
  2. *Ibid*, V, CVIII.
  3. *Ibid*, V, CXXVI.
  4. *Ibid*, V, CXXI.
  5. *Ibid*, V, CXLVII.

parodied somewhat in the manner of Morier's Hajji Baba. Old Baba, the <sup>u</sup>enuch, enters Gulbayaz's Haram briskly, where Juan is being prevailed upon by the Sultana:

"Bride of the Sun! and Sister of the Moon!  
('Twas thus he spake) and Empress of the Earth!  
Whose frown would put the spheres all out of tune,  
Whose smile makes all the planets dance with mirth,  
Your slave brings tidings - he hopes not too soon -  
Which your sublime attention may be worth:  
The Sun himself has sent me like a ray  
To hint that he is coming up this way."

"Is it" exclaimed Gulbeyaz "as you say?  
I wish to heaven he would not shine till morning!  
And bid my women from the Milky way.  
Hence my old comet! Give the stars due warning -  
And Christian mingle with them as you may . . . ." 1

This was a new and healthy note amidst the solemn Orientalising tendency in poetry, as Morier's was in the ponderous fiction about the Orient, clearing the air of the sentimentality, melodrama and the heavy tinsel ornament that was invariably associated with the East. If Byron's "verse tales served to disturb the waters of English poetry with a quickening influx of passionate feeling," 2 his Don Juan with its large laugh, its hearty blasphemy and its disinfecting note of mockery and satire served to dispel those very qualities of theatricality and melodrama which his early tales had helped to engender. And yet the note of beauty is not lost amidst this devastating predominance of mockery and satire. In Cantos V and VI there are fewer episodes than in the Juan Haidee idyll where Byron in spite of his satirical mood yields to a spell of sheer beauty, yet the description of the sleepers in the Haram, with its concrete and plastic pictures of the sleeping girls is all the more precious for being an interlude in the midst of Byron's usual jestings and ironic philosophisings:

"Many and beautiful lay those around,  
Like flowers of different hue, and clime, and root  
In some exotic garden sometimes found  
With cost, and care and warmth, induced to shoot.

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1. Don Juan, Canto V, CXLIV.
  2. The Background of English Literature, op. cit. p. 167.

One with her flush'd cheek laid on her white arm,  
 And raven ringlets gather'd in dark crowd  
 Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;  
 And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud  
 The moon breaks, half unveil'd each further charm,  
 As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,  
 Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of night  
 All bashfully to struggle into light.

A third's all pallid aspect offer'd more  
 The traits of sleeping sorrow, and betray'd  
 Through the heaved breast the dream of some far shore  
 Beloved and deplored; while slowly stray'd  
 (As night dew on a cypress glittering, tinges  
 The black bough) tear drops through her eyes dark fringes."<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing specifically Oriental about the historic account of the Siege of Ismail, except the hard fighting quality of the Turks, on which Byron dwells with gusto in spite of his harangues against war. Speaking of houris, he says:

"In short, however our better faith derides  
 These black eyed virgins make the Moslems fight."<sup>2</sup>

And the following mystic vision of a dying Moslem has a characteristically Byronic mixture of the grand and the satirical, the mocking and the pathetic:

"So fully flash'd the phantom on his eyes,  
 That when the very lance was in his heart  
 He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise  
 With all its veil of mystery drawn apart  
 And bright eternity without disguise  
 On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart:-  
 With prophets, houris, angels, saints descried  
 In one voluptuous blaze - and then he died."<sup>3</sup>

It is something to have made such an effective use of the trite subject of the houris.

In widening and varying the sphere of English poetry by introducing the Oriental element and in his later period, by a more realistic attitude towards the East, Byron offers a remarkable analogy to Rudyard Kipling. "Mr Kipling has been", in Prof. Grierson's opinion, "'le Byron de nos jours," not in the sense of Browning's poem, but in virtue of the quickening and immediate effect of his poetry on an audience as wide at least as the English speaking world, an audience not confined to the usual readers of poetry; and because Mr Kipling too, found the best material for

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1. Don Juan, VI, LXV, LXVI, LXVII, etc.
  2. Ibid, Canto. VIII, CXIV.
  3. Ibid, Canto, VIII, CXV.

romance and song, not in the reconstructed world of Greece or the Middle Ages, but in the actualities of life in his own day in India and England, the army, the workshop, and the tramp steamer." <sup>1</sup> Although Byron, the romantic democrat, with his hatred of the ruling classes of Europe and his sympathy with the downtrodden nations of the world was poles apart in his political and moral attitude to the East, from Kipling who has been described as "the romantic imperialist", who "combines his imperialism in a way, in which only an Englishman can combine incompatibles with an Hebraic sense of righteousness," the two poets are at one in an expression of riotous strength and superabundant animal vigour, combined with a keen eye for all the coloured details of life. Both poets write, like the Elizabethans, with the whole English language. *Good!* But Kipling's East is not the East of the early nineteenth century, a romantic Arcadia of the imagination, a land of luxuriant beauty and fierce passions, of nightingales and roses and Suttee and incest. Kipling sings, indeed, of vivid and picturesque contrasts of local colour between the East and the West, of the Koils and the rosebush but the romantic longing of escape is reversed:

" . . . the rose has lost its fragrance and the Koils note is  
 strange;  
 I am sick of endless sunshine, sick of blossom burdened bough,  
 Give me back the leafless woodlands where the winds of spring-  
 time range -  
 Give me back one day in England, for it's spring in England now" <sup>2</sup>

Along with climatic contrasts there has arisen in the modern realistic attitude to the East a sense of economic and hygienic contrasts of wealth and squalor, spirituality and infant mortality, emphasising the racial differences more than the climatic. Kipling's British private in Mandalay, longs for "a neater, sweeter maiden, in a cleaner, greener land"; while in Byron's day, in spite of the crime and the melodrama associated with the East, it was customary to long for the "land of the sun",

"Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine."

We shall have occasion to dwell on this change of attitude towards the East, towards the end of our survey.

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1. The Background of English Literature, p. 75-76.
  2. Rudyard Kipling's In Springtime.

## S H E L L E Y.

Shelley's interest in the Orient, like Coleridge's and Keats' was more purely poetic than that of his contemporaries. He went to the East neither with the antiquarian and moral interest of Southey, nor the sensual and epicurean delight of Moore. Nor, indeed did he regard the East, like Byron, as a land of luxuriant beauty and violent passions. Poetry was to Shelley, says A.C. Bradley, "so essentially an effusion of aspiration, love and worship that we can imagine his feeling it almost an impiety to break up its unity even for purposes of study and to give a separate attention to its means of utterance."<sup>1</sup> And his attitude to the East as a poetical subject is characterised with the same unscholarly singlemindedness.

Shelley expressed his disapproval of the exotic costume and scenery and the use of outlandish epithets when he wrote about his friend Medwin's Oriental poems<sup>2</sup> in these tactful, yet decisive words addressed to their author. "The volume ... is calculated to produce a considerable sensation. That poem is highly fit for popularity, considered in its subject; there being a strong demand in the imagination of our contemporaries for the scenery and situations you have studied. I admire equally the richness and variety of the imagery with the ease and profusion of language in which it is expressed ... The only general error, if it be such, in your poem seems to me to be the employment of Indian words in the body of the piece, and to the relegation of their meaning to the notes. Strictly I imagine, every expression, in a poem ought to be in itself an intelligible picture. But this practice, though foreign to that of the great poets of former times, is so highly admired by our

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1. Shelley's view of Poetry, Oxford Lectures on Poetry by A.C. Bradley, p. 159.
  2. Sketches in Hindostan with other Poems, London, 1821; Oswald & Edwin; an Oriental Sketch, Geneva, 1820. To be noticed later.

contemporaries that I can hardly counsel you to dissent. And then you have Moore and Lord Byron on your side, who being much better and more successful poets than I am, may be supposed to know better the road to success than one who has sought and missed it."<sup>1</sup>

Yet in spite of Shelley's distaste for conscious exoticism, there was none among his contemporaries who had a purer and a more genuine love of the marvellous and the transcendental. Shelley, Medwin says, had a deep love, like Collins for "fairies, genii, giants and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens."<sup>2</sup> But most of Shelley's youth was spent in admiration and imitation of the "Horror-school". Along with his taste for the works of Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Byrne (Rosa Matilda) and 'Monk' Lewis, Shelley during his Eton days developed a liking for books of Oriental travel and fancy. It was through Dr. James Lind "in early life surgeon to an East Indiaman; - a wanderer in strange lands "that Shelley was first introduced to the Orient. Dr. Lind had a "love of Eastern wanders" and a liking for "tricks, conundrums and queer things"- one who was "a better conjurer than a physician"<sup>3</sup> He sympathised with Shelley's inordinate curiosity and interest in chemistry, and what was then called "Natural Science", and we have Shelley introducing this benevolent venerable old man in several of his subsequent poems. "Remembering that Dr. Lind's travels had awakened in Shelley an interest in Oriental lore - Lind had gathered a fine collection of Indian and other Eastern curiosities - we may" says W. E. Peck, "regard it as not unlikely that Shelley first encountered the poetical works of Sir William Jones and Volney's Ruins of Empires in the library of the royal physician at Windsor"<sup>4</sup> (i.e. Dr. Lind.) Of the influence of these works upon Queen Mab, notice will be taken presently.

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1. Letter to Medwin, April 16, 1820. Letters of P.B. Shelley, edit. by Ingpen II, p. 773 - 774.
  2. The life of P.B. Shelley by Thomas Medwin, edit. by H.B. Forman, p. 26. cf. also Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Stanza V.
  3. E. Dowden, Life of P.B. Shelley, I, p. 32.
  4. Shelley his life and Work, I, p. 24-25.

But Shelley like most of his contemporaries did not learn any Eastern language. Hogg says, "with respect to Oriental tongues he coldly observed that the appearance of the characters was curious. Although he pursued with more than ordinary eagerness the relation of travellers in the East and translations of marvellous tales of Oriental fancy, he was not attracted by the desire to penetrate the languages which veil these treasures."<sup>1</sup> It was through the works of Sir William Jones, Southey, Volney and other Western writers, that the supernatural and marvellous in Oriental literatures began to attract Shelley's attention. Medwin says that "Shelley's favourite poet in 1809 was Southey. He had read Thalaba, till he almost knew it by heart and had drenched himself with its metrical beauty."<sup>2</sup> It is significant to note that the passages that Medwin says Shelley could quote from memory, are not those in which ~~Shelley~~<sup>Southey</sup> describes in ponderous detail the wealth and gorgeousness of the Orient, but those dealing with the magical and the sinister, (as it is to be expected from Shelley's state of mind at the time), e.g. that passage where the enchantress Maimuna with the "Damsel's face", "grey hair" and "bright blue eyes"<sup>3</sup> winds round Thalaba's finger the magical thread till he is imprisoned with the spell (Thalaba, VIII, 297-383). And from Kehama on which Medwin says he doted still more Shelley often declaimed the Curse:"

"I charm thy life  
From the weapons of strife...  
-----  
And the curse shall be on thee  
For ever and ever."<sup>4</sup>

"That romance" (Kehama) Shelley "used to look upon as perfect, and was haunted by the witch Loranite, (Sic) raving enthusiastically about the lines beginning":

"Is there a child whose little lovely ways  
Might win all hearts .. on whom his parents  
gaze  
Till they shed tears of joy and tenderness?  
Oh! hide him from that Witch's withering sight!  
Oh! hide him from the eye of Lorrinite!"<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hogg's Life of Shelley, p. 75.
  2. Medwin's Life, p. 44
  3. Dowden quotes (Life I, 378 ff) that Mrs. Boinville with her white hair but a certain youthful beauty of her face, was called Maimuna by Shelley, due to her resemblance to Southey's witch.
  4. The Curse of Kehama, II, 144-169.
  5. Ibid, XI, 55-59. Medwin's quotations are slightly inaccurate, as he says he transcribes the passages from memory. I have given the correct lines from the poem itself.

In 1811 Shelley again wrote "The Curse of Kehama is my most favourite poem", but he added "there is a great error - faith, in the character of the divine Kalyal."<sup>1</sup> To Shelley, the then ardent disciple of Reason, the genuine but rather superficial tenet of Southey, "The Talisman is Faith" must have been as revolting as the excessive use of outlandish words and mythological names. Hogg relates an amusing anecdote of Southey's habit of "reading his terrible epics before they were printed to any one/who seemed to be a fit subject for the cruel experiment". On one occasion Shelley was the victim. But while Southey recited the Curse of Kehama, "charmed with his own composition," "varying his voice occasionally and pointing out the finer passages and inviting applause", Shelley the "insensible young vandal lay buried in profound sleep under the table"<sup>2</sup>. Shelley also read with "tiresome pertinacity", and enjoyed Landor's Gebir<sup>3</sup> probably for the same reason, as Southey's poems, for there is in that poem also a witch, Dalica, who manufactures magical potions like Southey's Maimuna and Lorrinite (Gebir Bk. V.).

Poetry at this time seems to have meant very little to Shelley except "as a setting for romantic stories". "He asked of literature mainly two things - doctrines and excitement."<sup>4</sup> Of the latter we have noticed some instances above; of the former Queen Mab (1813) is the first considerable example. The poem is a strange hotch potch of Shelley's political theories gleaned from Godwin, Volney and other eighteenth century philosophers. The metre is that of Thalaba. It has been pointed out by two German scholars, L. Kellner<sup>5</sup> and E. Koepel,<sup>6</sup> that in this poem Shelley owed a good deal to the politico-economic essay on the philosophy of history Les

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1. Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 11, 1811. Ingpen's edit. of letters, I, p. 94.
  2. Hogg's Life. p. 293-294.
  3. Hogg's Life of P.B. Shelley, Edited by E. Dowden, 1906. p.127.
  4. Shelley and the Unromantics by O.W. Campbell, p. 78.
  5. Shelley's "Queen Mab" and Volney's "Les ruines," Englische Studien, vol. 22, 1895-96, p. 9ff.
  6. Shelley's "Queen Mab", and Sir William Jones "Palace of Fortune" Englische Studien, vol. 28, 1900, p. 43-53.

7. Shelley, his Life and Work. Book I. p. 76, note.  
 8. In Pagan London, 1811, 2nd. edition; vol. I, p. 111-112.  
 9. Letter to E. Hitchener, June 11, 1811, Ingpen I, 93-24; and  
 Letter to Hogg, June 11, 1811, Ingpen I 108-109.

Ruines, ou Méditation sur les Révolutions des Empires,<sup>1</sup> of the French savant, C.F. Volney, and the quasi-Oriental poem, The Palace of Fortune<sup>2</sup>, by Sir William Jones. Southey and Moore, we have seen, had already used Volney's work for their Oriental poems. But it was probably Peacock, who also consulted the book for his Palmyra and the Genius of Thames, who called it to Shelley's attention.<sup>3</sup> The many parallels pointed out by L. Kellener<sup>4</sup> prove conclusively that in some parts of Queen Mab Shelley was simply versifying the pages of Volney's work.

But the evidence about Shelley's debt to Sir William Jones is not so conclusive. Peck has suggested that Shelley might have read Jones' poems in Dr. Lind's library at Windsor; "Shelley must have read some of Jones' poems before June 11, 1811, when in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, he refers to "the true style of Hindoostanish devotion", and certainly before June 21st. in that year he must have read Jones' Hymn to Camdeo; for see his letter of that date to Miss Hitchener in which he says: 'Had I then/sacrificing at the altar of the Indian Camdeo'... Letters 1, 93, 103."<sup>5</sup>

But Peck is mistaken in regarding these two phrases as having come from Jones' works. Both of them occur in Miss Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan's) novel The Missionary, An Indian Tale,<sup>6</sup> which Shelley read at this time and the admiration for which he expressed in the very same letters from which Peck quotes<sup>7</sup>. Of the influence of The Missionary on Alastor we shall speak presently. Apart from these two references/by Peck there is no external evidence to prove that Shelley was acquainted with Jones' Palace of Fortune. Even the actual parallels between Jones' poem and Queen Mab are not entirely conclusive, as shall appear from the following.

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1. Paris 1791, 1792, English translation second edition London 1795; several more editions.
  2. The works of Sir William Jones in 6 vols. 1799, vol. IX, p 410 ff
  3. See also Hogg's Life of Shelley, edit. Dowden, 1906; p. 307 and Dowden's Life of Shelley, I, p. 75.
  4. Englische Studien, vol. 22. p. 9 ff.
  5. Shelley, his Life and Work. Peck I. p. 76, note.
  6. In 3 vols. London, 1811, 3rd. edition; vol. I. p.111-112.
  7. Letter to E. Hitchener, June 11, 1811, Ingpen I, 93-94; and Letter to Hogg, June 21, 1811, Ingpen I 103-104.

The story of Queen Mab is about a beautiful girl, Ianthe, who is visited, while she is asleep, by the Fairy Queen, Mab, in a "pearly and pellucid car", drawn by "celestial coursers". At the Fairy's command the soul of Ianthe quits her body and travels away in the magic car. There are vague descriptions of the journey to the ruins of Palmyra, Jerusalem etc. which give Mab an opportunity for speeches against the evils of various religions, against kings, war, and against commerce. Religion must be superseded by the Spirit of "all sufficing power," Nature. "There is no God", the fairy cries triumphantly and the wandering Jew is summoned to corroborate it. Ianthe is then shown the beautiful future, when Religion will fall before the Spirit of Nature and there will be universal harmony among men as well as animals. Eventually Ianthe's soul is brought back to her body. The poem is remarkable chiefly for the reason that it contains in embryo all the ideas which Shelley made into great poetry.

Now Sir William Jones' Palace of Fortune has a somewhat similar story. "Young Maia, fairest of the blue-eyed maids, That rov'd at noon in Tibets' musky shades" becomes toovain about her beauty because some fiend has whispered into her ear "Maia, thou art fair!" She is mourning about the unfruitfulness of her life, when the goddess Fortune in a golden car, by "two fair yokes of starry peacocks drawn," appears and carries her to her own magnificent palace of precious stones, where the wishes of all the aspirants are granted. Maia is asked to look into a magic crystal where she sees the joys of a youth, a knight and a sage turn to sorrow. The realization of her own desire for a diamond ring leads her into trouble, till she finally realizes the wisdom of the goddess's warning:

"Take sage example from this moral scene;  
See how vain pleasures sting the lips they kiss  
How asps are hid beneath the bowers of bliss  
While ever fair the flower of temperance blows.."<sup>1</sup>

She comes back to her own home where "she lived contented and contented died."

1. The Palace of Fortune, p. 418, The works of Sir William Jones, in six vols. 1799, vol. IV. Referred to as Works.

From these somewhat bald summaries of the two stories it will be seen that in both a fairy appears to a young girl, sleeping, and carries her off in a magic car, in Shelley to philosophise over the Present, the Past and the Future, and in Jones to show the virtues of contentment. Let us examine now some of the parallel passages that have been pointed out to see if there is any similarity in detail. The passages describing the approach of the fairy in Queen Mab, in Koepel's opinion, correspond to those in The Palace of Fortune. Here are the passages in question:

Shelley.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?  
'Tis like the wondrous strain  
That round a lonely ruin swells,  
Which wandering on the echoing  
shore

The enthusiast hears at evening;  
'Tis softer than the west wind's  
sigh;

'Tis wilder than the unmeasured  
notes  
Of that strange lyre whose  
strings

The genii of the breezes sweep:  
Those lines of rainbow light  
Are like the moonbeams when they  
fall

Through some cathedral window,  
but the tints  
Are such as may not find  
Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy  
Queen!

Celestial coursers paw the un-  
yielding air,  
Their filmy pennons at her word  
they furl  
And stop obedient to the reins  
of light.

The pearly and pellucid car  
Moved not the moonlight's line:

From her celestial car  
The Fairy Queen descended  
And thrice she waved her wand  
Circled with wreaths of amar-  
anth:

Her thin and misty form  
Moved with the moving air  
And the clear silver tones  
As thus she spoke were such  
As are unheard by all but gift-  
ed ear.<sup>1</sup>

Jones.

While thus she spake, a sudden  
blaze of light  
Shot through the clouds and struck  
her dazzled sight,

She raised her head astonished to  
the skies  
And veil'd with trembling hand her  
aching eyes;

When through the yielding air she  
saw from far

A goddess gliding in a golden car  
That soon descended on the flowry  
lawn

By two fair yokes of starry pea-  
cocks drawn

(The fairy is accompanied by)  
Celestial shapes: in fluid light  
array'd;

Their lucid mantles glitter'd in  
the sun,

Transparent robes that bore the  
rainbow's hue

And finer than the nets of pearly  
dew...

the queen herself too fair for mor-  
tal sight

Sat in the circle of encircling  
light...

straight the gay birds display'd  
their spangled train

And flew refulgent through th' aer-  
ial plain; ...

Now in the garden deck'd with ver-  
dant bowers

The glittering car descends on  
bending flowers:

(Elsewhere in the poem we find:-  
The goddess, wearied with the noisy  
crowd

Thrice waved her silver wand and

1. Queen Mab, 1, 55-113. The beginning of this passage, Peck points out pertinently is "almost certainly a revised version of lines in Despair, one of the poems in the Margaret Nicholson volume published at Oxford three years before." (Peck 1 p.305) This reduces the chance of Sir William Jones influence in these lines.

Shelley.

Jones.

admits of having heard his mythology  
and poems. But the immediate resemblance between Southey's and  
Shelley's passages is more apparent than in Jones's and  
Shelley's, as the following parallels show.

.....spoke aloud:)  
-----  
And thus in sounds, that favoured  
mortals hear  
She gently whispers in her ravish'd  
ear.<sup>1</sup>

The passages thus read side by side, indeed show many similarities in general design as well as particular words, which do not strike the reader in reading the two poems separately. But the mood of the two poems is entirely different and the differences in the above passages are perhaps more interesting than the similarities. Although Shelley at the time of writing Queen Mab had not entirely emancipated himself from the influence of mincing eighteenth century style and diction, his style is the very antithesis of Jones. In comparing the above passages, much can be said about the usual distinctions between the "classic" and the "romantic," how Shelley's method in dealing with approximately the same fantastic material is subjective and emotional, while Jones is objective and ingenious, how Shelley suggests the approach of the fairy by likening it to the sounds that the enthusiast hears round lonely ruins of the strange lyre whose strings the gennii of the breezes sweep, while Jones describes it through the obvious sensory response of the girl - her dazzled sight, her trembling hands, her aching eyes; how Shelley too falls into the trap of the symmetrical eighteenth century cliché, "celestial coursers paw the unyielding air" "Celestial shapes! in fluid light array'd", and so on. But our immediate problem<sup>is</sup> of Shelley's debt to Jones, a problem that becomes more complicated when we find that Shelley was also under the influence of Southey and Volney, especially Southey, at the time of writing Queen Mab. Throughout the poem, in versification and lyrical descriptions we find evidences of Southey's influence. The musical opening of Queen Mab, it is well-known, corresponds to the fine opening lines of Thalaba, while passages in the canto i of Queen Mab show beyond any doubt that Shelley had attentively studied the Curse of Kehama, and was modelling the supernatural parts of his poem on the machinery of Southey's poem. Many passages can be cited where Jones' ideas and images seem to have passed through Southey's poem before reaching Shelley, because Southey

1. Palace of Fortune, works. p. 411 ff.

admits of having based his mythological machinery on Jones' prose and poems. But the immediate resemblance between Southey's and Shelley's passages is more apparent than that between Jones' and Shelley's, as the following parallel passages show:

(P.T.O.)

Jones

... through the floating air  
she saw far  
riding in a golden  
our

Southey

The dragons' heads obedient to commands  
Their wings will expand;  
Like steeds will broken to fair lady's  
hands;  
They feel the reins of magic  
(Rehens II, 12)

Shelley

Behold the start of the fairy queen  
Celestial couriers saw the unfolding air  
Their flying pennons at her word  
And ever obedient to her  
(q. Revs, Lines 1-4)

Some did the hair and eyelids  
From the stupor of sleep

Oh! not the visions that in his dreams  
When slumber's chains were broken  
and

When every sight of lovely, wild and free  
Aspirations, whirlwinds, elevates  
When fancy at a glance could  
The wonders and the beauties  
So bright, so fair, so wild  
With ever yet bewails

Jones

1. ... Through the yielding air  
 she saw from far  
 A Goddess gliding in a golden  
 car ..  
 By two fair yokes of peacocks  
 drawn.  
 (The Palace of Fortune, Works.  
 p. 411)

Southey

The dragons long obedient to command  
 Their ample sails expand;  
 Like steeds well broken to fair lady's  
 hand,  
 They feel the reins of might .....

(Kehama XI, 12)

Shelley

Behold the chariot of the fairy Queen  
 Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air;  
 Their filmy pennons at her word they furl  
 And stop obedient to the reins of light ...  
 (Q. Mab, lines 59-62)

2. The Goddess still with looks  
 divinely fair

Surveys the sleeping object of  
her care.  
 (Ibid, p. 412)

While over her with earnest gaze he  
 hung  
Silent and motionless she lay .....

(Kehama, III, §)

Long did she gaze and silently  
 Upon the slumbering maid.

3. The queen herself too fair for  
mortal sight  
 Sat in the circle of encircling  
 light.  
 (Ibid. p. 411)

And never yet did form more beautiful  
 In dreams of night descending from on  
 high  
 Bless the Virgin's gifted sight,  
 Nor like a vision of delight  
 Rise on the raptured Poet's inward eye  
 Of human form divine was he .....

Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams  
 When silvery clouds float through the wild-  
 ered brain.  
 When every sight of lovely, wild and grand  
 Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,  
 When fancy at a glance combines  
 The wondrous and the beautiful, -  
 So bright, so fair, so wild a shape  
 Hath ever yet beheld.  
 (Q. Mab I, lines 68-75)

4. And on a rock of ice, by magick  
 rais'd,  
 High in the midst a gorgeous  
 palace blaz'd,  
 The sunbeams on the gilded  
 portals glanc'd

..... a Palace worthy of the God  
 Built on the Lake the waters were its  
 floor;  
 And spires and pinnacles of fire  
 Round watery cupolas aspire,  
 And domes of rainbow rest on fiery  
 towers;

... Mab's ethereal palace ...  
 Yet likest evening's vault, that faery Hall  
 As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it  
 spread  
 Its floors of flashing light  
 Its vast and azure dome,

Play'd on the spires and on the  
 To four bright gates four ivory  
 With Pearls illumin'd, and with  
 roses spread ...  
 (Ibid, p. 413)

And roofs of flame are turreted around  
 With cloud, and shafts of cloud with  
 flame are bound.  
 (Kehama, VII, 8, 10)

Its fertile golden islands  
 Floating on a silver sea  
 While suns their mingling beamings darted  
 Through clouds of circumambient darkness,  
 And pearly battlements around  
 Looked over the immense of Heaven.  
 (Cf also Coleridge's Kubla Khan).  
 (Q. Mab, II, lines 29-39)

5. She rais'd her finger, and the  
 At distance hung the dusky globe  
 Saw the round earth with foaming  
 oceans vein'd  
 And labouring clouds on mountain  
 tops sustain'd.  
 (Ibid, p. 414)

Here too the elements for ever veer,  
 Ranging around with endless interchang-  
 Pursued in love and so in love pur-  
 In endless revolutions here they roll;  
 For ever their mysterious work renewing;  
 The parts all shifting, still unchanged  
 the whole.  
 (Kehama, VII, 10)

Below lay stretched the universe!  
 There far as the remotest line  
 That bounds imagination's flight  
 Countless and unending orbs  
 In mazy motion intermingled  
 Yet still fulfilled immutable  
 Eternal nature's law.  
 (Q. Mab, II, 70-76)

(Peck finds in this passage an echo of Miss  
 Whaleley's Hymn to Solitude and a germ of the  
 well-known lines in Hellas "Worlds on Worlds  
 are rolling ever" ....  
 See Peck I, p. 315)

It is interesting to observe in these sets of passages the development of approximately the same ideas in three successive poets. What in Jones is solid and deliberately fantastic; loses its conventionality of eighteenth century verse and acquires an equally conventional and deliberate simplicity of Southey's romantic manner, while Shelley who in some cases (as in I) simply echoes Jones' style has in these passages a style remarkably like Southey's, on whom he was deliberately modelling his early poetry. In all these five sets of passages it is fairly obvious that if, at all, there is in Shelley's lines a suggestion of Jones' ideas and images, it is almost negligible and may just be coincidence; while the echoes from Southey are plentiful and definite. Will it not then be plausible to say that in Shelley we find echoes of Jones because Shelley was modelling his poems on Southey, who by his own admission owes something to Jones? Perhaps, No. The evidence of the passages quoted earlier and the general design of Canto I of Mab seem to point, that Shelley, if he was indebted to Southey for the detail of this Canto, the general plan of the story and a few ideas and images were suggested by Jones.

As for Volney, it is beyond our scope to discuss his influence on the political ideas expressed in Queen Mab. Volney relates how by the obscure light of the moon "There had appeared to the traveller in Asia Minor, "a pale apparition", which like Queen Mab in Shelley becomes the oracle of the author's philosophy. Mab like Volney's apparition and like Peacock in Palmyra meditates over "Palmyra's ruined palaces" in the approved eighteenth century manner of philosophising over ruins, and as Mab continues in her 'conducted tour' with Ianthé, she finds opportunity for moralising over the Pyramids of Egypt, over the deserts of Arabia "where wandering Arab's tent flaps in the desert", over haughty ~~and~~ Salem's "shameful glory" of "Golden domes", over the "inhuman and uncultured race" of Arabs and over Mohammad "who taught them that the God of nature and Benevolence hath given special sanction to the trade of blood". Later "Seva, Buddh, Foh, Johovah, God or Lord" are all denounced as creatures of their worshippers and symbols of tyranny and religious

authority. Shelley owed his information about the various religions to Volney's book, which like Gibbon's History gives incidentally, a detailed account of Mohammadanism, while propagating its rational religion of "return to nature". Volney differentiates "the world of chimeras from that of realities" and teaches men "after so many religions of error and delusion the religion of evidence and truth."<sup>1</sup> From the notes to Queen Mab, where in support of the doctrine of Necessity, Shelley quotes an anecdote about Islamic Fatalism, it is evident that he was not unacquainted with Sale's translation of the Koran. It is curious to notice that Southey, Byron and Shelley, all found an echo of their various theories of fatalism in Islam, although none of them took the trouble of going any deeper into the problem to notice the differences. This is perhaps another instance of the tendency of the romantic poets to see in Oriental things an echo of their own beliefs, prejudices and ideals.

In Alastor (1816) it is evident once more, that Southey's Oriental poems had made a deep effect on Shelley, and here we see his selective imagination appropriating to itself with a fine poetic sense, some of the scenery and images of Southey's uncouth epics. No poet has been accused more often of charges of imitation, plagiarism and second hand knowledge than Shelley and/<sup>no</sup>poet, with the possible exception of Coleridge has been more a victim of the ingenuity or diligence of the critics and source-hunters<sup>2</sup>. For Alastor a poem of 720 lines only, no fewer than the following 'sources' have been alleged: Arian, Coleridge, De Lisle, Goethe, Ben Jonson, Landor, Scott, Charlotte Smith, Southey, Volney, Wordsworth and Miss Owenson. Some of these are undoubtedly genuine and throw a useful light on Shelley's poetic use of his reading, but a few as

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1. Volney, The Ruins or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires, English trans. London, 1879, p. 142-143.
  2. The recent book by H. L. Hoffman Odyssey of the Soul, Columbia university, 1933 dealing exhaustively with the sources of Alastor, came out too late to be of much use to the present writer. Shelley's indebtedness to Miss Owenson's book was worked out by the present writer independently of Hoffman's book, where the author seems to ignore altogether the more important parallels which we have worked out here.

L. H. Allen points out in his careful article,<sup>1</sup> are more coincidences, and "only what is carefully sifted and certainly established should stand." The scope of our thesis forbids us to dwell at length on any but those sources that contribute to the Oriental colouring of the poem. Of these the influence of Southey and Miss Owenson is the most marked.

The general influence of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey on Shelley's early poetry is undeniable.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Shelley in her introduction to Queen Mab, admitted the possibility of this general kind of influence when she said: "The love and knowledge of Nature developed by Wordsworth, the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge's poetry, and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey formed his favourite reading."

In Alastor Shelley has, freed himself from his eighteenth century masters, he has relegated moralistic, argumentative style to the preface, his blank verse has a clear and characteristic ring and his poetic touch in general is surer and more individual. Yet in the details, if not in the arguments, which<sup>3</sup> wholly original, one can discern some traces of Wordsworth, Southey and Owenson.

That the youthful poet in Alastor, whose quest has something "in common with Galahad's quest of the Sangreal", should leave

STRANGE  
His cold fireside and alienated home  
To seek truth in undiscovered lands,"

and should journey, of all places to the East, the barbaric East, in search of love and beauty, has puzzled many critics of Shelley, who in irritation, have regarded the disappointment and death of the poet as a deserved punishment for his perversity.<sup>3</sup> Yet if we are to regard seriously the intermittent allegory of the poem, the poet's travels allegorize the travels of the spirit, his search for truth, the desire to penetrate the mysteries of nature and to study the records of past civilizations. It would be a mistake to ignore the actual geographical travels of the poet to the East as

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1. "Plagiarism, sources and influences in Shelley's Alastor", The Modern Language Review, vol 18. p. 133. ff.
  2. cf. Introduction to The Revolt of Islam.
  3. e.g. R. D. Havens in his article on Alastor in the Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, 45, 1930, p. 1098 ff. notes many inconsistencies in the poem and also says: "And surely a European seeking for the woman of his dreams, a woman who should embody the wisdom of the philosopher and should lead him entranced as she discourses of knowledge, truth, virtue and liberty would hardly turn to the countries between the Himalaya and the Caucasus mountains!" (p. 1103).

as Shelley's perversion, or even as a mere excuse for the description of exotic scenery. In the Roman Revival, as in the Elizabethan age, it is possible to discover a correspondence between the expansion of the borders of imagination aimed at by the poets and the expansion in space brought about by the voyagers and travellers in foreign lands. If the poetry of Marlowe reflects the travels of Drake and Cavendish, the poetry of Southey, Moore and Shelley makes frequent use of the travels of Bernier, Bruce and others; but with this important difference: the emphasis in the Elizabethan age was on history and action, culminating in the glorious tradition of the Elizabethan drama, whereas in the revived and backward looking age of Romance the emphasis was on fiction and emotion, which, naturally produced a poetry whose danger lay in its extravagance and morbidity. Yet the scope of a Goethe, the expansive plans of a Coleridge, even the ambitious schemes of a Southey for writing epics on all the religions of the world, are proof that not since the Renaissance had such a prospect and passion for learning and exploration come to man.

Through the works of the travellers and through Southey's poetry Shelley shared in the contemporary fascination for the East as a land of beauty and mystery. It is not surprising then to find the poet in Alastor wandering over "wide waste" and "tangled wilderness" like some Eastern or African traveller "Buying with his sweet voice and eyes from savage men his rest and food". Nor is it surprising that he should journey over "bitumen Lakes" (the phrase is from Thalaba, V. 22) to the secret caves rugged and dark that like the ruins of some gorgeous Oriental palace,

their starry domes  
Of diamonds and of gold expand above  
Numberless and immeasurable halls  
Frequent with crystal column and clear shrines  
Of pearl and thrones radiant with chrysolite.<sup>1</sup>

What one should remember about these and other such images in Alastor, Revolt of Islam<sup>2</sup> etc. is not their 'source' in this or that book of Oriental travel or poetry, but to recognise in them, as in Coleridge's Kubla Khan, the concentrated essence of the poet's reading about Oriental marvels and gorgeousness and, / to see / Shelley &

1. Alastor, l. 90-94.

2. cf. The Revolt of Islam, LII, LIII, where Laon and Cyntha come to a "Vast hall whose glorious roof was diamond", ten thousand columns", Jasperwalls" etc.

Coleridge were only doing with fine perfection of phrase and image what other minor writers on Oriental themes were doing crudely in conformation to the fashion of the time.

The poet "obedient to high thoughts" wanders on to contemplate the awful ruins of the days of old, Athens, and Tyre and Balbec and the waste where stood Jerusalem..."(lines 106ff). The passage has some similarity to that other passage in Queen Mab<sup>1</sup> where the fairy conducts Ianthe over "Palmyra's ruined palaces", the "eternal Nile" and the Pyramids and moralises over "The events of old and wondrous times." This part of the poem probably owes something to the invocation and early chapters of Volney's Ruins, but what difference there is between the conventional moralising of Volney and Shelley's powerful Miltonic lines with their skilful use of Eastern names!

Memphis and Thebes and whatso'er of strange  
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk  
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,  
Dark Aethiopia in her desert hills  
Conceals.<sup>2</sup>

Dowden relates how Shelley's friend Newton was wont to "brood on the mysterious significances of the signs of the Zodiac"<sup>3</sup> This might have given Shelley the hint for introducing the "Zodiac's brazen mystery:"

Among the ruined Temples there,  
Stupendous columns and wild images  
Of more than man, where marble daemons watch  
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
Hang their mute thought on the mute walls around...<sup>4</sup>

Locock, however thinks with Beljame that Shelley has in mind "The Zodiac of the temple of Denderah in upper Egypt alluded to in Volney's Les Ruins"<sup>5</sup>. Whatever the source, Shelley's aim is not to parade like Southey a fantastic piece of antiquarian knowledge, nor to point a mean and commonplace, moral. In Queen Mab, the fairy had said to Ianthe's soul:

"The present and the past thou hast beheld:  
It was a desolate sight. Now spirit, learn  
The secrets of the future - Time!"<sup>6</sup>

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1. Queen Mab, Canto II, lines 110 ff.
  2. Alastor, 112-116.
  3. Dowden's life I. 383.
  4. Alastor 116-120.
  5. Locock's edition of Shelley's poems, I. 539.
  6. Queen Mab, VIII, 1-3.

The same idea is expressed in Alastor in far finer words when the poet in a moment of intuitive and mystical apprehension "sees eternity in an hour:" He ever gazed

And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
Flashed like strong inspiration and he saw  
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time."<sup>1</sup>

From Egypt the poet wanders on through Arabia,

And Persia and the wild Carmanian waste  
And over the aerial mountains which pour down  
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves."<sup>2</sup>

The geography of Alastor is surprisingly free from confusion and inconsistency, so much so that Shelley must, it would seem, have traced his hero's wanderings on a map. Locock in his edition of Shelley's poems<sup>3</sup>, mentions Beljame's plausible suggestion that they are based on the expedition of Alexander the Great-in which Shelley may have become interested through his reading of Plutarch.

That the poet in Alastor should meet the "veiled maid", the spirit of the ideal, or the ideal of female perfection in the beautiful "Vale of Cashmere", is also significant of Shelley's romantic attitude towards the East. We have seen that following the descriptions of Bernier and others Thomas Moore had laid the scene of his last tale in Lalla Rookh, in Kashmir, "the terrestrial Paradise of the world". Shelley had a high opinion of Moore and may have owed the suggestion of making his Indian maid a native of Kashmir to Moore's poem. But more than any other it was the influence of Miss Owenson's book The Missionary, which determined the character and the race of the "veiled maid". This book relates in hysterical tones the love story of a Portuguese Missionary who fell in love with a beautiful Indian maid, the Hindu priestess of Kashmir. The India described in the book is the highly coloured impossible, India of the romantic tradition which Moore depicted in Lalla Rookh in glowing but extremely inaccurate terms. But the appeal of this book for Shelley probably lay in the prevailing sentimentality, with

1. Alastor, 125-128. p. 103-104.

2. Ibid, 140-143. p. 109.

3. Locock, i. p. 539.

which the authoress combines into a vague, diffuse mysticism the three chief elements of her story, religion, nature and love. The book continues in one interminable rhapsody, confounding as Professor Irving Babbitt would have said, the various planes of being, mingling flesh and the spirit in one "voluptuous and intoxicating brew"<sup>1</sup> of a romantic reverie.

Writing to Hogg Shelley says of this book. "It is a divine thing-Luxima, the Indian priestess, were it possible to embody such a character, is perfect. The Missionary has been my companion for sometime. I advise you to read it"<sup>2</sup> After a few days Shelley again wrote to Hogg: "The only thing that has interested me has been one novel. It is Miss Owenson's Missionary, an Indian tale. Will you read it? It is really a divine thing; Luxima the Indian is an angel. What a pity that we can not incorporate these creations of fancy; the very thoughts of them thrill the soul! Since I have read this book. I have read no other. But I have thought strangely!"<sup>3</sup> This Luxima who fired young Shelley's imagination is the Hindu priestess of Kashmir with whom the missionary falls in love in Miss Owenson's book. The authoress has lavished on her all the attributes that must have appealed profoundly to Shelley, an ethereal and elusive beauty, eloquence and above all a yearning, pseudo-mystical glow of spirituality that she feels when she contemplates Kamdeo, the god of love, we have already quoted Shelley's remark on the "true style of Hindoostanish devotion" and the sacrifices at the altar of the Indian Kamdeo," which refer beyond doubt to these episodes in Miss Owenson's book.

In introducing the Indian maiden in Alastor, Shelley was merely acting on his earlier impulse when he had lamented the impossibility of incorporating these creations of fancy in English literature. There is some reason to believe, that not only was

1. The New Laokoon, An Essay on the confusion of Arts, 1910, p. 98-105.

2. June 21, 1811, Ingpen I. p. 103-104.

3. June 27, 1811, I. p. 109.

Shelley hearkening back in memory to the glowing impressions that Luxima had produced on his mind, but that he had Miss Owenson's book, within reach when writing Alastor. Directly the poet reaches the "Vale of Cashmir" after his wanderings in "Arabie", the "wild Caramanian waste" and "the/aerial/mountains", we feel that Shelley has been looking into the Missionary. Miss Owenson relates how the missionary after journeying from Lahore, reached "Cashmire, the birthplace of Brahma, the scene of his avatars," a country "confined within the majestic girdle of the Indian Caucasus". Then she goes on to describe this wonderful country in lyrical, languorous tones, typical of her style throughout the book:

"The brilliant scene, the balmy atmosphere, renovated his (the Missionary's) spirits and his frame. He rapidly descended the rock, now no longer bleak, no longer rude but embossed with oderiferous plants and shaded by lofty shrubs. His vital powers his mental faculties seemed to dilate to the influence of the pure an subtil air which circulated with a genial softness through his frame and gave to his whole being a sense of vague but pure felicity which made even life itself enjoyment ... The cusa grass ... emitted a delicious odour ... and countless streams of liquid silver meeting in natural basons ... offered to his weary frame the most necessary luxury that he could now enjoy ... the silence of the delicious hour knew no interruption but from the soothing murmur of innumerable cascades. All breathed a tranquil but luxurious enjoyment; all invited to repose which resembled a waking dream. The missionary had no power to resist the soft and new emotions which possessed themselves on his whole being; it seemed as if sensation had survived all power of perception; and throwing himself on the odorous moss ... he slept ... The dawn awakened the Christian wanderer from a dream pure and bright as a prophets' vision."<sup>1</sup>

This too, too romantic "vale of Cashmire" has a similar opiate effect on the poet in Shelley's poem who:

"In joy and exultation held his way;  
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within  
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine  
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,  
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched

1. The Missionary by Miss Owenson in 3 vols. London, 1811 3rd. edition. Vol. 1. p. 131-133.

His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep  
 There came, a dream of hopes that never yet  
 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid  
 Sat near him, talking in low solemn tones,  
 Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
 Heard in the calm of thought, its music long,  
 Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held  
 His in most sense, suspended in its web  
 Of many-coloured wool and shifting hues."<sup>1</sup>

It is hard to doubt that the entwining odorous plants, the rocks, the sparkling rivulets and woven sounds of streams and breezes, that held the poet's inmost sense suspended in the vision of the veiled maid are anything but an imaginative transmutation of the embossed Odoriferous plants, the Cusa grass, the Oderous moss, the rocks, the streams of liquid silver and the soothing murmur of the Cascades that induced a sense of vague but pure felicity in the Missionary and it seemed as if sensation had survived all power of perception. The weary frame of the Missionary which throws itself on the moss in a tranquil but luxurious enjoyment of a waking dream, is the same as the languid limbs of the poet stretching themselves in the natural bower to dream. That both the poet and the Missionary are dreaming of the same veiled maid is also not very difficult to see. The poet in Alastor sees the veiled maid with:

"Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare  
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of night  
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
 Outstretched, and pale and quivering eagerly."<sup>2</sup>

Luxima in The Missionary is also described as "veiled".<sup>3</sup> "The resplendent locks of the seeming sprite were enwreathed with beams ... A drapery of snow shone round a form perfect in grace and symmetry"<sup>4</sup>... "her eyes threw their soft and dewy beams"<sup>5</sup> "her long dark hair floated on the wind"<sup>6</sup>... "the folds of her pure drapery, soft and fleecy as it was faintly defined the perfect forms of her perfect figure."<sup>7</sup>

Shelley's maid is "herself a poet" and:

1. Alastor.
2. Alastor. 176-180.
3. The Missionary op.cit. I. p. 84.
4. Ibid. p. 145-147.
5. Ibid., p. 111.
6. Ibid. vol. II. p. 59.
7. Ibid. I. p. 111-112.

Soon the solemn mood  
 Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame  
 A permeating fire; wild numbers then  
 She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs  
 Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands  
 Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp  
 Strange symphony ..."<sup>1</sup>

Miss Owenson also waxes eloquent on the intellectual and religious nature of Luxima, the priestess, and has many eloquent passages on "the delicate ardour of her imagination", the "mystic charm which breathes over her character and person"<sup>2</sup> ... "Believing herself inspired she looked the immortality she fancied and uttered rhapsodies in accents so tender and with emotions so wild ..." <sup>3</sup> etc. In another place we read of Luxima kneeling before the Indian Cupid Camdeo, "playing on the Indian lyre which she accompanied with a hymn to Camdeo. The sounds wild and tender, died upon her lips and she seemed to

Feed on thoughts  
 Which voluntary moved harmonious numbers."<sup>4</sup>

"It was in such moments as these" Miss Owenson continues very feelingly elsewhere, "that the native genius of her ardent character betrayed itself and then she poured on the listening ear that tender strain of feeling, or impassioned eloquence which brightened with all the sublimity of the Eastern style was characterized by that fluent softness and spirited delicacy which belongs to a woman in whatever region she exist, when animated by the desire of pleasing him, the object of her preference."<sup>5</sup>

In Alastor the effect of the veiled maid's sensuous beauty and musical eloquence on the poet is overpowering and irresistible:

"His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess  
 Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled  
 His grasping breath and spread his arms to meet  
 Her panting bosom ..."<sup>6</sup>

No less devastating is the effect of jealous love on the pious Christian Missionary:

"He could not comprehend the nature of those frightful sensa-

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1. Alastor, 169 ff.
  2. The Missionary I, 104.
  3. Ibid, p. 114.
  4. The Missionary, I. p. 199.
  5. Ibid. II, 41-42.
  6. Alastor, 181-184.

ions which quivered through his frame - that deadly sickness of the soul with which the most dreadful of all human passions first seizes on its victim. His mind's fever infected his whole frame- his head raged - his heart beat strongly; and all the vital motions which hurried on as if their harmony had been suddenly destroyed by some fearful visitation of divine wrath. He threw himself on the dewy earth and felt something like a horrible enjoyment in giving himself up, without reservation to pangs of love betrayed..."<sup>1</sup>

Critics of Shelley have frequently complained of the note of sentimentality in Shelley's representation of the ideal in the person of the glowing, human, Indian maid and a somewhat ambiguous admixture of mysticism and human love. As we have already remarked, that was one of the reasons why Miss Owenson's book appealed to Shelley. It would be rash to say that Shelley's views were to any appreciable extent influenced by a reading of the Missionary, but it seems probable that a passage like the following, which is typical of Miss Owenson's attitude towards love and religion, must have contributed to some extent to the ardent nature of the poet's love for the Indian maiden in Alastor:

"Whatever glow of imagination warms the worship of colder regions, (the Missionary) was unaware that in India the ardent gratitude of created spirits, was wont to ascend to the Creator in expressions of most fervid emotion, that the tender eloquence of mystic piety too frequently assumed the character of human feelings, and that the faint line which sometime separated the language of love from that of religion was too delicate to be perceptible but to the pure in spirit and devout in mind".<sup>2</sup>

There were doubtless other influences, namely that of the horror - fiction of the time, that moulded Shelley's view of love but into those it is not our business to enter here. From the above it will be clear that Miss Owenson's book played not an inconsiderable part in determining the race and the character of the Indian maiden.

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1. The Missionary, II, 99-100.  
 2. The Missionary, I. p. 203.

It has also been pointed out by Ackermann<sup>1</sup> that the poet's vision about the veiled maid in Alastor is influenced by certain passages in Thalaba. But as L. H. Allen has said refuting most of Ackerman's parallels in his article,<sup>2</sup> only a few of these parallel passages prove Shelley's debt to Southey; the rest may be mere coincidences. We have seen how Southey echoing the Moallakat, had written of the hands of his heroine in Thalaba, as she trimmed the lamp:

And through the veins and delicate skin  
The light shone rosy. (Thalaba, III, 25)

Shelley has something similar to it when he speaks of his Indian maid's hands:

"And in their branching veins  
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale"  
(Alastor, 167)

or the poet

"Saw by the warm light of their own life  
Her glowing limbs" (Alastor, 174)

It is quite possible that the radiance of Miss Owenson's Luxima has been reinforced here by the radiance of Southey's Oneiza, who in her turn is a reincarnation of the Arab maidens in the Moallakat. It has also been argued that some of the Oriental scenery of Thalaba, as well as the boat voyage that Shelley's poet makes were suggested by Southey's poem. But as L. H. Allen effectively refutes Ackerman's suggestions and C. D. Locock in his edition of Shelley's poems has pointed out most of these parallels, we need not reproduce them here.<sup>3</sup>

The problem of Shelley's plagiarism is perhaps best summed up by Professor Baynes,<sup>4</sup> when he enlarges on the term "unconscious plagiarism", due in Shelley's own words to "a resemblance that does not depend on their own will between all the writers of any particular age." Shelley's mind was what according to T. S. Eliot the mind of every good poet is, "a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases images, which remain there

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1. Quellen, Vorbilder, Stoffe zu Shelleys Poetischen Werken, Erlangen and Leipzig 1890, a work that I have not consulted.
  2. Plagiarism, sources and influences in Shelley's Alastor, The Modern Language Review, vol. 18, 1923, p. 133 ff.
  3. See also a very interesting article by B. I. Evans The Persistent Image in Shelley, in Nineteenth Century, May 1922.
  4. Edinburgh Review 1871 p. 443-4 cited by L. H. Allen op.cit.

until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." And it is "the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place that counts."<sup>1</sup> In Shelley as in Coleridge this catalysis is intense enough to assimilate and transform the various images, phrases and ideas picked up from books, into a new & living whole, while in Southey and Moore the various components remain unassimilated and untransformed and consequently do not produce the effect of poetry.

There is nothing Oriental about The Revolt of Islam except its strange title and a few vague references in the poem to Turkish Tyrants, Argolis and Constantinople. Of the title Swinburne said, "What is the Revolt of Islam? Islam is not put forward as the sole creed of the tyrants and slaves who play their parts here with such frank ferocity; Persian and Indian Christian and Mohometan mythologies are massed together, for attack. And certainly Islam is not, as the rules of language would imply the creed of the insurgents. Could the phrase "revolt of the Christians" be taken to signify a revolt against the Christians? There is at least meaning in the first title - "Laon and <sup>Cytha</sup>~~Cytha~~ or the Revolution of the Golden City".<sup>2</sup> "It may be objected that the creed from which the insurgent population has been delivered by the preaching of Laon and <sup>Cytha</sup>~~Cytha~~ was that of Islam and that the word is here used to express not the doctrine itself but the mass of men or nations reared in the belief or tradition of that doctrine. This use may be doubtless permissible and does afford a reasonable sense to the later title of the poem but the original title as well as the original text seems to me preferable."<sup>3</sup>

This latter interpretation seems to be the correct one, considering the great interest that was being taken in the Greek War of

1. The Sacred Wood, 1928. p. 53-55.

2. Notes on the Text of Shelley, Essays and Studies, 1875, p. 193-194.

3. Ibid. note.

of Independence against the Turks, a cause in support of which Shelley under Byron's influence later, wrote Hellas.

It is significant to note that Shelley sent his poem to the publisher of Lalla Rookh, asking him to submit the poem to Thomas Moore and ask his opinion of its merit. "The scene", Shelley explained in this letter, is laid in Constantinople and Modern Greece but without much attempt at minute delineation of Mahometan manners<sup>1</sup>

"Without much attempt at minute delineation of Mahometan manners" was, evidently an apology to the author of Lalla Rookh, who like Southey had set out to "illustrate", the manners, customs etc. of Persia and India. But in The Revolt of Islam there is hardly any attempt at the "delineation of Mahometan manners," minute or otherwise. We know by a single phrase that Laon was born "in Argolis beside the echoing sea"<sup>2</sup>, and mourned with <sup>Cynthia</sup>~~Cynthia~~ the Turkish tyranny,

"If we let the reason sleep", says Professor Siton, and are content to watch a man ".... the servitude in which the half of mankind were mewed Victims of lust and hate the slave of slaves."<sup>3</sup> Othman, the "Sceptred wretch", is of course the blackest symbol of tyranny and "cruel lust", as Laon is of impeccable virtue and freedom in Shelley's black and white view of good and evil. The fall of the Tyrant is celebrated in Vegetarian and non-alcoholic feasts, almost Brahmanic in their uncontaminated purity:

"My brethren, we are free! The fruits are glowing  
Beneath the stars and the night winds are flowing  
O'er the ripe corns, the birds and beasts are dream-  
ing -

Never again may blood of bird or beast  
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast ...."  
Oriental fruits are present but Shelley will have none of the "forbidden draughts" that Byron's Turks quaff!:

".... pomegranates and citrons, fairest fruit,  
Melons and dates and figs and many a root  
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet  
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute  
Into a mortal bane ..."

1. Letter to a Publisher, oct. 13, 1817, Ingpen II, 559.

2. The Revolt of Islam, Cant. II, II.

3. Ibid, Cant. II, XXXVI.

But the reign of good is short lived. All the Tyrants of the earth flock to help their brother tyrant, "Europe's subtler son".

Tartar and Frank and millions whom the wings  
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band  
The Arctic Anarch sent and Idumea's sand,  
Fertile in prodigies and lies....

Laon and <sup>Cynthia</sup> Cynthia are to be sacrificed. The votaries of

Oromaze, Joshua and Mahomet  
Moses and Buddh, Zerdusht and Brahm and Moh  
A tumult of strange names which never met  
Before as watch-words of a single woe

all participate in the burning of the martyrs, Laon and Cynthia on a pyre and the poem ends with the description of their souls journeying to the temple of the Spirit in a boat. In a poem that is so full of impassioned idealism and fury and that in "incoherence at time recalls Blake's miscreate epics", there was small chance for Shelley to give any concrete description of Turkish scenery and manners. "If we let the reason sleep", says Professor Elton, and are content to watch a succession of dissolving views the poem is seen to overflow with beauty."<sup>1</sup> The poem is replete in Shelley's own words, "with imagery beautiful as dream",<sup>2</sup> imagery that is neither of England nor of Turkey, nor of any other country on the face of the earth; it is purely "the consecration of the poet's dream". And what is true of imagery is also true of the vague, ideal characters of the poem. Characteristically, in Shelley's lines it is the

If the scene of the Revolt of Islam is laid in some ethereal Turkey, that of Prometheus Unbound is laid in some fabulous region of the Indian Caucasus. Shelley may have taken the idea of placing the scene of his lyrical drama in Indian Caucasus from some Greek author, but it seems more probable, that/is in Alastor, Shelley was following Miss Owenson in making India the home of the elemental Aryan gods and goddesses. We must repeat here a passage from her book which we have already quoted in connection with Alastor

1. Shelley by O. Elton, 1924, p. 26.

2. The Revolt of Islam, cant. V. XXVI.

3. Prometheus Unbound, Act. I. 826-832.

where the Indian Caucasus is described:

"Confined within the majestic girdle of the Indian Caucasus lies Cashmire, the birth place of Brahma, the scene of his avatars.. The brilliant scene, the balmy atmosphere, renovated his (the Missionary's) Spirits and his frame. He rapidly descended the rock, now no longer bleak, no longer rude but embossed with odoriferous plants and shaded by lofty shrubs. His vital powers, his mental faculties seemed to dilate to the influences of the pure and subtil air which circulated with a genial softness through his frame and gave to his whole being a sense of vague but pure felicity which made even life itself enjoyment..."<sup>1</sup>

We have seen the bearing of this passage on Alastor. The "Indian Caucasus" of Prometheus Unbound is not described in any great detail, but the following <sup>few</sup> lines describing the Indian Vale, seem to have been suggested by the above passage from the Missionary:

"And Asia waits in that far Indian Vale  
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once  
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;  
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,  
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow  
Among the woods and waters, from the ether  
Of her transforming presence ..."<sup>2</sup>

We have the same rugged and bleak rocks in the two passages, grown with Odoriferous parasites and the same renovating effect of the breezes; although, characteristically, in Shelley's lines it is the "transforming presence" of Asia that changes the character of the landscape, instead of the landscape reviving her, as it does the Missionary.

Shelley's myths about Nature sometimes remind one of the early Vedic myths of ancient India, especially when the scene of Prometheus Unbound happens to be laid in India. But it is unlikely that Shelley was influenced by any religious myths, Vedic or otherwise. Besides, Shelley's myths about the natural forces are not anthropomorphic like the Vedic myths. With Shelley the clouds, the

1. The Missionary, op. cit. I. 130-138.

2. Prometheus Unbound, Act. I. 826-832.

3. Missionary, 696-703.  
4. Missionary, 820-824.

When the Orient/of Islam rolled in triumph  
From Caucasus to white Ceraunia."1

But more than anything the poem serves as a pretext for passages of description and meditation upon the human fate; expressing Shelley's almost Oriental sense of the cosmic unity which breathes its being into the essence of all created things and the mystic conviction that birth and death and matter are mere illusion - Maya:

"Sultan! talk no more  
Of thee and me, the future and the past;  
But look on that which cannot change - the one  
The unborn and the undying."2

The whole created Universe

"Is but a vision; all that it inherits  
Are notes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams ..."3

These and other such utterances in Shelley, the examples of a creed that looks at death with a serene almost humorous disregard:

"It is a modest creed and yet  
Pleasant if one considers it,  
To own that death itself must be  
Like all the rest, a mockery."

and the view that

"Life, like a dome of many coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity."5

though the outcome of Shelley's own mystical temperament and the deep influence of Neo-Platonic philosophy, afford a remarkable analogy to the view of life held by Sufi and Hindu mystics<sup>6</sup>. Of all the romantic poets, Shelley with his keen spiritual curiosity and enthusiastic, if not sound speculative ability, would have been the fittest person to understand, and find a kinship with, Persian mysticism and Hindu philosophy. As it was, Southey's conscious Christian rectitude and prudery allowed him only to glean the outskirts of Hindu mythology and incorporate a few monstrous fables into his so called epics and Tom Moore, temperamentally too sentimental and superficial, was only able to see a reflection of his own sweet

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1. Ibid, 261-267.
  2. Ibid. 766-769.
  3. Ibid 780-781.
  4. The Sensitive Plant, conclusion, 13-16.
  5. Adonais. LII.
  6. It is interesting to note in this connection that Shelley's in his political idealism has been likened to Gandhi. See H. Richter, Gandhi und Shelley. "Zwei Idealisten der Revolution" in Archiv für das Studium der neuen Sprachen, CLIV, 277-80. I have not seen this article.

amorousness in the few Persian fables that he came across in the works of the encyclopaedists and travellers. Shelley's early youth was spent, as we have seen, mainly under the spell of the terror fiction of the time and there is no evidence to show that he was influenced by Hindu or Persian ways of thinking to any great extent. The nearest that he ever came to it, must have been in the works of Sir William Jones, of which too there is no definite evidence to prove any influence on the speculative side of Shelley, at least. Besides Jones was a pioneer and an organiser of learning and confined himself with the barest outlines of subjects, too dry to provoke any but an academic or scholarly interest in his readers. But we have noticed how Miss Owenson's novel by the very nature of its pseudo-mystical glow of devotion and aspiration, appealed to Shelley's ardent imagination; although compared to Plato Berkeley and Godwin, Miss Owenson seems too insignificant to have influenced Shelley deeply and permanently. It is interesting however, to notice at least a superficial <sup>of</sup> similarity/beliefs between Shelley and say, the Persian mystic Jelaluddin Rumi or between Shelley and Sankara the mystic interpreter of the Vedas. The identity of belief does not prove that one is generated by the other; they may be the results of a like cause. Moreover since all manifestations of the mystical spirit are fundamentally the same (modified, of course by the peculiar environment and religion of the writer), it is not surprising to encounter in remote lands and different ages of the world 'one set of principles variously combined'. Shelley's well-known lines from Adonais, for example,

"The one remains, the many change and pass;  
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
Life like a dome of many coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of eternity..."

are analogous to many passages in Rumi and Jami<sup>1</sup> who also use the simile of the mirror or glass to describe the process of creation. Things they say can be known only through their opposites or negations. The opposite of Absolute Being is necessarily Not Being - a phantom

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1. cf. Jami, Tuh fat-ul-Inrar, Mokamat, I, "He desired that in another mirror (the beauties of all things) might be displayed to His view".

which can have no real existence, but which is evoked for a season and for a special purpose. When Not Being became opposed to Being there appeared on the former, as in a mirror, a reflection of Being. This reflection is called Contingent Being, another name for the phenomenal universe. This idea of the phenomenal world being merely a reflection of Absolute Being cast on the mirror of Not Being is expressed by Mahmud -i-Shabisteri in his Gulshan-i-Raz or 'Mystic Rose-bower':-

"If you desire to behold the eye of the sun  
 You must make use of another body,  
 Since the eye of the head has not strength enough  
 You may look on the brilliant sun in the water  
 Since its brightness shows less brightly therein,  
 You can bear to look on it for a longer space  
Not being is the mirror of Absolute Being  
There in is reflected the shining of "The Truth".  
 When Not Being is set opposite to Being,  
 It catches its reflection in a moment!  
That unity is exposed to view in this plurality,  
 Like as when you count one it becomes many".<sup>1</sup>

All this may act as a commentary on Shelley's two brief and felicitous lines

"Life like a dome of many coloured glass  
 Stains the white radiance of eternity."

Apart from the identity of thought the identity of the image of the glass or mirror, an image common to most mystics, may not be mere accident, for words and images are themselves not things of chance but arise of necessity out of the subject matter itself and give it expression. In their resemblance or their identity is mirrored the resemblance or the identity of the matter which they have to express. Yet on a closer view Shelley's poetry appears to be poetry about mysticism rather than mystical poetry - two quite different things. His continual aspiration, "the desire of the moth for the star", was destined never to culminate into a clear and intimate vision of God which it is the privilege of true mystics to achieve.

It has been held by some patriotic Indian scholars, even persons of such wisdom and insight as Rabindra Nath Tagore, the Indian poet, that the mystical view of life and Nature developed by the nineteenth century poets, was to a great extent due to the discovery

1. E. H. Whinefields' Translation of Gulshan-i-Raz, London, 1880, p. 14.

of Indian thought and philosophy by the band of scholars in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth Century. Tagore, for example deplores that Shakespeare failed to recognise in his writings "the truth of the interpenetration of human life with the cosmic life of the universe." "We observe" he goes on to say "a completely different attitude of mind in the later English poets like Wordsworth and Shelley, which can be attributed in the main to the great mental change in Europe at that particular period, through the influences of the newly discovered philosophy of India which stirred the soul of Germany and aroused the attention of other Western countries."<sup>1</sup> Whatever the influence of Indian thought on Germany, to aver that the Romantic Revival was in the main, due to the discovery of Indian philosophy, shows an utter ignorance of English literary history; it is much too naive even for a patriotism. Wordsworth was entirely uninfluenced by Oriental philosophy and in Shelley's case we have seen that it was through Western writers, like Jones, Southey, Volney and Miss Owenson, that he came into touch with the fictitious Orient of the time. The identity of outlook that is observable between the abstract thought of Shelley and some of the Eastern writers is more a matter of analogy and coincidence, rather than of influence. If certain ideas are common to the mystics of all ages and countries the imagery and the superb poetic form in which they are expressed in Shelley is characteristic of the West, rather than of the East.

Before concluding our account of Shelley we must notice briefly a few of the minor poems that reflect his interest in the Orient. In the Fragment of an Unfinished Drama written at Pisa in 1822, the scene is again laid in India. But except for a reference or two to the "plants of India"<sup>2</sup> and the "Springs of Himala"<sup>3</sup> there is nothing Oriental about the scenery of the so called Indian Island. But

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1. Creative Unity, London, 1922, p. 6..
  2. Fragments of an Unfinished Drama, 104-113.
  3. Ibid, 128

the word Indian it seems, had distinct poetic associations in Shelley's mind, for the word occurs no fewer than twenty times in Shelley's poems.<sup>1</sup>

The lady in The Sensitive plant is supposed to be Indian; she carries "a basket of Indian woof"<sup>2</sup> and nurses the

"Indian plants of scent and hue  
The Sweetest that ever were fed on dew"<sup>3</sup>

with almost as tender a concern as Sakuntala in Kalidasa's play tends her plants. This concern for animal and plant life and Shelley's vegetarianism, though again not of Oriental origin, offer another point of similarity between Shelley's view and the Oriental view of the universe. Shelley, it appears had been initiated into vegetarianism by his friends the Newtons, to whose interpretation of the Vultures in the Prometheus myth, as the spirit of indigestion gnawing at the vitals of meat eating man, Shelley refers in the notes to Mab. The beautiful lyric, beginning "I arise from dreams of thee", first called Song written for an Indian air, and later the Indian Serenade is again supposed to be addressed to an Indian maid. But inspite of the Champak and the nightingale, the ardent, almost swooning feeling of self abandonment is characteristically Shelleyan:

"The wandering airs they faint  
On the dark the silent stream,  
The Champak odours fail  
Like sweet thoughts in a dream,  
The nightingale's complaint,  
It dies upon her heart,  
As I must die on thine,  
Oh, beloved as thou art!"

A Clutton-Brock's suggestion that Shelley meant in this poem to imitate Moore seems plausible.

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- 1.
  2. "Not the Swart Pariah in some Indian grove,  
Lone, lean, and haunted by his brother's hate  
Hath drunk so deep the cup of bitter fate ... enilia)  
(The Solitary, in Shelley's Juv-  
"The Indian on the pyre of her dead husband" (Rosalind & Helen, 507).  
"that shy bird that gleams in the Indian air (Letter to M. Gisborne, 235.)  
"Strange night upon some Indian isle (Triumph of Life, 486)  
"As a tuberose Peoples some indian dell with scents" (The Woodman and the Nightingale, &) etc.etc.
  3. Ibid. 150.
  4. The Sensitive Plant. II, 43.
  5. Ibid. III. 30-31.

But Clutton Brock goes on to say rightly, "If Mozarts' "Don Giovanni" had been composed in imitation of Rossini the result would not have been more surprising. But genius can get its inspiration from inferior art as well as from nature and Shelley trying to sing like Moore, sang like himself instead."<sup>1</sup>

Another short lyric which has an Oriental subject is the one called From the Arabic, An Imitation. According to Medwin it was based on some passage in Terrick Hamilton's prose translation of The Arabian romance Antar, a Bedoueen Romance, (1819-20). "This Jack-the Giant-Killer romance," says Medwin, "Abounds with vivid and picturesque, but overcharged descriptions of the scenery and manners of the tribes of the Desert, and his (Shelley's) Lines from the Arabic were almost a translation from a translation in that Oriental fiction. Antar is a straw that floated for a moment on the stream and has been engulfed - forgotten."<sup>2</sup>

The present writer has like Shelley's editor H. B. Forman tried, unsuccessfully, to identify the one passage in Hamilton's four volumes of rather monotonous translation, on which Shelley based his lyric. As we have seen in other instances, it was not Shelley's habit to adhere to his sources closely; he liked rather to extract a phrase or two that appeared suggestive of some peculiar impression that he wanted to convey, and surrounded it, as with a sort of halo, with his own dominant emotional mood. Similarly in this case Forman seems right in believing that Shelley's lyric is perhaps not based on any one passage of Antar. "It seems to me" he says "more like the thrice distilled and purified essence of the spirit of devotion diffused throughout the romance. At the most it could only represent in a highly idealized form some utterance of Ibla, the cousin and beloved of the death-dealing black champion of

1. Shelley, The Man and the Poet. p. 190.

2. Medwin's Revised Life of Shelley, edit. H. B. Forman, p. 351.

her tribe while away on one of his innumerable blood thirsty forays in the desert."<sup>1</sup> Shelley's method, like Coleridge's, indeed, aims at conveying "the thrice distilled and purified essence", emotional and atmospheric essence, of his 'source', rather than like Southey to overload the reader's mind by an accumulation of far-fetched and incongruous ornament. The ardent devotion of the Arabian maiden for her warrior lover is skilfully expressed by the similes, which though conventional in Arabic, are all the more effective in English on account of their alien formality:

My faint spirit was sitting in the light  
Of thy looks my love;  
It panted for thee like the hind at noon  
For the brooks my love,  
Thy barb whose hoofs out speed the tempests' flight  
Bore thee far from me;  
My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,  
Did companion Thee.<sup>2</sup>

Shelley also wrote two sonnets on subjects that can be called Oriental - Ozymandias, on the statue of the Egyptian king Ozymandias, lying shattered in the desert:

Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

and the sonnet on the Nile, written in friendly competition with Keats and Leigh Hunt. Of these the one by Leigh Hunt is for once, better than those of Keats and Shelley. Nile and the Mountains of the Moon, from which it takes its source, were a constant topic of inspiration for nearly all poets of the Romantic Revival, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Leigh Hunt; and Shelley once again conveys his Witch of Atlas, like Mab and the poet in Alastor, to the Nile;

But her choice sport was in the hours of sleep,  
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads  
Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep  
Of utmost Axume, until he spreads  
Like a calm flock of silver fleeced sheep,  
His waters on the plain: crested heads  
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ibid. note. This song affords a remarkable parallel to the "Arab Love Song", of Shelley's great admirer Francis Thompson. As Shelley's song expresses the quintessence of chivalry and romance of the Arabian romance Antar, so Thompson's song is the quintessence of the Arab poetry of love, extracted from the Mu'allakat, the Golden Odes of Arabia.

2. From the Arabic, An Imitation.

3. The Witch of Atlas LVII.

what then is Shelley's general attitude to the Orient? His interest in the East began, as we have seen, alongside his taste for the "horror-romanticism" of the time, as an offshoot of his strong sense of the numinous, the awe of the supernatural. We have seen how Southey's supernatural machinery thrilled him; how Gebir absorbed his attention. In Queen Mab, written during his discipleship of Godwinian Reason, it was the economo-political essay of Volney (and possibly the poem of Jones) that contributed to his Orientalism. In Alastor while his poetic manner matured, the influence of the Oriental travellers and fiction writers is visible in some of the descriptive passages of the poem and of Southey in some lyrical; significantly the Oriental journeys of the poet in Alastor embody his spiritual quest of the Ideal. But the personal and absorbing theme of the poem helps Shelley to assimilate all the 'influences' and creation is with him, as with all great poets, a working together of the whole man, a fusion of conscious and sub-conscious memories. After Alastor the Orient is either the scene of Shelley's mythical kingdom where evil and tyranny are predominant, as in The Revolt of Islam, or as in Hellas, the Greek War of Independence against the Turks, is the symbol of the regeneration of mankind. The mythical vales of the Indian Caucasus, where the eternal strife of good and evil goes on, remain too remote and shadowy to belong to any earthly country. Then we have some lyrics and sonnets in the contemporary Oriental fashion and a few references in other poems, where, though the subject is Oriental the soaring lyrical manner is intensely Shelleyan - expressing in quintessence the qualities dear to Shelleys' own heart, the charm of mental travels to remote lands and rivers with strange sounding names, the contemplation of awful ruins and statues, the admiration for the self-abnegatory devotion of Indian and Arabian maidens, that transcends the boundaries of the real and the human into the mystical and the Ideal. We have also noticed the analogy that the abstract and Platonic thought of Shelley sometimes affords with Persian and Hindu systems of thought, but how it differs from

them in being clothed in more opulent imagery, which if it is frequently diffuse and amorphous, abounds in simple impressions of colour, light and motion, symbolical of that immutable reality, in the light of which Shelley constantly endeavoured to view the world of sense.

If Shelley affords interesting analogies to Eastern mystics and idealists, Keats "the most-English of poets since Shakespeare", has also been described as having an Oriental strain in his temperament. But this Oriental strain is not mystical as in Shelley; it is the sensuousness, the love of warmth and colour, a certain hysterical emotionalism and a "default of male robustness", that Keats is said to possess in common with Oriental people. And in this case, as can be expected from this analogy which is not too flattering to the Oriental people, it is not some patriotic Oriental scholar who attributes these qualities to Keats. We have the word of no less a person than the well-known editor of Keats and Shelley, H. Buxton Forman. "The fact of the matter is" says Forman, "that somehow or other, an Oriental as well as a Greek strain had passed into the child of Pinebury parents, and if we have the supreme advantage of a romantic colour and warmth throughout a great part of the poetry left by this wondrously gifted youth, we must be content to take with it the prevalent temperament of the lovers in Oriental romances and tales, who faint as a matter of course under due provocation, very much to the surprise of a northerly reader not previously acquainted with their customs. Strange and occult things happen now and again in the building up of men of genius; but I do not know that the presence in a London child of unremarkable parents, of clear emanations from the spirit of Greek mythology and the spirit of Eastern Romance is more wonderful than the transfusion of the sublimated essence of the French revolution into the veins of Shelley the son of a long line of Sussex squires . . . ." <sup>1</sup> This is of course a single trait we cannot point out, of an otherwise "manly and even

1. H. B. Forman's edition of Keats' works in four volumes, 1863, vol. I, p. 322, preface.

## K E A T S.

If Shelley affords interesting analogies to Eastern mystics and idealists, Keats "the most English of poets since Shakespeare", has also been described as having an Oriental strain in his temperament. But this Oriental strain is not mystical as in Shelley; it is the sensuousness, the love of warmth and colour, a certain hysterical emotionalism and a "default of male robustness", that Keats is said to possess in common with Oriental people. And in this case, as can be expected from this analogy which is not too flattering to the Oriental people, it is not some patriotic Oriental scholar who attributes these qualities to Keats. We have the word of no less a person than the well-known editor of Keats and Shelley, H. Buxton Forman. "The fact of the matter is" says Forman, "that somehow or other, an Oriental as well as a Greek strain had passed into the child of Finsbury parents, and if we have the supreme advantage of a romantic colour and warmth throughout a great part of the poetry left by this wondrously gifted youth, we must be content to take with it the prevalent temperament of the lovers in Oriental romances and tales, who faint as a matter of course under due provocation, very much to the surprise of a Northerly reader not previously acquainted with their customs. Strange and occult things happen now and again in the building up of men of genius; but I do not know that the presence in a London child of unremarkable parents, of clear emanations from the spirit of Greek Mythology and the spirit of Eastern Romance is more wonderful than the transfusion of the sublimated essence of the French Revolution into the veins of Shelley the scion of a long line of Sussex squires . . . ." <sup>1</sup> This is of course a single trait as Forman points out, of an otherwise "manly and even

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1. H. B. Forman's edition of Keat's works in four volumes, 1883, vol. I. p. XXIX, preface.

pugnacious character", and one can set against it as a foil the "flint and iron "Keats of Mathew Arnold or the Keats of J. Middleton Murry, who is perhaps a little too much "with Shakespeare". But the fact remains that there was an hysterical and sentimental trait in Keats of which he gradually cleared himself as his poetic art evolved. It will be an interesting study in ethnology or as Forman says in occultism to trace this so called Oriental strain in Keats' ancestors! Of literary influences, it was perhaps the lingering vapid sentimentalism of the Della Cruscan School, of Moore's poems and above all the artificial 'luxury' and 'ecstasy' of Leigh Hunt's works, rather than any Oriental literature, that contributed to the lovelorn sensuousness of Keats' earlier poetry and to his view of women that classed them "with roses and sweatmeats". Keats must have read the Arabian Nights and other kindred tales early in his life; he refers to them in his correspondence with Fanny Brawne many years later in connection with his hopeless passion for her: "I have been reading lately an Oriental tale of a very beautiful color- It is of a city of melancholy men, all made so by this circumstance. Through a series of adventures each one of them by turns reach(es) some gardens of Paradise where they meet with a most enchanting Lady; and just as they are going to embrace her, she bids them shut their eyes - they shut them - and on opening their eyes again find themselves descending to the earth in a magic basket. The remembrance of this Lady and their delights lost beyond all recovery render them melancholy ever after. How I applied this to you, my dear, how I palpitated at it; ..."<sup>1</sup>

One feels irreverent using these melancholy love-letters of a great man to prove our paltry contentions about this or that matter; however, this is perhaps the only place where Keats speaks of his own love in connection with the Orient.

We learn from Keats' school friend Charles Cowden Clarke that

1. Letter to Fanny Brawne, July 15, 1819, p. 390. vol. II. Letters of J. Keats, edited by M. B. Forman, 1931.

2. Recollections of Writers by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, London, 1872, p. 124.

Keats, like most of his contemporaries studied the works of the travellers with avidity. "He must in those last months have exhausted the school library, which consisted principally of abridgements of all the voyages and travels of any note," including, we are sure, many works of Oriental travel. "The books, however, that were his constantly recurrent sources of attraction were Tooke's "Pantheon", Lempriere's classical Dictionary which he appeared to learn and Spence's "Polymetis"....."<sup>1</sup> From these and Edward Baldwin's (pseud: William Godwin) Pantheon, Keats satisfied his early appetite for the mythologies of the various nations. One is reminded, inevitably, of Southey's similar boyhood passion for Picart's Religious Ceremonies, which he resolved to 'illustrate', in his 'epics'. This interest in the travels, mythologies and religions of the various nations was, as we have seen, a characteristic symbol of the expanding borders of the imagination and a more catholic taste in the Romantic Revival, as was also the re-emergent interest in the supernatural. But in Keats' case at least it was not only from ~~the~~ encyclopaedias and dictionaries that he satisfied his early mythological appetite, but from an enthusiastic study of Spenser, Chapman and the Jacobean poets. His Chapman Sonnet expresses symbolically that sense of wonder and adventure that the poets of the Romantic Revival felt for their expanding universe of the imagination, a sense of wonder and adventure that is, in some respects, akin to the one that the Elizabethans felt for actual travel and adventure. To Keats and his contemporaries, as to the Elizabethans, remarks E. de Selincourt "the world of ancient mythology which had just dawned on their horizon seemed but an extension of their own kingdom. Their vivid imagination absorbed its beauty and found it in a wealth of material by which to illustrate and to interpret their most deeply felt emotions, so that it became for all its aloofness only another means of passionate self-expression. For them the distinctions of classic and romantic, arid distinctions of the schools, would appear at their best a meaningless piece of pedantry and at their worst a denial of what was to them a vital truth - the essential unity of human feeling and human

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1. Recollections of Writers by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, London, 1878, p. 124.

experience wherever and whenever it is found."<sup>1</sup> The Oriental mythologies, however, were not naturalized to the same extent as the classical, partly because of the feebleness, and lack of poetical ability of its advocates and practitioners, Jones, Southey and Moore, and partly because of their inherent alien and unpoetical nature, which kept the better poets away from them. Keats had no high opinion of the Oriental poems of Southey, Moore and Byron and it is possible that he referred to the morbidity and the melodramatic nature of their works when he spoke in Sleep and Poetry of the contemporary poets whose:

"themes  
 Are ugly clubs, the poets Polyphemes  
 Disturbing the grand sea."<sup>2</sup>

"Poetry", Keats said, "Should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity".<sup>3</sup> And the Oriental poems were perhaps too 'singular' for his taste, and the 'excess' they had was of turbulence, of passion and of outlandish epithets, rather than of any 'fine' sensuousness. Yet if Southey's Glendoveers, Moore's Peris and Byron's lowering Corsairs failed to attract Keats, he was like Shelley, sensible of the romance of foreign names and countries, Egypt, Nineveh, Memphis and Babylon, of the gorgeousness and gloom of the many-columned Oriental halls and palaces, the subterranean caverns and chasms, that haunted the imagination of all his contemporaries, ever since Beckford and Coleridge wrote about them. Nor can one fail to notice the influence of the magical atmosphere of the Arabian Nights in Endymion and other poems. As Sir Sidney Colvin has pointed out in his monumental book on Keats, the hints for submarine and ethereal wanderings in Endymion, may have come from the Arabian Nights. "The scenery", says Colvin, "is often not merely of a Gothic vastness and intricacy there is something of Oriental bewilderment - an Arabian Nights jugglery with space and time - in the vague suddenness with which its changes are effected."<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Poems of Keats, edited with an introduction by E. De Selincourt 1905, p. XLVII.  
 2. Sleep and Poetry, 233-35.  
 3. Letter to J. Taylor, Feb. 27, 1818,  
 4. John Keats, His Life and Poetry, his Friends critics and After-fame by Sidney Colvin, 1920. p. 173.

In Bk. II the temple of Diana suddenly dissolves "into a structure which by its 'abysmal depths of awe', its gloomy splendours and intricacies of aisle and vault and corridor, its dimly gorgeous and most un-Grecian magnificence reminds us of nothing so much as of Vathek and the halls of Eblis or some of the magical subterranean palaces of the Arabian Nights." <sup>1</sup>

A dusky empire and its diadems;  
One faint eternal eventide of gems. <sup>2</sup>

In Bk. III again, the episode of the old man Glaucus contains suggestions of incidents and machinery of Oriental magic from the Arabian Nights. "The dawn of paralysed and helpless senility which the enchantress had condemned him to endure for a thousand years ... reminds us of such stories as that of the fisherman in the Arabian Nights and of the spell laid by Suleiman upon the rebellious Djinn whom he imprisoned for a thousand and eight hundred years in a bottle until the fisherman released him." <sup>3</sup> In the episode of Glaucus and Circe, corresponding to the story of Beber Selim in the Arabian Nights, with its Kings and Queens of the sea living and moving under water, its repeated magical transformations and enchantments and the adventures of the hero with Queen Lab, the Oriental counterpart of Circe, we see that Keats was mixing with his classical myth, ideas taken from the Arabian Nights. Similarly in Hyperion Keats' imagination is fired by the legends of the East as by those of Greece and Rome, when he conceives Asia as "born of most enormous Kaf," <sup>4</sup> Kaf being the fabulous mountain in Mohammedan mythology, supposed to be surrounding the world. In Endymion the lines

"Aye even as dead still as a marble man  
Frozen in that old tale Arabian." <sup>5</sup>

allude to the tale of Zobeide, Eldest Lady's story in The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, Yet Arabian Nights is not the only

1. Ibid p. 184.
2. Endymion II, 224-25. See the whole passage 221-239.
3. J. Keats, S. Colvin, p. 191.
4. Hyperion, II, 53. I owe these references to Selincourt's edition of Keats' poems op.cit. p. 424 & 507.
5. Endymion I, 405-406. See also Selincourt op.cit. p. 424. And reference to Aladdin Magian also from the Arabian Nights, in Staffa I and Endymion III, 265.

book that contributes whatever Oriental colouring, certain episodes of Endymion possess. We know that Shelley's Alastor, published in 1816 and praised in the Examiner by Leigh Hunt, was read by Keats before he began Endymion in 1817. The subject of Endymion, it has been pointed out, is the subject of Alastor, which is, with some qualifications, the subject of The Prelude. This chain of influences from the elder to the younger poets of the Romantic Revival, responsible in some measure for their recurrent preoccupation with the subject of the soul's journey in search of the Ideal, and the need of human sympathy, is not our business to consider here. It seems very probable, on the other hand, that it was not merely the subject of Alastor that influenced Endymion but also its general plan and some of its descriptions. Professor A. C. Bradley in his Oxford Lectures on Poetry <sup>after</sup> pointing out the similarity of subject and of some descriptions, in the two poems, came to the conclusion that, "it seems beyond doubt that the story of Cynthia and Endymion would not have taken this shape but for Alastor."<sup>1</sup> But this interesting subject has not been pursued any further. It would require a whole book, in the manner of Professor Lowes' excellent The Road to Xanadu, or that similar <sup>but</sup> vastly inferior book on Shelley's Alastor, An Odyssey of the Soul,<sup>2</sup> to trace all the images and descriptions of Endymion to Keats' reading and ascertain his debts to his contemporaries. There is no doubt that some strong-hearted and industrious scholar will one day venture to tackle this vast subject. For the present, we can but notice a few instances that have some bearing on our subject.

We have seen that it was no mere whim on Shelley's part to conduct his poet in Alastor to the ancient Eastern lands Nineveh, Memphis and Babylon, Persia and India and marvel on the mystery and

1. Oxford Lectures on Poetry, by A. C. Bradley, 1909, Note 'The Letters of Keats', p. 241. See also 'The Long Poem in Wordsworth's Age', p. 186. Professor Bradley was probably the first to draw attention to the similarity of subject between Endymion and Alastor.

2. By H. L. Hoffman, New York, 1933.

grandeur of ruins and magnificent Oriental halls. It was a reflection of the great contemporary interest in the marvellous adventures related by Eastern travellers; Shelley was doing in his quintessential poetic manner what Southey, Moore and others were doing in their own longwinded, elaborate style. With Keats this 'quintessentializing' process is carried one step further. There are passages in Endymion, such as the one pointed out before (II, 221-239), where no Eastern names are mentioned, because Keats is dealing with a classical legend, but the essence, one can at once notice, is most un-classical.

A dusky empire and its diadems;  
One faint eternal eventide of gems,

millions of which "sparkled on a vein of gold"; "the monstrous roof curves hugely"; there are

Winding passages, where sameness breeds  
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change

and

Silver grotts, or giant range  
Of Sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge  
Athward a flood of crystal."<sup>1</sup>

Far away there is "an orb'd diamond set to fray old darkness "from the throne and so forth,

There is another passage in Bk. II which is still nearer to the Eastern magnificence of the descriptions in Alastor. We will quote the two passages side by side. The heroes of both poems wander in search of "strange truths in undiscovered lands" and visit:

"...where'er  
The red volcano over-canopies  
Its fields of snow and pinnacles  
of ice  
With burning smoke or where bitu-  
men lakes  
On black bare pointed islets ever  
beat  
With sluggish surge or where the  
secret caves  
Rugged and dark, winding among  
the springs  
Of fire and poison, inaccessible  
To avarice or pride, their starry  
domes  
Of diamond and of gold expand  
above  
Numberless and immeasurable halls

"...Caves and palaces of mottled  
ore  
Gold dome, and crystal wall, and  
turquoise floor,  
Black polish'd porticos of awful  
shade,  
And at the last, a diamond balus-  
trade  
Leading afar past wild magnifi-  
cence,  
Spiral through ruggedest loopholes  
and thence  
Stretching across a void, then  
guiding o'er  
Enormous chasms, where all foam  
and roar,  
Streams subterranean tease their  
granite beds;

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1. Endymion II, 221-239.



Indian maid? We have suggested some reasons for this partiality of the romantic poets for the Orient, in the section on Shelley.. It seems impossible to believe that Keats had forgotten all about the glowing passages in Alastor that describe the Indian maid and that he was unaware of the parallelism. On the other hand, one is almost led to the engaging belief that Keats was deliberately trying to outrival Shelley by writing on the same subjects, with approximately the same plan, though a characteristically different style and conclusion.

Before coming to the sources of Keats' Indian maiden let us first compare the passages describing the two maids in Alastor and Endymion. Both maids are in<sup>a</sup> tremulous state of love/lorn grief, and the poet/Shelley's poem is, if anything, in a still more passionate state of self surrender. The poet in Alastor sees the Indian maid thus:

... "by the warm light of their own life  
 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare  
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,  
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
 Outstretched and pale and quivering eagerly.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian maid in Endymion is described thus: (I am putting together the descriptive lines scattered over a couple of pages.)

"Behold her panting in the forest grass  
 Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass  
 For tenderness the arms so idly lain  
 Amongst them?.....  
 To see such lovely eyes in swimming search  
 After some warm delight .....

The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see  
 Her gentle bosom heaving tumultuously.  
 .....there she lay  
 Sweet as a musk rose upon new-made hay  
 With all her limbs on tremble and her eyes  
 Shut softly up alive..."<sup>2</sup>

The similarity between the ardent condition of the two maids, their panting and trembling natures is fairly obvious. But let us also compare the individual phrases from the two passages, even at the cost of spoiling the effect of poetry.

1. The "dark locks", "beamy bending eyes" of Shelleys' maid correspond to the "curls of jet" and "lovely eyes in swimming search" of

2. The Noble Savage by A. W. Fairchild, New York, 1880; p. 213.

- 1. Alastor, 175-180.
- 2. Endymion IV. 59-104.

Keats' maid; the "bare arms" and "glowing limbs" of the former appear in a slightly different combination ~~as~~ <sup>from</sup> the tender "arms" and "limbs on tremble" of the latter. To make up for "limbs on tremble", however, we have the lips of Shelley's maiden "quivering eagerly". But then if Shelley makes the "beating of her heart" "and her breath tumultuously" accord to her song, Keats' "lady's heart beat quick and he could see her gentle bosom heaving tumultuously". Both maidens sing; in Alastor "wild numbers then she raised with voice stifled in tremulous sobs subdued by its own pathos", in Endymion she "for pity sang this roundelay". All these, surely, are not just coincidences.<sup>1</sup>

We need not go any further in to the effect produced on Endymion by the Indian maid's roundelay, the "mawkishness" of "thine other softling" (for hand) and "O let me sip that tear!" <sup>as</sup> has been pointed out often enough, and Keats himself was the first to realize it. But one must remember that Shelley also is not entirely free from this melting mood. "I die! I faint! I fail!" (The Indian Serenade) "I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire" (Epipsychideon 590), - only the expression in Shelley is not so banal as in Keats' early poems. The frequency of these moods in Shelley and Keats shows that in the examples pointed above, it was not merely for dramatic representation, of lovesick Indian maidens that they fell into these fainting moods, though that might serve as a convenient excuse for giving outlet to their own inherent emotionalism, and explain, to that extent, their partiality for the Indian maids. The American author of the Noble Savage was disappointed to find that "Diana did not disguise herself as a squaw";<sup>2</sup> it is of some consequence for us to notice that she appears as a devout Hindu, the "Swan of Ganges",<sup>3</sup> murmuring about Indian streams,<sup>4</sup> and that Shelley's vision of the Ideal embodying "all of wonderful, or wise or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher and the lover could depicture"<sup>5</sup> materialises

1. Prof. Bradley (op.cit) p. 241. also compares Endymion, 680 ff and Alastor 192 ff. the dreamers' feeling on awakening from his dream is the same in two poems. Similar disenchantment falls on the scene.
2. The Noble Savage by H. N. Fairchild, New York, 1928; p. 313.
3. Endymion IV. 466.
4. Ibid, IV. 143.
5. Preface Alastor.

ing  
 into a quiver/Kashmirian maid! It is impossible not to believe that these two amorous Indian maids, if they are not ~~the~~ one and the same person, are at least sisters and the two English poets heaped on them all the exotic attributes that they considered essential for an Indian maiden, who should represent their ideal of physical and intellectual beauty.

If Keats owed to Shelley<sup>1</sup> the original idea of introducing the Indian maid in his poem, he follows an entirely different course in the rest of the episodes dealing with her. Some of Shelley's descriptions in Alastor, we remember, were reminiscent of Southey and the Eastern travellers. Keats' notions of the Orient, on the other hand seem to be drawn almost entirely from the Greek authors and possibly from Milton. In describing the passing of Bacchus through India Keats hit upon a happy device of introducing descriptions of Oriental countries and mythologies into his classical legend without any sense of incongruity. But although the whole of the roundelay, is supposed to be sung by the Indian maid, the parts describing in triumphant tones the conquest of the East by Bacchus,<sup>2</sup> would have been more suitable as coming from Bacchus himself rather than from the "sickhearted weary", maid, whose sympathies, one expects, should be with her own deities. Keats was probably so taken up with the vivid and triumphant character of the descriptions themselves as to disregard their dramatic inappropriateness in the mouth of the Indian maid. Before venturing any further remarks on the character of the Orient described, let us first glance at the alleged sources.

Part of the song, it is generally agreed was suggested, as Lord Houghton first pointed out, by the famous picture of Bacchus and Ariadne in the National Gallery, which Keats had seen. (Miss Amy Lowell dissents from this view<sup>3</sup> because Keats does not mention Ariadne!) According to Sir Sidney Colvin<sup>4</sup> the rest of the details

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1. I am not forgetting the couplet in G. L. Way's translation (Lond. 1800) of the Fabliaux and Tales from the French of M. Le Grand, suggested by S. Colvin (p. 33) as the possible source for the Indian Maiden, especially when Keats had employed it for the Alexander Fragment (Colvin p. 554). Still the more urgent and living inspiration seems to have come from Shelley's Alastor. For Ways Fable see vol. II. p. 49-59 of above.
  2. Especially Lines 257-267. IV.
  3. John Keats I. p. 437.
  4. John Keats op.cit. p. 231. ff.

about the Asiatic animals, were suggested by Spence's and Godwin's book's mentioned before, as well as by a certain ancient sacrophagus which Keats may have seen in the Towner collection at the British Museum; - so that the whole picture is a composite from various sources. The latter suggestion is plausible because of Keats' frequent habit of working from something seen with his eyes. Professor Selincourt<sup>1</sup> suggested that the music and cadence as well as some ideas and the word "Osirian" may have been suggested to Keats from Milton's Ode to Nativity<sup>2</sup> and he may have, with the help of his own imagination, developed hints taken from Lempriere and Sandy's translation of Ovid. Amy Lowell, however in her 'revolutionising' and modernistic biography of Keats dismisses most of the above suggestions, not because they are inadequate or incorrect, but because following Professor J. Livingston Lowes' suggestion<sup>3</sup> (without however his convincing method) she believes to have discovered a new 'source' of Keats' song in the Historical Library of Diodorus Siculus which Keats may have read. Not considering Shelley's possible influence at all, she asserts, that "Diana owes the nationality of her impersonation, I am firmly convinced, to Diodorus."<sup>4</sup> But the grounds for this firm conviction are not too sound. In the first place there is no evidence whatsoever to prove that Keats did read Diodorus, and secondly, Miss Lowell's ingenious contentions and forced deductions do not seem plausible enough to supersede those of Colvin and Selincourt. With an immoderate enthusiasm over dismissing previous suggestions and an extraordinary will to believe in her own she, further, deprives Keats of all power of imagination and reduces him to an automaton simply recording external impressions and hoarding phrases from this or that 'source' without any power of creation whatsoever. Last we be accused of prejudice, let us examine one or two of her assertions, if only to serve as an occasion for our own

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1. Poems of John Keats, op.cit. p. 446-447.

2. cf. Ode to Nativity, Stanzas XIX-XXV. and Endymion V. 257-267. (Selincourt, p. 446.)

3. John Keats by Amy Lowell op.cit. I. p. 425.

4. Ibid. p. 427.

remarks. For the source of the following lines of the Indian maiden:

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side  
I sat a weeping: in the whole world wide  
There was no one to ask me why I wept,-  
And so I kept  
Brimming the water lily cups with tears  
Cold as my fears.

Beneath my palm trees by the riverside  
I sat a weeping: what enamoured bride  
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds  
But hides and shrouds,  
Beneath dark palm trees by the riverside?"<sup>1</sup>

Miss Lowell quotes the following passage from Diodorus "describing" as she herself says "not India in particular ... but a mythical island off the coast of Greece":<sup>2</sup> "The first entrance into the Island runs up a long vale, shaded all along with high and lofty trees, so thick, that only a dim and glimmering light passes through; but the fiery beams of the sun enter not in the least to offend the passenger. In passing along, issue many sweet and crystal springs".<sup>3</sup>

Then follow her own illuminating remarks:

"The scene (of Keats lines quoted) is that of Diodorus, the "lofty trees" have turned into appropriate palms, often spoken of in the Historical Library; the "crystal springs" have widened into a river, the "glimmering light" has given the shadowy wooer."<sup>4</sup>

Now no person except Miss Lowell with her willing suspension of all sense of discrimination, would see any resemblance whatsoever, either in phrase or image, between Keats' lines and the passage quoted, which might be, for all we know, a description out of any book of travel, about any mythical island off the coast of any country. How the "lofty trees" can "turn" into "appropriate palms," and "crystal springs" "widen" into a river, and how the "glimmering light" can give the "shadowy wooer", only Miss Lowell's metamorphic mind knows! All this jugglery in landscape-transformation seems less arbitrary to Miss Lowell's mind than the simple commonsense view, that

1. Endymion, IV. 182-192.

2. John Keats by Amy Lowell op.cit. p. 427.

3. Ibid. 427-428.

4. Ibid. 428.

5. Ibid. p. 431.

would credit Keats with the imagination to think for himself of the obvious images of the palm trees and the river in connection with India.

"But Diodorus" we are reassured by Miss Lowell, "is not unaccompanied in reminiscence in these two stanzas. There is a hint of Lycidas in the brimming lilly cups, and more than a dash of Coleridge's peculiar touch of weird suggestion in the last three lines".<sup>1</sup> So this cocktail of a source turns out to be, if we dismiss that "dash" of Diodorus, to be nothing but a "shaking up" of the suggestions of Colvin<sup>2</sup> and Selincourt<sup>3</sup>: Let us examine yet another instance.

Apropos of the "Asian elephants" and other Oriental animals (mentioned in lines 241-246, Bk. IV.) Miss Lowell says in her picturesque style (I p. 435): "Ovid has no elephants, but they tramp up and down the pages of Diodorus in herds." So the elephants in Keats' poem come from Diodorus. But Miss Lowell has not such an easy job with the rest of, what she calls "Keats' menagerie";<sup>4</sup> she can find not a single zebra "tramping up and down the pages of Diodorus"! So it is inevitable that Keats should, for once, get the credit of "invention". "Keats invents the zebras as he also does the alligators, but these last two owe their existence to the crocodiles, who come directly from Diodorus..."<sup>5</sup> It is a relief to find Keats "inventing" at least zebras, for a moment ago we saw that he could not invent even palm trees and Miss Lowell had to "turn" some lofty trees "into appropriate palms" for him! But these "last two" i.e. Zebras and alligators, owing "their existence to the crocodiles who come from Diodorus," is a still greater piece of witchcraft than the "crystal springs" widening into a river or "glimmering light", giving the "shadowy wooer". Miss Lowell being herself a poetess, probably knows more about these strange births and transformations than we do!

After such "analysis" of the Triumph of Bacchus, for several

1. Ibid.
2. J. Keats, by S. Colvin op.cit. p. 230 for the influence of Kubla Khan in Endymion IV. 188-192.
3. Poems of J. Keats, op.cit. p. 446, for influence of Milton's Ode to Nativity.
4. J. Keats by Amy Lowell op.cit. I p. 436.
5. Ibid. p. 435.

pages Miss Lowell sums up Keats' method by saying that "his method here is somewhat akin to the old game, where, given a word and a question, each player must write a poem bringing in the word and answering the question".<sup>1</sup> Whether it is true of Keats' or not, it is certainly true of Miss Lowell's method which is somewhat akin to the new game where given a poem and a 'source' the critic must write a book bringing in the source and damning the poem!

Yet Miss Lowell can pounce at other peoples' comparatively harmless and even true suggestions. Dr. Robert Bridges in his well-known critical essay on Keats, said that the Indian Maiden's song was "unmatched for life, wide motion and dreamy romantic Orientalism."<sup>2</sup> This Miss Lowell calls, in her journalese an "amazing statement".<sup>3</sup> Her own statement must be quoted in full, not for its intrinsic worth, but again as an occasion for further remarks:

"I find none of these things in it", she says, "except the motion. It is too artificial to contain much life. The procession is an amusing picture, but it is not in the least Oriental. I wish I knew what Dr. Bridges means by 'romantic, dreamy Orientalism'. Dreamy romance is certainly not a quality of Greek literature and one may search the Bible, that great storehouse of Hebrew texts, without finding anything to qualify; Egyptian literature has no trace of it, and never once in my delvings into the literature of China and Japan have I come across anything to which the term might fitly be given. The Hindu may supply us with mysticism, even perhaps, if one chooses to call it so, romance, but scarcely, I think, of the type to which "dreamy" would apply. Persian literature comes the nearest, but the romantic dreams of Persia are so entirely based upon eroticism that any comparison between them and Keats' lyric simply can not be made. Keats knew nothing of any Oriental state of mind...After all how could the song be Oriental, considering that the legend on which it is based reached Keats through the medium of a Roman a Sicilian, and/<sup>a</sup> Frenchman?<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid. p. 442.

2. Reprinted in Collected Essays Papers etc. of Robert Bridges 1929. IV. p. 134.

3. J. Keats by Amy Lowell op.cit. p. 438.

4. Ibid.

As regards the denial of "life" in the song, we can only express our regret, and say, we wish we knew what Miss Lowell means when she calls it artificial and amusing. The second point about Orientalism is more relevant to our subject. One can't fail to notice that Miss Lowell misconstrues Dr. Bridges' remark absolutely and tries to overawe the reader by her superior, but in this case irrelevant, knowledge about the Orient. Dr. Bridge's phrase "dreamy romantic Orientalism" is meant to describe a certain quality of Keats' song i.e. a certain attitude to the Orient expressed in the song, (which we shall presently see is dreamy and romantic); it does not, nor was it meant to, attribute any dreamy, romantic qualities to the actual Orient and also from Oriental literatures, is a fact too obvious to be pointed out. The relation of this imaginative Orient to the real Orient we leave for discussion in the future chapter. For the present we are confining ourselves to the fascinating task of examining how characteristically different each poet's Orientalism, the romantic Orientalism of the early 19th century poets.

Any summing up as Miss Lowell does of the vast and various literatures of India, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, China and Japan in the compass of a single paragraph is bound to be inadequate and misleading. And to use the extremely vague and confusing word 'romantic' or its opposite 'classical' or 'realistic' to describe the distinguishing qualities of these literatures, is to court certain disaster. The danger of such sweeping generalisations arrived at by a mere 'delving' into one or two of these literatures is made apparent when Miss Lowell speaks of the "romantic dreams of Persia" being "so entirely based upon eroticism". We are asked to believe that the whole of a country's literature which contains such names as Rumi and Jami, Hafiz and Khayyam, is nothing but entire eroticism! The charge is too absurd even to deserve refutation.

In any case the point whether Oriental literatures are romantic or otherwise is entirely irrelevant to Keats' Orientalism, for Keats knew no Oriental literatures. "After all how could the song be Oriental, considering that the legend on which it is based reached Keats through the medium of a Roman, a Sicilian and a Frenchman?" The answer is very simple. The song could not be, nor was meant by Keats or Dr. Bridges, to be Oriental, but that does not stop it from being

partaking of the Orientalism of a Roman, a Sicilian, a Frenchman and lastly of Keats, the Englishman. We have seen in the course of these pages how the colourful, gorgeous, fantastic, cruel, voluptuous or sentimental qualities of that Orient, which is partly a product of the poets' own imagination and partly a thrice distilled essence of the accounts of the travellers, historians, encyclopaedists translators etc, have been incorporated into their poetry by different poets in different ways. This attitude of each poet towards the Orient, we have, for convenience been calling his "Orientalism". That these notions of the Orient are different from the actual Orient and also from Oriental literatures, is a fact too obvious to be pointed out. The relation of this imaginative Orient to the real Orient we leave for discussion in a future chapter. For the present we are confining ourselves to the fascinating task of examining how characteristically different is each poet's Orientalism.

Keats' Orientalism as we remarked a few pages earlier is mainly derived, in the Triumph of Bacchus, from Milton and the classics, while the Indian maid, we saw, owed something to Shelley's Indian maid in Alastor. This duality of sources probably accounts, among other reasons for the difference of tone observable in the earlier sentimental descriptions of the maid and the triumphant sonorosity of the lines which she is made to utter:

"I saw Osirian Egypt kneel down  
 Before the vine-wreath crown!  
 I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing  
 To the silver cymbals ring!  
 I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce  
 Old Tartary the fierce!  
 The Kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,  
 And from their treasures scatter pearled hail;  
 Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans  
 And all his priesthood moans;  
 Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale"<sup>1</sup>

We have seen examples in Shelley and Moore of this favourite device of the romantic poets, of reviewing the various Oriental countries/and characterising them in a sort of rapid survey in the course of a journey. But Keats' lines differ from them not only in their skilful

1. Endymion. IV. 257-267.

2. Endymion, p. 42.

3. On Icarus, some friends at an early hour 8-9.

4. Sleep and Poetry, 181-182.

But we have seen that there is also an abundance of these Miltonic use of resounding Eastern names but in the hot and passionate quality of the Oriental procession described. If it cannot exactly be called 'dreamy', it is certainly 'romantic' in its selective emphasis on pomp and grandeur. It is doubtful whether from the times of Ovid, Diodorus, Strabo & Dionysius Periegetes, with their descriptions of Oriental wealth, precious stones and wild animals to our own age of novels, magazines and 'pictures', with their, in some respects, similar abundance of wealthy Maharajas, jewels and tiger-shooting, the popular attitude of the Westerner to the Orient has been anything but 'romantic'.<sup>1</sup> But only poets with their superior command of fine and arresting language, have been able to give this popular view the dignity and beauty that only art can give. Keats' passage is a good instance of this.

Before leaving Endymion certain other images must be noticed for their possible Oriental origin. In Bk. II, of Endymion, where Keats describes in his highly wrought and luxuriant manner, the descent of Venus to awaken Adonis from his winter sleep, Venus descends from the blue sky in

" a silver car air-borne but still the dew-  
whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of  
Spun off a drizzling dew. "2

The image is a beautiful instance of what Lascelles Abercrombie calls "inspired realisation".<sup>3</sup> In an earlier sonnet "On leaving some friends at an early hour", Keats had described a heavenly car thus:

"And let there glide by many a pearly car  
Pink robes and wavy hair and diamond jar  
And half discovered wings and glances keen."4

And in Sleep and Poetry, we have the following passage, which seems an earlier version of the more perfect image in Endymion:

"for lo! I see afar  
Oversailing the blue cragginess, a car  
And steads with creamy manes - the charioteer  
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear:  
And now the numerous tramlings quiver lightly  
Along a huge cloud's ridge; and now with sprightly  
Wheel downward they come into fresher skies  
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes"

1. Using the word in its popular, unhistorical sense.
2. Endymion, II, 518-520.
3. The Theory of Poetry, p. 31.
4. On leaving some friends at an Early hour 6-8.
5. Sleep and Poetry, 125-132.

But we have seen that there is also an abundance of these celestial cars in Shelley and Southey. In Queen Mab we saw a "pearly and pellucid"<sup>1</sup> car approach Ianthe from heaven, driven by "Celestial coursers", and its journey in the sky was described thus:

"The magic car moved on  
From the celestial hoofs  
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew  
And where the burning wheels  
Eddied upon the mountains loftiest peak  
Was traced a line of lightning."<sup>2</sup>

There is some similarity between this passage and that just quoted from Sleep and Poetry.

In Shelley's poetry we know the heavenly cars and chariots and "bright eyed charioteers"<sup>3</sup> are a recurring feature, but in Queen Mab, where we have noticed a marked influence of Southey and possibly of Jones, it is not improbable that the Celestial car was suggested by Southey's "Ship of Heaven", itself a hybrid creation, manufactured by Southey, as he himself says, by converting the Vimana or the self-moving car of the Gods in Sanskrit mythology, into a Ship.<sup>4</sup> Southey's own Ship is too prosaic and mechanical a contrivance to fire the imagination of any poet; but still the description of its journey in the skies is similar to corresponding descriptions in Queen Mab:

"The Ship of Heaven instinct with thought display'd  
Its living sail, and glides along the sky,  
On either side in wavy tide,  
The clouds of morn along its paths divide;..."<sup>5</sup>

But in the notes to this passage, Southey quotes the following brief but vivid description of the Vimana or celestial car of Indra, from Sir William Jones' translation of Kalidasa's play Sakuntala:

"Dushmanta. The car itself instructs me that we are moving  
over clouds pregnant with showers; for the circumference of its  
wheels disperses pellucid water"<sup>6</sup>

1. Queen Mab. I, 82.

2. Ibid.

3. Prometheus, Unbound Act II, Scene IV.

4. The Curse of Kehama, London, 1810, notes, p. 294.

5. Ibid. VII 3-6. p. 57.

6. Ibid. p. 295.

If this passage did not suggest Shelley's pellucid car, most certainly it suggested Keats' car in Endymion:

"a silver car air-borne  
Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn  
Spun off a drizzling dew."

It is impossible to determine the exact extent of the interdependence of this series of passages, all dealing with the same subject. Southey was, on his own admission, influenced by Jones; Shelley in Queen Mab echoes Southey in many places and Keats also must have read Queen Mab and also, as we shall presently see The Curse of Kehama. But it is more probable that this particular image in Endymion came not through Shelley but directly from Southey's notes to the Curse of Kehama, where Jones' translation of Sakuntala is quoted. In either case an interesting chain of influences, if such it may be called, is established. The Sanskrit play of Kalidasa is translated into 18th century prose by the scholarly Sir William Jones; Southey the tireless antiquary digs out certain images from Jones' translations, that appeal to him and embodies them in his poetry, which though not of the highest order, helps by the aid of its notes to popularise certain images from Sanskrit, which would otherwise have remained inaccessible. The young Shelley is enthusiastic about Southey's works for reasons of his own, and gives a new life to certain of the elder poet's images. Keats, sensitive and independent, but impressionable, in his early <sup>echoes</sup> poetry/Shelley and Southey at some places and by his capacity of "inspired realization", makes this particular image entirely his own. It is a long and fascinating journey from Kalidasa to Keats, in the course of which the image is shorn of all but its poetic essence and can be applied to the car of Venus as appropriately as it was applied to the car of Indra.

One might hazard the suggestion that the same chain of influences is noticeable, in a less appreciable manner, in the evolution so to speak, of the Indian maids. Kalidasa's heroine Sakuntala suggested some traits of Oneiza and Kalyal in Southey's two Oriental

poems.<sup>1</sup> The "divine Kalyal" as Shelley called her, bequeathes some of the glowing and ethereal qualities of her body to the Indian maid in Alastor.<sup>2</sup> and Shelley's Indian maid we have just noticed imparted some of her tremors and quivers to Keats' Indian maid in Endymion. Of course every poet has invested his own creation with other attributes in keeping with the story and the maids of Alastor and Endymion have other sources, besides Southey; but they have all ardent souls and glowing bodies and are Indian.

A third example is apposite to our contention. Southey founded his story of The Curse of Kehama on the notion of the vehement curses that the gods of Indian mythology are in the habit of delivering at each other. Shelley liked Southey's Curse so much that he employed a similar, but much better, curse in his Prometheus Unbound<sup>3</sup> to curse ~~Prometheus~~ <sup>Jupiter</sup>. In Keats' Isabella; or the Pot of Basil, Isabella has a horrible vision about Lorenzo, that pains her;

"like a lance,  
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall  
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again  
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain."<sup>4</sup>

This echoes the language of the Curse that Kehama delivers at Lad-  
urlad:

With a fire in thy heart  
And a fire in thy brain .....etc.<sup>5</sup>

And also shows that Keats was familiar with Southey's poem and must have come across the quotation from Sakuntala in the notes. In the same poem there is yet another image which has some analogies with Southey. Keats says of Isabella's avaricious brothers:

"For them the Ceylon diver held his breath  
And went all naked to the hungry shark;  
For them his ears gushed blood....."<sup>6</sup>

Forman pointed out<sup>7</sup> that in this passage Keats was echoing from Dryden's Annus Mirabilis, lines describing the monopolies of the Dutch

1. See the Section on Southey.
2. See the section on Shelley.
3. Prometheus Unbound. Act I. Scene, I.
4. Isabella or the Pot of Basil XXXIV.
5. The Curse of Kehama. II, 144-169.
6. Isabella or the Pot of Basil. XV.
7. The complete works of John Keats, 1901, Poems vol. II. p. 41.

in East India trade:

For them alone the heav'ns had kindly heat,  
 In Eastern queries ripening precious dew  
 For them the Idumean balm did sweat  
 And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew.

But it is quite probable that Keats had also read Southey's lines (probably based on Dryden) describing the Garden of Irem in Thalaba and had both Dryden and Southey in mind:

"For this exhausted mines  
 Supplied their golden store;  
 For this the central caverns gave their gems  
 For this the woodman's axe  
 Opened the cedar forest to the sun  
 The silkworm of the East  
 Spun her sepulchral egg".....<sup>1</sup>

Other three mentions of India, Lorenzo embalmed "in warm Indian clove",<sup>2</sup>

"She withers like a palm  
 Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm."<sup>3</sup>

And the one quoted above from Curse of Kehama about the "gnawing fire at heart and brain" of an Indian,<sup>4</sup> all in the same poem,

lend some weight to the suggestion that Keats may also have read the above lines from Southey, although he repeats Dryden's word Ceylon.

All these echoes though intrinsically unimportant show that in spite of Byron, Southey was read and certain outstanding images from his Oriental "unsaleables" (Byron's word) were echoed by the younger poets, though mostly in un-Oriental contexts.

After the brief episode of the Indian maiden in Endymion, and a certain mingling of the atmosphere of the Arabian Nights with his classical mythology, Keats wrote no poem of any considerable length on an Oriental subject. Like Shelley, as his genius ripened these fantastic themes had a lesser and lesser hold on him, a significant fact showing that the Oriental themes, though they may attract the lesser poets like Southey and Moore, never succeeded in getting naturalized into English poetry; at best they represent only an adolescent craze in the development of the genuinely

1. Thalaba. I, 239-245.

2. Isabella XIII.

3. Ibid. LVI.

4. Ibid. XXXIV.

romantic poets of the Romantic Revival.

Yet as we have seen the scenes of Oriental grandeur and magnificence haunted Keats' imagination, and if he did not think worthwhile writing a long Oriental poem, the individual images in his poems, even though not specifically Oriental, express more imaginatively the true spirit of the Orient than the elaborate accumulative catalogues of Southey and Moore. The description of the phantom hall in Lamia, though not meant to be Oriental, has a true Oriental magnificence:

"The glowing banquet room shone with wide-arched grace  
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
Supportless of the faery-roof, made moan  
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade,  
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade  
Of palm and plaintain, met from either side,  
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:  
Two palms and then two plaintains and so on,  
From either side their stems branch'd one to one  
All down the aisled place; and beneath all  
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall  
So canopied, lay an untasted feast  
Teeming with odours ....."<sup>1</sup>

Further on we have "jasper panels", "creeping imageries", "A censor fed with myrrh and spiced wood" and "soft wool-woofed carpets."<sup>2</sup>

It is probable that Keats had read the description of the Garden of Irem and the Paradise of Aloadin in Thalaba, (which Southey had based on Spensers' Bower of Bliss), but there is no evidence to prove that Keats owes any thing to them. It is useful to remember, however that Keats' description though not avowedly Oriental is in the same line with Wordsworth, Southey and Moore's descriptions of Oriental palaces and paradises, though far superior to them in its suggestive sensuousness and a more genuine exoticism. Leigh Hunt, in The Indicator, said of the opening lines of the above passage, "This is the very quintessence of the romantic."

Coleridge and Keats alone of the poets of the Romantic Revival have five senses and all five operate everywhere across their poetry. In Keats not only the senses of sound, colour, motion, smell and touch are aptly expressed but also one type of sense is qualified by words

1. Lamia II, 121-132.

2. Ibid. 173 ff.

which are originally used to express or imply another type of sense, for example "Smoothest Silence", "Coolness to the eye", "fragrance soft"<sup>1</sup>. At one time there was a tendency to credit Keats with nothing but this "mere sensuousness", and also to condemn him for it. It was the Keats of the Flora and Pan region wandering:

"Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon  
Till in the bosom of a leafy world  
We rest in silence, like two gems upcurled  
In the recesses of a pearly shell"<sup>2</sup>

It was of the poetry of this Keats that Courthope remarked, that it "exhibits the progressive efforts of a man of powerful genius to create for his imagination an ideal atmosphere, unaffected by the social influences of his age". And "O for a life of sensations, rather than of thought", was quoted derogatively as a proof of Keats, "decadent" mind. Since then, and even from Arnold downwards Keats has also had advocates who have stressed, perhaps a little too much, his human and social side and tried to make of him a poet of "the agonies, the strife of human hearts",<sup>3</sup> one of a group of poets

"..... to whom the miseries of the world  
Are misery, and will not let them rest"<sup>4</sup>

As a culminating stage of this tendency we have J. Middleton Murray,<sup>5</sup> who, by dint of his own mystical temperament, and with some amount of wrestling with Keats' correspondence, has succeeded in making of Keats, a subtler metaphysician than Coleridge a greater mystic than Blake, and a poet almost as 'Universal' as Shakespeare. We are far, indeed, from that "mere sensuousness", which on the other hand, along with Keats' most characteristic <sup>poetry</sup>, is in danger of being overlooked for a more transcendental and philosophic purpose. It is not our business, however, to go any further into a discussion of this vacillation of taste, with regard to Keats' poetry. The problem of his sensuousness and exoticism, connected as it is with his Orientalism, deserves some attention.

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1. All these phrases are from Hyperion I, 205-210.
  2. Sleep and Poetry, 118-121.
  3. Sleep and Poetry, 123-125.
  4. The Fall of Hyperion, I, 148-149.
  5. Keats and Shakespeare, op.cit.

"The richness of (Keats') poetry might have led us to expect him to be arrested by the colour and magnificence of Oriental Scenery,"<sup>1</sup> said Prof. <sup>E. de.</sup> Selincourt. But such is not the case, for reasons we have already suggested. The finest example of Keats' rich sensuousness and of his exotic Orientalism, occurs in The Eve of St. Agnes, where Madeline is described sleeping and Prophyro spreads out a sumptuous feast of Oriental fruits beside her. The passage is well known and often quoted, but must be quoted once more, for its never-fading charm and as an illustration of our remarks.

"And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep  
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd  
While he from the closet brought a heap  
Of Candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon,  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd  
From Fez, and spiced dainties, every one  
From silken Samarcand to Cedar'd Lebanon." <sup>2</sup>

No finer example can be quoted of a more delicate sensuousness, not merely of the eye and the ear, but also of the senses of fragrance, taste and touch, with an equally masterful onomatopoeic sense of suggesting by words the exact shade of associations connected with the thing or action designated. "We are made to feel how those ideal and rare sweets of sense surround her not only with their own natural richness, but with the associations and the homage of all far countries whence they have been gathered."

"From Silken Samarcand to Cedar'd Lebanon"<sup>3</sup> Here Keats the lover of fine phrases has loaded every rift of his subject with ore. It has been pointed out by Forman and <sup>E. de.</sup> Selincourt<sup>4</sup> that for the whole of this stanza Keats drew upon his Elizabethan reading of Milton, Spenser and Shakespeare; and Samarcand and Fez are both perhaps drawn from Milton.<sup>5</sup> Here as elsewhere, Keats' Eastern epithets are more in the tradition of Milton's vague poetical-sounding Oriental names, than those more correct, realistic names that Southey and Moore

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1. Poems of Keats op.cit. LXIII.
2. The Eve of St. Agnes XXX.
3. S. Colvin, John Keats op.cit. p. 401.
4. Poems of J. Keats, op.cit. p. 471.
5. Paradise Lost XI, 389-403.

employed with disastrous effects.

In The Fall of Hyperion<sup>1</sup> Keats again described a feast of fruits but in a severer manner, without any Eastern epithets.

This kind of sensuous exoticism, if exoticism it is, is inseparable from a rich poetic temperament, in as much as every poet must depend on the exercise of his five senses, on the life of sensations. Sensations in this sense comprehend all poetic experience, and would be called intuitions in modern phraseology, as opposed to concepts. Remy De Gourmont, a later champion of the 'Decadents' has the following to say about sensations and their use in writing: "If there were an art of writing, it would be nothing more or less than the art of feeling, the art of seeing, the art of hearing, the art of using all the senses, whether directly or through the imagination, and the new serious method of a theory of style would be an attempt to show how these two separate worlds, the world of sensations and the world of words penetrate each other."<sup>2</sup>

No other English writers, except Shakespeare and Milton, were so subtly conscious of this relationship of the world of sensations and the world of words as Keats and no other writer possessed to such an eminent degree that power, so tersely defined by Robert Bridges, as "the power of concentrating all the far reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time astonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth."<sup>3</sup> If this is to be sensuous & exotic than Keats was sensuous and Exotic.

Mario Praz, in his recent book The Romantic Agony,<sup>4</sup> includes Keats' name, among a group of writers, whose presiding genius he considers to be the Marquis de Sade. Praz also traces in Keats, in common with Beckford, Coleridge and De Quincey, a vein of exoticism,

1. The Fall of Hyperion I. 30 ff. Selincourt (p. 520) points out the indebtedness of both these feasts to Milton's similar passage in Paradise Lost, V. 341-49.
2. Decadence and other Essays on the Culture of Ideas, trans: by W. A. Bradley, London, 1922; p. 167.
3. Collected Essays op.cit. p. 158.
4. The Romantic Agony by Mario Praz, trans. by A Davidson, London 1933, p. 201 ff.

that desire to transport one's self in imagination outside the actualities of time or space (or both) into a world of one's own creation; though unlike Beckford it is not the Orient that is the El Dorado of Keats' dreams. Did not, Praz contends, Keats' say that, "According to my state of mind, I am with Achilles shouting in the trenches, or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily or I throw my whole being into Troilus and repeating those lines 'I wander like a soul lost upon the stygian banks staying for waftage'. I melt into the air/a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone"<sup>1</sup> This Praz says, is the very "ecstasy of the exoticist; the exoticist who is an 'ecstatic', an exile from his present and actual self ---"<sup>2</sup> But a poet, we must remember, according to Keats, "has no self - It is everything and nothing - It has no character - it enjoys light and shade it lives in gusto be it foul or fair high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated ... a poet has no Identity - he is continually in for andfilling some other body."<sup>3</sup> This utter selflessness and loss of identity is surely not the aim of the exoticist, who, to escape from the ennui of everyday life projects himself by means of his dreams in to a congenial country of his own imagining, his Orient or his Middle Ages, where he can luxuriate in the curiosities of an alien cultural surrounding and satisfy all his thwarted desires. Keats has no special preference for one exotic atmosphere; he not only wants to be with Achilles or with Theocritus, he can annihilate his self by a contemplation of any person or object. "When I am in a room with people ... the identity of everyone in the room begins to press upon me so that I am in a very little time annihilated - not only among men, it would be the same in a nursery of children."<sup>4</sup> It was not only in a nursery of children but also among birds. "If a sparrow came before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel."<sup>5</sup> This attitude of receptivity that accepts all experience is more like the "wise passiveness" of Wordsworth or even the myriad-minded object-

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1. Letter to George & Georgiana Keats, Oct. 1818; Letters edit. M. B. Forman, I. 262.  
 2. The Romantic Agony op.cit. p. 202.  
 3. Lett. to R. Woodhouse, oct. 27, 1818. Letters edit. M. B. Forman I. p. 245.  
 4. Ibid  
 5. Letter to B. Bailey, Nov. 22, 1817, Letters edit. M. B. Forman I, p.74.

ivity of Shakespeare than the gorgeous but monotonous Orientalism of Beckford.

One feels certain that Keats must have enjoyed Beckford's descriptions of the five quintessential Palaces of the Senses, in Vathek.<sup>1</sup> But no two writers are more different in their aim and their and than Beckford and Keats. Beckford like all true exoticists was a dreamer, pure and simple and wanted to remain a dreamer; Keats, on the other hand, one feels, was over-critical of his quite wholesome and "exquisite sense of the luxurious":

"What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe  
To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,  
A fever of thyself: think of the Earth." 2

And think of earth Keats did more and more as he grew older.

Praz<sup>3</sup> also makes Keats' La belle dame sans Merci/<sup>the</sup> unwitting ancestor of a brood of exotic, Fatal Woman of the Decadents, the Cleopatras, Nysias, Mona Lisas, and Salomes of Gautier, Flaubert, Swinburne, Pater, Wilde and others. We need not go into this subject for the simple reason that there is nothing Oriental about Keats' La belle dame sans Merci, and her later progeny is beyond our scope and period.

Keats' exoticism, if we must call it that, is what Praz himself designates "generic exoticism which can be documented in all periods and all literatures"<sup>4</sup> and not the specific exoticism which feeds upon a specific cultural atmosphere," as a sort of drug. The very fact that Keats, temperamentably sensuous though he was, did not resort to any particular type of exoticism, Oriental or otherwise, shows, that he aimed at a higher ideal than that of a mere exotic dreamer.

Instances of this generic exoticism and Keats affinity for the rich and the gorgeous can be cited from all over his poetry and also from his life. We know that Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra appealed to him for its sensuous opulence; it corresponded he said to

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1. Keats had read Vathek but he refers nowhere to its exoticism; on the other hand the only reference in Keats' Letters (To J.H. Reynolds, July 11, 1818, Letters, M.B. Forman, I, p. 192) is to the humorous and grotesque kicks delivered by the Caliph Vathek to the carcasses of his dead guards.
  2. The Fall of Hyperion, I. 167-169.
  3. The Romantic Agony, op.cit. chapter IV. La Belle Dame Sans Merci p. 189-271.
  4. Ibid.

the 'feel' he had of "an heroic painting", "large, prominent round and colour'd with magnificence".<sup>1</sup> Miss Caroline F. E. Spurgeon in her descriptive study Keats' Shakespeare, points out that this was one of the most read plays in Keats' volume, and that magnificent passage describing Cleopatra's Barge on the Nile was underlined twice by Keats:

"The barge she sat in like a burnished throne  
Burn'd on the water: the prop<sup>r</sup> was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfum'd that  
The winds were lovesick with them: the oars were silver;  
The water which they beat, to follow faster  
As amorous of their strokes ....."<sup>2</sup>

It was from passages like these that Keats' exoticism was fed. It was his dream to diffuse the same kind of rich colouring over a poem which should have the sensuousness of The Eve of St. Agnes, but also have a greater psychological truth.

Such an attraction did the exotic beauty of Cleopatra possess for Keats that he wrote of Reynold's Anglo Indian Cousin, Miss Jane Cox: "She is not a Cleopatra but she is at least a Charmian. She has a rich Eastern look; she has fine eyes and fine manners. When she comes into a room she makes an impression the same as the beauty of a Leopardess....."<sup>3</sup>

Another note<sup>4</sup> on Milton's ringing description of the magnificence of the Pandemonium in Paradise Lost, also testifies Keats' admiration for the "rich and strange". The passage underlined by Keats is too long to quote. We will quote only a few lines which must have served Keats as a model for the proper poetic use of Eastern names in poetry.

"Not Babylon  
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence  
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine  
Belus or Seraphis their gods, or seat  
Their Kings when Egypt with Assyria strove  
In wealth and luxury."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Letter to Hayden, April, 10, 1818. Letters edit. M.B. Forman I 139.  
2. Anthony and Cleopatra II, ii, 199 ff Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Keats' Shakespeare p. 125.  
3. Letters, edit M. B. Forman, I, p. 252.  
4. 'Notes on Milton's Paradise Lost', Ibid p. 260-261  
5. Paradise Lost, bk. I. 717-722.

Keats' significant note on this passage reads: "What creates the intense pleasure of not knowing? A sense of independence, of power, from the fancy's creating a world of its own by the sense of probabilities. We have read the Arabian Nights, and hear there are thousands of those romances lost - we imagine after them - but not their realities if we had them nor our fancies in their strength can go further than this Pandemonium ..."

It was the discipleship of such severe taskmasters as Milton and Shakespeare that kept Keats from falling into a slough of any dreamy exoticism such as Beckford's or stifling his poetry under a dead weight of tinsel ornament in the manner of Southey and Moore. And it was no mere discipleship; in places Keats comes so near to his Shakespearean or Miltonic model, that it is difficult to believe that in the felicitous power of conjuring up an atmosphere, by the use of a single magical phrase, he is not the equal of his masters.

"No Asian poppy nor elixir fine  
Of the soon-fading, jealous, Caliphat  
No poison engender'd in close monkish cell  
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men ....."<sup>1</sup>

has not only the ring of Milton's' lines just quoted

"Not Babylon  
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence...."

it is not an unworthy echo of the well-known lines from Othello, which probably Keats had in mind:

"Nor poppy, nor mandragora  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world  
Shall ever medicine thee to that Sweet sleep  
Which thou ow'dst yesterday."

In all these instances, Keats employs in Miltonic and Shakespearean manner the Oriental images of colour, warmth and magnificence to express his innate sensuousness and his "exquisite sense of the luxurious". But when he came to write his Miltonic epic of Hyperion, it was not the images of luxury and warmth alone that he needed, but also those of majesty and grandeur. Here again Keats' enriched his poem by images drawn from the Orient. How the Egyptian sculpture<sup>2</sup> in the British Museum, served him as a model for the vast conceptions

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1. The Fall of Hyperion, I, 47-50.  
2. Brought by Napoleon from his conquests, which fell into British hands. See H. Darbishire below.

and large majesty of the Titans in Hyperion and Fall of Hyperion  
Helen Darbishire, in her article Keats and Egypt,<sup>1</sup> has very fas-  
cinatingly expounded. She points out how the colossal sculpture  
and architecture of Egypt met Keats' need and passed into his poem.  
"Thea's face "large as that of Memphian Sphinx", Hyperion's stature,

like the bulk  
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun,  
To one who travels from the dusking East:<sup>2</sup>

and his palace

Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold<sup>3</sup>  
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks<sup>3</sup>

take on a huge primeval grandeur impossible to convey through the  
graceful proportions of Greek statue or temple. The imagination  
responds at once to a large difference in scale."<sup>4</sup>

It is likely that the lines from Hyperion:

Hieroglyphics old  
Which sages and keen eyed astrologers  
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought  
Won from the gaze of many centuries:<sup>5</sup>

may have been suggested to Keats from the reading of the passage from  
the periodical Annals of the Fine Arts<sup>6</sup> which Miss Darbishire quotes.

But the following lines from Alastor, which Miss Darbishire, consid-  
ers to have been inspired by "a similar description", may well have  
given Keats the hint for the above lines:

Where marble demon's watch  
The Zodiacs brazen mystery, and dead men  
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around  
He lingered, poring on memorials  
Of the world's youth .....  
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
Flashed like strong inspiration and he saw  
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.<sup>7</sup>

Writing about Egypt and its antiquities was a craze in Keats' day. Shelley's lines on Egyptian subjects have already been noticed. Keats, too, in friendly competition with Shelley and Leigh Hunt wrote

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1. In the Review of English Studies, Jan. 1927, p. 1-11.
  2. Hyperion.
  3. Hyperion, 176 ff.
  4. Keats and Egypt, op.cit. p. 3.
  5. Hyperion
  6. Edit. by Elmes Keats' friend and inspired by Benjamin Hayden; p. 8.
  7. Alastor. 118 ff.

1. Leigh Hunt's Biography by Charles Sumner, 1830, p. 117. where the above passage is quoted.

his Sonnet to the Nile, in which strangely enough Keats' love of English countryside and English rivers, makes him write quite un-geographically of the Egyptian river:

"Thou dost bedew  
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste  
The pleasant sun-rise. Green isles hast thou,  
And to the sea as happily dost haste."

But so widespread was the fashion for everything Egyptian in the early years of nineteenth century that a wit in the Morning Chronicle, possibly Lamb, posing as Priscilla Plainstich thus pictured the effect:

"My eldest boy rides on a sphynx, instead of a rocking horse and my youngest has a paper boat in the shape of a crocodile. My husband has built a water-closet in the form of a pyramid and has his shirts marked with a Lotus. He talks in his sleep of Ibis, Apis, and Sir Apis and God knows what other heathen names, who he tells me were more celebrated in Egypt than Lord Nelson or Sydney Smith. My eldest girl's music master is turned away, because he could not teach her to play on the sistrun, a thing like a horse shoe."

"The same source which produced these nonsensical phenomena," says Edmund Blunden in his biography of Leigh Hunt, "set Shelley, Keats and Hunt writing their 'Nile' sonnets"<sup>1</sup>

To come back to our starting point, how far is H. B. Forman justified in talking of Keats' 'Oriental' nature and his 'Oriental' descent? It is obvious from what has been said, that the appeal of the Orient for Keats lay in the images of colour, warmth, gorgeousness and majesty that it provided him for his poems. The East was for Keats, as for the Elizabethans whom he regarded as his poetical masters, not so much a land of philosophers, of saints, or of crude passions and bloshed, but of luscious fruits, exquisite perfumes, odoriferous spices and many-columned, gorgeous halls. The hysterical emotionalism of Keats' early poems and parts of Endymion, owes nothing, as we have seen, to the Orient, except possibly in the conception of the Indian maiden in Endymion, where distinct echoes of

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1. Leigh Hunt a Biography by Edmund Blunden, 1930, p. 119. where the above passage is quoted.

Shelley's Indian maiden are noticeable. Other traits of Keats' temperament, his love of "delicious, diligent indolence",<sup>1</sup> for example,

".....sweet as drowsy noons,  
And evenings steep'd in honeyed indolence"

do at times, remind one of the passive inactivity preached by Oriental philosophers. Professor Elton<sup>2</sup> has noticed a touch of the "Eastern doctrine that consciousness is an evil, desire an illusion and the beauties of sense a mirage" in Keats' sonnet, "When I have fears that I may cease to be", and in the Ode to Melancholy, where a sense of passing away of all things weighs heavy on Keats' heart:

"Beauty that must die;  
And joy whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu ....."

Although there is a reference to Hinduism and Zoroastrianism in Keats' well-known letter<sup>3</sup> on Soul-making, it is unlikely that Keats knew much about Indian or Persian philosophies. As in Shelley the coincidences with the Oriental point of view are accidental, rather than a matter of influence. The appeal of the Orient to Keats, as to all his contemporaries was not philosophical, as in Germany, but purely poetic.

Hunt disapproved of the editor of the edition because he was inclined to parallelize but in another note he says significantly: "The Eastern beauty seems allowed a certain quantum of rage and cruelty as a sort of moral Pin-money which she may spend without being accountable for it." We have seen how the English writers on Oriental themes were aiming at a similar amalgam of terror and beauty.

Hunt gives in the Liberal a spirited picture of the Paradises to which his magic books conveyed him, "Now to some piping vale of Arcady", now to some mountain top in Tartary, to the Ganges,

1. Publications of the British Museum, 1811, p. 104. See also Ibid p. 330 and 354. And Man, Woman and Books, 1847, p. 111. "from the clouds ..... and half a dozen other phenomena."

2. A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1830, vol. II, p. 247.

3. To George and Georgiana Keats, Feb. 14. 1819, Letters edit. M. B. Forman, II. p. 364.

LEIGH HUNT AND WRITERS OF ORIENTAL VERSE-TALES .

Before passing on to the minor writers of Oriental verse-tales, it would be convenient here to mention a few short poems of Leigh Hunt on Oriental subjects. Like the rest of his contemporaries Hunt was susceptible to the romance of the East, but his poems on Eastern subjects, though they sometimes remind one of Keats in their lusciousness and 'luxury', have a certain lightness and deftness that is peculiar to Hunt.

We read in Hunt's Autobiography<sup>1</sup>, that like almost all his contemporaries, the Arabian Nights were his favourite reading in childhood, and like Coleridge, he continued to enjoy them even in after life. Mrs. James T. Field, to whom many of Hunt's books<sup>2</sup> passed, gives a delightful account in her A Shelf of old Books, of Hunt's readings from the Arabian Nights and his marginal notes, which bear witness to an almost tranced condition into which Hunt passed when he read these tales. Some of the notes quoted were made by Hunt when he was fifty-two years old, but his childlike, almost childish, delight and wonder prove how seriously he took these Arabian Tales. Hunt disapproved of the editor of the edition because he was inclined to moralize but in another note he says significantly: "The Eastern beauty seems allowed a certain quantum of rage and cruelty as a sort of moral Pin-money which she may spend without being accountable for it." We have seen how the English writers on Oriental themes were aiming at a similar amalgam of terror and beauty.

Hunt gives in the Liberal a spirited picture of the Paradises to which his magic books conveyed him, "Now to some piping vale of Arcady", now to some mountain top in Tartary, to the Ganges,

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1. Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, edit E. Blunden, 1928; P. 104; cf also Ibid P. 330 and 364. And Men, Women and Books, 1847, I P. 139. "A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla", contains a Brass Jar from the Arabian Nights out of which issues "an Ufreet as high as the clouds ..... and half a dozen other phenomena."

2. London 1894; P. 48-56.

to Greece:

"And yet," says  
 would have been  
 a book of his  
 It was in  
 And then I'm all for Araby, my first love, "Hunt  
 I'm Giafar, I am a 'genie', I'm a jar;  
 I'm Sindbad in some very horrid grove, - India been  
 Which is delicious: I'm the Calendar  
 Who with the lady was one hand and glove;  
 I am the prince, who shot his bow so far,  
 And found that cellar, with a stock divine  
 Of lips to kiss, still redder than the wine."

This vein of exoticism is carried still further by Hunt when during his voyage to Italy, the first sight of the Mediterranean provokes the following "classical and romantic memories" in him:

"The water at your feet is the same that bathes the shores of Europe, of Africa and of Asia - of Italy and Greece and the Holy Land and the lands of Chivalry and romance and pastoral Sicily and the Pyramids and old Crete and the Arabian city of Al Cairo, glittering in the magic lustre of the Thousand and One Nights." On hearing from Major D.L. Richardson, an Anglo Indian poet that subscriptions to his poems were increasing in India, Hunt bursts out into a romantic eulogy of the East:

"It gives me a peculiar species of gratification," Hunt says in a letter to D.L. Richardson, "to think the native editors of the Reformer and the Inquirer have interested themselves on my behalf. You know I delight in associations of old books and romances; India to me is an Arabian Night country; all the modern common-places of it, which I have never seen, are accustomed to give way in my mind before its old exclusively Oriental aspect; and in finding that I have friends there, time and space seem to roll apart like a cloud and I fancy myself a new kind of living, yet ancient Sindbad taken by the hand after a shipwreck by strangers

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1. Cited by E. Blunden in Leigh Hunt, a Biography, 1930, P. 346.
  2. Autobiography, The World's Classics, P. 365-366.
  3. D.L. Richardson the poet and the editor of the Bengal Annual and the Calcutta Literary Gazette, author of Literary Recreations or Essays, Criticisms and poems, chiefly written in India, Calcutta 1852.

2. Leigh Hunt, a Biography, 1930, P. 362.

3. First published in the Liberal II, 363, 1823.

4. First published as "The first Canto of the Squire's Tale of Chaucer Modernised," in the Liberal, IV, 1823.

with dusk faces and white drapery, under a glowing sun."<sup>1</sup>

"And yet," says Edmund Blunden in his excellent biography, "Hunt would have been as deeply stirred as anyone, had Mother India been a book of his day and brought forward to extinguish his vision."<sup>2</sup>

It was inevitable with such a cheerful zest about the East, that Hunt should contribute to the prevalent Orientalism of his day. Mahmoud,<sup>3</sup> a short poem founded on the history of Mahmoud the Ghaznevide, as related by Gibbon, is a colloquial anecdote told with Hunt's peculiar mastery of story-telling.

"I have read a most amazing thing  
A true and noble story of a King."

The story tells of Mahmoud's justice; how at the petition of a poor subject, he had one of his officers slain for molesting the poor man, even though he believed that molestor might be some lord or "perhaps a lawless son."

Cambus Khan,<sup>4</sup> a longer and more ambitious piece, is one of the "Narrative Modernizations" from Chaucer. A stranger brings to the King of Tartary, Cambus Khan, while he is feasting, certain wonderful presents from "the King of Araby and Ind," - a steed of brass, "the thing is like a thought and cuts the air so smoothly;" a glass that shows the past and the future; a ring that enables one to understand the language of the birds and plants; and a marvellous sword that can cut through anything. The description of Cambus Khan's feast, though superfluous to the story, is characteristically Huntian in its sensuousness of style and simplicity of diction:

"Here were the cushioned sofas, the perfumes  
The heavenly mirrors making endless rooms;  
The last quintessences of drinks, the trays  
Of coloured relishes, dressed a thousand ways;  
The dancing girls, that bending here and there  
With asking beauty lay along the air;

1. The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, edited by his eldest son, 1862, I, P. 306.

2. Leigh Hunt, a Biography, 1930, P. 262.

3. First published in the Liberal II, 363, 1823.

4. First published as "The first Canto of the Squire's Tale of Chaucer Modernised," in the Liberal, IV, 1823.

5. 151, Adrian.

6. The Romantic Movement in English Poetry, p. 225.

And lighter instruments, guitars and lutes be found in  
 Sprinkling their silver graces on the flutes  
 And all the sounds and all the sweets of show  
 Feeling victorious while the harpings go."

The King accepts all the magic gifts and a display of their properties fills his Courtiers with delight and wonder. The 'moral' of the Story is that one should try not to wake from a dream of joy:

the best way then  
 Is to wake little and go sleep again  
 Wake much if life go right: if it go wrong  
 Learn how to dream with Chaucer all day long:  
 Or learn still better, if you can to make  
 Your world at all times sleeping or awake.

Other moral anecdotes on Oriental themes that Hunt wrote are, <sup>1</sup>  
Jaffar, a story of Haroun-al-Rashid's cruelty and whimsical magnanimity; <sup>2</sup>  
Abraham and the Fireworshipper, a dramatic parable about religious toleration; The Trumpet of Doolkarnein, and finally the exquisite and justly famous <sup>3</sup>  
Abou Ben Adham. The latter two pieces are founded on the Bibliothèque Orientale of D'Herbelot, a favourite book of Hunt's. The story of Ibn-Ishak-Ben Adhem is told in two or three prose paragraphs in D'Herbelot, that make a very dull reading indeed. It speaks of the transmitting power of Hunt's poetic pen, to have given such a point and finish to the prose matter by a hardly perceptible process of arrangement and versification. "Here and in two or three stories," says Arthur Symons, "there is a very precise and ingenious grasp on story-telling, worthy of Maupassant; and there is a kernel of just, at times profound, thought, which suggests something of the quality of an Eastern apologue," <sup>4</sup>  
 Hunt was a reader and a great admirer of Sa'di's Gulistan or Rose-Garden, whose easy and varied style and happy bon mots that compose the Mokatta'at, or moral aphorisms and epigrams, undoubtedly served him as models for such poems as Abou-Ben-Adham. But the jewel-like perfection of phraseology and the

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1. *First* published in the New Monthly Magazine, Feb. 1850.
  2. *First* published in Dicken's Household Words, March 30, 1850. Story taken from Jeremy Taylor's Apology for Christian Toleration.
  3. First printed in S.C. Hall's Book of Gems vol. III, 1838. Based on an extract from D'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale, 1781, tom I P. 161, Adhem.
  4. The Romantic Movement in English Poetry, p. 225.

touch of glory, "a great wakening light," are not to be found in Sa'di's profound but rather dull apologues; these are Hunt's own. <sup>1</sup>

passed very little merit as poetical compositions, reflect in a more unimportant fashion than their masters, the contemporary taste for Orientalism. Lacking the genius or the force of personality of the writers whose imitations they imitate and exaggerate, these writings, nevertheless, are the abstract and brief chronicles of the literary taste of their times.

We have already remarked how the fashion of the verse-tale started by Scott was taken up by Byron and Moore, and how these two later writers, in accordance with the taste of their times, had assumed a more thrilling mode of episode by varying the subjects of their verse-tales from the Middle Ages to the Orient. This imaginary land \_\_\_\_\_ passions, appeared to them a better background for their romances of love, murder and revenge; here they could indulge with impunity in all the violent passions and extravagant heroics, which in their own colder world orderly society would appear uncharacteristic. How widespread was the fashion for these crude and unpolished Oriental tales, will appear from the following brief summaries of these minor poems, which it has been found necessary to give here, even at the cost of some dullness and monotony.

Henry Gally Knight (1786-1845), the author of Alisair, A Syrian Tale, 1816; Throsyne, a Grecian Tale; Alashkar, an Arabian Tale, 1817, and Eastern Sketches (1830) which contain all the three tales, is perhaps the best remembered as account of Byron's contemporary and witty reference to him. Like Byron, Knight had travelled in Spain, Greece, and some parts of the Near East and while Byron had a steady income of twelve thousand a year, Knight was a "Gally Slave," Byron wrote, "than a Gally Knight - so utter of I despise the manning merchant's mediocrity in every thing but the

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1. J. Godfrey Saxe, wrote many verse-tales, mostly in the light, half-humorous manner of Hunt. The King and the Cottager, a Persian Legend, published in the volume called Money-making and other poems, 1859, is a longish tale of Oriental justice.

1. Letters and Journals of Byron, edit. Prothero, vi: 7. For other references to Gally Knight see ibid. vi: 71, 104, 105, 210.

Next we come to a host of minor writers of Oriental verse-tales in the manner of Byron and Moore, whose poems, though they possess very little merit as poetical compositions, reflect in a more transparent fashion than their masters, the contemporary craze for Orientalism. Lacking the genius or the force of personality of the writers whose idiosyncracies they imitate and exaggerate, these writers, nevertheless, are 'the abstracts and brief chronicles' of the literary taste of their times.

We have already remarked how the fashion of the verse-tale started by Scott was taken <sup>up</sup> by Byron and Moore, and how these two later writers, in conformation to the taste of their times, had sounded a more thrilling note of romance by varying the subjects of their verse-tales from the Middle Ages to the Orient. This imaginary land of luxurious beauty and fierce passions, appeared to them a fitter background for their romantic tales of love, murder and revenge; here they could indulge with impunity in all the violent passions and extravagant heroics, which in their own colder more orderly country would appear anachronistic. How widespread was the fashion for these crude and turbulent Oriental tales, will appear from the following brief summaries of these minor poems, which it has been found necessary to give here, even at the cost of some dullness and monotony.

Henry Gally Knight (1786-1846), the author of Ilderim, A Syrian Tale, 1816; Phrosyne, a Grecian Tale; Alashtar, an Arabian Tale, 1817, and Eastern Sketches (1830) which contain all the three tales, is perhaps the best remembered on account of Byron's contemptuous and witty reference to him. Like Byron, Knight had travelled in Spain, Greece, and some parts of the Near East and unlike Byron he had a steady income of twelve thousand a year. "I would be a Gally Slave," Byron wrote, "than a Gally Knight - so utterly do I despise the middling mountebank's mediocrity in everything but his income." <sup>1</sup> And writing to Moore Byron said: Lalla Rookh "I humbly suspect will knock up Ilderim and show gentlemen something more

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1. Letters and Journals of Byron, edit. Prothero, vol. V. p. 68. For other references to Gally Knight see Ibid IV 71, 164, 191, 219 etc.

than having been across a camel's hump is necessary to write a good Oriental tale,"<sup>1</sup> Byron was justly proud of having visited the East of which he wrote. We have seen that in Don Juan writing of Oriental plants he had said:

".... that of late your scribblers think it worth  
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in their works,  
Because one poet travelled 'mongst the Turks."<sup>2</sup>

This is a different kind of superiority from that of Moore, of whom we remember it was said that "reading D'Herbelot is as good as riding on the back of a Camel." Moore and Southey were proud to produce full and accurate authorities for their Orientalism from books; their aim was to "illustrate" the mythologies and customs of the Eastern countries. But Gally Knight with an ambition similar to theirs, but with an actual knowledge of the East like Byron's, wrote in the preface to his Eastern Sketches:  
"The stories are not merely fables; they are intended to be portraits, faithfully representing the features of the respective countries in which the scene of each poem is laid - authorities exist in nature for whatever is produced. The Muse is perhaps never so much at her ease as when she sports in the regions of pure fancy; but in touching upon the countries of the East truth and poetry may still be united. Civilization and refinement destroy those strong features, those projecting points, that variety of character, which create a strong interest when described. But civilization has affected no change in the Turkish Empire. Its actual state is one in which romantic adventures are daily occurrences, very similar to those of Europe under the feudal system; with great advantage on the side of climate and costume." Dilating on the difficulty, the danger and the thrill of travelling in the East, the massacres, murders and slavery, Gally Knight continues, that "these circumstances, however revolting to his feeling as a man are favourable to his views as a poet." The climate of the East is wonderful. "He finds himself for the first time in

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1. Ibid IV, p. 146.

2. Don Juan, Canto V, XLII.

countries where the pastoral poetry of the ancients is true to Nature; where the shepherds and shapherdesses absolutely may have passed their lives in the open air and wanted no shelter but that of grottos and trees.<sup>1</sup>"

This passage, though coming from a minor poet like Gally Knight, is important, for it articulates also the poetic appeal of the Orient for his greater contemporaries. We have noticed in Southey and Byron and Moore a similar desire to escape from urban surroundings into comparatively uncivilized regions where the primeval instincts and passions of men have a freer play and where the tempestuous beauty of Nature forms a fit background for violent emotions.

Gally Knight's poems are, however, not "portraits faithfully representing the features of the respective countries in which the scene of each poem is laid." His Syrian, Grecian and Arabian tales have the same kind of Byronic personages and are situated in a uniform East of the romantic tradition, as will be seen from the following.

Ilderim, a Syrian Tale, in four Cantos of Spenserian stanzas, begins with the description of "Stern Abdallagh's" tower in Balbec, with "branching walnut," "myrtle woods," "bowers of citron," "spicy fragrance" etc, where his daughter "bright eyed Azza", with her slave Elmyra, is the victim of her father's tyranny. Elmyra is the daughter of some Amir whom Abdallagh (the recurrent type of the Byronic Turkish tyrant) has murdered. Then appears the bandit hero, Ilderim, who appals the land, is kind to peasants but hates the rich. Some secret grief is furrowed on his brow and "grief has classed him with the sterner kind." He invades Abdallagh's tower and rescues the two maidens, one of whom, Elmyra, turns out to be his long lost sweetheart; Azza conveniently falls in love with Ilderim's friend Mirza and everything ends happily. Nature's loveliness, of course, provides a soothing contrast to this bloodshed and revenge:

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1. Preface, Eastern Sketches, 1830

"Oh this is not a Northern poet's dream  
Whose fancy toils, that night may have a charm."

This is the East:

Where nature freshens in the still moon's sight  
These only climes unfold the loveliness of night ... etc.

If Abdallah in Ilderim is a faint prototype of Ali Pasha, the Turkish tyrant appears in person in Phrosyne: a Grecian Tale. During his march through the city of Collirete, beautiful Phrosyne, the betrothed of Demo catches his fancy and he devises underhand means to get her for his Harem. Since there is no way of escape Phrosyne prefers death at the hands of her kindred to dishonour and the sacrifice is completed with more than a Spartan determination:

"..... tell Albania's Lord, that thus alone  
The Colliretian maids approach his throne."

"Grecia", like Syria is the land where "beauty in the lap of terror smiles."

Alashtar, an Arabian Tale, is a story of revenge, revenge regarded as a sacred duty. Alashtar wants to avenge his slain brother, Agib, on Mohareb, the chief of a neighbouring tribe.

"Deep gloom forever settled on his brow  
As thunder cloud obscuring summer's day."

A man is brought in by Alashtar's men, dying of thirst in the desert, who proves to be Mohareb, but the rules of Arab hospitality demand that the sick man should be looked after. It is decided that Mohareb should meet Alashtar at a certain place for a combat when he recovers. Meanwhile Zora "a tender graceful maid" tends Mohareb. After some scenes of suspense the men meet; Mohareb is killed and Alashtar later dies of wounds but he "dies content, his soul has known relief."

These conventional, obviously romantic stories are told in a straight-forward, bare style, with the phraseology of Scott and Byron, interspersed with pseudo-classical diction of the eighteenth century. In plots, characters and sentiments, the author is obviously imitating Byron.

J.H. Reynolds, Keats' friend, also in his early youth wrote Safie, An Eastern Tale (1814) after the manner of Byron, who on

receiving the tale wrote a letter<sup>1</sup> of fatherly advice to the young author, making the following entry in his journal of the same day: "The lad is clever but much of his thoughts are borrowed - whence the Reviewers may find out. I hate discouraging a young one, and I think, - though wild and more Oriental than he would be, had he seen the scenes where he has placed his tale, - that he has much talent and certainly fire enough."<sup>2</sup>

The octosyllabic metre of Safie, its declamatory style, its abrupt irregular expression, and long, involved sentences, are all imitative of Byron but the author has also succeeded in catching the gloomy pathos of Byron's earlier tales, the passion that heats, without illumining them. The story of Safie is stereotyped. The heroine, the favourite mistress of Assad, a Persian, is torn from his Harem by an unknown Turk, who with his followers attacks that retreat and disables Assad from immediate pursuit. Unable, however, to recover the peace of mind of which the loss of his favourite has deprived him, Assad sets out with a band of men to look for Safie. In the progress of his journey, he arrives under the walls of a Turkish Harem towards evening and stops attracted by the sounds of music and revelry; when to his astonishment he hears the wellknown voice of his mistress singing to another the song which formerly delighted him. Stung with the reproach of her unfaithfulness, he immediately attacks the Turkish Harem and a furious battle commences in which Assad, is wounded and taken prisoner. In the course of the succeeding night he stabs himself in his dungeon leaving a scroll of pathetic reproach for the unworthy object of his passion. The scroll being delivered to Safie, it so affects her that she gradually sinks under the mixture of remorse and sorrow it occasions. In the introductory stanzas the author addresses the "Land of the East" in the usual manner:

Land of the East, long loved and lately sung  
By one whose touch could animate the lyre...

1. Letters and Journal of Byron edit. Prothero III p. 45-48.

2. Ibid, Journal, Feb, 20. 1814.

referring to Byron, whose "Knowest thou the land..." is the obvious model here:

This is the land for the love! The land for soul!  
For hearts of ardour and for beauty bright;  
Love lives and roves with thee without control,  
Smiles in the air and in the laughing light.... etc."

The most characteristic passages of the poem are those describing the fury and the passion of Assad's death.

He dash'd his arm upon the floor  
So wet, so stained with his own gore,  
He writhed his body - struck his wound  
And scattered wide the blood around.....

It must be of Reynolds' tale and not of Gally Knight's as R.E.

<sup>1</sup> Prothero believes, that Byron said in his letter to Murray: "The conclusion is not correct in costume there being no Mussulman suicide on record, at least for love." Byron is however wrong; suicides for love are as frequent and plentiful in Mohammedan countries as elsewhere.

Edward George Lytton Bulwer's Ismaël; an Oriental Tale (1820) "written between the age of thirteen and fifteen," pays a homage to Scott rather than to Byron.

"To thee, O Scott, I tune my humble lyre  
Who first inflamed me with a poet's fire..."

As for Byron:

"..... who so blind can be  
Ever to prefer that wayward Bard to thee  
Sublime in what? - in what! - Impiety!"

The poem begins solemnly with the usual "'Tis Eve..." and tells of the efforts of Ismael, a young descendant of the ancient Persian Kings, to win back his throne from Alvante the usurper. There is the usual tender maiden, Solyma, "the flower of Ava's race," who has, however, no part in the story except that of living happily ever afterwards when Ismael has succeeded in defeating his enemies. In spite of his assertions to the contrary, the author owes more to Byron than to Scott. There are the tyrant Turks employed in revelry, enjoying the "forbidden sparkle of the bowl," "sable coursers"

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1. "The Persian Tales" mentioned by Byron (Letter to J. Murray, Dec. 4, 1813, Letters and Journal, II p. 299) refer to Reynolds' tale and not Gally Knight's; in whose tales, we have seen, there is no Mussulman suicide.

or "snowy steeds", "Calpacs", "Caftans" and "gore" in profusion. The poem is without any dramatic interest and too amateurish in versification to deserve any more attention.

The Arabs, a Tale in four Cantos (1825), by H.A. Driver is more ambitious, and also more interesting. In the preface the author voices the attitude of his contemporaries when he says: "The scene of the poem is laid in Arabia but it is not 'an Arabian Tale.' Any attempt at imitating the Arabian must end in something 'plus Arabe qu'en Arabie.' I believe the truly Oriental poem to be quite at variance with our prevailing taste. Six pages of Antar would be found sufficient for a sitting because we can not feel as Arabians. To affect their manner, therefore, would somewhat resemble the late project for the restoration of the Parthenon on the Calton Hill at Edinburgh; where everything would have been Grecian except the feelings to which it would have appealed ..... Southey, Byron and Moore ..... all have adopted a sort of Anglo-Oriental style which is highly beautiful and perfectly congenial with our taste .... These higher authorities of the day I may humbly follow."

The 'Anglo-Oriental style' may not be highly beautiful but the author has at least the merit of an honest recognition of the difference between the Oriental and the European ways of writing.

The tale itself shows more traces of Byron than of Southey and Moore. It tells of the tragic love of a Nazarene, Otho, for Zabeide, the "gazelle-like" daughter of the recognisable Turkish tyrant Morad Pasha. An Arab wanderer is introduced on whose "brow long years were stamped in sorrow, such as knows no tears" - the cause of the usual "furrowed brow," being the usual desire for revenge on the usual Turkish tyrant. The lovers, who perish by drowning in the complications that follow, are rescued from the sea still clasping each other and are buried together in the same pathetic embrace, under a simple cross.

1. Preface, The Arabs by H. Driver, 1825. There is also The Arab, a Tale in three Cantos by W. Hone, London 1819, which I have not been able to procure, and Zayda and other Poems by Oscar, 1820, and many other anonymous and worthless compositions reviewed in the Oriental Herald and other periodicals. See Bibliography.

The story is interspersed with descriptions of the desert and gorgeous Oriental feasts, fruits, etc. in the approved style of Southey and Moore, and there are also notes.

Abdallah, an Oriental Poem in three cantos by Horace Gwynne (1824) is a better tale than the foregoing. The design of the poem, its author says, is to give a picture of the manners of Arabia at the time of Mohammad, by making a contest between Mohammad and the Guebres or fireworshippers the subject of the poem. Abdallah the Guebre chief, with "his curling lip, his ebon eye of fire flashing at intervals a smothered ire," comes to Mecca for the purpose of assassinating the Prophet, but is completely won over by the kindness of Mohammad and the beauty of Leila, Mohammad's daughter. Vacillating between love and duty he plans to elope with Leila, but they are discovered in the nick of time by Omar, who also loves Leila and stabs her in jealousy. Abdallah escapes but is later killed in the battle along with his father, and Islam triumphs over the other religions.

Though the story suffers like the Giaour by sudden and obscure changes of scene, there is a certain wistful pathos in the theme that gives <sup>it</sup> some distinction. The movement of the blank verse in reflective passages is smooth.

The Oriental Herald reviewing the tale remarked rightly that the poem was somewhat different from the Oriental poems written, which have the same monotonous assemblage of insipid images - the bulbul's melting notes to the rosebanks of coral sleeping in the moonlight, Indian plants and flowers etc. gleaned from travel books. "These circumstances," the reviewer said, "have the effect of bringing the name of an Oriental poem into some disrepute, in so far as it now conveys nothing else to the reader's mind than the

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1. Oriental Herald, edited by J.S. Buckingham, vol I No.4 p. 614 This periodical contains réviews also, of some of the other poems mentioned in this section, and prints some Oriental poems of which Abzen degani, or the Water of Life (An Eastern Legend) (vol V, Nov. 1825, p. 249-257) by an anonymous author, calling himself جیبترن, 'the friend of the East', is the longest and the best. The same author wrote The Fourteen Gems, a Hindu Legend, (vol IX, 1826, p. 57, 295 and 231). The accurate, but profuse use of Persian and Hindu mythological names, testifies to the author's knowledge of Persian and Sanskrit.

idea of a baseless structure of unnatural imagery and false taste."

B.E. Pote, the author of Abassah, an Arabian Tale in two cantos (1826), a tale founded on the account given by D'Herbelot of the whimsical tyrant of the Arabian Nights, Haroun-al-Rashid, and the Assassins of the Paradise, an Oriental tale in four Cantos, (1831) in the preface to the latter tale, defends the fashion of the Oriental tales. European mythologies and fables, the author says, have become too stale for poetic purposes. The East "affords in its sudden contrasts of splendour and wretchedness, of success and disaster and in the vehemence of the worst and wildest but often also the noblest actions, that singular and exaggerated state of society which offers, if not the best, at least the easiest materials for fiction, and like a gorgeous drapery may serve to veil the artist's ignorance in the finer mouldings of the human form." The predominance of feeling and passion in the Eastern people, Pote thinks, is promoted by lack of education and general indolence; their life is "little more than a state of sensation, a dreamy trance beneath a cloudless sky; imagination is the business of their life, and truth and fiction have for them almost equally an ideal being."<sup>1</sup>

As for the style of the Oriental tales, Pote believes with Ockley and Gibbon, that on such subjects "the strain of the language as of thought should as nearly as possible approximate to the style of the 'Gorgeous East.'"<sup>2</sup> But in practice, the style of the author approximates to Southey, and the thought to Byron. Of the Assassins of Paradise, we are solemnly told that "Dark is the tale - of vengeance unrestrained." Haleb, a Byronic youth, sick and disgusted with life is enticed by the Assassins of Persia, the Old Man of the Mountain, and carried to their Earthly Paradise drugged with Hashish. He wakes up amid the luxuries and the pleasures of the garden, which Southey had taken so much pains to describe in Thalaba. The usual attributes of the Mohammedan paradise are

1. Preface to the Assasins of the Paradise, 1831; p. III, IV.

2. Ibid. p. VIII.

by J.G. Lockhart (1833), on the other hand, had given a new and

enumerated - the fruit trees with gems, slender columns of precious stone, luxurious baths, fantastic halls, lights of all hues:

"The loaded air with odorous sweets imbued  
Floats, filmiform in wavy multitude."  
Oriental fruits and wines

"... costly vases show  
The Vines' dark daughters blushing through their snow."  
and so on. Naturally, there are Houris - one of whom Dilara becomes the youth's bride, - she with the "ivory bosom, narcissus eye, ebon ringlet and eyes of liquid flame."! She persuades Haleb to avenge her on the old Sheikh but he, by mistake, kills her brother and thereafter wanders in unconsolable grief:

"Earth has no charms; time offers no release  
The sting is wakened - never more to cease,"

But unlike the Byronic hero, "long repentance cleans the stain away:"

"The worst that passion prompts, or guilt could dare  
May be retrieved by souls that spurn despair."

The work of Mrs. F.D. Hemans has more affinities with that of Southey and Moore, than with Byron. Like Southey she shows a cosmopolitan, but rather superficial desire to write poems about the various nations of the world; her Lays of Many Lands (1825) contains pieces on the American Indian, Swiss, Greek, Italian and Moorish themes, which the authoress says may be considered a series as each is "intended to be commemorative of some national recollection, popular custom or tradition." But her sweetly amorous, sentimental style is reminiscent of Moore, rather than of Southey.

The contemporary interest taken in the Peninsular War had attracted the attention of the English writers to Spain and its history, as the Greek War of Independence had made Greece the subject of many a poem of the Romantic Revival. The Vision of Don Roderick by Sir Walter Scott (1811), Roderick, the last of the Goths by Southey and Count Julian (1812) by Landor, had all dealt with the romantic legend of the invasion of Spain by the Moors in the eighth century, and the part played by Roderick the King of the Goths and Count Julian. The Ancient Spanish Ballads, translated by J.G. Lockhart (1823), on the other hand, had given a new and

lasting currency to Spanish and Moorish themes by revealing, as Arthur Symons has said, "a whole new world in which chivalry was lofty, with the proud dignity, sombre simplicity, strange barbarity and stranger gentleness of the Spaniard, with, through it all, an Oriental undercurrent, the uncalculable mystery of the Moor,"<sup>1</sup>

These and the publication of Washington Irving's popular Chronicle of the History of Granada (1829) and The Alhambra (1832), had made Moorish Spain as common a topic for the romantic writers, as the Orient. It was not till Gautier's Voyage en Espagne (1845), that the formula of the romantic and picturesque Spain<sup>2</sup>, with its tender princesses being wooed by gallant Moors in the luxurious and fabulous palaces of the Alhambra, was perfected, but long before that, we find the "Oriental" followers<sup>of</sup> Byron and Moore, making Spain the background of their Oriental verse tales. Mrs. Hemans' The Abencerrage (1819) is a romantic tale in the same tradition. Based on the events related in Historia de la Guerras civiles de Granada, it relates the tragic love story of Hamet and Zayda, the former of whom joins the army of Ferdinand and Isabella, to avenge the wrongs done to his tribe by Abdallah (Boabdil) the Moorish King of Granada. The rich background of the Alhambra, its citron groves, myrtle shades, cypress bowers etc. are copiously described in the approved fashion:

pillar'd halls where exquisitely wrought  
Rich arabesques with glittering foliage fraught  
Surmounted each fretted arch and lend the scene  
A wild, romantic, Oriental mien.

Mrs. Hemans also wrote The Indian City, which again is a tale of revenge. A young Moslem boy is murdered by the Brahmins for profaning their holy ground; his mother invites the Tartars and the Arabs, her co-religionists to plunder and pillage the Hindu City.

"This was the work of one deep heart wrung!"

exclaims the authoress, when the city is a heap of ruins. Incidentally, a picture of the Indian city is given in the manner of the time:

1. The Romantic Movement in English Literature, By A. Symons, p.296
2. A very provocative book has been written by Professor Mario Praz, called Unromantic Spain (1929), with the purpose of proving that instead of the art, scenery, architecture and life of Spain being picturesque and romantic, they are simply grandiose and overwhelmingly monotonous.

"Many a graceful Hindoo maid  
 With the water vase from the palmy shade  
 Came gliding light as the desert's roe  
 Down marble steps, to the tanks below  
 And a cool sweet plashing was heard  
 As the molten glass of the wave was stirr'd,  
 And a murmur, thrilling the scented air  
 Told where the Bramin bow'd in prayer,"

There are references to the East also in other poems of Mrs. Hemans. In Modern Greece (1817) a poem after the manner of Byron, life in Greece is spoken of as wearing two forms - the tyrant and the slave" - Turk tyrants and Greek slaves.

Another tale<sup>2</sup> in which, like Mrs. Heman's Abencerrage, the historical events of the time of Abdallah, the last king of the Moors, are woven with the fictitious fortunes of young Hassan, a Moorish general is The Moor (1825) by H.J.G. Herbert (Lord Porchester). Like its predecessors, the story is full of the splendours of the Moorish Court, the descriptions of the Alhambra and some stern fighting. After the death of his mistress Zaira, Hassan disappears like Byron's Corsair and Blanche, his Christian sweetheart finds another lover. A long drawn-out, tedious and colourless tale.

Zayda, A Tale (1848) by Thomas Stewart Traill, is another Byronic tale based on the historical accounts of the Moorish struggle against the invasion of Ferdinand and Isabella. Zayda, the Moorish heroine, dies at the hands of the Christians and Afzal, her lover, swears vengeance and dies fighting. In the spirited descriptions of fighting and "it was Eve" - style, as well as in the characters of Afzal and Zayda, the influence of Byron is very marked. Traill also wrote an Eastern Serenade somewhat in the manner of Shelley's Indian Serenade.

Rev. George Croly, the author of The Alhambra (1830) also wrote The Angel of the World (1820), a poem founded on the story of the fallen angels Haruth and Maruth, of which Southey and Moore had written. His The Prophet's Scimitar, describes the transmission of Mohammad's sword from the upper world. Croly also wrote The Song of Antar, a short lyric founded on T. Hamilton's

1. Records of Women (1828); p. 253, lines 19-26, Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans, Oxford Edition.

2. Mrs. Esme Erskine wrote Alcon Manzor, a Moorish Tale, which I have not seen.

The poem was later named Julian and Gizels. See the Angel of the World in Vol. II (1834) vol II p.295-347.

translation of the Arabian romance of Antar, which had given Shelley the idea of his song from the Arabic, An Imitation. As has been explained in the introduction, it is not the purpose of the present writer to enter into a discussion of the "Anglo Indian literature", as defined by the Cambridge History of English Literature. That subject has been adequately dealt with by C.F. Oaten and after him Robert Sencourt in his India in English Literature (1926) has added several more names of the writers in this line, to the long list given by Oaten. We shall deal here only with those writers, who have not been dealt with by any of these writers, and whose work, is a continuation, as it were, of the tradition of writing on Oriental themes, started by Southey, Byron, Moore and others, rather than a contribution to 'Anglo Indian literature'.

Thomas Medwin, the friend and biographer <sup>and</sup> of Shelley and Byron, who had served in the Indian Army for some time as a lieutenant, published anonymously on his return to England, two short poems, The Lion Hunt, and The Pindarees, forming a part of his Sketches in Hindoostan.<sup>1</sup> The latter of these poems was afterwards affixed in an altered form<sup>2</sup> to The Angler in Wales, (1834) as prose work, based like the poems on Medwin's memories of Indian experiences.

The Lion Hunt describes the adventures of two Englishmen, Oswald and Edwin, in "the borders of the Beekanir desert," during a lion hunt. The poem contains descriptions of the various stages of the hunt, of Indian scenery, plants, flowers, beasts, etc. done in a most circumstantial manner, although the presence of "odorous jasmine" and "the Jow" with "its yellow clustering bells" hanging is more than a little doubtful in the sandy deserts of Bikaner. We have seen that this kind of license was customary in Medwin's day, in the interests of 'romance'. What is still more amusing is the contrast between this tropical flora and fauna, this big

1. The contents of Oswald and Edwin, an Oriental Sketch, printed privately at Geneva, 1820, were later revised and reprinted in Sketches in Hindoostan, 1821. See Appendix IV, Medwin's Revised Life of Shelley, p.487 edit by H.B. Forman, where an annotated list of Medwin's books is given.

2. The poem was later named Julian and Gizele. See the Angler in Wales (1834) vol II p.295-347.

game hunting and a Wordsworthian worship of Nature. - "Nature's worship - changeless, chaste and pure," in which the two friends indulge while they are actually on a lion hunt. Oswald has a meditative temperament, "Though Christian born, he followed Brahma's laws," and "practised the strictest abstinence of Yogie's life." But his ideas of love are Byronic rather than Wordsworthian; he

".... was nurtured 'mid these sunny plains  
Where the blood boils, not creeps along the veins  
As in our freezing climate of the North  
Where Man's a plant of slow and doubtful growth,  
And harnessed with the shackles of his Schools,  
Dares not or act or think without their rules...."

He sought repose in danger and in the lion-hunt wanted to forget his cares. Towards the end of the poem something very unexpected happens:

"'Tis Eve!....."

and Oswald paces his tent in impatient strides; Edwin has not returned from the hunt. The sight of the blood-stained/elephant later convinces Oswald of Edwin's death. The poem ends with Oswald visiting the romantic grave of his friend in the forest:

"Thought cannot picture a more quiet spot  
For one to sleep in, by the world forgot..."

In his second poem Medwin describes very ambitiously the Pindarees, or the robbers of Central India, their dresses, their habits, their philosophy of loot etc. Zalim, the Byronic bandit chief is described as having "stamp'd in every lineament," "demon thoughts, a train of crimes ... unrestrained." Oswald of the last tale is introduced, preparing to go and suppress the Pindarees, after bidding a passionate adieu to his Indian sweetheart Seta, who is the prototype of the conventional Indian maiden of the romantics, gentle, and spiritual, talking of metempsychosis, and kinship "with Nature's universal frame."

"Pale as Tajh's marble was her cheek  
Her features and her form half-breathing speak  
The love that animated them"..... etc.

Oswald departs after much lingering; there is an affray with the Pindarees and it is rumoured that he is killed. Seta is unable to sustain the grief, and as befits her ethereal character, pines

away in grief and dies. Oswald returns, and as one might expect, loses all interest in life.

"And moon by moon slow lingering waned away  
And Oswald's hair turned prematurely grey...."

The poem not only echoes Byronic sentiments, its abrupt and obscure style seems to be deliberately modelled on The Giaour. We have already quoted Shelley's lukewarm praise of Medwin's Oriental poems, who objected to the employment of Indian words in the poems and to the relegation of their meaning to the notes.

Opoleyta or a Tale of Ind, a poem in four cantos by Bertie Ambrose, (1815), is a Byronic tale of revenge, with its scene laid in India instead of the Near East. A Rajpoot chief with the impossible name of Abdullah, meditates over a guilty past in the obvious Byronic manner:

"But still to ponder over a guilty past  
And sternly brood o'er that terrific waste -  
Dun clime of streamless sands and scorching sky  
Eternal state of guilt's futurity."

But this terrific and eternal guilt being also characteristically vague and obscure, we need not go into it. As for the author's idea of India which he seems to have visited, the following extract should suffice for a specimen:

"They who the sunny scenes of Ind recall  
Its thousand tribes, its fancies mystical;  
They who in that soft clime have sweetened hours  
With India's sex in everblooming bowers  
In heavenly lassitude inhaling bliss  
And cheering love with every burning kiss ...!"

These lines probably mark the nadir of absurdity reached by contemporary writers on Oriental themes.

A similar poem on an Indian theme that needs no more than a bare mention is The Exile by R.H. Rattray (1826).

Sixty-two stanzas in the Childe Harold manner on the beauty, cruelty and antiquity of the East especially India, constitute the Oriental Musings (1840) of Patrick Scott. India is the "Land of the sunny soil and cloudless skies" .... where the "dusky fair" have "raven locks and darkly beaming eyes." It is the many hist-  
oried land "unchanged in arts, oppression and in ill!" Its inhab-

1. Cf. also Orient Harping, a desultory poem in two parts by John Lawson, 1821.

itants the "slaves of the nations" worship monstrous gods and observe unholy rites. The Indian priest's cell is a "harlot's bower" and "the life blood of man" flows to please "the passions of its marble deities." This conception of India would be as modern as that of Miss Mayo's Mother India, if the author did not pass on to recount the beauties of the Indian flowers, fruits, and the "benign climate." "And oh! are not thy daughters lovely, - they of the black locks and colour of the sun?" etc. etc. The poem continues in its conventional musings over the antiquity of Egyptian sculpture and history and a denunciation of the "great Imposter" Mohammad. The author seems to have visited India and gives several paraphrases from the Persian.

But it is not to be supposed that for all writers of Oriental tales, India was a land of beautiful sunshine and dark-eyed beauties. There were others, among whom was J.H. Caunter B.D., who returned from India disgusted with Oriental life, "having discovered much to his disappointment nothing on the Continent of Asia to interest him." Caunter's best known work is his 'Romance of History', India 3 vols (1836), republished in 1837, which formed a part of a popular series. Under the form of stories it treats the most remarkable features of the Mohammedan Conquest of India. But it was in Cadet 2 vols (1814) that Caunter, recorded in heroic couplets his disgust of India. He says in the preface to this poem that his romantic conception of India, as a land of perpetual sunshine, fragrant flowers, herbs and spices, Bulbul and roses, was rudely shocked by his visit. He found India, instead, a land of poverty, famine, disease, superstition and barbarous customs:

"Frequent, when radiant Morn illumines the East  
 Warning the world that Night's dull hours have ceast  
 Some half-starv'd mother quits her rocky bed,  
 Looks at her side, and finds her infant dead;  
 Shocked at the sight uplifts her streamy eyes,  
 Clasps her weak hands to Heaven, groans and dies."

But most of the poem is devoted to satirising the Anglo Indian life in India.

"What are the luxuries they boast them here  
 The lolling couch, the joys of bottled beer;  
 On garnished sofas squeamish misses lie  
 Arrayed in white transparent drapery .... "

And men: The engraved illustrations are better than the verse.

"Sleep half their lives, or dally with a punk  
And crown the illspent day be getting drunk."

A similar but slightly better poem in the light, satirical manner of Byron's Beppo and Don Juan is "Tom Raw the Griffin, A Burlesque Poem in twelve cantos, illustrated by twenty five engravings, descriptions of the adventures of a Cadet in the East India Company's service from the period of his quitting England to his obtaining staff situation in India, by a Civilian and an officer on the Bengal Establishment, London 1828." The authors were Sir Charles Doyly, Bart, the Indian Civilian and artist and James Atkinson, an officer in the Bengal Army. Doyly was an amateur artist of some powers and his drawings chiefly illustrative of Indian Customs and field sports were highly commended by Bishop Heber.

Griffin, an Anglo Indian word, means a European newly arrived in India and unaccustomed to the ways and the peculiarities of that country. It was the purpose of the authors to satirise the snobbish, mercenary and dull life of the Anglo Indians, by relating the adventures of the imaginary Griffin, and the poem gives a fairly accurate picture of the activities of the Anglo Indians, their balls, dances, hunting, shopping, fighting and gossip. But it has neither the grip on Oriental life, displayed by the author of Hajji Baba, nor the wit, the easy flexibility of Byron's moods, nor the savage indignation of his satire. The following record of the conversation at an Anglo Indian dinner table, though it sets out to copy Byron's rhyming tricks, is spoilt by too profuse a use of the hybrid Hindoostani spoken by Europeans in India:

And in the pauses - "Punkah zoor si keencho,"  
"'Tis very hot" - "A gurrum panee bassum" -  
I pledge you m'am - Loll shraub - this is white wine"  
- "Pshaw" -  
Pray saw you P-l-r as King Richard?" - Porsun!  
There is too much garlic in these outlets." (Cursing)  
Across our hero the two Judges chattered  
Of Moodai, Moodillahi and Russoom  
Which was to him no joke at all - bespattered  
By two full greasy mouths, that more than wordings scattered"

The humour of the poem is cheap and plebeian. There are also frequent reflections on the poverty and the sordidness of Indian life. But as the Dictionary of National Biography says, "the book is more meritorious from an artistic than a literary point

of view," the engraved illustrations are better than the verse.

We have seen that Byron's self-critical and anti-romantic mind had already laughed at and parodied the extravagances of his early Oriental poems, in Don Juan. But the melodramatic and absurd Oriental tales that repeated monotonously Byron's formula of the Oriental tale, without Byron's genuine passion, or Byron's force of personality, were to deserve a severer chastisement at the hands of Victorian parodists, like Thackeray, Theodore Martin, Aytoun, Calverley, Owen Seaman and others. Parody, says George Kitchin in his exhaustive Survey of Burlesque and Poetry in English, "is an incessant reaction against literary fashions" and extravagances of taste. "Parody is for the man of medium taste, and is often a source of annoyance to exceptional people - to transcendentalists, mystics, lofty romantics, Utopians, primitives" and we may add 'Orientalising' poets. After the ridiculous fashion of the Oriental tales of crime, revenge, bloodshed and sickly sentimentality, tales that had not even the merit of a genuine exoticism, it was inevitable that parodists should appear to set right the balance of taste. It does not come within the scope of our work to give a detailed consideration to the prose literature of parody written by Thackeray and others against sham Orientalism. We shall only confine ourselves to a few pieces of verse, parodying the contemporary Oriental poems, especially 'Oriental lyrics'.

The early years of the Victorian era, the "roaring Forties," were an age of Annuals, Keepsakes, Forget-me-nots and other similar foibles, whose abundance masked the relative barrenness of the period in good poetry, till the appearance of Tennyson's and Arnold's poems. A recurrent feature of these Annuals was the 'Oriental lyric', an adaptation from this or that Oriental work

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1. A survey of Burlesque and Poetry in English G. Kitchin, 1931, p. 282.

2. The Keepsake, edited by the Countess of Blessington, 1841, a typical number, contains an Oriental story in prose, Legends of the Dekhan by Meadows Taylor and a short poem Mohammed's Lamentation for his mother, who died a pagan; there is also Pasha's Father, a Turkish tale in prose. The book also contains illustrations of fierce looking Oriental lovers making ridiculous love to bejewelled, love-sick maidens, while squatting on the carpets, between luxurious cushions, swords, fountains and hookahs.

or an original composition with a sprinkling of Oriental names. The Eastern Serenade, and From the Arabic, An Imitation, by Shelley, were the best compositions in this line. But the periodicals of the times are full of mawkish sentimental pieces, written by third rate poetasters, which it will be a waste of time and energy to collect and examine. A fair idea of their absurd nature can be got by the parodies that they gave rise to.

As early as 1812, James and Horace Smith, in their excellent Rejected Addresses, had parodied the metre and the manner of Southey's Curse of Kehama in the piece called The Rebuilding, beginning "I am the blessed Glendover;" but it was left to Thackeray and the authors of the Bon Gaultier Ballads to ridicule the absurdities of sham Orientalism. Thackeray<sup>1</sup> in The Ghazul, or Oriental Love Song<sup>2</sup>, parodies three kinds of Eastern poems from a large collection called Draughts of Sherbet. The first called The Rocks, is a song "anterior to the times of Antar, and almost as popular among the tribes of Lebanon as any Chronicle of the indomitable lover of Ibla .... Sung to a Guzla and to a wild and plaintive air the Antelope never failed to bring tears into the eyes of the Emeer's attendants"

"I was a timid little antelope  
My home was in the rocks, the lonely rocks" ... etc.

The second piece called the Merry Bard is supposed to be recited by "the celebrated or rather notorious little Kara Guroo, the cobbler, philosopher and bell ringer at the mosque of Sultan Achmet," who sings regularly of an evening, in front of the wine-houses at Constantinople, "with a dulcimer and a jar of wine beside him, tippling and singing verses of an epicurean and amatory tendency." The piece is in prose and not worth quoting, but one wonders what Thackeray's friend FitzGerald thought of the "epicurean and amatory" tendency of the "Merry Bard."

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1. Other prose parodies of Thackeray on Oriental themes constitute Some Passages in the Life of Major Gahagan, printed in the New Monthly Magazine, Feb. 1838 - to Feb. 1839; Punch in the East, Punch, Jan. 18 to Feb. 8, 1845; Notes on a journey from Cornhill to Cairo, 1846. Letters from the East by our own Bashi-Bazouk, (in the manner of Godsmith's Citizen of the World) Punch, June 24 to August 5, 1854, etc.etc.

2. First printed in Punch, June 5, 1847, vol XII, p.227.

The third piece The Caique is a dig at the Byronic mystery-mongering tales of crime. "This is a favourite song of His Highness Abd-ul-Medjeed." I composed it (in the Turkish language with which I am pretty familiar) on a melancholy occasion, of which I forbear to speak. The fate of the Leila of the song is well known. The Reverend G-e Br-n of the American Mission at Pera, has in his possession the sack in which the lovely and unfortunate Georgian girl was found floating in the Bosphorus. I have never been the same man since."!

Yonder is the kiosk, beside the creek  
Paddle the swift Caique  
Thou brawny oarsman with the sunburnt cheek,  
Quick! for it soothes my heart to hear the Bulbul speak!

Then "beneath the melancholy sycamores ... what a ravishing note the lovelorn Bulbul pours" etc.

In The Legend of Jawbrahim-Heraudee, perhaps the best of Thackeray's prose pieces, satirising under an Oriental disguise the dull prolixity of one John Abraham Herand, the king of Armenia Poof-allee-Shaw "had a female slave, the farfamed moon of beauty, surnamed for the slimness of her shape, Roolee-Poolee," who like the king himself had a marvellous memory and "could repeat you a little lively, erotic ditty of Thammaz the Moor, or a passionate tale by Byron, or a long sanctimonious, philosophic reflective poem by the famous old Dervish Wordswoorth-el-Muddee (or of the Lake)" .... etc.

But it was in the Bon Gaultier Ballads (1845) of Theodore Martin and W.B. Aytoun, that the most deliberate and effective blow was struck at the "prevailing literary craze or vitiation of taste,"<sup>3</sup> of the public that applauded in a romantic rapture, the Moor, the Turk and the Arab. In the Spanish Ballads, "The Broken Pitcher," "Don Fernando Gomersalez" etc. the tender Moorish maidens, their Christian lovers, the dark revengeful Moors, the bearded Cadi and other paraphernalia of Lockhart's Spanish Ballads and other inferior compositions was effectively and amusingly parodied. In

1. First printed in the Punch, June 18, 1842.

2. First appearing in the Fraser's and Tait's Magazines from 1842-1844.

3. Preface by Theodore Martin to the 16th edition, 1903 of Bon Gaultier Ballads, p. VII.

the "Cadi's Daughter, A Legend of the Bosphorus," the sickly sentimentality of the Oriental pieces of the Annuals, was held up to ridicule:

Young Leila sits in her jasmine bower  
And she hears the bulbul sing ....

waiting for "her own brave Galiongee ...."

The most amusing of the Oriental pieces in the Bon Gaultier Ballads is the "Eastern Serenade, by the Honourable Singin Muff" - in which the Byronic-Turkish lyric, with its abundance of uncouth epithets, is parodied to perfection. The piece begins with the description of the favourite hour of romance, evening:

The minarets wave on the plain of Stamboul  
And the breeze of the evening blows freshly and cool,  
The voice of the musnud is heard from the west  
And Kaftan and Kalpac have gone to their rest ....

and the Greek dragoman is waiting for his beloved by "the flowery tophaic". Though his heart beats beneath "the folds of a Greek Allah-hu," it is still faithful and true.

"Oh, wake thee, my dearest! the muftis are still  
And the tschocadars sleep on the franguestan hill  
No sullen aleikoum - no derveesh is here  
And the mosques are all watching by lonely Kashmere!  
Oh, come in the gush of thy beauty so full,  
I have waited for thee, my adored attar-gul!

I see thee - I hear thee - thy antelope foot  
Treads lightly and soft on the velvet cheroot;  
The jewelled amaun of the zemzem is bare,  
And the folds of thy palampore wave in the air,  
Come rest on the bosom that loves thee so well  
My dove! my phingari! my gentle gazelle!"

and so on. An illuminating note to the poem explains that it was written "to ridicule the various verses of the time, to which the use of Turkish words was supposed to impart a poetical flavour."

"Had Byron been alive, or Moore not ceased to write," continues the imaginary reviewer, Bon Gaultier, "we should have bidden them look to their laurels. 'Nonsense,' says Dryden, 'shall be eloquent in love,' and here we find the axiom aptly illustrated, for in this Eastern Serenade are comprised nonsense and eloquence in perfection. But apart from its erotic and poetical merits, it is a great curiosity, as exhibiting in a very marked manner the singular changes which the stride of civilization and the bow-string of the Sultaun Mahmoud have made in the Turkish language and customs

within a few years. Thus we learn from the writer that a 'masnud' which in Byron's day was a sofa, now signifies a nightingale. A 'tophaic' which once fired away in Moore's octosyllabics as a musket, is metamorphosed into a bank of flowers. 'Zemzem' the sacred well, now makes shift as a chemise; while the rallying cry of 'Allah-hu' closes in a stanza as a military cloak ..... Most of these changes are certainly highly poetical, and, while we admire their ingenuity we do not impugn their correctness. But with all respects for the author, the Honourable Singin Muff, we think that in one or two instances he has sacrificed propriety at the shrine of imagination. We do not allude to such little incongruities as the waving of a minaret, or the watching of a mosque. These may be accounted for; but (referring to the lines on the 'velvet cheroot' and:

Nay tremble not, dearest! I feel thy heart throb,  
'Neath the sheltering shroud of thy snowy Kiebaub;)

but who - who, we ask with some earnestness, ever heard of cheroots growing ready made among the grass, or of a young lady keeping an appointment in a scarf trimmed with mutton outlets? ..... We will not give up our own interpretation of 'Keibaubs,' seeing that we dined upon them not two months ago at the best chophouse in Constantinople.<sup>1</sup>"

Such fun directed against the extravagances of literary fashions is healthy and sound. The Bon Gaultier Ballads, had nearly the same purging effect on the silly Orientalism of the times as Goldsmith's parodies of the Oriental prose tale of the eighteenth century, already quoted, had on his contemporaries. A lesser and lesser number of Byronic-Oriental poems was being written as the century advanced. But every decade seems to have a craze of its own - and its own parodists. With FitzGerald, Sir Edwin Arnold and other later writers, a different, and a less ridiculous kind of Orientalism was coming into force, which depended not so much on a mere sprinkling of exotic words and exotic sentiments but on a comparatively better acquaintance <sup>with</sup> Oriental literature and thought. With some of these writers, we shall deal in our subsequent chapters.

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1. P. 269-270, Bon Gaultier Ballads, 1903.

## TENNYSON.

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The period between the death of Byron in 1824 and the publication of the Tennyson volumes of 1842 is usually called the literary interregnum.<sup>1</sup> All the major voices of the Romantic Revival were either dead or silent and the throne of English poetry was occupied by such second rate poets as Felicia Hemans, Henry Taylor and Robert Montgomery. Taine in his well-written History of English Literature, heralded the advent of Tennyson in the following words, which do better justice to the activities of the romantic poets, than they indicate the position that Tennyson's early volumes occupied in the course of English poetry:

"The potent generation of poets", says Taine, "who had just died out, had passed like a whirlwind. Like their forerunners of the sixteenth century, they had carried away and hurried everything to its extreme. Some had culled gigantic legends piled up dreams, ransacked the East, Greece, Arabia, the Middle Ages, and overloaded the human imagination with hues and fancies from every clime. Others had buried themselves in metaphysics and moral philosophy, had mused indefatigably on the condition of man and spent their lives on the sublime and the monotonous. Others, making a medley of crime and heroism, had conducted, through darkness and flashes of lightning, a train of contorted and terrible figures, desperate with remorse, relieved by their grandeur. Men wanted to rest after so many efforts and so much excess. On/going out of the imaginative, sentimental and Satanic school, Tennyson appeared exquisite. All the forms and ideas which had pleased them were found in him, but purified, modulated, set in a splendid style. He completed an

1. Vide, The Life and Times of Tennyson, by T.R. Lounsbury, 1915. p.129-203.

2. The Life and Times of Tennyson, p. 52.

age; he enjoyed that which had agitated others; his poetry was like the lovely evenings in summer: the outlines of the landscapes are then the same as in the day time; but the splendour of the dazzling celestial arch is dulled;....."<sup>1</sup>

This dramatic passage is, of course, unfair to Tennyson, whose sensitive, troubled and even morbid poetry is more than the poetry of the lovely evenings in summer. Moreover, Tennyson did not break, as we shall presently see, the tradition of romance that ransacked Greece and Arabia, the East and the Middle Ages. Literary history can be made dramatic and interesting, only at the cost of accuracy. One age shades imperceptibly into another with less noise of drums than the literary historians will have us believe.

The Poems by Two Brothers volume of 1827, though of very little intrinsic importance shows, that the Tennyson brothers were not indifferent to the tradition of writing on Oriental and pseudo-Oriental themes, made fashionable by Byron, Moore and others. This is especially true of Alfred Tennyson, whose early taste for the romance of exotic lands is evidenced by such poems as Persia, Egypt, The Expedition of Nadir Shah into Hindostan and By an Exile of Bassorah. In Persia Alexander's triumphal march over the East, reminds one of similar descriptions of Eastern lands which we have noticed in Moore, Shelley's Alastor and especially Keats' "Song of the Indian maiden" in Endymion, the latter of which might have given Tennyson the idea of his poem. The following lines, though they show none of that mastery of apt epithets, characteristic of Keats, and of Tennyson's own later poetry, are none the less remarkable, in Professor Lounsbury's words, for "the mastery of historical and geographical detail they exhibit" and "the skill manifested in marshalling an almost Miltonic wealth of nomenclature"<sup>2</sup>.

1. History of English Literature by H.A. Taine, trans. H. Van Laun, 1874, vol. IV. cited by Harold Nicholson in his Tennyson in a different translation. p. 427-428.
2. The Life and Times of Tennyson, p. 59.

Alexander led his armies in triumph:-

"O'er Anatolia, and the fane  
Of Belus, and Caister's plain  
And Sardis, and the glittering sands  
Of bright Pactolus, and the lands  
Where Croesus held his rich domain:  
On fair Diarbeck's land of spice,  
Adiabene's plains of rice,  
Where down th' Euphrates, swift and strong,  
The shield-like Kuphars bound along;

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And further east, where, broadly roll'd,  
Old Indus pours his stream of gold;  
And there, where tumbling deep and hoarse,  
Blue Ganga leaves her vaccine source;....."

The poem called Egypt is a more conventional rhapsody over the pyramids, "Those vast and hoary enemies of time", prefixed by Moore's lines from Lalla Rookh:

"Egypt's palmy groves,  
Her grottos and sepulchres of Kings."

The Expedition of Nadir Shah into Hindostan shows that the young Alfred Tennyson was acquainted with Sir William Jones' translation of the History of Nadir Shah and that the passionate rush of Byron's Destruction of Sennacherib had affected him so strongly as to merit an imitation. Here is the India of the romantic tradition overrun by the tyrant: Nadir Shah:

"The shrieks of the orphan, the lone widows wail,  
The groans of the childless are loud on the gale;  
For the star of thy glory is blasted and wan,  
And wither'd the flower of thy fame, Hindostan!"

An exile from Bassorah, mourns, while sailing down the Euphrates over the usual "minaret and mosque in the distant gleaming", and rather inconsistently over a Hindu maiden "whose look was like Cama's young glance". Cama (Kama) the Hindu God of love, introduced by Sir William Jones<sup>1</sup> and employed by Southey in his poetry, is once more alluded to by Tennyson in the poem Love:

"Thy fragrant bow of cane thou bendest  
Twanging the string of honey'd bees,  
And thence the flower tipp'd arrow sendest,  
Which gives or robs the heart of ease;  
Camdeo, or cupid, O be near,  
To listen, and to grant my prayer!"

All these juvenile experiments are in the approved pseudo-Oriental manner of the times and bear witness to that exotic impressionism that we have noticed as a very marked quality of most romantic poets

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1. Whose following lines Tennyson quotes in the note to the above passage: "He bends the luscious cane, and twists the string;  
With bees how sweet, but ah! how keen the sting!  
He with five flowrets tips thy ruthless darts,  
Which thro' five senses pierce enraptured hearts."

in their adolescence. A similar strain is carried on in the unpublished Anacaona, written at Cambridge between 1828-31, of which Hallam Tennyson says in the Memoir: "My father liked this poem but did not publish it because the natural history and the rhymes did not satisfy him. He evidently chose words which sounded well and gave a tropical air to the whole and he did not then care, as in his later poems, for absolute accuracy".<sup>1</sup> The poem is about the South Sea island of Hayti but is worth quoting for its "tropical air" that appealed to young Tennyson:

"A dark Indian maiden  
 Warbling in the bloom'd liana,  
 Stepping lightly flower-laden,  
 By the crimson-eyed anana,  
 Wantoning in orange groves,  
 Naked, and dark-limb'd, and gay,  
 Bathing in the slumberous coves,  
 In the cocoa-shadow'd coves,  
 Of sunbright Xaraguay,  
 Who was so happy as Anacaona,  
 The beauty of Espagnola  
 The golden flower of Hayti?"<sup>2</sup>

Already we have an evidence of the skilful use of vowel sounds, that was to be so characteristic of Tennyson's art. One wishes that Tennyson had given a freer rein to his innate gipsy temperament and not cared so much for that "absolute accuracy" that hindered him from attempting exotic themes in poetry.

The volume of 1830 contained but a single 'exotic' poem The Recollections of the Arabian Nights, which was unanimously praised, (with the single curious exception of Leigh Hunt) even by the more blood-thirsty of Tennyson's contemporary critics. Leigh Hunt's disapprobation was perhaps no more than the result of niggardliness and prejudice. His own idea of an Oriental poem was, as we have seen, an apologue, with a moral tag at the end, rather than the richly jewelled, Keatsian ode, which Tennyson's poem resembles. Indeed, Tennyson's poem both in its "carrying through" movement and a rather prolific use of the double-shotted adjectives, resembles those parts

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1. Tennyson, A Memoir, 1897, vol. I. p. 56; where the poem is quoted.  
 2. Ibid. Kubla Khan was Tennyson's special favourite (Memoir I.p.50) and Xaraguay may well owe something to Xanadu.

of Endymion which describe the wanderings of the hero among scenes of Oriental magnificence and splendour.<sup>1</sup> In the journey that the poet makes in his shallop adown the Tigris, there are faint suggestions also of the river journey that Shelley's poet in Alastor makes, although there is no correspondence between the awful and unearthly landscape of Alastor and the luxurious English landscape of Tennyson's poem. We have seen how it was impossible for Keats to describe any but the English landscape in his so called Oriental poems. We find the same thing in Tennyson. "The sloping of the moonlit sward" with "damask-work", the "deep inlay of braided blooms unmown", leaves flushed "with rich gold-green", making "interspaces" "with diamond-plots of dark and green", all these describe more aptly the journey of the Thames through England's green and pleasant isle, rather than the sunburnt course of the Tigris through the deserts of Arabia. Tennyson makes frequent efforts to give the conventional Oriental colouring to his landscape by talking rather vaguely of "eastern flowers large" and "tall Orient Shrubs", but the landscape remains English even in spite of "Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold", "Broidered sofas"<sup>2</sup> and the "great pavilion of the Caliphate." We have seen how the Arabian Nights produced a metaphysical awe in young Coleridge and habituated his mind to "the Vast" and "the whole"; how they proved a support to Wordsworth's theory of the value of wonder in child education; how Keats in Endymion appropriated some of their "jugglery with time and space." Tennyson provides one more whimsical example of the diverse uses to which the romantic minds put these Arabian tales. In Tennyson's poetical, but somewhat botanically-inclined mind these tales provoked visions of a rich and luxurious English landscape, adown the river, unfolding vistas of varying tints and new effects of light and shade at every bend of the river. With his desire for "absolute accuracy", Tennyson liked to describe only

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1. cf. Endymion. II, 221-239; 594-604.

2. Tennyson's note in the Works Eversley edition, 1907, vol. I p. 340, reads, "I had only the translation from the French of Galland of the Arabian Nights, when this was written, so I talked of sofas etc. Lane was yet unborn." cf. Memoirs I. 34 Tennyson writes to Mrs. Russel from Cambridge in 1828, "I wish to heaven I had prince Hussain's fairy carpet to transport me along the depths of air to your coterie, Nay I would even take up with his brother Aboul-somethings glass for the mere pleasure of a peep, what a pity it is that the golden days of Fairie are over". The 'Oriental fever' had gripped him like the rest of his contemporaries.

those scenes which he had seen with his own eyes, and for better or for worse, this poetic realism hindered him from any kind of genuine exoticism. Near the end of his journey the poet gets a glimpse of the "Persian girl", one of those amorous brood of Oriental maidens who from Coleridge, Southey, Shelley and Keats downwards keep rewarding the young English poets with their exotic beauties:

"Then I stole up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl  
Flowing beneath her rose hued zone;  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Well worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid."<sup>1</sup>

In Tennyson's 1832 volume there appeared a poem, prefixed by a quotation from Sappho, whose unusual theme was the passionate and self-abandoning love of a woman for a man. Tennyson thought advisable, later, to call the poem Fatima, probably in order to make such unseemly passion more suitable in an Oriental woman. The poem is a rare and not unworthy expression in Tennyson of a "fierce delight" in physical love, ending in an ecstasy of self-abandonment:

"I will possess him or will die,  
I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace."

In its swooning tenderness the poem falls in with Shelley's lyric The Indian Serenade and some of Keats' lines from Endymion mentioned in a previous section. We have already seen that in the Poems by Two Brothers Tennyson makes several allusions to the work of Sir William Jones, and even imitates one of the Oriental scholar's poems. But to Jones Tennyson owes also the idea of one of his major poems, Locksley Hall (1842). Of this poem Hallam Tennyson says,

"I remember my father saying that Sir William Jones' prose translation

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1. The recent biography of Harun-al-Rashid by H. St. J. B. Philby, 1933, has proved that this whimsical and inquisitive despot of the Nights was after all, a charitable and religious monarch the "good Haroun Alraschid". The "Persian girl", Tennyson said was "Noureddin, the fair Persian" in the Arabian Nights.

The lover is introduced accompanied by his friends, to whom these of the Moallakat, the seven Arabian poems (which are a selection from the work of pre-Mohammedan poets) hanging up in the temple of Mecca, gave him the idea of the poem."<sup>1</sup>

That these classical Arabian poems, even in Sir William Jones not too brilliant a translation, had the power to move other poets by their startlingly original images of desert life, we have already seen in connection with Southey. The central idea of these Love Elegies, is, like Tennyson's poem, the complaint of a man about his lost or faithless mistress. The lover stands before the desolate and ruined dwelling of his mistress and sorrowfully remembers the happiness of the past. In the Poem of Hareth, for example the lover says:

"Doth fair Asoma give us notice of her departure? She is resolved to depart after our mutual vows among the sandy hillocks of Shamma. Vows repeated in Mohayat .... vows renewed in the bowers of katha... I see no remains of the troth which she plighted in those stations, and I waste the day in tears, frantick with grief: but oh! what part of my happiness will tears restore?"<sup>2</sup>

And in the Poem of Lebeid there is a similar situation where the "shallowhearted Amy" of the desert lover proves "Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung:"<sup>3</sup>

"Break then so vain a connection with a mistress whose regard has ceased, for hopeless is an union with a maid, who has broken her vow! When a damsel is kind and complacent, love her with ardent affection; but when her faith staggers and her constancy is shaken, let your disunion from her be unutterably fixed"<sup>4</sup>.

But the greatest similarity with the opening of Tennyson's monologue occurs in the Poem of Amriolkais, the first of the Moallakat.

1. Memoir, op.cit. 1. p.195.
2. The Poem of Hareth, 1-5; The Works of Sir William Jones in 6 vols. 1799, vol. IV. p. 326.
3. Locksley Hall. (20-21).
4. The Poem of Lebeid, (20-21) Works of Sir W. Jones op. cit. IV. p. 287-288.

5. Poem of Amriolkais, 23; Works of Jones op.cit.

The lover is introduced accompanied by his friends, to whom these words are addressed:

"Stay let us weep at the remembrance of our beloved, at the sight of the station where her tent was raised, by the edge of yon bending sands between Dahul and Haumel,

Tudam and Mikra; a station, the marks of which are not wholly effaced, though the south wind and the north have woven the twisted sand".<sup>1</sup>

The imaginary Victorian hero on the sandy coast of Lincolnshire<sup>2</sup> begins in a similar vein:

"Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet tis early morn:  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all round it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland, flying over Locksley Hall,  
Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts....."

The beautiful image of the following lines also appears in the Arabian poem:

"Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid".<sup>3</sup>

In the Poem of Amriolkais, we find: "It was the hour, when the Pleiads appeared in the firmament, like the folds of a silken sash variously decked with gems."

The Poem of Amriolkais finishes with an account of the storm where there occurs this startling image:

"O friend, seest thou the lightning whose flashes resemble the quick glance of two hands amid clouds raised above clouds".<sup>4</sup>

Tennyson's poem too ends in a storm:

"Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunder-bolt.

1. The Poem of Amriolkais, 1-2. Ibid, p. 249.

2. "Locksley Hall is an imaginary place (tho' the coast is Lincolnshire) and the hero is imaginary". Memoir, op.cit. I. 194.

3. The Poem of Amriolkais, 23; Works of Jones op.cit.

4. Ibid, 64, p. 256.

"Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail or fire  
or snow;

For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward and I go"<sup>1</sup>

But not only was Tennyson influenced in the central idea of his poem by the Arabian poems, the metre of Locksley Hall is the same as of these poems. If we take accent for quantity, which the genius of the English language requires, Locksley Hall, furnishes an admirable example of what is called in Persian Prosody as a mathnawi or a "couplet poem", written in the metre called Ramal-i Muthamman-i-mahdhuf (رمل شتمن محذوف) or the "apocopated octa meter Ramal"; i.e. | - u - - | - u - - | - u - - | - u - - | twice repeated in a bayt.

Here are two first bayts (four lines of the English) scanned in the Persian fashion:-

"Comrades, / leave me / here a little / while as yet 'tis / early morn /:

Leave me here and / when you want me / sound upon the / bugle horn /

'Tis the place and / all around it / as of old the / curlews call /

Dreary gleams a / bout the moorland / flying over / Locksley Hall /

All long systematised didactic poems in Persian, Shahnama of Firdausi, Haft Aurang of Jami, Mathnawi of Jalal-u-ddin Rumi, are composed in this form, which is of Persian invention, though occasionally employed in post-classical Arabic verse.

Tennyson became acquainted with this metrical scheme, from the transcription of the original Arabic text in Latin characters which Sir William Jones <sup>gives.</sup> This transcription is printed in a couplet form, the second line of the couplet having the same rhyme throughout the poem. Tennyson's poem, however, is divided into rhyming couplets. One verse in the Poem of Ariolkais, for example is transcribed thus by Jones:

Qadábica min ómri álhowáirithi kablahá  
Wajáratihá ómri árabábi bimásli

And if we read this verse with trochaic rhythm we get exactly the model of the catalectic trochaic tetrameter that Tennyson's poem

1. Locksley Hall.

2. Works op.cit. vol. IV. p. 337.

is composed in:

Cadá/bíca/mín om/ ní alh/ hówai/ rithi/ kábla/ha  
 Lóve took/ úp the/ gláss of/ Tíme and/ turn'd it/ ín his  
 glówing/ hánds.<sup>1</sup>

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 To this point, however, we shall return later.

Although Tennyson wrote no professedly Oriental poem, his interest in Oriental literature was great. In 1854 at Farringford,

We get evidence of an altogether different kind of Orientalism when the Indian born lover of Locksley Hall, sick of the cold-heartedness of his English Amy writes:

"Ah for some retreat  
 Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,  
 Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil starr'd;-  
 I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward  
 Or to burst all links of habit - thereto wander far away  
 On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.  
 Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies  
 Breaths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of  
 Paradise."<sup>2</sup>

This we recognise is the Orient of the romantic tradition, moons, palms and all, with the addition of the historical reference to the doings of the East India Company, which were attracting more and more attention in the Victorian England. The petulant desire of Tennyson's lover of escaping to the Orient after being jilted by his "Cousin Amy" and there taking some "savage woman" and rearing "a dusky race", reminds one of the child who told his mother, that if she didn't give him sweets, he will go into the garden and eat worms! But this "desire to herd with narrow foreheads", is only a momentary whim of "the heir of all the ages, in the foremost lines of time."<sup>3</sup> The Victorian youth of the "Forward, forward let us range", tradition, finally comes to the well-known conclusion that:

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay".<sup>4</sup>

1. A remarkable parallel to these lines of Tennyson occurs in the Mathnavi of Jelal-ud-Din Rumi, where a similar thought is expressed

پس عدم گردد عدم چون او غنول - گویم کانا ایبراهیم را جعول

"Let me be Nought! The harp-string tells me plain,  
 That 'unto Him do we return again!"

2. Locksley Hall.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Thus we find that nostalgia for the East, so noticeable in the romantic poets, already undergoing modification, with the increase of knowledge about the Orient, and more particularly on account of a less idealistic temper of mind prevailing in the prosperous days of Queen Victoria. To this point, however, we shall return later.

Although Tennyson wrote no professedly Oriental poem, his interest in Oriental literature was great. In 1854 at Farringford, we hear of his reading Persian with FitzGerald, who was at this time collecting Persian Dictionaries and grammars for his translations. In a letter of March, 29, 1854, Tennyson tells us how he hurt his eyes by poring over a small-printed Persian Grammar; until this with Hafiz and other Persian books had to be hidden away, for he had seen "the Persian letters stalking like giants round the walls of his room"<sup>1</sup> And in a letter of June, 15th, 1854 we find FitzGerald wanting to send him Eastwick's Translation of Sa'di's Gulistan. "I could mark some of the pieces," says FitzGerald with his characteristic reserve, "which I think it might not offend you to read: though you will not care greatly for anything in it"<sup>2</sup>.

Tennyson's Persian studies produced no fruit, but he had a high opinion of his friends' Rubaiyat, which he calls the "golden Eastern lay":

Than which I know no version done,  
In English more divinely well;  
A planet equal to the sun  
Which cast it, that large infidel  
Your Omar; ....."<sup>3</sup>

The "humorous poco-curantism" and the indolent kindly, Epicureanism<sup>4</sup> of FitzGerald appealed to Tennyson, while the latter's Gareth & Lynette which expresses a somewhat similar frame of mind, was one of

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1. Memoir, op.cit. I. p. 373-374; cf. Tennyson and his friends, edit. Hellam Lord Tennyson, 1911, p. 106, a very useful chapter on Tennyson's friends by Dr. Warren.
  2. Tennyson and his friends op. cit. p. 107.
  3. "To E. FitzGerald" introduction to Tiresias and other Poems.
  4. Dr. Warren in Tennyson and his friends, op. cit. p.124, draws a parallel between Tennyson and FitzGerald, to which I am here indebted.

FitzGerald's favourites. Both poets felt an awe on contemplating "the awful processes of time"<sup>1</sup> and the "terrible Muses";<sup>2</sup> of Astronomy and Geology, but while FitzGerald believed in making:

"the most of what we yet may spend  
Before we into the dust descend;  
Dust into dust and under dust to lie,  
Sans wine, sans song, sans singer and sans end!"

Tennyson with a more comfortable vision of "one far off divine event, to which the whole creation moves", could write:

"If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure  
Pierian Altar,  
Tho' their music here be mortal, need the singer  
greatly care?  
Other songs for other worlds! the fire within him  
would not falter;  
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer  
There".<sup>3</sup>

It was more characteristic of Tennyson to be interested in the duality of good and evil, Ormuzd and Ahriman of Zoroastrianism, on which he planned a poem in later life. The poem was never written; but from <sup>the</sup> sketch which exists in Hallam Tennyson's Memoir,<sup>4</sup> one can get an idea of the transcendent faith which it was to embody. "The philosophers of the East", says Hallam Tennyson in connection with his father's poem Akbar's Dream, "had a great fascination for my father, and he felt that the Western religion might learn from them much of spirituality. He was sure too that Western civilization had even in his time developed Eastern thought and morality, but what direction the development would ultimately take, it was impossible to predict."<sup>5</sup> But unlike <sup>Matthew</sup> Arnold, it was not Buddha or the Bhagvad Gita, which attracted Tennyson, but the broadminded politic Emperor Akbar,<sup>6</sup> whom he made the embodiment of a "lofty ideal of an eclectic faith trans-

1. FitzGerald's letter to Cowell, 1847, quoted in Tennyson and his Friends, p. 137.  
2. Tennyson in Parnassus, Ibid, p. 138.  
3. Parnassus.  
4. II, 321.  
5. Memoir, op.cit. vol. II. p. 388, cf. p. 398.  
6. For his poem Tennyson consulted Abul Fazl's Akbar Nama, Aine-Akbari (translated by J. Blochman), Elphinstone's History of India and Asiatic Studies by Alfred Lyall, See Memoir, II, p. 389.

ending formalism, sectarian intolerance, and the idols of the crowd; and seeking for some spacious theology that shall comprehend the inner significance and aspiration of all external worships."<sup>1</sup>

It is not on Indian philosophy that Tennyson's best 'Oriental' lines were written but on the poetic appeal of luxurious vegetation and the many-hued sunsets of India. In a poem headed Milton, one of the "Experiments in Quantity", Tennyson writes:

"Me rather all that bowery loveliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
Where some refulgent sunset of India  
Streams over rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
Whisper in odorous heights of even."

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1. Alfred Lyall, Tennyson, E.M.L. p. 176, himself an authority on India whom Tennyson consulted. See the previous note.

<sup>t</sup>MATHEW ARNOLD.

<sup>t</sup>Mathew Arnold's interest in the Orient though in some ways parallel to that of Tennyson, is also characteristically different. Both poets in their early poetry, show a propensity to choose Oriental themes, and in their middle period, Arnolds' Sohrab & Rustum, corresponds to Tennyson's Locksley Hall & Akbar's Dream. But no two poets were prompted to choose the same kind of subjects, by more different motives. With Tennyson, as we have seen, it was an experimental indulgence in a vein of exoticism, that did not come quite natural to him and dwindled down in the Defence of Lucknow and Akbar's Dream into patriotic celebration of heroism and the portrayal of an ideal of religious toleration, respectively. Arnold's interest in the East, however, can not properly be called exotic; he chose Oriental themes because they fitted in with his critical and philosophical theories. The ideal of cosmopolitan culture with its desire to be acquainted with the best that is known and thought in the world, and the belief that the "eternal subjects of Poetry among all nations and at all times --- are actions,"<sup>1</sup> the two main tenets of <sup>t</sup>Mathew Arnold's 'philosophy', were both favourable for the choice of poetic themes, from distant times and countries, including the Orient. And Sohrab & Rustum was written as a direct exemplification of these theories. But of greater interest and deserving of more attention, is the fact that, unlike most English poets dealt with so far, Arnold's interest in the East was also prompted by philosophical reasons.

The recent publication of The Letters of Mathew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough, by H.F. Lowry,<sup>2</sup> provides some valuable

1. Preface to 1853 edition of Poems.

2. Oxford University Press, 1932.

3. Examiner, March, 4, 1946, p.145-146.

his

information regarding Mathew Arnold's early life, / friendship with Clough and the philosophical and literary discussions of the two friends which had a profound effect on both poets. Among many topics discussed by Arnold and Clough, one is surprised to find, there is also Hindu philosophy. Sometime in the beginning of 1848, Arnold had, it seems, come across the well-known Hindu philosophical poem, The Bhagavad-Gita, which, we remember, Coleridge so eloquently denounced. Finding some kinship to his own philosophy of stoical resignation in this poem, Arnold wrote to Clough: "The Indians distinguish between meditation or absorption - and knowledge: between abandoning practice, and abandoning the fruits of action and all respect thereto. This last is a supreme step and dilated on throughout the poem."<sup>1</sup>

Arnold is referring here, no doubt, to that reconciliation of the two ideals by which according to the Gita, salvation can be won - renunciation (Sannyasa) or withdrawal from life and the performing of duty or right action (Karma-Yoga):

"Therefore fulfil ever without attachment the Work that thou hast to do; for the man that does his work without attachment wins to the Supreme! Or again, "Casting off all thy Works upon Me with thy mind on the One over Self, be thou without craving and without thought of a Mine, and put away thy fever and fight."<sup>2</sup>

How near it is, at least on the face of it, to Arnold's view of life, we shall see presently.

But for Clough, who had probably a greater amount of what Coleridge called "euphrasy of commonsense", and a more sceptical and ironical temper, all this talk of desirelessness and detachment had no appeal. We have Arnold writing again, "I am disappointed, the Oriental wisdom, God grant it were mine, pleased you not".<sup>3</sup> Arnold continues in the same strain in a letter written shortly after: "The Examiners article<sup>4</sup> is by Carlyle - and how solemn, how deeply restful, it strikes on one amidst the heat and vain words that are everywhere

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1. Letter to Clough, Mar. 4. 1848, Lowry, op.cit. p. 71.
  2. Bhagavad-Gita, chap. 3. 19, 30, trans. by L.D. Barnett, The Temple Classics. Arnold used Wilkinson's earlier translation, the same that Coleridge denounced. I quote a better and a later translation.
  3. Letter to Clough, Mar. 1. 1848. Lowry, op.cit. p. 69. cf Lowry, p. 71 note 3.
  4. On Louis Philippe, Examiner, March, 4. 1848, p. 145-146.

just now - Yet the thought extracted and abstractly stated, are every newspaper's: it is the style and the feeling, by which the beloved man appears. Apply this, Infidel, to the Oriental Poem."<sup>1</sup> The Oriental Poem here is again, undoubtedly Bhagavat - Gita, to whose heightened moral manner Arnold compares Carlyle's style. But Clough was not to be converted. In his review of Arnold's two volumes of poems in the North American Review, many years later we find him making certain strictures on Arnold's tendency to assign too high a place to what "we call nature", and upon his too great confinement within "the dismal cycle of his rehabilitated Hindoo-Greek theosophy".<sup>2</sup> Clough who was Arnold's constant companion when the above mentioned volumes were written must have known of Arnold's enthusiasm for Hindu philosophy to speak of "the dismal cycle of his rehabilitated Hindoo-Greek theosophy", and besides the evidence provided by the above letters, the poems themselves echo a vein of thought not very different from that inculcated in the Bhagavad-Gita. The following stanza of the poem significantly called "The World and the Quietist", and addressed to "Critias", may well have been the result of a discussion with Clough on Hindu philosophy:

"Why when the world's great mind  
Hath, finally inclin'd  
Why, you say, Critias, 'be debating still?  
Why with these mournful rhymes  
Learn'd in more languid climes,  
Blame our activity,  
Who with such passionate will,  
Are what we mean to be?"

The "languid climes" may well be India. The poetic ideal described in the finest poem of the 1849 volume, Resignation, also bears evidence of that detached contemplation advocated in the Bhagavad-Gita. The poet in his "sad lucidity of soul" looks into beautiful eyes and bears to admire them "uncravingly"; he looks at the happy crowds "and does not say, 'I am alone'"; he gazes at the panorama of hills and trees and streams:

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1. Letter to Clough, March, 8.1848; Lowry, p. 75.
  2. North American Review, vol. LXXVII, No. 160, July 1853, p.1-30. Lowry, p. 141, note 2.

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environment of his day, that must have moulded his views. But it is at least probable that among all these Hindu philosophy had its share too.

But underneath Arnold's philosophical calm, one can't help feeling, there was an austere will that had achieved a false serenity, not through the fulness of experience, but through starvation. One finds no evidence in Arnold of that "fierce dispute, betwixt Hell torment and impassioned clay" that man must "Burn through" to reach that true state of detachment when:

....."to bear all naked truths  
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty."

In the same volume of 1849 in which Resignation appeared, there is another poem which proves that Arnold's interest in the East was not restricted to Hindu philosophy. The Sick King of Bokhara tells the story of a man who, during a scarcity of water in Persia, hoarded some water secretly for himself, and was consequently sentenced to death by stoning by the orthodox Ulemas or priests. The merciful King of Bokhara, though he had to concede reluctantly to the law of his land, was greatly touched by the fate of the poor man and ordered him to be buried in the grave that he had reserved for himself:

....."He was not wholly vile,  
Because a King shall bury him".

This rather insignificant moral anecdote, Arnold decorates with a host of bright circumstantial touches of local colour and the narrative is managed with something of that skill and simplicity in story telling/that we have witnessed in the Oriental poems of Leigh Hunt, by whom Arnold may well have been influenced. But for the story itself the details of the Persian King's court, the description of the town intersected by canals and shaded by mulberry trees, and other information about the manners and customs of the Persians. Arnold was indebted, as has been pointed out by F.L. Juard,<sup>1</sup> to a book Travels

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1. Journal of English and German Philology, vol VI, oct. 1906, p 99 ff. The story related by Arnold is given in Burnes' book (vol. I p.307-8) in a somewhat different form. The account of the city intersected by canals and shaded by mulberry trees (Ibid.p.301), the coloured pieces of snow (Ibid,p.278) and many other details, Arnold repeats almost verbatim from Burnes' book.

in Bokhara, by Sir Alexander Burnes. The table of parallel passages, given by F. L. Juard in his article, proves that not only was the plot of the poem taken from Burnes' book, but Arnold also gathered all the vivid touches of scenery and local colour from the same work. Burnes who belonged to the same family as Robert Burns, the poet, was an officer of the East India Company who had performed the hazardous journey to Bokhara, and written a commercial and political account of the countries he visited. The book has no literary pretensions; but the author recounts his daring and often dangerous exploits with candour and simplicity and some of his descriptions of wild Toorkmun life are vivid enough to deserve the compliment that Arnold paid them, by making them the ground work of his similes in Sohrab & Rustum and other poems. We hear from Burnes' biographer Sir John William Kaye,<sup>1</sup> that on Burnes' return from Bokhara, all the magnates of the land, Lord Holland, Lord Landsdowne, the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, and even the King-William the Fourth, were anxious for a privilege of conversation with "Indus Burnes", or "Bokhara Burnes", about his famous travels. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Arnold, employing in poetry the accounts of a famous contemporary traveller, as Coleridge and Southey had employed Bruce's travels.

Even in the early poem The Strayed Traveller, (1849) there are evidences to show that Arnold was drawing on Burnes' account. The account of the Scythian merchants, who take "mare's milk and bread baked on embers", and their crossing of the

.....broad, clay laden  
Lone Chorasmian stream

in a ferry boat drawn by a team of horses, and laden with merchandise, shows that Arnold was drawing on the same chapters in Burnes' book<sup>2</sup> that were to supply him with information for Sohrab & Rustum. The lone Chorasmian stream is, of course, the Oxus of the later poem.

1. Lives of Indian Officers, 1867, vol.II, p. 26.  
2. Vol. II. Chapter XII, we shall come to Burnes' book in connection with Sohrab & Rustum.

Juward in his article cited above, pointed out Arnolds' debt to Burnes book in The Sick King of Bokhara, but how much more Arnold owed to this book we shall see presently.

Sohrab & Rustum, with the possible exception of Thyrsis is the finest of Arnolds' poems, and with the exception of Fitzgerald's Omar, the best known of all the Oriental poems written by Englishmen. Before Arnold made famous this episode from the Persian epic Shahnameh or the "Book of Kings", by Abul Qasim Firdausi, written about A.D. 1010, this great Persian work was known to a comparatively few English readers by such early unsatisfactory translations of various extracts as The Poems of Firdosi by J. Champion, (Calcutta, 1785), Sohrab, a poem by J. Atkinson (Calcutta 1814, 1829), Episodes from the Shah Nameh, by S. Weston, (1815), Rustum Zaboolae & Sohrab by W. T. Robertson (Calcutta, 1829) and finally the abridged version in prose with occasional verse by J. Atkinson, printed by the Oriental Translation Fund in 1832.<sup>1</sup> This last version was the most satisfactory one till the appearance of the Persian text with French prose translation in a magnificent folio edition, at the expense of the French government, by Julius Von Mohl (1831-68).

There is no evidence to show that Arnold was acquainted with any of the above versions, except with Atkinson's abridged translation, which as we shall presently see, he may have consulted. Mohl's French translation, at least in its earlier editions was too bulky, and too costly to be easily available.

In a note to his poem Arnold confesses that "the whole of the sources from which he drew the story" of Sohrab & Rustum, were firstly the brief resumé of the episode which Sir John Malcolm gives in his History of Persia<sup>2</sup> and secondly in Arnold's own words, "M. Sainte-Beuve, also, that most delightful of critics, in a notice of an edition of Ferdousi's great poem by M. Mohl now in the course of publication at Paris, containing the original text and prose translation,

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1. Our references are to the reprint of 1886, The Chandos Classics.  
 2. Vol. 1. p. 36-37, edited 1825.

gives an analysis of this episode, with M. Mohl's translation, which I will quote at length: commencing from the point where Rustum leaves Tehmimé, the future mother of Sohrab, before the birth of her child; having given her an onyx with instructions to let the child wear it in her hair, if a girl, and on his arm, if a boy. Of M. Mohl's book itself I have not been able to obtain sight." Arnold then quotes a long extract in French from a very charming and moving introduction to the poet Firdausi, written by M. Sainte-Beuve, in the Constitutionnel of Monday, February 11, 1850, which appeared later in the Causeries du Lundi.<sup>1</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that without this excellent article, Arnold's Sohrab & Rustum would never have been written. Arnold had much in common with the French critic and the praise that the latter bestows on Firdausi, and the agreeable analysis that he gives of the Sohrab and Rustum episode, must have supplied the greatest impetus for Arnold's choice of this episode for his poem. "It is a good thing to travel sometimes"; says Sainte-Beuve, "it widens one's ideas and lessens one's conceit. We get a juster measure of what we call fame and of what that grand word comes to. On the days when we are too infatuated with ourselves, and our importance, I know of nothing more tranquillising than to read a book of travels in Persia or China"<sup>2</sup>. Arnold must have agreed entirely with this Goethe-like conception of cosmopolitan culture. Again, Sainte-Beuve speaking of the "moral seriousness" of Firdausi's genius characterises the Persian poet, in the following words which must have undoubtedly flattered Arnold's own serene stoicism:

"On seeing so many dynasties and so many centuries following each other which, at a distance, appear to be gathered into one day, the poet conceived a deep sense of the instability of human things, of the flight of life and the brilliant years, of the vanity of every thing except a good name, for he believes in poetry and fame. Beyond that he finds a satisfaction in that tranquil universal detachment, that kind of transcendent epicureanism, which we find exhaling from

1. Our references are to the English translation by E. J. Trenchman, vol. I. p. 266-280.

2. Ibid. p. 261 - 67.

Solomon's books of Wisdom. This eternal theme is here rejuvenated by a charming imagination. In Firdausi it is combined with a particular softness, a disposition to clemency and compassion, which suggests the neighbourhood of India".

We have seen how a similar philosophy of detachment and resignation in Hinduism appealed to Arnold.

As regards the episode proper of Sohrab & Rustum, "this dramatic and touching episode, this adventure all full of colours in the first place and of perfumes and finally of tears"<sup>2</sup> Sainte-Beuve says that "it has travelled the world over (and) reblossomed in many a ballad in every country, and which many poets have rehandled and reinvented in their own way...."<sup>3</sup>

There could be no more direct invitation from the critic whom Arnold admired and respected to rehandle and reinvent in his own way the episode of Sohrab & Rustum. And this is exactly what Arnold did.

Having got the idea of this "very noble and excellent story",<sup>4</sup> as he calls it in a letter written at the time, Arnold set out<sup>looking</sup> for other sources to supplement his knowledge of Persia. Sainte-Beuve's abstract gives in a very lucid/and attractive form the central idea of the dramatic conflict of the story, which proved of great use to Arnold; and it is doubtful if without the help of this simplified version Arnold could have been able to reduce the involved and diffuse story as given in Atkinson, to the dramatic and emotional unity that is so characteristic of Arnold's poem. But Sainte-Beuve's abstract however admirable in other ways, lacks the facts and figures necessary for a minor epic of eight hundred and ninety two lines. What was more natural for Arnold<sup>than</sup> to refer again to Burnes' Travels in Bokhara, which he had twice used before? But before discussing how heavily indebted Arnold was to this book let us dispose of the

1. Ibid 273 - 74.

2. Ibid. p. 275.

3. Ibid.

4. Letters edit. Russell, 1, p. 34-5. cf. Lowry p. 136.

exaggerated importance attached by Arnold's editors to the other two books, Malcolm's History of Persia, and Atkinson's abstract of the Shah-nameh, the first of which as we have said, Arnold

quoted in his note to the poem. Louise Pound<sup>1</sup> in a brief note on Arnold's sources for Sohrab & Rustum, pointed out, rightly, the error of Arnold's editors in ascribing a great deal of the poem to Atkinson's abstract of the Shah-nameh. It was <sup>Louise</sup> Pound's opinion that Malcolm's History of Persia, was the chief basis of Arnold's narrative. The reasons for this belief were, briefly these:

(1) The spellings of proper names in Arnold's poem, Peran-Wisa, Zoar-inehah, Ferood, Gudurz, Siestan etc. were Malcolm's rather than Atkinson's who has Piran-Wisa, Zuara, Ferhad, Sistan.

(2) Arnold follows Malcolm in making Sohrab's mark of identity a seal pricked on his arm, rather than an amulet or a golden bracelet as in Atkinson.

(3) Arnold does not mention Tamineh, Sohrab's mother, while in the Atkinson she is given a very prominent part.

(4) Arnold follows Malcolm in making the banks of the Oxus, the scene of the affray. In Atkinson the action takes place in a desert fortress.

(5) References to Rustum's falcon, the Bahrein diver, Jamshed's pillars of black granite might possibly have been suggested by Malcolm.

But in spite of all these, <sup>Louise</sup> Pound thinks that perhaps it is well to make the assumption that Arnold was indebted to Atkinson's translation for some stray touches in the handling. A number of similarities in the handling, for example the embassy of Gudarz to Rustum and the former's argument (cf Atkinson, p. 131), the description of Sohrab by the "cyprus tree" simile (Ibid p. 132.), touches in the dialogue where Sohrab and Rustum meet or in the narrative of the combat, prove that perhaps Arnold did consult Atkinson's abstract.

1. Modern Language Notes, 21, 1906, p. 15-17.

The present writer after a careful examination of the four possible sources of Arnold's poem, Atkinson, Malcolm, Sainte-Beuve's abstract mentioned and Burnes' Travels in Bokhara, (the latter two of which are not mentioned at all by Pound), is of the opinion that Pounds' contentions number (1), (2) and (5) are in the main, correct although in no: (2) that writer, omits to mention the important detail, that the sign on Sohrab's arm was the design of the Griffin "which of old reared Zal", Rustum's father whom he left among the mountain rocks; a fact that comes directly from Malcolm (vol. I. p. 25). Contention no: (2) neither proves nor disproves anything. Tamineh is also mentioned by Sainte-Beuve, but Arnold omits the romantic episode of Rustum and Tamineh, except as a pathetic reminiscence of the dying Sohrab, probably to concentrate more on the relations of the father and the son. In no: (4) as we shall see, Burnes' may have contributed as much to the importance of the Oxus in Arnold's poem as Malcolm.

The embassy of Gudarz to Rustum and the former's argument (lines 243 ff) are indeed strongly reminiscent of Atkinson (p. 131) and are not mentioned by any of the other writers. The simile of the cypress describing Sohrab "like some young cypress, tall and dark and straight" (line 314) may also have come from Atkinson (p. 131), where Sohrab is described "In stature perfect, as the cypress tree", but Sainte-Beuve also mentions a "tall cypress",<sup>1</sup> and Arnold's line may well be <sup>an</sup> amalgam of the two. On the other hand, the ironical and pathetic dialogue between Rustum and Sohrab, owes, in the present writer's opinion, more to Sainte-Beuve's quotations from Mohl's translation than to Atkinson (p. 135):

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1. Causeries du Lundi, Trans. Trenchman, Vol. I. p. 275.

'O thou young man, the air of  
 heaven is soft  
 And warm and pleasant; but the  
 grave is cold  
 Heaven's air is better than the  
 cold dead grave.  
 Behold me: I am vast and clad  
 in iron,  
 And tried, and I have stood on  
 many a field  
 Of blood, and I have fought  
 with many a foe:  
 Never was that field lost, or  
 that foe sav'd  
 O Sohrab wherefore thou rush  
 on death?  
 Be govern'd: quit the Tartar host  
 and come  
 To Iran, and be as my son to me  
 And fight beneath my banner till  
 I die,  
 There are no youths in Iran as  
 brave as thou.  
 (S.R. 323-333)<sup>1</sup>

'O tender youth! he says, the  
 earth is dry and cold, the air  
 is soft and warm. I am old;  
 I have seen many a battle field  
 I have destroyed many an army  
 and I have never been vanquish-  
 ed. But I have pity on thee  
 and would not deprive thee of  
 life. Remain not with the  
 Turks; I know no man in Iran  
 with shoulders and arms like  
 thine'<sup>2</sup>

Similarly Sohrab's filial softenings of the heart and his request to  
 suspend hostilities echo Sainte-Beuve more than Atkinson: (p. 137).

'O thou old warrior, let us  
 yield to Heaven!  
 Come plant we here in earth our  
 angry spears,  
 And make a truce, and sit upon  
 the sand,  
 And pledge each other in red  
 wine, like friends,  
 And thou shalt talk to me of  
 Rustum's deeds  
 There are enough foes in the  
 Persian host  
 Whom I may meet, and strike,  
 and feel no pang,  
 Champions enough Afrasiab has,  
 whom thou  
 Mayst fight; fight them when  
 they confront thy spear,  
 But oh, let there be peace  
 'twixt thee and me!  
 (S.R. 438-447).

".....Throw away this club &  
 that sword of vengeance, throw  
 away all this equipment for an  
 impious combat. Let us sit  
 down together on the ground, &  
 soften these angry glances with  
 wine. Let us make a treaty &  
 call upon God and repent in our  
 heart of this hostility. Wait  
 until another presents himself  
 for the fight, and prepare with  
 me a feast. My heart will com-  
 municate its love to thee, and  
 I will make thine eyes to flow  
 with tears of shame....."<sup>3</sup>

And finally the moving speech which Sohrab makes, when in Sainte-Beuve's  
 words, he "dies with resignation and meekness", killed by his own  
 father:

1. These references throughout are to Sohrab & Rustum.  
 2. Causeries du Lundi, op.cit. I. p. 278-9. In the original Persian  
 the first two lines are:-

بدو گفت نرم ای جوانمردم - زین خشک کرد دهنم گرم

3. Causeries du Lundi, vol. I. p. 279. The Persian lines are again  
 remarkably near to Arnold's version, due of course to Mohl's  
 translation on which Arnold was modelling himself in these dram-  
 atic passages.

ز کف لگن این تیرو شمشیر و کین  
 بزین جنگ بیدارم بر زمین  
 نشینم سپردم پیا لایتم  
 پس تازه داریم روی درم  
 بیجان تا کنس دیگر آید برزم  
 تو با من بساز و بیدارم برزم

"....Fate, fate engag'd  
The strife and hurl'd me on my  
Father's spear,  
But let us speak no more of  
this.....  
....for like the lightning to  
this field  
I came, and like the wind I go  
away -  
Sudden, swift, and like a pass-  
ing wind,  
But it was writ in Heaven that  
this should be".  
(S.R. 714-725).

".....My fate was written over  
my head and I was destined to  
die by the hand of my father. I  
came like the thunderbolt, I de-  
part like the wind; perhaps I  
shall see thee again happy in  
heaven."<sup>1</sup>

All these comparisons prove that for most of the dramatic speeches, of his poem, Arnold was drawing heavily on the extracts from Mohl's translation rather than on Atkinson, whose ponderous heroic couplets do not give a true idea of the simple pathos of Firdausi's episode. It will be observed from the foot-notes that through Mohl and Sainte-Beuve some of the actual images and similes of Firdausi's poem have passed into Arnold's poem, notably in lines 320-21, "the air of Heaven is soft ....etc" and 722-23, "like the lightning to this field I came and like the wind I go away". The similarity here between Atkinson and Arnold may be due merely to the fact that Arnold is echoing through Mohl the language of the Shah-nameh and Atkinson is actually translating Firdausi.

Before making any further comparison between Firdausi and Arnold let us pass on to the similes of Sohrab and Rostum.

The most significant feature of Sohrab & Rostum, it has been remarked, is its truth of local colouring and the Miltonic or Homeric use of long draw out similes with the decorative or pictorial motive often outweighing the explanatory or illustrative. While the poem was being composed Arnold wrote to Clough, "I read Homer and toujours Homer";<sup>2</sup> and Lowry with a knowledge of Arnold's unpublished note-books adds, "Arnold's note books reveal that he was indeed reading Homer and 'toujours Homer'.<sup>3</sup> That and Milton were daily preparation for Sohrab & Rostum, which he was then composing". - In Indeē, many

1. Ibid, p. 280. In Persian the image is the same:

2. Lowry, op. cit. p. 133.

3. Ibid, p. 134, note 9.

3. برق آسمانم ختم انبیا - همینو مگر بینت بازدار

also explains the remarkably clear geography of the poem. But Arnold did more than that. In the second volume of Burnes' travels Oxus occupies as prominent a place in the geographical and commercial life of the countries and peoples surrounding it, as it does in the emotional environment of the characters in Arnold's poem. Burnes particularly mentions<sup>1</sup> that this river, which is known to the people as Jihoon or Amoo, was called Oxus by Alexander's historians - who described it in great detail. These classical associations must have appealed to Arnold's Hellenism. The floor has That the last passage of Arnold's poem is a heightened, poetical paraphrase of Burnes' descriptions will be apparent from the following parallel passages. (I am putting together various passages from Burnes<sup>2</sup> with page)

But the majestic River floated  
 on,  
 Out of the mist and hum of that  
 low land,  
 Into the frosty starlight, and  
 there mov'd  
 Rejoicing, through the hush'd  
 Chorasmian waste,  
 Under the solitary moon: he  
 flow'd  
 Right for the Polar Star, past  
 Orgunje,  
 Brimming and bright, and large;  
 then sands begin  
 To hem his watery march, and  
 dam his streams,  
 And split his currents; that  
 for many a league  
 The shorn and parcell'd Oxus  
 strains along  
 Through beds of sand and matt-  
 ed rushy isles -  
 Oxus, forgetting the bright  
 speed he had  
 In his high mountain cradle in  
 Pamere,  
 A foiled circuitous wanderer:-  
 till at last  
 The long'd for dash of waves is  
 heard, and wide  
 His luminous home of waters  
 opens, bright  
 And tranquil, from whose floor  
 the new bath'd stars  
 Emerge, and shine upon the Aral  
 Sea.

(S.R. 875-892.)

The Oxus rises in the table-lands of Pamere (p.186) ... There are low and peaked hillocks near that pass of the Oxus (p.6.) ... Lower down the river we have the name of the country ... which is called Chorasmia (p.7.) We set out at midnight for the river, under a bright moon (p.1.) It here enters upon the desert ... till it reaches the territories of Orgunje (p.187)- Curtius tells us that Oxus was a muddy river, that bore much slime with it; and I found that one fortieth of the stream is clay suspended in water (p.7.) In the latter part of its course so great is the body of water drawn for the purposes of irrigation, and so numerous are the divisions of its branches that it forms a swampy delta, overgrown with reeds and aquatic plants.... (p. 187.) At Orgunje it is more widely spread by art and is then lost in the sea of Aral. (p.187.)

1. Travels to Bokhara, II, p. 6-7.

2. The references are to Vol. II of Burnes' Travels to Bokhara, 1834.

Postponing comments for the moment, let us examine some more parallel passages and similes. In Arnold's poem (12-13) the Tartar camps stand "clustering like beehives" on the banks of the Oxus. The Toorkman camps in Burnes (p. 27). "stood like so many gigantic beehives". Peran-Wisa's tent is built on the site where "the men of former times had crowned the top with a clay fort" (20-21). Burnes mentions a similar "pretty fort that crowns a hillock", (p.8) situated on the banks of the Oxus. Peran - Wisa's tent has a "dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread," while the floor has "thick-pil'd carpets" (23-25). Burnes describes a Toorkman house whose "roof was formed of laths" and the "floor was spread with felts and carpets" (p. 59-60). Peran-Wisa wears his "Sheep-skin cap, black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-kul", (100-101), made from the "sheep which produces the jet-black curly fleece, that is made into caps in Persia; and is peculiar to Kara Kool" (p.174), described by Burnes.

Now we come to the ambitious Miltonic passage that describes the Tartar armies filing into the open plain. Arnold compares them to the files of "long-neck'd cranes" streaming over Casbin ... etc, a simile suggested, as has been pointed out,<sup>1</sup> by Homer (*Iliad*, II, 459-63). But the long list of Tartar tribes that follows, describing minutely the occupation and characteristics of each tribe, is composed entirely of scraps from Burnes' travels, as the following comparison will help to show:

The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,	Tartars of Oxus .....The Kaffirs wear black goat-skin dresses (p.210). Bokhara, Khiva.....
First with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;	I expected nothing else than
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara came	"Kimmiz" or "boozu" mare's milk or fermented liquor, he brought
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.	me camel's milk which is the only drink of the Toorkmans (p.19) The
Next the more temperate Toorkmans of the south,	most illustrious of all the Toorkmans is the tribe of Salore ----
The Tukas and the lances of Salore,	Tukas (p. 253) Attruck --- Caspian sands (p. 260) The colony of
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;	Tartars advances with their flocks and herds --- advancing column
Light men on light steeds, who only drink	(p.267). Tartar features --- flattened foreheads and a scanty
The acid milk of Camels, and their wells.	beard (p. 265). The inhabitants of Kokan wear skull-caps... (p.236)

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1. The Influence of the classics on the Poetry of Mathew Arnold, by R.E.C. Houghton, op.cit. p. 13. For other echoes of Homer see Ibid, 11-14.

And then a swarm of wandering  
 horse,  
 Who came from far, and more doubt-  
 ful service own'd  
 The Tartars of Ferghana, from the  
 banks,  
 Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty  
 beards  
 And close-set skull caps; and  
 those wilder hordes  
 Who roam over skipchak and the  
 northern waste  
 Kalmuks and unkemp'd Kuzzaks,  
 tribes who stray  
 Nearest the Pole, and wandering  
 Kirghizzes,  
 Who come on shaggy ponies from  
 Pamere.

(S.R. 117-134.)

Similarly the simile of the pedlars from Cabool crossing the Indian  
 Caucasus is taken almost bodily from Burnes' book.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,

Cross underneath the Indian Cau-  
 casus,  
 That vast sky-neighbouring moun-  
 tain of milk snow,  
 Winding so high, that, as they  
 mount, they pass  
 Long flocks of travelling birds  
 dead on the snow,  
 Chok'd by the air, and scarce  
 can they themselves  
 Slake their parch'd throats with  
 sugar'd mulberries  
 In single file they move, and  
 stop their breath,  
 For fear they should dislodge  
 the o'er hanging snows  
 So the pale Persians held their  
 breath with fear.

(S.R. 160-169).

Kalmuks, Kirgizzes, Kuzzaks....  
 "dusht-i-kipchak" (p.267) In Bok-  
 are there are horses ... with a  
 shaggy coat ( p.277).  
 The Kingizzes come from Pamere.  
 (p. 268.).

Jelum (Hydaspees)... The rude  
 structure of boats on the rivers  
 of the Punjab... The craft of  
 them are not numerous, & little  
 wood is produced in the plain; but  
 the rains yearly wash down trees  
 from the mountains to increase  
 their number.

(p. 290-290).

The mountains of Hindoo-koosh ..  
 this great peak is visible from  
 Cabool and entirely enveloped in  
 milk - white snow --- Its alti-  
 tude must be considerable, for  
 the travellers complain of the  
 difficulty of breathing, and  
 carry sugar and mulberries, with  
 them to ease their respiration..  
 Thousands of birds are also  
 found dead on the snow, for it is  
 believed that they are unable to  
 fly from the violence of the  
 winds; but it is more probable  
 that they are prevented by the  
 rarity of the atmosphere.....  
 The greatest silence is preserved  
 in crossing Hindoo Koosh; and no  
 one speaks aloud, or fires a gun,  
 lest the reverberation cause a  
 fall of snow.....(p. 247-248.).

Next we come to Rustum's camp, which like that of Peran-Wisa, is  
 moulded on the nodel of Toorkmun camps described in Burnes. Rus-  
 tum's camps are described as of "scarlet cloth" and "glittering gay"  
 (191-192); while Burnes speaks of "variegated coloured cloth, both  
 silk and cotton,.....large tassels of silk ... differing in colour,"  
 suspended in Toorkmun camps (p.60). Rustum's meal, which he has just  
 finished consists of "a side of roasted sheep and cakes of bread and  
 dark green melons", (198-199); exactly the same three courses, baked  
 bread, "meat consisting of an entire sheep" and melons (p.61-62),

Burnes describes as the food of the Toorkmuns. Similarly Rustum's

club is none other than a log of wood from the rivers Jhelum (Hydaspes) and Beas (Hyphasis) in the Punjab:

"an unlopp'd trunk it was, & huge,

Still rough, like those which men  
 in treeless plains  
 To build them boats from the flood-  
 ed rivers,  
 Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when high up  
 By their dark springs, the wind in  
 winter time  
 Has made in Himalayan forests wrack  
 And strewn the channels with torn  
 boughs, so huge  
 the club..."

(S.R. 409-416)

Jelum (Hydaspes)... The rude structures of boats on the rivers of the Punjab... The craft of them are not numerous, & little wood is produced in the plain; but the rains yearly wash down trees from the mountains to increase their number.

(p. 289-290).

It must have been observed how close the similes and even the language of Arnold's poem are to Burnes' simple and matter of fact account of the primitive life of the Persian tribes. We have seen how Arnold steeped himself in Homer and Milton to capture the noble simplicity of style requisite for an epic - "I read Homer and toujours Homer". But Arnold could also have said "I read Burnes and toujours Burnes". Professor Lowes has pointed out how Coleridge succeeded in catching the simplicity and vividness of the accounts of the travellers, in The Ancient Mariner; it may be said with equal truth, that the vivid pictorial qualities of Sohrab & Rostum, and its primitive concern with "great primary human affections," were greatly helped by Burnes' travels. But the method followed by Arnold is not that of Coleridge. Coleridge read and read and the impressions gathered from books kept merging and germinating in his mind and forming new and startling combinations, till a definite stimulus of the imagination made them emerge in fresh shapes, hardly to be recognised. In Arnold on the other hand, as in Southey, the process was a simpler one of direct transposition from the book into the poem. But whereas Southey used his impressions culled from books in a pedantic, haphazard way, parading his superfluous learning in erudite notes, Arnold's more selective imagination, employs only those similes and metaphors which accord more or less with the dramatic motive of the poem. Still it is doubtful how many of Arnold's similes have been put in the poem, for illustration and elucidation of an action or an emotion, and how many for their mere pictorial effects of local colour.

Firdausi's Shah-nameh, differs from Arnolds' version greatly in

this respect. Like most primitive epics, as different from the artificial literary revivals, the similes of the Shah-nameh are generally very brief and also monotonous. Every hero appears as a "fierce war-seeking lion", "a crocodile", "a raging elephant", and the like; and when he moves swiftly he moves "like smoke", "like dust", or "like the wind". This monotony and the nakedness of the underlying ideas is, however, not so apparent when a professional rhapsodist of Persia restores in recitation the sonorousness and majesty which the Shah-nameh, inevitably, misses in translation. But the Persian epic differs from the European epics in other ways also. Homer, for example, effectually hides <sup>his</sup> personality. He plunges into the middle of his subject and makes the period of his action as brief as possible. Selecting one central motive he weaves round it only so much of the subject matter at his disposal as he can employ with tolerable consistency. His web is closely woven and the workmanship so exquisite that comparatively few indications are left to betray the nature of the raw material. Firdausi on the other hand takes us into his confidence from the first. The period of his action extends over thousands of years. He uses all the epic material good, bad or indifferent on which he can lay hands on. His web is open work and its design unsymmetrical. He makes no secret of his method but tells us what his materials are and how he obtained them. He shows us in fact his loom in action and calls our attention to the bright many-coloured threads of myth, romance and history which are being woven therein.

Arnold who was acquainted only with Atkinson's and Sainte-Beuve's abstracts, could not have known much about the original Persian epic. But it is interesting to notice how he 'Homerises' the episode of the Persian epic. As has been pointed out before, Arnold hardly mentions the tragic story's romantic prelude—Rustum's loss of his beloved horse Ruksh, and during the search for it his meeting with the daughter of the King of Samangan, the beautiful Tahminah, who having heard of Rustum's marvellous exploits, is <sup>willing</sup> ~~proposed~~ to give herself body and soul to the handsome hero. They wed with the consent of the King. Rustum, on parting, gives her

a famous amulet which she should bind in the hair of the girl or the arm of the boy that was born to her. Here Arnold followed the incorrect account of the episode given in Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia where Tahminah is represented as having informed Rustum that she had given birth to a daughter. The improbability of the story was thus lessened for the English reader, but to the Oriental eye it is the very improbability that makes it so impressive, as being an illustration of the working out of destiny which frustrates the best intentions, overrides all obstacles and makes mankind the puppets of its will.

Arnold's change in the treatment of the episode, was in general one of compression. In the original the heroes fought three times in three days. The first they parted by mutual consent, the second Sohrab spared Rustum's life; the third Sohrab was killed. Arnold has divided his one fight into three parts. The kindly speeches at the beginning correspond to the first combat; Sohrab's refusal to kill Rustum when the latter was on his knees represents the second; and the final onslaught is the third. Arnold also condenses the story by departing from the strictly chronological sequence of the events and plunging right into the heart of the story, leaving any necessary but less interesting information to be given incidentally either by allusions in the speeches of the characters or by deliberate episodes.<sup>1</sup> Whatever importance Arnold attached in theory to "action", and "situation", he bestows much more care, than Firdausi on the motivation of the action, the thoughts and feelings of his characters. Compared to the Persian poet, he notes finer shades of character and depicts the subtler workings of the mind when under stress of emotion.<sup>2</sup> Sainte-Beuve had said that Firdausi's episode was "involved with an art and skill which belong

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1. For example Sohrab's previous history is conveyed in a speech to Peran-Wisa (34-63); Rustum's ignorance of the fact that he had a son is conveyed in (229-30, 576-78, 607-31.); the burial of Sohrab in Seistan is not narrated as a fact but as Sohrab's request and Rustum's promise.....etc.etc.

2. See especially lines 243-59; 345-63; 380-97, 427-47 etc.

to the poet. The fatal solution is both foreseen and retarded by means of gradations which render it more dramatic." This <sup>is</sup> more true of Arnold's subtler handling of the story, than of Firdausi, whose poem is overlaid with much extravagant and superfluous matter.

We have already remarked how "the deep sense of the "instability of human things, of the flight of life and the brilliant years, of the vanity of everything" which Sainte-Beuve noticed in Firdausi, appealed to Arnold. Arnold expresses a meek spirit of resignation to the power of inexorable destiny, characteristically in his favourite image of the Oxus flowing joyfully through mountains and plains and deserts, to its tranquil and luminous home of waters in the Aral sea, while the Persian poet with a wisdom more sententious, but none the less poetic expresses the same spirit of stoical acceptance of pain and death:

"Now if a rude gust should arise and bear  
 A yet unripened orange to the dust,  
 Shall I describe this as unfair or fair,  
 Shall I pronounce it as tyrannous or just?  
 Where is the evil if we all must die?  
 Why clamour and appeal from what is right?  
 Thy spirit wotteth not this mystery;  
 Beyond the Veil there is no path in sight".<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Shah-mameh, of Firdausi, translated by A. & E. Warner, Sacred Books of the East, vol. II, p. 119.

J.C. MANGAN AND JAMES THOMSON

Not only do the lives of the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan (1803-1849) and the Scotch poet James Thomson (1834-1882) provide a striking parallel in being two of the gloomiest and the most dissipated lives led by poets, there is a further affinity between the productions of the two writers, in so far as they were both skilled, and often erratic, literary craftsmen who occasionally burst into original and unusual poetry of a very high order; both had cosmopolitan tastes and, finally, both looked to Germany and the Orient, to provide them with themes for translations, as well as original poems. That Mangan was more of a virtuoso and an inferior poet to Thomson, there is no doubt; his monotonous misery and stagnant grief did not crystallize into a poem of such passion and power as the City of Dreadful Night. But having made that allowance, one still feels on reading Mangan's poems, that far less attention has been paid to his work than his original, though extremely unequal, genius deserves. Few, except the professional scholars, know that the author of Dark Rosaleen, also wrote the Last Words of Al-Hassan, the Wail and Warning of the Three Khalenders, The Time of the Barmecides and the Howling Song of Al-Mohara, imperfect, but remarkable pieces, enough to make the fortune of a minor poet. For this neglect Mangan is himself, in part, responsible. Through a certain lack of confidence, which was partly the result of an obscure life of dissipation and unmitigated despair, and partly the outcome of an ironical and mischievous desire to play tricks on his readers, all Mangan's best work was done, for comparatively unknown Irish Magazines, under foreign masks, Gaelic, German or Oriental. There have been other poets, notable among whom is Edward FitzGerald, who have, through some reason or other, found it more convenient to shine in the reflected glory of a great master, in whom they found some affinity to their own temperament and whose work they sought to renovate, or recreate afresh. But such an honourable compromise between self-effacement and self-assertion was impossible for a person of

self-willed and perturbed nature. Mangan's position as a translator has been ably summed up by L.I. Guiney, in her introductory study to the poems of J.C. Mangan, the only adequate account of the poet's genius: his Oriental poems are wholly original. Mangan's biographer says, "The truth is," says Miss Guiney, "Clarence Mangan is no translator at all. He is dominated by his own genuine erratic force, which throve under evil conditions, and had no clear outlet; and he cannot contain the ebullition of his natural speech even in the majestic presence of Goethe. His mind is not serviceable; he can give an able and courteous co-operation only when the demigod chances to agree with his native fire. The most striking internal evidence that he had not in him the first instinct of the translator, is that he approaches Heine (whose abrupt beauty, if it be conveyable at all, Mangan in his trustier mood was curiously well fitted to convey into English), in order to appraise him as "darkly diabolical" and to deplore his "melancholy misdirection of glorious faculties." As it was, Mangan wasted on the dreams of anybody else the time he was forbidden to devote to the inspirations of his own brain. It was his misfortune, his punishment also, that the early loss of enthusiasm, and "that true tranquil perception of the beautiful," which as he himself feelingly says of an elder writer, "a life led according to the rules of the divine law alone can confer on man," there came an autumnal decadence: a sinking from the exercise of the creative faculty to that of the critical, a relinquishment of the highest intellectual mood, which was his birthright, for that of the spectator, the sceptic, the jaded philosopher. He recanted his belief in his own powers, and having done that, he held a false but consistent way. The things he accomplished in literature have the look of accidents and commentaries, as he wished; the pride of his own shadowed career was to figure in a mask unworthy of him. In such a spirit of evasion he took to his inexplicable trade of translating: accepting a suggestion, and scornfully elaborating it, or ironically referring to the gardens of Ispahan his own roses, whose colour seemed too

startling for the banks of the Liffey."<sup>1</sup>

There is no gainsaying the general import of this estimate, But it has been too readily supposed by Mangan's critics and biographers that all his Oriental poems are wholly original. Mangan's biographer D.J. O'Donoghue, for example says, roundly, about Mangan's Oriental translations: "He also issued many pieces which he pretended were renderings from the Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Coptic. He was wholly ignorant of those languages, but his wide reading in books about the East enabled him to give an Oriental colouring to his verse."<sup>2</sup> This is undoubtedly true of some of the major pieces like The Time of the Barmecides, The Hundred Leaf'd Rose, The Karamanian Exile, The Howling song of Al-Mohara, and a few others. But it would be rash to generalise on the strength of these alone and suppose that all the poems in his series of six articles on Littré Orientales<sup>3</sup> that appeared in the Dublin University Magazine from 1837 to 1846, and which included such pieces as the Time of the Roses, The World - a Ghazel, and numerous other epigrams from the Turkish, were all original compositions, sprinkled with Oriental epithets. As D.J. O'Donoghue says elsewhere with greater truth, "a Persian and Turkish scholar might find much material for an essay on Mangan's alleged translations from those sources."<sup>4</sup> The present writer claims but a very superficial knowledge of Turkish, but so far as Persian is concerned, a comparatively more accurate examination is within his scope. Space does not permit us to compare all Mangan's upward of hundred pieces, one by one with their possible Oriental originals, but we shall attempt to arrive at some generalisations by examining a few of the better known and more typical of Mangan's poems. Before doing that, however, let us notice what Mangan has himself to say about Oriental

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1. James Clarence Mangan, Poems and a Study, by L.I. Guiney, 1897; p. 88-89.

2. Dictionary of National Biography, Life and Writings of J.C. Mangan by the same writer, 1897.

3. Dublin University Magazine vol X, 1837, p. 274 ff; vol XI, 1838, p. 291 ff; vol XII, 1838, p. 328 ff; vol XV, 1840, p. 377 ff; vol XXIII, 1844 p. 535 ff; vol XXVII, 1846, p. 43 ff.

4. Poems of J.C. Mangan, edit by D.J. O'Donoghue 1903; Preface, p. 20.

literature and the problem of translation. In those lighthearted and clever commentaries in the Anthologia Germanica and the Lit<sup>rae</sup> Orientales whose imitative raillery and officious footnotes remind one of William Maginn, Mangan has a lot to say of the Oriental poets, whom he purported to translate and the Oriental scholars whom he is at pains to show that he had studied. It is clear, that during his term of office as a copyist for the Ordnance Survey work, Mangan had made full use of the ample opportunities that Marsh's Library, Trinity College, Dublin, afforded him for a study of old and curious literature in many languages. There is some reason to suppose that Mangan developed a taste for Oriental literature by a study of the German poets and scholars. Goethe, Rückert, Heine, Freiligrath, von Hammer and the Schlegels, of whose work he shows a thorough acquaintance and whose enthusiasm for the East probably proved contagious for the Irish poet. But Mangan was equally well acquainted with the works of D'Herbelot, Jones, Richardson, Sale, the Ouseleys and other French and English Orientalists; and he also professed an unbounded admiration for Byron and Moore, the former of whom bequeathed, alone with his Orientalism, that fashionable mixture of passion and melancholy, which is such a marked feature of Mangan's poems. In his first article on Lit<sup>rae</sup> Orientales in the Dublin University Magazine of September 1837, Mangan characterises the appeal of the Orient as follows:

"That shadowy species of affinity which the mind in its complacent moods delights to assume as subsisting between the Orient and its own images of Geni<sup>-</sup>land possess rich and irresistible charms for human contemplation . . . . Imagination feels averse to surrender the paramount jewel in the diadem of its prerogatives - a faith, to wit, in the practicability of, at some time or another, realising the Unreal . . . . Alas! wanting that which we have not, can not have, never shall have, we mould that which we really have into an ill-defined counterfeit of that which we want; and then casting a veil over it, we contemplate the creature of our own fancy . . . . From amid the lumber of the actual world prize is made

of a safety valve, which carries off from the surface of our reveries the redundant smoke and vapour, that, suffered to continue pent up within us, would suffocate every healthier volition and energy of the spirit."<sup>1</sup>

This view of the East as an exotic escape from the monotony of the actual and real into a 'land of heart's desire', has been, as we have seen, the common attitude of the English writers since Beckford. Mangan also shares the enthusiasm of the Orientalists in regarding Asia as "the mother of Science, the house of gods." "the cradle of the human race", "man's primeval world." Contemplating the ruins of ancient civilization at Palmyra, Balbec, Babylon, Persepolis, he adds, "that the justness of the trite remark, that Greatness though in decay is Greatness still, is nowhere more fully exemplified than in the East."<sup>2</sup>

But unlike most English Romantics, Mangan does not regard the East merely as a convenient safety valve for pleasant dreams and moralistic meditations; his interest like <sup>that of</sup> the German Orientalists and like FitzGerald, is also linguistic. From the various lines of Turkish and Persian quoted in his articles in Roman letters, the comparatively correct orthography of Eastern names, and above all from the references to original Oriental poets, historians and chroniclers,<sup>3</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that Mangan did possess a knowledge of at least some of the many Oriental languages he professed to know. It is almost certain that he had a fairly exact knowledge of Turkish, to which he devotes many of his articles and from which most of his translations are done. Arabic he knew enough to quote only single lines, mostly incorrect. As for Persian, Coptic, Hindustani and several other languages, which he liked his unsuspecting readers to believe that he knew, one can say

1. Dublin University Magazine, Sept. 1837; p. 275

2. Ibid, p. 276

3. Among many others, Mangan mentions the Turkish Biographers Schedi, Ahdi, Latifi, Aashik, Nizame, Kinalizade and Kafzade (Dub. Univ. Mag. XII, 1838 p. 328 ff). Of course the possibility remains that Mangan knew of these writers through the work of the German scholar Von Hammer and other European Orientalists. But to the present writer, it appears from Mangan's prose articles and his poems that he did know Turkish at least.

with reasonable assurance that it was Mangan's mischievous vanity, claiming rather more credit as a linguist than his knowledge deserved. But in spite of all his clever impositions and transparent tricks, Mangan's strictures on the general spirit of Oriental literature seem remarkably just. In his Litrae Orientales No IV he has an article on Arabian, Persian and Turkish Poetry, where the inclusion of the first two languages is merely gratuitous; but what he has to say on the subject of translation, is not only a declaration of his own principles, but also a just comment on the general problem of translation from Eastern into Western languages. After bestowing much time and thought on the subject, and having had every facility for the acquisition of information bearing upon it, Mangan is of opinion that the poetry of Eastern nations can not be translated with effect into English. "Our conclusion is a mature one: we state, and we challenge the entire world of linguists and litterateurs to refute the statement, that Oriental poetry is not fairly readable in an English translation, - that there is no practibility of translating it idiomatically with effect into our language - perhaps into any of our languages .... Oriental poetry apparelled in a Western dress becomes essentially unrecognisable, forfeits its identity, ceases to be an intelligible object of apprehension to the understanding. It must be read in the original, and ce qui est plus at pire, it must be studied in it; for the bare reading will not answer. The student is not to flatter himself into the belief that because he has rattled through a Persian Grammar and skimmed Richardson's Dissertation, the business is accomplished and he has nothing more to do but take his MS in hand and loll on his ottoman. A severe initiation awaits him. He must for a season renounce his country, divest himself of his educational prejudices, forego his individuality, and become like Alfred Tennyson, "a Mussulman true and sworn." Over the wide gulf by which we of Europe are severed from the Eastern nations in religious worship, modes of thought and habits of feeling, and in the government, customs and social systems that spring out of these and react upon them sans intermission, no bridge is thrown - the

enthusiast must plunge into its depths and scale the opposite steep, or abandon his purpose for ever. If he would appreciate Oriental poetry, if he would make any approach to understanding it, he must first disencumber himself of all the old rags of his Europeanism and scatter them to the winds. He must go in the spirit of Goethe's maxim -

Wer den Dichter will verstehen  
Musz in Dichtersland gehen.  
(Who would the Poet understand)  
(Must enter first the Poet's Land.)

He must be satisfied to accept sounds for symbols, influences for ideas and dreams for tangibilities. He must in fine begin his poetical education afresh, with the *Moallakát* as his primer and the Koran for his *Μέγας Βίβλος*; and after a series of years, (industry, commentators and opium in the meantime assisting), he may perhaps be able to boast that he has measured the height, length, breadth and circumference of the great temple in which the imagination of Bakki and the soul of Hafiz are enshrined and beyond the extreme outer porch or Ethnic Forecourt of which none save those who have served a like probationary apprenticeship to the Genius<sup>1</sup> of Orientalism have ever been permitted to advance."

As has already been remarked, Mangan himself, (in spite of the requisite Moallakát, the Koran, Commentators, opium and also alcohol) was too individualistic to lose his identity completely in the object of his translation, and consequently his translations are, as we shall see presently, more like free paraphrases, expressing symbolically the eccentricities of their author, than exact renderings from Oriental languages. Like most European writers his critical sense did not allow him to accord completely with the Oriental attitude. As he goes on to say in the article quoted above, echoing Coleridge, "Eastern Poetry is at the best what the old schoolmen would have called an ens rationis - a lawless, unfixable ghostlike thing, irreducible to rule, unamenable to criticism .... It is occasionally graphic enough - can on most occasions be

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1. Dublin University Magazine, April 1840; p. 377

admired for euphony, and may at intervals exhibit sublimity; - but the great irradiating light of Imagination is not there; - the highest of the faculties, the very pillar of Genius, the vivifying soul of Thought, the power ~~without~~ which it dwindles into a most monotonous and mechanical process of mind, is wanting; and the "long-resounding march and energy immense" of compound epithets and sonorous polysyllables makes us but indifferent amends for its absence."<sup>1</sup> Continuing his remarks on the psychology of the Oriental people, Mangan says penetratingly: "The truth is that the Mooslem has more faith, humanly speaking, than the Englishman. It is an easier task to satisfy him. He reverences with deeper emotion, cherishes sympathies more comprehensive, has a roomier capacity for the reception of mysteries of all sorts .... He is a devout, dreamy, all embracing, far wandering, extra mundane imagination. He "doffs the world and bids it pass", and hence it is that he is always tranquil, always untouchable, always ready to trust both in and against appearances to believe in a soul of Beauty beneath ribs of clay, and to construe even the apparent senilities of others into lessons of wisdom worthy of admiration of the latest posterity."<sup>2</sup>

This attitude of unquestioning acceptance, rather than of inquiry or wonder, accounts for the extravagances and exaggerations of Oriental literatures, and also their somewhat sententious wisdom. Hence also the profusion of mechanical and monotonous figures of speech, metrical tricks and rhetorical embellishments, which prove so repellent to the Western reader.

Whatever Mangan's critical opinion of Oriental poetry, he found much in it that appealed to his whimsical tastes. It is plausible to suppose that his fondness for verbal quips and quiddities, his "phonetic" waggery, his use of impossible rhymes and daring metrical enterprises, and other tricks with which he sometimes liked to cloak his earnestness, were the cause as well as

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1. Dublin University Magazine, April 1840; p. 378.  
 2. Ibid, p. 378-379.

the effect of his Oriental studies. In his second article on Litrae Orientales he quotes with enthusiastic admiration his translation of the Turkish poet Lami'i's epigram, which provides a characteristic example of what is the Eastern "Art of Euphuism" (علم برع) is called Tam-i-Tanasub (تام تناسب) or "Amphibological Congruity." In Eastern countries, where thin waist in a woman is supposed to be a sign of beauty, the poets vie with each other in expressing its thinness with all sorts of exaggerated figures of speech; among others it is compared to "Hitzistan" or "The land of Nothing":

"Thy waist many swear  
Is the region of Nought  
And they call thy loose hair  
The Black Desert of Ghaut;  
But persons of taste  
Are content to declare  
That thy hair is a waste  
While thy waist is a hair."<sup>1</sup>

The Eastern poets abound in such verbal and mental dexterities, and Mangan finds them after his own taste. Here is another in praise of the Thinness, or, hyperbolically, the absence of the beloved's lips, another mark of beauty in the East. Mangan calls it: Ex Nihilo Antiquid Fit:

"With wonderful skill did the Lord  
Produce thy sweet mouth from thy lips, as he brought  
Long ago by the infinite power of His word  
The round world out of Nought."<sup>2</sup>

And the following called "Genuine Etheriality", is even more characteristic:

"Mine eyes of old the beamiest of the beamy  
Are now alas! the filmiest of the filmy,  
So meagre am I, too, no lath is like me;  
Death for my shadowy thinness cannot see me  
And when he enters my sad cell to kill me  
His lance will not know how or where to strike me."<sup>3</sup>

This last piece expresses whimsically and half-humorously, a thought similar to what Donne, with a subtle force of intellect and in infinitely more passionate words expresses in the lines:

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1. From the Turkish poet Lama'ii; Dub. Univ. Mag. XII, 1838 p. 329.

2. Dub. Univ. Mag. XI, 1838, p. 301.

3. Ibid, p. 301.

It will be  
 what is call  
 that is, on

"For I am every dead thing  
 In whom love wrought new Alchimie.  
 For his art did expresse  
 A quintessence even from nothingnesse,  
 He ruin'd mee, and I am re-begot  
 Of absence, darknesse, death; things which are not."<sup>1</sup>

The comparison with the Metaphysical poets here is not idle; for it brings out aptly the unintellectual and unemotional nature of the fantastic vagaries of the Eastern poets and of Mangan. Their conceits are not, as the conceits of the Metaphysical poets are, the medium through which they express their complex sensibility. The conceit in Donne, for example, is a surreptitious means of expressing a complexity of attitude - wit, play of intellect, stress of cerebral muscle, intensity of feeling. Most of the conceits of the Oriental poets, on the other hand, are merely verbal ingenuities without any intellectual and emotional justification.

Another poem, which both in its content and metre, is a characteristic instance of Mangan's experimentation in Eastern forms of verse, is The World - Ghazel.<sup>2</sup> In the Eastern Ghazel form, the second lines of all the couplets rhyme together, while the first lines do not rhyme at all. Mangan, however, goes one better on his Eastern model and makes all his first lines have the same rhyme too. The poet likens the world to a Khan or stopping place in the desert and speculates on the source and destination of the pilgrims who call thereat:

"To this Khan, and from this Khan  
 How many pilgrims came and went, too!  
In this Khan - and by this Khan  
 What arts were spent - what hearts were rent, too!  
To this Khan - and from this Khan  
 Which for penance man is sent to,  
 Many a van and caravan  
 Crowded came - and shrouded went, too!  
 Christian man and Moslem man,  
 Guebre, Heathen, Jew and Gentoo,  
To this Khan - and from this Khan  
 Weeping came and weeping went, too!  
 A riddle this since time began  
 Which many a sage his mind hath bent to;  
All came and went, but never man  
 Knew whence they came or where they went to."

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1. A Nocturnall upon St. Lucies Day, 12-18.
  2. Dublin Univ. Magazine XI, p. 295. Reprinted by Guiney and O'Donoghue opcit.

It will be observed that here we have in addition to the rhyme, what is called a Radif (ردیف), which in Arabic means 'Pillion-rider' that is, one or more words, always the same, added to the end of every line that has the same rhyme, which though counted in the scansion, are not regarded as the rhyme; the true rhyme in every case being found immediately before. Hood's poem The Bridge of Sighs is a good example of this kind of rhyming in English:

"Still for all those slips of hers  
One of Eve's family  
Wipe those poor lips of hers  
Oozing so clammyly."

But while in English a Radif very seldom consists of more than one or two words, a Persian or Turkish Radif may consist of every word in the line except the first, there being, of course, always one word to form the rhyme. (The original Turkish of Kemal Ummi, from which Mangan's translation was made, is given by <sup>E.J.W.</sup>Gibb in his History of Ottoman Poetry, vol VI, p. 36.)

آن توغری کوجدی - بولدی آن خان توغری  
مکر فی حقین کاروان توغری - بولدی آن کاروان توغری  
بولدی آن میمان توغری کوجدی - بولدی آن بر توغری  
هریت قنقلی خندان توغری کوجدی - بولدی آن قنقلی  
بولدی آن لیماری اجز صرینه تریاق - بولدی آن لیماری

The Turkish Radif آن توغری کوجدی corresponds to Mangan's "nt, too." But in addition to this complicated scheme of rhyming there is in Turkish a play upon the two meanings of the word Khan: 'a Tartar sovereign' and 'an inn'; a point which Mangan perhaps through his lack of accurate, /or perhaps deliberately missed. A comparison of Mangan's lines with a more literal translation of the same lines by the well-known Turkish scholar E.J.W. Gibb, will bring out the liberties that Mangan has taken with the original; how he has expanded the five couplets of Turkish into eight of his own, by amplifying most of the ideas, and particularising the travellers who visit the inn;

"How many a Khan within this Khan hath lighted!  
How many a King on this divan hath lighted!  
An ancient caravanseray the world is  
Where many and many a caravan hath lighted.  
A guest within the world's alberge art thou now  
Where many a traveller pale and wan hath lighted.  
A-weeping came they all, a-weeping went they;  
Say, who of these a joyous man hath lighted?"

1. Quoted in the History of Ottoman Poetry, by E.J.W. Gibb, VI, p. 36

Not one hath found a theriac for death's bane,<sup>1</sup>  
 Yet here full many a sage Loqman hath lighted."

It is obvious that in his free paraphrase of the lines, Mangan has been successful in catching the spirit of the original and the curious rhyming effect. But such double and treble endings, unless they are managed with the delicate mastery and pathos of Hood's lines, quoted above, are apt to prove laughable and artificial in English and Mangan's lines remain as a curious exercise in rhyming rather than a piece of poetry. In imitating these Oriental verse-forms Mangan was following the German poets and Orientalists, notably Rückert, whose pensive Ghazel, Und dann nicht Mehr, he translated with greater success under the title And then no more.<sup>2</sup> The repetition of the Redif here is more in keeping with the lyrical pathos of the piece and does not jar so much as in the other Ghazel quoted above.

A longer and a better known poem of Mangan's is The Time of the Roses,<sup>3</sup> which has been regarded by Mangan's biographer and Miss Guiney as an original piece. But the poem is in fact a very free paraphrase of the celebrated "Ode on Spring" of the Turkish poet Mesihî, a translation of which had been first given to Western readers by Sir William Jones.<sup>4</sup>

This poem provides once more a typical example of Mangan's method of dealing with his Eastern originals,<sup>5</sup> and also of his tripping metres and intricate rhymes. The poem is too long to be quoted in full; so we shall confine ourselves to quoting a few stanzas from it and comparing them to their Turkish originals.

The poem begins in a somewhat Tom Mooreish manner with the eternal nightingales warbling in the vales.

"Morning is blushing; the gay nightingales  
 Warble their exquisite songs in the vales ...."

1. Ibid, I; p.413.

2. Poems of J.C. Mangan, edit O'Donoghue, opcit, p. 248.

3. Ibid, p. 180.

4. Works of Sir William Jones in 6 vols (1799), vol IV, p. 468-472

5. If this piece was a translation from the Turkish, the accompanying reply The Time Ere the Roses were Blowing, supposed to be a translation from the Persian of Kazem Zerbayeh (!) is purely fictitious.

and so on; but improves in the second stanza where Mangan breaks loose from the original and amplifies in his usual manner, the idea of the transience of spring:

Meadows, and gardens, and sunlighted glades,  
Palaces, terraces, grottos and shades  
Woo thee; a fairy bird sings in thine ear,  
Come and be happy an Eden is here!  
Knowest thou whether for thee there be any  
Years in the future? Ah think on how many  
A young heart under the mould reposes,  
Nor feels how wheels the time of the Roses.

And the fifth stanza with its Shelleyan rhymes:

Pity the roses! Each rose is a maiden,  
Prankt, and with jewels of dew overladen:  
Pity the maidens! The moon of their bloom  
Rises to set in the cells of the tomb,  
Life has its Winter: when Summer is gone,  
Maidens like roses lie stricken and wan;  
Though bright as the Burning Bush of Moses,  
Soon fades, fair maids, the Time of the Roses!

These are extraordinarily free paraphrases of the ~~following~~ two stanzas of Mesihî,

خاری بگیس از لاله در گل ایله لاله  
کرم قولاقلارین در لوجو سره آصمیش تراله  
آل لاله صحرای کرم بوزینه زود نا لاله  
عیاش و نازش این کیم کیم قالمز اویان ایله

اینه لاله شونیه ایننوی باغ و دای  
شیر نیول قوردی قیقلارین ایشنه لاله  
کیم بلور لاله بومر کیم اول کیم قاصغ  
عیاش و نازش این کیم کیم قالمز اویان ایله

a more literal translation of ~~these two stanzas~~ <sup>which</sup> by E.J.W. Gibb is as follows:

Once again with diverse florets gay bedeckt are garth and plain  
Tents for pleasance have the blossoms pitched in every rosy lane  
Who can say who dead may be, who whole, when spring comes round

again? -  
Drink be gay; for soon will vanish, bidding not, the days o'  
Spring!

Rose and tulip bloom as beauties bright o' blee and sweet o'  
show,

In whose ears the dew hath hung full many a gem to gleam and glow  
Deem not thou, thyself deceiving, things will aye continue so.

Drink be gay; for soon will vanish, bidding not, the days o'  
Spring!

It will be observed that Gibb has tried to imitate the verse-form of the original, the Murebba-i Mutkerrir (مزاج متکرر) or "Repeating Foursome", where the first three lines of each stanza have the same rhyme and the fourth line of the first stanza is repeated as the fourth line of each one following, and is thus made in <sup>6</sup>a sort of refrain. Mangan on the other hand, has followed the metrical

scheme known in Arabic prosody as Muttamman Muzdawij ( متن مزدوج ) or "Pairing Eightsome," where the eighth lines of each stanza, while rhyming together, vary with each stanza.

The freedom with which Mangan amplifies and expands his original Oriental sources and the hedonism of this piece, as of many another, remind one forcibly of the other Irish translator Edward FitzGerald. But FitzGerald, if he took liberties with his originals, also condensed his quintessence of Orientalism drawn from many sources, into jewelled phrases, finely cut and pregnant with subtle associations. Mangan's Irish fluency and luxuriance too often lead him into slovenliness and too careless and profuse a use of obvious words and phrases. Yet one wonders, whether FitzGerald was aware of his brother Irish poet's Eastern renderings!

Space forbids us to compare Mangan's other pieces with their sources, nor would it modify one's views of Mangan as a translator to do so. What has been said of the poems noted above, is true more or less of other pieces of Mangan, The Hundred Leaf'd Rose from Lama'ii,<sup>1</sup> The Dialogue between Bang and Wine from Fuzuli, numerous epigrams from Turkish poets and such humorous pieces as the Stammering or Topsy Ghazel from Fuzuli.

It is a different matter with Mangan's so-called translations from Persian and Arabic. The present writer, has not been able to discover any original sources for such poems as The Howling Song of Al-Mohara, purported to be taken from the Arabic of Mustanzer Billah, The Time of the Barmedides, which it is said is from Arabian, The Karamanian Exile from one Fahreyeh, The Wail and Warning of three Khalenders, and several other pieces, for which no sources are given. In these cases it is safe to believe in the anecdote related by John Mitchell, Mangan's friend, that when somebody asked Mangan "why he gave credit to Hafiz for such exquisite gems of his own poetry; because, he said, Hafiz paid better than Mangan - and any critic could see that they were only half his"! In an amusing passage in one of his articles Mangan bewails that he is left al-

most likely to be mistaken.

1. From the Martyrdom of Husaim of Lama'ii.
2. Introduction by John Mitchell, reproduced in Poems of J.C. Mangan, edit by O'Donoghue opcit p. XLIII.

most alone to wrestle with the German muse and he breaks forth into verse in the following style:

"Where art thou, Soul of Per-version?  
Where be thy fantasies jinglish?  
Why lies in tact so much Prussian and Persian?  
And whither has fled the phrase 'Done into English?'"<sup>1</sup>

Most of the poems mentioned above are, one presumes, 'Done into English' in this way from apocryphal Oriental poets. That, however, does not detract from their poetic value. Under cover of his spurious Orientalism Mangan allowed himself much autobiographical utterance; his numerous Oriental poems, with their metrical subtleties and uncouth refrains of bizarre Oriental epithets, are but symbols of that dark passion that he expressed so consummately in his Irish poem Dark Rosaleen. When in the Last Words of Al-Hassan (purported to be a translation from the German of one Hayden) we read:

The wasted moon has a marvellous look  
Amiddle of the starry hordes;  
The heavens, too, shine like a mystic book  
All bright with burning words;  
The mists of the dawn begin to dislimn  
Zahara's castle of Sand;  
Farewell, farewell! Mine eyes feel dim,  
They turn to the lampless land,  
'L llah Hu!  
My heart is weary, mine eyes are dim;  
I will rest in the dark, dark land.

or in the fine piece called The Time of the Barmecides, which in its mournful regret for the Arabian Nights' country, provides an apt contrast to the joyous landscapes of Tennyson's Recollections of the Arabian Nights:

My eyes are filmed, my beard is grey,  
I am bowed with the weight of years;  
I would I were stretched in my bed of clay,  
With my long lost youth's compeers;  
For back to the Past, though the thought brings woe,  
My memory ever glides -  
To the old, old time, long, long ago  
The time of the Barmecides  
To the old, old time, long, long ago  
The time of the Barmecides.

or the vehement Howling Song of Al-Moharra,

We feel that these are not the sentiments of some fictitious Oriental writer, but of Mangan himself, weighed down under a poverty-stricken

1. Dublin Univ. Magazine, XV; p. 394.

2. The Thousand and One Nights, Trans. A.W. Lane, I, p. 245 ff.

drug-ridden life of misery. No discerning reader of Mangan's melancholy life, can doubt that Mangan's passionate laments, his grotesque bitter humour, his grim tricks with words and metres and his outlandish Oriental refrains, are anything but symbols of a sensitive and restless temperament, unbalanced and at war with itself. If in his hopeless state of slavery ~~an~~ drug habits and a premature senility, Mangan reminds one of Coleridge, his alloy of passionate melancholy and an incipient sense of satire and humour, as well as his Orientalism, are strongly reminiscent of Byron. Not less striking is his similarity to Edgar Allan Poe, whose skilful refrains and sonorous successive lines, which cunningly fall short of exact duplication, were foreshadowed, if not actually suggested by Mangan.

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But a still closer parallel to Mangan, both in a pessimistic life of dissipation and the interest in the Orient, is provided by James Thomson. Like Mangan, Thomson was also interested in the German poets, Heine, Goethe and others, who wrote on Oriental themes, but there is no reason to believe that Thomson knew any of the Orient languages. Like most of his English contemporaries, Thomson's interest in the East was poetic not linguistic.

In a note on the manuscript copy of the The Doom of a City (1857), which Thomson presented to his friend John Grant, it was admitted that the idea of this poem was suggested to Thomson by The Arabian Nights. "The City of the Statues," Thomson said, "is from the tale of Zobeide in the History of the Three Ladies of Bagdad and the Three Calendars. This episode and the account of the Kingdom of the Sea in 'Prince Bedr and ----' impressed my boyhood more powerfully than anything else in the Arabian Nights."

The stories referred to here are the, "The story of the first of the three Ladies of Bagdad,"<sup>1</sup> and the "Story of Bedr Basim and The Thousand and One Nights, Trans. E.W. Lane, I, p. 195 ff.

Joharah,"<sup>1</sup> both of which Thomson came across in E.W. Lane's translation of the Arabian Nights which appeared from 1838-1840 and superseded Galland's popular, though inaccurate version. Thomson's gloomy poem provides one more instance of the romantic use to which these Arabian tales were put by the English poets. In Thomson these tales did not provoke the metaphysical dread, to which Coleridge bore such an eloquent testimony, nor did they unfold before him, as they did before Tennyson, a vista of everchanging, joyous landscapes. In the Doom of a City, the Arabian Nights cities, converted into stone along with their inhabitants by the power of magic, stand as symbols of the stony insensibility of the human heart when numbed by destiny and despair.

"The passionate, heaving, restless, sounding life  
With all its tides and billows, foam and spray,  
Arrested in full tumult of its strife  
Frozen into a nightmare's ghastly death,  
The vigorous heart and brain and blood and breath  
Stark, strangled, confined in eternal stone."<sup>2</sup>

But no more than the idea of the petrified city seems to have been taken from the Arabian Nights. The first part of Thomson's poem describes a rambling and allegorical voyage in the manner of Shelley's Alastor; it is when the poet arrives in the City that the influence of the Arabian Nights is noticeable. "The Story of the First of the Three Ladies of Bagdad," mentioned above relates the unhappy story of the ingratitude of the Lady's sisters and her tragical love for a man whom she meets in the Stony City, during one of her mercantile voyages. It is the description of the petrified city itself that impressed Thomson. The Lady relates how she and her companions "entered the city (and) found all its inhabitants converted into black stones. We were amazed at the sight, and as we walked through the market, streets finding the merchandise and the gold and silver remaining in their original state, we rejoiced . . . . As for myself, I ascended to the Citadel . . . . and entering the King's palace, I found all the vessels of

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1. The Thousand and One Nights, III; p. 271 ff.

2. The Doom of a City, Part II, The City, VIII.

gold and silver remaining in their places, and the king himself seated in the midst of his chamberlains and viceroys and wezeers, and clad in apparel of astonishing richness. Drawing nearer to him, I perceived that he was sitting upon a throne adorned with pearls and jewels, every one of the pearls shining like a star; his dress was embroidered with gold, and around him stood fifty mamlooks, attired in silks and various descriptions and having in their hands drawn swords. Stupified at this spectacle, I proceeded and entered the saloon of the Harem upon the walls of which were hung silken curtains, and here I beheld the Queen, attired in a dress embroidered with fresh pearls and having upon her head a diadem adorned with various jewels, and necklaces of different kinds on her neck. All her clothing and ornament remained as they were at first, though she herself was converted into black stone,"<sup>1</sup>

This somewhat monotonous profusion of magnificence appears in a more dramatic form in Thomson's description of the Stony City:

"I plunged into the City of the Dead,  
 And pierced its Mausolean loneliness -  
 Between the self-sufficing places,  
 Broad fronts of azure, fire and gold, which shone  
 Spectrally pallid in the moonlight wan;  
 Adown great streets ....  
 Past range on range of marts which spread their wares  
 Weirdly unlighted to the eyes of heaven  
 Jewels and silks and golden ornaments,  
 Rich perfumes soul in soul of all rare scents,  
 Viols and timbrels .....

.....  
 Dead stone sentries stony eyed,  
 Erect, steel-sworded, brass-defended all ...  
 .....

Stone statues all throughout the streets and squares  
 Grouped as in social converse or alone;  
 Dim stony merchants holding forth rich wares  
 To catch the choice of purchasers of stone;  
 Fair statues leaning over balconies  
 Whose bosoms made the bronze and marble chill  
 .....

Firm sculptured horsemen on stony horses still;  
 .....

The Palace gates stand open wide and free;  
 The King and queen and all their company  
 Transfigured in full splendour of their pride  
 Came flowing forth in one refulgant tide  
 .....

..... etc. etc." <sup>1</sup>

1. The Doom of a City, Part II, VI - X.

Further on in the poem we read:

The Palace gates indeed stand open wide:  
Perchance the stately sepulchre may hide  
Some single life amidst the desolation;  
Preserved along in mystical salvation  
Entranced apart in holy contemplation?"<sup>1</sup>

Similarly in the Arabian Tale there is a single young man who has survived the catastrophe. The lady says that "at midnight I heard a recitation of the Kur-an performed by a melodious and soft voice,; upon which I arose, and looking about, saw a closet with an open door, and I entered it and found that it was an oratory: lighted lamps were suspended in it, and upon a prayer-carpet spread on the floor sat a young man of handsome aspect ...."<sup>2</sup>

Cities converted into stone with a single inhabitant left to tell the sad tale are a common feature of the Arabian Nights, and it is probable that Thomson was indebted to more than one of the tales for the vision of the Stony City. The "Story of Bedr Basim and Joharah," which Thomson said, was his favourite in youth, has nothing in common with the Doom of a City; but in the same volume of Lane's translation which contains this story, there is "The Story of the City of Brass,"<sup>3</sup> which describes in great detail a city with all its inhabitants lying dead. Portions of this tale bear some similarity to Thomson's Doom of a City, not only in its descriptions of the petrified inhabitants but also in the pessimistic moral reflections on the evanescence of love and joy and the transitoriness of all things human in the face of death. In fact, from an almost Oriental submission to Fate inculcated in the Lord of the Castle of Indolence, or from the lines in the autobiographical poem, Vane's Story:

"Oh what can Saadi have to do  
With penitence? and what can you?  
And Shiraz roses wreathed with rue?"<sup>4</sup>

and a few other references it seems plausible to suppose<sup>that</sup> the gloomy Necessitarianism of Thomson was reinforced, if not influenced by his reading of the Arabian Nights and other Oriental literature in

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1. The Doom of a City, Part II, XII.
  2. Lane, op cit. I; p. 196.
  3. Ibid, III; p. 118 ff.
  4. Vane's Story, Poetical works of J. Thomson, edit B. Dobell, I p. 20.

German translation.

"I find no hint throughout the Universe  
Of good or ill of blessing or of curse,  
I find alone Necessity Supreme."<sup>1</sup>

So wrote Thomson in the City of Dreadful Night, published in 1874, fifteen years after FitzGerald had proclaimed the Oriental doctrines of predestination and hedonism in the Rubaiyat:

"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 they Ears wash out a Word of it."<sup>2</sup>

Mathew Arnold, FitzGerald, Thomson; it is curious to observe that these three Victorian prophets of pessimism and stoicism, should all have, one after the other, showed decided leanings towards an Oriental way of thinking, in addition to choosing Oriental subjects for their poems. In that powerful poem To Our Ladies of Death, Thomson prays to our Lady of Oblivion, to deliver him from the "weary bearing of the heavy Now", into "divinely tranquil Death", and for a moment he seems to be fascinated with the Hindu idea of the absorption of the separate individual self into the cosmic life of the universe:

" .... to die  
By abdication of my separate soul:  
So shall this single, self impelling piece  
Of mechanism from lone labour cease  
Resolving into union with the Whole,"<sup>3</sup>

But in that mood of clear-eyed pessimism that prevails the City of Dreadful Night, even this hope proves an illusion. The poet meets a dotard who crawls painfully backward in an endeavour to regain the innocence and delight of a previous existence or that:

"He should to antenatal night retrace,  
And hide his elements in that large womb  
Beyond the reach of man-evolving Doom."

But to Thomson this appears to be a tragic mockery of existence:

"And even thus, what weary way were planned,  
To seek oblivion through the far off gate  
Of birth, when that of death is close at hand!  
For this is law, if law there be in Fate:  
What never has been yet may have its when;  
The thing which has been, never is again."<sup>4</sup>

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1. The City of Dreadful Night.
  2. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, trans. E. FitzGerald, LI.
  3. To Our Ladies of Death, stanza 28.
  4. The City of Dreadful Night. XVIII.

Transmigration and Reincarnation these are but the refuge of cunning logicians: the Patroness of Thomson's dolorous City is the unvanquished and indomitable "Melencolia" that transcends all wit."

It has been remarked that Thomson's City is an allegory of the sordidness and misery of London, "a mask of all civilization's giant centres" and finally also a mask "of the soul and destiny of the race within space and time, as his mood conceived it, stupendous and pitiable, magnificent and insignificant." <sup>1</sup> But it is also possible to see in Thomson's nightmare of the City, faint echoes of those petrified Arabian Nights' Cities of stone and bronze that typified for him the senseless and numb misery of mankind in the Doom of a City "stark, strangled, confined in eternal stone."

But while the City in the earlier poem was senseless and static, in the latter poem it is a ghastly night-vision of a living, moving metropolis. Yet it is possible that some of the precincts of the latter City:

"The soundless solitudes immense  
Of ranged mansions dark and still as tombs"

and its inhabitants with "worn faces that look deaf and blind like tragic masks of stone," recalled in Thomson's mind the stone and bronze cities of the Arabian Nights which impressed him so much in youth, as to become permanent symbols of his thought. It is striking, indeed, how persistently the images of petrified cities and sculptured stony faces run through Thomson's poem, reaching their symbolic culmination in the defiant, consoling statue of "Melencolia" in the City of Dreadful Night:

"Titanic from her high throne in the north  
That City's sombre Patroness and Queen  
In bronze sublimity she gazes forth  
Over her Capital . . . . ."

Not only that; the wanderings of the poet in spacious squares of the City, its lanes and markets full of merchandise, its stony mansions, rivers and bridges, seem to be a modification and

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1. Edmund Blunden, Introduction to the City of Dreadful Night and other poems, 1932; p. 8.  
2. The City of Dreadful Night, Canto XXI.

elaboration of the same idea as expressed in the Arabian Nights. In Canto X of the poem, for example, we read that the poet wandered about in a mansion, lighted but deadly still, whose noble hall "hung round with heavy black from dome to door":

"I paced from room to room, from hall to hall  
Nor any life throughout the maze discerned;  
But each was hung with its funereal pall,  
And held a shrine, around with tapers burned,

. . . . .  
At length I heard a murmur as of lips,  
And reached an open oratory hung  
With heaviest blackness of the whole eclipse  
Beneath the dome a fuming censer swung;  
And one lay there upon a low white bed  
With tapers burning at the foot and head:

The Lady of the images: supine  
Deathsstill, lifesweet, with folded palms she lay  
And kneeling there as at a sacred shrine  
A young man wan and worn who seemed to pray . . ." <sup>1</sup>

It is more than probable that Thomson was recalling in these lines of his poem some episodes from the Arabian Nights, which had already served as a basis for the Doom of a City. In the "Story of the First of the Three Ladies of Bagdad," already mentioned, the wanderings of the Lady through the stony city, are described in the following words:

"In this apartment I likewise observed some lighted candles . . . I passed thence to another part of the palace and continued to explore the different apartments . . . until the commencement of night when I would have departed but could not find the door; so I returned to the place in which were the lighted candles . . . at midnight I heard a recitation of the Kuran performed by a melodious soft voice . . . I entered . . . and found an oratory: lighted lamps were suspended in it and on the prayer-carpet on the floor sat a young man of handsome aspect . . ." <sup>2</sup>

While in the "Story of the City of Brass," where similar wanderings in a lifeless city are described, the visitors pass through various halls till they come to a room containing a couch. "Whereon was a damsel resembling the shining sun . . . Any beholder would imagine that she was alive and not dead . . . (but) know that this damsel is dead. There is no life in her . . . she is skillfully embalmed; and her eyes have been taken out after her death,

1. The City of Dreadful Night Canto X  
2. Lane op. cit. I, 196

and quicksilver hath been put beneath them . . . so they gleam; and whenever the air putteth them in motion, the beholder imagineth that she twinkleth her eyes, though she is dead." <sup>1</sup>

The wanderings from hall to hall of Thomson's poet, the tapers the murmur heard from the oratory (the same word occurs in Thomson and the Arabian Nights), the hanging censer, the bed with a dead girl sleeping on it and a young man praying - all these details, though in slightly different forms, occur in the above two passages, and it is at least possible that the impressions drawn from them coalesced and fused in Thomson's mind to produce the above picture; though there is no reason why Thomson could not have thought of them independently. In any case these passages lend some weight to the more general assertions made above, regarding the influence of the Arabian Nights in Thomson's poems.

The City of Dreadful Night, does not strictly fall within our prescribed period, but it has been found necessary to make these tentative suggestions, as a continued discussion of the influence of the Arabian Nights in the Doom of a City, whose date of publication '1857), is within our period.

Thomson's other two poems on Oriental subjects Weddah and Om-el-Bonain (1868-9) and Two Lovers (1867) also fall outside our period and considerations of space do not allow us to speak of them in detail. The subjects of both these poems were suggested to Thomson by a chapter in De Stendhal (Henri Beyle's) De l'Amour <sup>2</sup>, where that author quotes some fragments from an Arabian MS entitled the Book of Love compiled by Ibn-Abi-Hajlat. But only the bare outlines of the two tales are given in Stendhal; Thomson elaborates them greatly in his poems. Weddah is a beautiful and powerfully told Oriental tale of tragic love, possessing what Swinburne called a "forthright triumphant power." It ranges itself with the many Oriental verse-tales noticed in our earlier chapters, but is infinitely superior to them in the passionate and tragic sincerity with

1. Lane, op.cit. III, 144-145.

2. English Translation, by Vyvyan Holland, On Love, 1928, p. 212-221.

which Thomson has invested the congenial subject of thwarted love.

Thomson also translated a lyric from Goethe's West-östlicher Divan, and some poems of Heine. The following from the latter German poet called "Hindoo Mythology", bears evidence of that repugnance with which Hindu Mythology has always inspired the Western poets:

"The great King Viswamitra  
Has no rest for his vow  
By fighting and by penance  
To win Vasishtha's cow.

O Great King Viswamitra  
O, what a bull art thou  
To court such strife and sorrow,  
And only for a cow." 1

In such humorous and epigrammatic pieces Thomson bears a further resemblance to Mangan.

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1. The Poetical Works of J. Thomson, edit: B. Dobell, II; p.352.

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

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We come, at last to Edward FitzGerald, whose translations of Jami's Saláman & Absál, (1856), Farid-ud-Din-Attár's, Mantiq-ut-Tair, (translated in 1858-1859 but published posthumously in 1889) and the Rubaiyát of Omar Khayyám, (1859) are the belated but worthy fulfilments of those enthusiastic prophecies which Sir William Jones had made as far back as 1784.

Unlike most authors that we have tackled in our survey, a great deal has been written on the Oriental aspects of FitzGerald's poetry. We must confine ourselves, therefore, to only those matters, which have either been ignored by other writers or have not received the attention they deserve.

A.C. Benson, in his monograph, on FitzGerald, rather extravagantly, attributes FitzGerald's interest in Oriental literature to Major Moor, an Anglo Indian with whom FitzGerald as a boy used to take walks in the country round Woodbridge. There is no ground for supposing Major Moor to be "the true begetter of Omar Khayyam."<sup>1</sup> It would be one of our aims to show how completely this credit belongs to Edward Cowell.

Even as late as 1845, FitzGerald had no leanings towards Oriental subjects. Writing to Frederick Tennyson on February 6, 1845, FitzGerald scoffs thus at the contemporary Oriental craze, examples of which we have noticed earlier:

"Well and have you read 'Eothen', which all the world talks of? And do you know who it is written by? .... Then Eliot Warburton has written an Oriental book! Ye God! In Shakespeare's day the nuisance was the Monsieur Travellers, who had 'swum in a gundelle'; but now the bores are those who have smoked tshibouques in a Peshaw! Deuce

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1. Edward FitzGerald by A. C. Benson, E. M. L. p. 5.

take it: I say 'tis better to stick to muddy Suffolk".<sup>1</sup> FitzGerald is here alluding to the popular travel book of Eliot Warburton "The Crescent and the Cross, or Romance and Realities of Eastern Travel" (1845), where the author gives 'glowing descriptions' of Egypt Syria, Palestine etc. His reflections on men and manners of the East are usually full of lively interest, though apt to be a little too naive sometimes.

In 1846 came probably the greatest influence in FitzGerald's life - his friendship with Edward Cowell, later Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University. In a speech at a special meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society, held on May 25, 1898, Professor Cowell made some very interesting remarks. After paying a tribute to the memory of Colonel Hockley, a retired Bombay officer, from whom Cowell learnt his Persian, he continued: "Now this leads me at once to the main point which I wish to impress on my audience - the power which our enthusiasm and sympathy can always exercise on others, wherever we may be placed. I can give, indeed, an infinitely more important example of this than <sup>my</sup> personal reminiscences of Colonel Hockley: for it was an Indian civilian who first kindled the flame of Sanskrit scholarship in Germany. An Indian civilian, Alexander Hamilton, happened to be travelling in France in May, 1803, when Napoleon, enraged at the sudden renewal of hostilities, caused every English traveller in France to be arrested at once without any warning. Hamilton remained a prisoner in France till 1808, but this time was not thrown away he did good service to England and India during his enforced exile. He studied Sanskrit in India; and while he spent the long years in Paris he formed a friendship with Augustus von Schlegel, and introduced him to the new language and literature. Schlegel caught the enthusiasm, and afterwards edited and translated the Hitopadeśa, Bhagavadgita, and Ramayana, and thus began the illustrious series of German Sanskritists, to whom Europe and India owe such a debt of gratitude.

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1. Letters of Edward FitzGerald, edit. by W. A. Wright, London 1894; vol. I. p. 189.

There is nothing more interesting than to trace, where it is possible, these electric currents of influence; but how many such there must be which we can never know!"

It was even such an electric influence which Cowell himself exercised on his friend Edward FitzGerald; as shall appear later; but for Cowell, FitzGerald would probably never have studied Persian. And it was <sup>a</sup> similar electric influence which Cowell in his turn admitted Sir William Jones to have exercised on him when in a speech before the Royal Asiatic Society in 1898 he spoke as follows:

"It was in 1841 that Sir William Jones first awoke in my mind an interest in India and the East. I owe the bent of my life to his 'Poeseos Asiaticae Commentarii'. I well remember the joy of finding a Persian Grammar among his works, and I soon learned the characters, and, with the aid of a glossary at the end, began to study the anthology of beautiful extracts by which he illustrates his rules. It was with Jones's Grammar that some thirteen years afterwards, at Oxford, I gave FitzGerald his first lesson in the Persian Alphabet." Thus we find the current of 'electric influences' running from Sir William Jones, through Cowell to FitzGerald.

Cowell began to translate Háfiz at this early age. He chose the Asiatic Journal to be the recipient of his labours. As early as January, 1842, we find a translation of Háfiz from his pen in the pages of this Journal, under the heading 'Gazel of Háfiz' -

These translations from Háfiz were destined to exercise <sup>a</sup> great influence on FitzGerald. They were full of that epicureanism which had such a lasting fascination for FitzGerald. In the May number of the Asiatic Journal for 1842, for example there appeared a piece from Cowell's pen beginning:

"O why lament the passing hour?  
Enjoy the moments in thy power:" etc.etc.

And in the September number of 1842, we find

"Again comes the spring, in its beauties array'd:  
How soon we forget all the vows we have made!"

All these ideas found an echo in FitzGerald's translations from the Persian.

Another point worth noticing is, that Cowell did not always try to adhere strictly to the original. In this too, he was not with-

out influence on FitzGerald who turned out to be an apt pupil. But the liberties which Cowell took with the original Persian poems did not go without a protest. In the December Number of the Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany for 1844, appeared a letter, signed "The old Judge" accusing Cowell of taking too much liberty with his Persian Originals. "The doings into English of Persian poetry", the correspondent complained, "scarcely or never convey the correct sense of the original, to say nothing of the curiosa felicitas of the style and expression. What can this be owing to, and what chance therefore, has the mere English scholar of ever knowing what Persian poetry is? No great loss perhaps, it will be said, if he never does."

To this Cowell replied in the following Number - January, 1845:

"There must always be a wide difference between translations from European and Eastern languages, not only on account of the essential difference in manners, habits of thought, etc., but also of the frequent flights of nonsense in which the poets of the East indulge far more daringly than their brethern in the West. Surely a translator is not to be bound to his author's Pegasus, to follow him through all his freaks and vagaries like Tappecoue and his horse in Rabelais. 'Qui se mist au trot, a bondz et au qualet, a ruades, fressurades et double pedales, tant qu'elle rua bas Tappecoue, quoy qu'il se tinst a l'aulbe du bast de toutes ses forces.' (Pantagruel. IV. 13). Wherever I have deviated from Hafiz in consequence of obscurity, or nonsense, or allusions which would seem pointless to the general reader, I have almost invariably inserted passages from some of his other odes; and I have done this on purpose to avoid the fault your correspondent has censured, viz., that of filling one's author with the common expletives of 'Helicon's rhyme-jingling crew'. I had hoped that one so skilled in Persian literature as 'old Judge' seems to be, would not have failed to see this." This theory of translation, we shall see was, to influence FitzGerald.

During the closing days of 1845, and the early days of 1846, Cowell's thoughts were constantly occupied with Jami. On December 3, 1845, he wrote to Elizabeth Charlesworth, his fiancée: "Perhaps next Christmas Day we may find out something new in this piece of Jami ... The more I think of that piece, the more I wonder that Persia could have produced anything so like Emerson where Emerson is truest and greatest - 'Every earthly veil is a veil of his beauty - ' This sentence seems to me wonderfully deep. It seems related to that piece of Sallust, 'the powers of bodies are bodiless', because everything that hath ever taken deep hold of the heart of man must, according to Sallust, do so by an invisible bodiless influence which Jami would call the Spirit of beauty. However, be this as it may, Jami, is most magnificent."<sup>1</sup>

Cowell is here referring to the famous lines in Jami's Yusuf and Zulaikha which he had already translated in the Asiatic Journal for April 1845, Beginning:

"The heavens are a point from the pen of God's perfection;  
The world is a bud from the bower of his beauty;  
The sun is a spark from the light of his wisdom,  
And the sky is a bubble on the sea of his power.  
His beauty is free from the spot of sin.  
Hidden in the thick veil of darkness,  
He made mirrors of the atoms of the world,  
And threw a reflection from his own face on every atom;  
To thy clear-seeing eye, whatsoever is fair,  
When thou see'st it is a reflection of his face."

By April, 1846, Cowell had already read Hafiz and Nizami. It was in this year that FitzGerald became acquainted with him, and in the very first of his published letters to Cowell we find that he had already begun to take interest in his friend's translations from the Persian. He writes to Cowell in 1846: "Your Hafiz is fine: his tavern world is a sad and just idea ... It would be a good work to give us some of the good things of Hafiz and the Persians; of bulbuls and ghuls we have had enough."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Life and Letters of E. B. Cowell by George Cowell, 1904, p.42.
  2. See page 81 of کتاب یوسف و زلیخا edited by Vincenz Edlem von Rosenzweig. Wien. MDCCCXXIV.
  3. Letters, op.cit. vol. I. p. 205.

The bulbuls and ghuls are of course the nightingales and roses so favourite with the writers of pseudo Oriental tales, we have already noticed. The idea of the tavern world which FitzGerald liked so much, is expressed by Háfiz in various odes, some of which Cowell translated and later published in the Westminster Review for July 1847 (in an article entitled "Persian Poetry") and in Fraser's Magazine for September, 1854.

It was in the fitness of things that FitzGerald should be attracted to Háfiz by Cowell's translations. For the spirit of melancholy, and the sense of the evanescence of time are characteristic both of Háfiz and of Umar Khayyám. Indeed, there is recorded a saying of Akbar, the great Moghul, that "an ode of Háfiz is the wine, and a quatrain of Omar is the relish."<sup>1</sup>

These poems of Háfiz were destined to colour all the Persian studies of FitzGerald, so that, whether he was translating Jámi, or Umar Khayyám, reminiscences from Háfiz cropped up in his mind, and modified his work.

Meanwhile, Cowell was continuing his studies of the Persian poets, and contributing articles to various magazines. By far his longest article on Persian poetry appeared in the Westminster Review for July 1847, entitled "Persian Poetry". It was a review of "The Rose Garden of Persia. By Louisa Stuart Costello. London MCCCXLV" - an anthology of translations from Persian poets interspersed with comments. Among the poets mentioned, it is interesting to note, are Umar Khayyám (spelt in the book as Omar KHiam) of whom the author writes: "He was altogether unprecedented in regard to the freedom of his religious opinions; or rather, his boldness in denouncing hypocrisy and intolerance ... He may be called the Voltaire of Persia." Attár is also mentioned, whose book the "Pend-Nameh" is constantly mis-spelled by the author as "Perid - Nameh."

Cowell, in his review of this book, gives an account of the chief poets of Persia, with his own translations from them. He

1. H. J. Jarrett. Ain-i-Akbari, by Abu Fazl-i-Allami. Calcutta. 1891. Part II. Page 392.

discusses, among others, Firdawsi, Anwari, Umar Khayyám, Hátifi and Sádi. Here too, we find him trying to bring Rumi to the notice of the public. He gives his own translation of a tale from Rumi's Mathnawi - viz. "The Merchant and His Parrot".

Later, in the "People's Journal" for January 1848, Cowell published another translation from Rumi, this time the story of "Moses and the Shepherd". From a letter dated January 25, 1848 we find that FitzGerald was following his friend's articles with great zest.

Early in 1851 Cowell went up to Oxford. Here FitzGerald visited him frequently, "wrapped in a plaid and a mysterious atmosphere of cynicism."<sup>1</sup> He followed Cowell's articles in the various magazines scrupulously. In 1852 we find him urging Cowell to translate the Mathnawi of Rumi. His old enthusiasm for Háfiz is still there. He writes to Cowell, "I like the bits from Háfiz much. No doubt he (with one or two Persians besides) is an exception to the universal spoon-meat of Asia."

The year 1853 saw the publication of "Six Dramas from Calderon freely translated by Edward FitzGerald," the only book<sup>2</sup> which he ever put his name. These translations do not concern us here, except to mention that they initiated FitzGerald in the art of translation. We have FitzGerald's own word for it that his translations from Calderon are rather free. "I think you can hardly make Calderon interesting to English Readers unless with a large latitude of interpretation."

The sentence is suggestive. We can see that FitzGerald's personal theory of translation was being formed at this time. He never swerved from this theory. As late as December 1878 we find him reiterating it with the same conviction, in a letter to J.R. Lowell, apropos of Calderon ".....my Calderon, which you speak of - very many beside myself, with as much fair Dramatic Spirit, knowledge of good English and English Verse, would do quite as well as you think I do, if they would not hamper themselves with

1. "Life and Letters of Edward Byles Cowell by George Cowell, London 1904," Page 101.

Forms of Verse, and Thought, irreconcilable with English Language and English Ways of thinking. I am persuaded that, to keep life in the Work (as Drama must) the Translator (however inferior to his Original) must recast that original into his own likeness, more or less: the less like his original, so much the worse: but still, the live Dog better than the dead lion ..."<sup>1</sup>

As we shall see later, in his translations from the Persian poets, and especially Attár and Umar Khayyám, FitzGerald acted on the same theory.

It was in 1853 that, influenced by Cowell, FitzGerald began seriously the study of the Persian language, and it was with Sir William Jones' Persian Grammar that Cowell started him off on this study.<sup>2</sup> This Grammar suited him very well, for in it, there are many beautiful lines of poetry from Háfiz, Sádi, etc., quoted as examples. He writes to Cowell in October, 1853, "I have ordered Eastwick's Gulistan: for I believe I shall potter out so much Persian."<sup>3</sup>

At the end of the Grammar, Sir William Jones gives a "Catalogue of the Most valuable Books in the Persian language", to be found in Oxford, Paris, the British Museum, and the collections of private men. And there, to be sure, is mentioned Jámi's Salamán and Absál.

The dictionary used by FitzGerald was Francis Johnson's, "A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English", London, 1852.

FitzGerald was now more competent to judge Cowell's translations from Háfiz, some of which were published in Fraser's Magazine for September 1854. They were prefaced by an article on Háfiz. And here we notice the first important divergence of views between Cowell and FitzGerald. Cowell was an orthodox Christian and he had a tendency to be rather too serious in his interpretations of Persian poets. In the article mentioned above, he tried to show that there is often a deeper significance underlying the

1. Letters of Edward FitzGerald. London 1894. vol. II page 261.

2. A Grammar of the Persian Language by Sir William Jones, 1771 etc

3. Letters, vol I. p. 285.

roses and wines of Persian poets - that they should be interpreted mystically. "Mysticism or Sufeyism runs through all their works; and, without recognising this, they must be continually misunderstood. To use the words of the great Jelaleddin, 'they profess eager desire, but no carnal affection; and circulate the cup, but no material goblet; since all things are spiritual in their sect, all is mystery within mystery.' Such passages as these furnish the key to this peculiar characteristic of Persian poetry; the phrases of revelry and the praises of the transient joys of love and wine, which meet us at every turn, are but the mystical phraseology of the time, the veil which conceals under the joys of earth the visions of the poet or the ecstasies of the rapt enthusiast ... The greater part of his (i.e. Hafiz) odes were written with a Sufi aim."

In the first volume of a publication which ran on only for four years, called "Oxford Essays", Cowell developed this idea at some length.

"The peculiar feature of Persian poetry - its distinguishing charm - is the mystical tone which universally pervades it. This mystical tendency is not confined to mere isolated passages; with but few exceptions it extends its influence everywhere ... The outer form of the poem may appear a romance or a song; it may tell of the loves of Yusuf and Zulaikha, or of Majnun and Laili; or it may plant us by the bowers of Mosella, amid the lighthearted revelry of the wine-worshippers of Shiraz; and to the idle listener the words may have conveyed nothing more. But just as in Calderon's comedy of The Open Secret (El Secreto a voces), the very words, which to the common persons of the drama only conveyed a common meaning, bore to the two partners of the secret the whole history of their sorrows and joys, - so to the ear, which is rightly attuned, in these utterances of the Persian Muse, echoes of a deeper harmony untwine themselves from the confusion of sounds ... The odes of Sufeyism, as we find them in the diwans of Hafiz and Jelaleddin, are supposed to be the natural expression of these vague and mysterious longings; in these its dumb and strugg-

ling aspirations find a voice, while it passes from stage to stage in the journey of Sufi development, learning to recognise the divine original with continually clearer intuition, as it gradually escapes from matter and its selfish tendencies. Human speech, however, is weak and imperfect; and, since ordinary language is only framed to convey the daily wants and impressions of mankind, these higher experiences of the soul can only be represented by symbols and metaphors. Hence the Sufi poets adopt a form of expression which to the uninitiated ear can convey no such depth of meaning. Under the veil of an earthly passion, and the woes of a temporal separation, they disguise the dark riddle of human life, and the celestial banishment, which lies behind the threshold of existence; and under the joys of revelry and intoxication they figure mystical transports and divine ecstasies."<sup>1</sup>

There is of course a great deal of truth in Cowell's remarks though many critics think that it is wrong to engraft too much of mysticism upon most of the frankly Epicurean odes of Háfiz. FitzGerald, at any rate, disliked this excessive spiritualisation of a poet with whom he felt a close affinity. Accordingly, we find him writing to Carlyle - "Please to look at the September Number of Fraser's Magazine where are some prose Translations of Háfiz by Cowell which may interest you a little. I think Cowell (as he is apt to do) gives Háfiz rather too much credit for a mystical wine-cup, and cup-bearer; I mean taking him on the whole. The few odes he quotes have certainly a deep and pious feeling: such as the Man of Mirth will feel at times; none perhaps more strongly."<sup>2</sup>

He never swerved from this point of view. Interpretations naturally differ, but in FitzGerald's interpretation of Háfiz there was nothing merely wilful. His whole personality was involved in it. Years afterwards, when Garcin de Tassy tried to

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1. Oxford Essays vol. I. 1855.

2. Letters vol. I. p. 294.

show that Umar was a Sufi, as Háfiz is supposed to be by some critics, FitzGerald wrote in the preface to his second edition of 'Omar Khayyam', - "I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Sufi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his song." Without this strong personal bias, it is probable that FitzGerald would never have been attracted by Umar Khayyám; he would have been to him one among many, and those too not very notable, Persian poets who wrote mystical verse. In any case, we would have got quite a different sort of translation from FitzGerald's pen even if he had been drawn towards the astronomer-poet of Persia.

Cowell fully appreciated his friend's independence of judgment and strength of character. "He is a man of real power", he wrote in 1850 to George Kitchin, later Dean of Durham, "one such as we seldom meet with in the world. There is something so very solid and stately about him, a kind of slumbering giant, or silent Vesuvius. It is only at times that the eruption comes, but when it does come, it overwhelms you!"<sup>1</sup>

Having mastered the rudiments of the language, FitzGerald proceeded to tackle some more advanced works. As we have seen, Sa'di's Gulistán early attracted <sup>him</sup> by its quaint stories; but it did not hold him long. Sa'di was too drily moralistic for his tastes and he never quite succeeded in liking him. As late as 1867 we find him offering his copy of the Gulistán to Cowell, with the words, "You know, I never cared for Sádi". Firdawsi, too, failed to excite any permanent interest in him. He sympathised with the national tendencies of the poet, but with the epic as a form of verse FitzGerald had not much sympathy.<sup>2</sup>

But the poet who did at last succeed in holding FitzGerald's interest was Abdu'r-Rahman, more famous by his pen-name of Jámi. In 1850, Forbes Falconer had brought out an edition of Jámi's

1. Life and Letters of Edward Byles Cowell, by George Cowell, p.91  
 2. See Cowell's letter to W. A. Wright, July 9, 1883, Life and Letters of E.B. Cowell by George Cowell op.cit. p. 282-283.

Salamán-u-Absál from a collection of eight manuscripts in the library of the India House; and it was printed in London for the Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts. FitzGerald bought a copy at Oxford, and began studying it assiduously with Cowell. We have FitzGerald's own word for it that this was the first Persian poem he read in its entirety.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that it was Cowell's generous encouragement that prompted FitzGerald later to undertake the task of translating Salamán into English. Cowell's interest in Jami was not fleeting. We have already seen that Jami's Yusuf and Zulaykha was one of Cowell's early loves, and it was quite natural that, now that a good text of the poet's Salamán-u-Absál was available, he should recommend it to his friend. But Cowell's interest did not stop here. In the Oxford Essays for 1855, he wrote an article on Persian literature, in which he gave translations from Mirdawsi,

Rumi, Sá'di, Háfiz and Jami. Of Jami Cowell wrote:- "We can only add a brief account of Jami, a poet of the fifteenth century, whose seven poems (called in Persia, The Seven Thrones) abound with beautiful passages, and are likewise deeply imbued with Persian mysticism. Salamán and Absál is an allegory, which describes the connexion of the soul and the body under the form of a love story and relates the gradual disentanglement of the soul from material ties as it rises nearer and nearer to the contemplation of heavenly beauty. From it we select the opening invocation, one of the most remarkable passages, in the whole range of Persian poetry ..." Cowell then gives forty-two lines of translation which

FitzGerald, of course read, and from which he borrowed phrases for his opening of the Salamán later on. We give Cowell's version, for it is extremely interesting to compare the respective versions of the master and the pupil:-

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1. See Letter to Schutz Wilson, March 1882, Letters op.cit. vol. II. 325-326; also vol. I. p. 282-318.

line and the prologue were an integral part of the Persian poet's genius, and here his judgment was right.

Oh! Thou whose memory refreshes the lover's soul,  
 The water of whose kindness moistens the lover's tongue,  
 From thee hath fallen a shadow on the world,  
 And earth's fair ones have traded on this as their whole  
 capital.

Earth's lovers fall in homage before that shadow,  
 At the sight of that capital are they filled with frenzy.  
 Ere from Laili rose the secrets of Thy beauty,  
 Her love excited no flame in Majnun.  
 Ere thou hadst made Shirin's lips like sugar,  
 Her two lovers' hearts were not filled with blood,  
 Ere Thou had'st given Azra her silver cheeks,  
 No quicksilver tears filled Wamik's eyes.  
 From thee, and thee alone, comes mention of beauty and  
 love;

Lover and loved, there is none save Thee.  
 The beauty of earth's fair ones is a veil before Thee.  
 Thou hast hidden Thy face behind the veil.  
 It is Thou that with Thine own beauty deckest the veil;  
 'Tis for this that the heart is fixed thereon as on a  
 veiled bride.

Long enough hath Thy divine face been concealed by the  
 veil;

We cannot distinguish Thy face from the curtain.  
 How long wilt thou shoot Thy glances from behind its folds,  
 With a whole world enraptured at the picture of a veil?  
 It is time for thee to remove the veil from before Thee  
 And to display thy face unclouded by its screen,  
 That I may be lost in the revelation of thyself,  
 And freed from all power to distinguish good or ill,  
 That I may be Thy lover, enlightened by thee,  
 With my eyes sealed to all other objects.

Thy goings are concealed under the various forms of truth;  
 Under all the creatures we see only Thee,  
 Though I look forth from every place of seeing,  
 In all the world I behold none other than Thee.  
 Thou adornest Thyself under the image of the world,  
 Thou art the keen-eyed censor in the guise of man.  
 There is no admission for separate personality within Thy  
 sacred chamber;

There is no mention there of great or small.  
 From separate consciousness, oh, make us united to Thyself,  
 Oh! grant me a place in Thy assembly,  
 That like that Kurd in the story, escaped from personality,  
 I may say, 'Is it I, oh God, or is it Thou?  
 'If it be I, then whence this knowledge and power?  
 'And if it be Thou, whence this weakness and frailty?'

After these lines Cowell writes in a footnote: "The story  
 which succeeds is omitted, as its grotesqueness mars the effect  
 of the rest, - at least to our more polished Western taste."

He refers to the story of the Kurd who tied a gourd round his  
 ankle as a token, for fear he should lose himself. It immediate-  
 ly follows the invocation to God.

FitzGerald, however, did not reject all these episodes  
 when he translated the poem himself. He realised that the sub-  
 lime and the grotesque were an integral part of the Persian poet's  
 genius, and here his judgment was right.

his translation of the Salamán. He writes to Cowell in 1855 "You never say a word about your Háfiz. Has that fallen for the present, Austin not daring to embark in it in these days of war, when nothing that is not warlike sells except Macaulay? Don't suppose I bandy compliments; but with moderate care, any such Translation of such a writer as Háfiz by you into pure, sweet, and partially measured prose must be better than what I am doing for Jámi; whose ingen<sup>u</sup>s prattle I am stilting into too Miltonic verse. This I am very sure of. But it is done."<sup>1</sup>

And again in January, 1856. "I send you a sketch of Jámi's Life, which cut, correct, and annotate as you like. Where there was so little to tell I have brought in all the fine Names and extra bits I could give it a little sparkle ... I feel guilty at taking up your Time and Thoughts: and also at Dressing myself so in your Plumes. But I mean to say a word about this, in my Preliminary Notice; and would gladly dedicate the Little Book to you by Name, with due acknowledgement, did I think the world will take it for a Compliment to you. But though I like the version, and you like it, we know very well the world - even the very little world, I mean who will see it - may not; and might laugh at us both for any such Compliment. They cannot laugh at your Scholarship; but they might laugh at the use I put it to: and to my dedicating a Cobweb (as Carlyle called Maud the other night) to you."

This letter reveals FitzGerald's extreme modesty. No wonder that the only book to which he ever put his name was his "Six Dramas from Calderon", published in 1853. One other sentence is worth noting in this letter; "Where there was so little to tell I have brought in all the fine names and extra bits I could to give it a little sparkle." Persian names indeed fascinated him. We find him writing in another letter to Cowell. "There is one thing which I think I find in Salaman which may be worth your

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1. Letters. Vol. I. page 304.

of the Persian Complete - (here, like people on the Stage, I am consideration (not needing much) in Hafiz: namely in Translation to retain the original Persian Names as much as possible - 'Shah' for 'King' for instance - 'Yusuf and Suleyman' for 'Joseph and Solomon', etc. The Persian is not only more musical but removes such words and names further from Europe and European Prejudices and Associations. So Also I think best to talk of 'A Moon' rather than 'a Month', and perhaps 'Sennight' is better than 'week'. This is a little matter: but it is well to rub off as little Oriental Colour as possible."<sup>1</sup>

The reference to the 'moon' in the above letter is, of course, to the Persian word *ol* which means both 'moon' and 'month'. As the Muslims measure their months by the moon, FitzGerald is quite right in thinking that it would sound much prettier, if one translated the word *ol* where it means a month as 'moon'. And so he did; line 682 of the third edition of his Salaman runs "When they had sailed their vessel for a Moon", -meaning a month.

The book duly came out in 1856, shortly before Cowell's departure for India in August.<sup>2</sup>

The preface to this 1st edition is in the form of a letter to Cowell, and as it was never reprinted in its entirety in any subsequent edition, nor given in Aldis Wright's edition of FitzGerald's edition of FitzGerald's letters, we reproduce extracts from it below. It is an extremely useful document, for in it we get the views of the translator on the difficulties and pitfalls of his art. FitzGerald admits that whatever Scholarship this "reduced version" of their favourite poet Jami has, belongs to his "Master in Persian," Cowell and goes on to say: "But unlike Hafiz' best - (whose sonnets are sometimes as close packt as Shakespeare's, which they resemble in more ways than one) - Jami, you know, like his Countrymen generally, is very diffuse in what he tells and his way of telling it. The very structure

1. Letters. Vol. I. page 306.

2. Published by J. W. Parker & Son of West Strand, London.

~~414~~ 414

of the Persian Couplet - (here, like people on the Stage, I am repeating to you what you know, with an Eye to the small Audience beyond) - so often ending with the same word, or Two Words, if but the foregoing Syllable secure a lawful Rhyme, so often makes the Second Line but a slightly varied Repetition, or Modification of the First, and gets slowly over Ground often hardly worth gaining. This iteration is common indeed to the Hebrew Psalms and Proverbs - where, however, the Value of the Repetition is different. In your Hafiz also, not Two only, but Eight or Ten lines perhaps are tied to the same Close of Two - or Three - words; a verbal Ingenuity as much valued in the East as better Thought. This, together with the confined Action of Persian Grammar, whose organic simplicity seems to me its difficulty when applied, makes the Line by Line Translation of a Poem not a line by line precious tedious in proportion to its length. Especially - (what the Sonnet does not feel) - in the Narrative; which I found when once eased in its Collar, and yet missing somewhat of rhythmical Amble, somehow, and not without resistance on my part, swerved into that "easy road" of Verse - easiest as unbeset with any exigencies of Rhyme. As for the much bodily omitted - it may be readily guessed that an Asiatic of the 15th Century might say much on such a subject that an Englishmen of the 19th would not care to read. Not that our Jami is ever Licentious like his Contemporary Chaucer, nor like Chaucer's Posterity in Times that called themselves more Civil. But better Men will not now endure a simplicity of Speech that Worse men abuse. Then the many more, and foolisher, Stories - preliminary Te Deums to Allah and Allah's -shadow Shah - very much about Alef Noses, Eyebrows like inverted Nuns, drunken Narcissus Eyes - and that eternal Moon Face which never wanes from Persia - of all which there is surely enough in this Glimpse of the Original. No doubt some Oriental character escapes - the Story sometimes becomes too Skin and Bone without due interval of even Stupid and Bad. Of the two Evils? - At least what I have chosen is least in point of bulk; However it may be with this, I am sure a complete Translation - even in Prose - would not have been a readable one - which, after

415

all, is a useful property of most Books, even of Poetry.

---Here is the best I could make of Jami's Poem - "Ouvrage de  
Universelle  
peu d'etendue," says the Biographie, and whatever that means,  
here collaps'd into a nutshell Epic indeed; whose Story however,  
if nothing else, may interest some Scholars as one of Persian  
Mysticism - perhaps the grand Mystery of all Religions - an Alle-  
gory fairly devised and carried out - dramatically culminating as  
it goes on; and told as to this day the East loves to tell her  
Story, illustrated by Fables and Tales, so often (as we read in  
the latest Travels) at the expense of the poor Arab of the  
Desert."

Being modest, FitzGerald had not expected much from the  
critics; "Half-a-dozen will buy" he had written to Cowell, be-  
fore its publication, "and the Critics in the Papers will sneer,"  
but he was spared these sneers for the simple reason that the  
book passed unnoticed by any. Only his friend Cowell referred to  
it in a footnote to one of his translations from Jami's ghazals,  
published in Fraser's Magazine for November 1856, in the article  
entitled "Jami, The Persian Poet".

And yet the book certainly deserved notice. For apart from  
its merits as a translation, it affords evidence of quite wide  
reading. From references scattered about the book and the notes  
to it we find that FitzGerald was acquainted with the works of  
at least Sir William Jones, Sir William and Gore Ouseley, East-  
wick, D'Herbelot, Rosenzweig, Sir John Chardin and Hafiz. This  
was no mean achievement for one who did not profess to be a Per-  
sian scholar.

In 1871 appeared the second edition of Salaman and Absal,  
privately printed at Cowell's steam Printing Works, and the third  
in 1879 as a part of the fourth edition of Omar. Of this <sup>last</sup> edition  
FitzGerald wrote ... "Omar remains as he was; Jami (Salaman) is  
cut down to two-thirds of his former proportion, and very much  
improved, I think. It is still in a wrong key: Verse of Mil-  
tonic strain, unlike the simple Eastern; I remember trying that  
at first, but could not succeed. So there is little but the Alle-  
gory itself (not a bad one), and now condensed into a very fair

Bird's Eye view; quite enough for any Allegory, I think ..."<sup>1</sup>

And when in 1882, H. Schutz Wilson, who had previously reviewed Omar in the Contemporary Review for March, 1876, wrote to FitzGerald asking him if he might write a review on Salamán, FitzGerald replied: "I must thank you sincerely for your thoughts about Salaman, but I scarce think that it is of a kind to profit so far by any review as to make it worth the expense of Time and Talent you might bestow upon it. In Omar's case it was different: he sang, in an acceptable way it seems, of what all men feel in their hearts, but had not exprest in verse before: Jami tells of what everybody knows, under cover of a not very skilful Allegory. I have undoubtedly improved the whole by boiling it down to about a Quarter of its original size; and there are many pretty things in it, though the blank Verse is too Miltonic for Oriental style."<sup>2</sup>

Salamán wa Absál, a part of the Haft Awrang or "Seven Thrones" of the Persian mystical poet Mulla Nuru'd -Din Abdu'r-Rahman Jámi (1414-1492. A.D.),<sup>3</sup> is a version of the love-story of the Oriental lovers Salamán and Absál, whose ultimate source is Avicenna's Al-Isharát wa-t-Tanbihát.<sup>4</sup> Jámi who was acquainted with Avicenna's version through the latter poet's commentator Nasir-ud-Din Tusi, modified the story a good deal to suit his own mystical philosophy, and the way he has transformed a pagan myth into a Sufi-istic allegory deserves high praise.

Jámi's poem is written in the verse-form called Mathnawi, i.e. in rhyming couplets, usually complete in themselves, though occasionally affording examples of enjambement. The metre used is the Ramal -i- Musaddas - i - Mahdzuf, which as we have seen, offers a fairly close parallel to the fifteen syllable trochaic measure of Tennyson's Locksley Hall. According to the conventions of Persian poetry, the poem opens with a canto in praise of God,

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1. Letters of Edward FitzGerald. Vol. II. page 263.  
2. Letters. Vol. II. pp. 324-325.  
3. For an excellent Sketch of Jámi's life see Biographical Sketch of Jámi by Nassau Lees, prefixed to his edition of the Mafahat ul-Uns, Calcutta, 1859. Also E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia 4 vols, Cambridge 1928.  
4. See Traitées Mystiques -d' Avicenne, Il ième Fascicule, Leyde, 1891 and Avicenne by Baron Carra De Vaux, Paris, 1900, p. 290-298.

to which the writer is here indebted.

followed by one in praise of the prophets, four in praise of the four successors of the prophet, and a panegyric in praise of the King, to whom the book is dedicated. After much introductory extravagance and hyperbole, comes the story itself divided into a number of sections and cantos, each of the cantos being headed by a rubric, setting forth the matter treated. An epilogue brings the work to <sup>α</sup>close.

The story of the poem is of the slenderest kind, the dramatis personae being a King of Greece, a Wise Man who is his constant mentor and advisor, his beautiful and dearly beloved son Salaman, Absal the fair nurse of the boy, and Zuhra (the planet Venus), representing as in Keats' Endymion, the heavenly Beauty which finally expels the memory of Absal from Salaman's mind. Amongst the somewhat grotesque features of the story are the birth of Salaman, without a mother to bear him (the poet's misogyny holding marriage in abhorrence, though he was himself married), and the seniority by some twenty years of the charming Absal over her nursing, whom, when he reached maturity, she entangles in an attachment, highly distasteful to the King and the Sage. The latter, by a kind of mesmeric power, compels Salaman in the earthly paradise whither he has fled with Absal to build and kindle a great pyre of brushwood, into which the two lovers cast themselves, with the result that, while poor Absal is burned to ashes, Salaman emerges unhurt, purified from all earthly desires and fit to receive the crown and throne which his father hastens to confer upon him. The allegory, transparent enough without commentary is fully explained in the Epilogue.<sup>1</sup>

But the most distinctive feature of Jami's poem is a profuse and utterly undramatic use of moral anecdotes to drive home his own views and beliefs. It is here that FitzGerald diverges most from Jami, both in the structure and the 'moral' of his translation. Space does not permit us to compare in detail FitzGerald's version with Jami's original but, by examining a few typical points of divergence between the two authors we shall attempt to

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l. p. 71-75 of FitzGerald's translation (1856) and lines 1076-1120 of the Original in Forbes' Falconer's edition (1850).

arrive at some generalisations. The text of Jami's poem is that of Forbes Falconer's excellent edition printed for the Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts in 1850, which FitzGerald himself used for his translation.

Jámi narrates the story of a simple Arab who, amidst the crowd of a town, tied a gourd round his ankle for fear he should lose himself. When he fell asleep a mischievous fellow untied that token from him and fastened it on to himself. When the Arab woke up he was naturally perplexed and cried out, "Is it I or thou?" Jámi very cleverly lends a mystic significance to this rather grotesque story. He desires to reach a stage of development when he should be unable to distinguish between himself and God. Then follows a pun on his pen-name, Jámi, which signifies also a cup. The poet prays that like a cup of wine he should serve humanity.

FitzGerald employs a brisk unrhymed trochaic metre (the same used by Longfellow in his Hiawatha) for this, as well as for other such illustrative anecdotes. The experiment it must be admitted is not a happy one. Apart from the fact that most of these anecdotes seem odd even in the original, their impression in FitzGerald's translations is singularly jejune and bizarre. Verses 352-387. When the King has finished his discourse, the Sage, in his turn, begins to rebuke women for their lust. These lines throw interesting light on the views held by Persian poets about women. It must be admitted that they are anything but flattering. To Jámi women are nothing but the 'receptacle of lust', and therefore they should be avoided as one avoids the devil. It is not that Persian poets are not sensitive to the charms of women: they are, as a matter of fact, only too sensitive. But for that very reason, women are regarded as a snare and a temptation. To frequent the company of women is considered a very bad habit by Jámi, and he illustrates his meaning by the usual anecdote; the venom of Jami's satire (put in the mouth of the Sage) becomes even more savage, and he asks in despair: "Who in this world has ever seen faithfulness in a woman? Or anything

but deceit and betrayal?" (verse 384).

In the first edition FitzGerald follows the original closely, but he omits the anecdote. He also omits the following two verses of Jami (verses 386-387), considering them perhaps a little too "strong":-

Jami: "If you are old, she wants another lover; she wants a companion stronger than yourself.

When she sees a young<sup>man</sup>/she desires that he should replace you in her amorous service (lit. he should gird up his loins in your place)."

In the third edition FitzGerald took liberties with the original. The following lines for example, convey the idea of the original in a very vague and remote manner only:-

"So much for the result; and for the means -  
 "Oh SHAH, who would not be himself a slave,  
 "Which SHAH least should, and of an appetite  
 "Among the basest of his slaves enslav'd -  
 "Better let Azrael find him on his throne  
 "Of Empire sitting childless and alone .....!etc.

(lines 253-258, 3rd edition).

Azrael (the angel of Death) came out of FitzGerald's own fancy though it must be noted once again that for the sake of the 'atmosphere' he took care that even his additions to the original should be Oriental in character.

Verses 399-490. As the Sage does not approve of women, he therefore makes plans so that a son should be born to the King without his associations with them. He draws from the King's loins the 'liquor seminale' and deposits it 'in a place other than the womb! After nine months a child issues from that place and is given the name 'Salaman', that is one who is immune from all calamities. A nurse is then chosen to look after him - 'her years less than twenty, her name Absal'. Jami then gives two pages of Absal's description. It is full of clichés; the narcissus of her eyes; the cypress of her stature; her waist thinner than a hair, etc., etc. But in spite of the clichés, the description is warm and colourful. Jami describes Absal from head to feet, not even omitting to mention her private parts;

altogether.

he writes rather naughtily:

"When speech comes to describe the calf of her leg and her thigh, it is better to draw the tongue back into the palate,

Because I am afraid my discourse might touch a place whose description would embarrass me a great deal ...." (verses 441-442.)

Then follows an anecdote in which Jami shows that it is better to reject something that has been profaned by others (referring of course to the doubtful virginity of Absal). After this anecdote Jami goes on to describe how Absal looked after Salaman. "Sometimes she washed his body with musk and rose-water; sometimes she fed him with red honey ..... When he woke up in the morning she adorned him like a golden idol."

And so Salaman grew till he was fourteen. Here follows a description of Salaman, as usual in the most extravagant style. In the same breath he is compared to the sun, to the new moon that is eclipsed, to the full moon, to the spear. His languid eyes are like those of a deer, his chin is a fresh fruit from paradise, etc.etc. And then the poet begins to expatiate on his hero's strength.

FitzGerald has abridged these verses very ruthlessly. To begin with, out of consideration probably for his public, he describes the birth of Salaman in lines which are admirable for their studied vagueness:

.....and THE SHAN  
With Magic-mighty WISDOM his pure WILL  
Leaguings, its Self-fulfilment wrought from Heaven."

His treatment of the description of Absal is even more drastic. He condensed the thirty-seven verses of Jami into the following five lines:-

"They chose for him a Nurse - her name ABSAL -  
"Her Years not Twenty - from the Silver Line,  
"Dividing the Musk-Harvest of her Hair  
"Down to her Foot that trampled Crowns of Kings,  
"A Moon of Beauty Full; who thus elect ....."

After this line FitzGerald at once jumps over to verse 454 in Jami, omitting the anecdote. The description of Salaman love. FitzGerald has translated this anecdote as usual in the is also abridged heavily by him, verses 476-490 being omitted altogether.

Verses 578-615. Absal falls madly in love with Salaman who is now a handsome young man. She employs all her womanly wiles to attract his attention. The description of these wiles is typically Oriental in its elaborate details. The poet tells us, for example, that she often 'painted her eyebrows with indigo', or 'put a grain of musk on her cheek in order to capture the bird of her heart'. The pun here is on the word 'grain' which is used as a bait for capturing birds. There are many more conceits in this style, the most notable among them being the one contained in the following verses:

Jami:

"Like a boat he pressed her to his bosom and drank from that sweet fountain of love the desire of his soul.

They started the game with kisses, for kisses are the herald of

"Sometimes she would part her musky locks and from that parting weave two curls,

As much as to say: I have not obtained the desire of my heart,  
How long shall I continue to writhe and twist like these curls?"

(Verses 587-588).

(Verses 542-545).

Here the pain of the heart is compared to a twisted curl.

In both his editions, FitzGerald heavily abridged the original. The verses just quoted, for instance, are not found in either of the two. But he did succeed in conveying in his translation some of the original conceits.

The following lines in the first edition are a very good literal rendering of the Persian verses:

Verses 577-  
 "Now to the Rose-leaf of her Cheek would add  
 Fresh Rose, and then a Grain of Musk lay there,  
 The Bird of the Beloved Heart to snare.  
 Now with a Laugh would break the Ruby Seal  
 That lockt up Pearl; or busied in the Room  
 Would smite her Hand perhaps - on that pretence  
 To lift and show the Silver in her sleeve;  
 Or hastily rising clash her Golden Anklets  
 To draw the Crowned Head under her Feet."

In verses 606 -615 Jami' narrates the anecdote of Zulaikha who, like Absal, employed all sorts of artifices to win Yusuf's love. FitzGerald has translated this anecdote as usual in the metre of Hiawatha.

In the third edition FitzGerald follows the original very faithfully, but in the third we must with his favourite practice

Verses 615-676. Absal succeeds at last in winning Salaman's love. He is at first diffident and doubts if it would be wise to abandon himself to her love (which remark is illustrated by Jami in an anecdote) but he cannot long resist her charms. The descriptions of the consummation of their love is frank without being vulgar.

In the first edition FitzGerald has heavily abridged the original; at the same time he modifies the description of Salaman and Absal's love in order, probably, to make the verses respectable enough for his Victorian readers.

Jami:

"Like a coat he pressed her to his bosom and drank from that sweet fountain of hers the desire of his soul. They started the game with kisses, for kisses are the herald of embracing.

They crushed their lips so far that the cup of their pleasure was full.

Much as they crushed their lips on each other, the principal sport was yet to come."

(Verses 643-646).

FitzGerald's first edition is innocent enough:

"He held her trembling there - and from that Fount  
Drew first Desire; then Deeper from her Lips  
That, yielding, mutually drew from his  
A Wine that ever drawn from never fail'd -."

But in the third edition he cancels the description of Salaman and Absal's love-making altogether, thus impairing the unity of the poem.

Verses 677-785. Salaman is so much engrossed in his love for Absal that he neglects his duties towards his father and the sage. They therefore summon him to their presence and admonish him gently for wasting his time in the company of an unworthy woman. As usual, the remarks of the various speakers are illustrated by short anecdotes. Prudent counsels are distasteful to lovers and Salaman was no exception. He does not relish being loaded with advice and eventually elopes with Absal.

In the first edition FitzGerald follows the original very faithfully, but in the third we meet with his favourite practice

of introducing reminiscences from other Persian poets.

In the first edition he translates Jami's verse No. 700 literally as:

"Go, flash thy Steel among the Ranks of Men,  
"And smite the Warriors' Necks:- ."

In the third edition it becomes:-

"Go, challenge ZAL or RUSTAM to the Field,  
"And smite the warriors' neck ----." (lines 558-559).

Here the first line is an obvious reminiscence of his Omar "Let Zal and Rustam bluster as they will." (Stanza 10, Fourth Edition). There is no mention of Zal or Rustam in Jami. Similarly in lines 601-602 of the third edition, FitzGerald introduces the Muslim call to prayer "La Allah Illa 'Llah". (There is no God but God; Muhammad is his Prophet); Jami does not give these words in his verses.

Verses 887-1018. The King once again implores Salaman to give up Absal. But he is too far gone in love to listen to his father's advice. So he elopes with Absal a second time and going into the desert he lights a pile of fire and jumps in it with Absal. The King knows all this in secret and he exercises his power in such a way that while Absal is consumed in the fire, Salaman remains unscorched. Salaman returns to his father, heart-braken, and spends his time in wailing and lamentation. The description of his grief for Absal verges sometimes on the grotesque. We are told, for example, that "with his nails, he inflicted so many injuries on his breast that not one nail remained unbroken on his fingers. He smote his bosom with a stone ....; when he could no more clasp Absal with his hands, he tore the back of his hands with his teeth. When he did not find his sugary-lipped sweetheart beside him, he sucked his fingers in regret; as the knees of Absal did not press against his, he beat his own knees black and blue." etc. (Verses 940 ff).

FitzGerald, finding this description too extravagant and unmanly, abridged it heavily in both his editions.

The third edition version is comparatively much shorter than the corresponding first edition version. Verses 787-905

are omitted altogether and the remaining lines of his translation give only a substance of the original..

Salaman is so grief-stricken that his father is alarmed and begs the Sage to cure the prince of his unhappiness. The Sage mesmerizes Salaman and brings before his eyes the image of the Celestial Venus, the goddess of chastity. Salaman falls in love with Venus ( *وَقْتِ* ) and forgets Absal completely.

Verses 1019-1131. The King bestows his Kingdom on his son and gives him a valedictory address. He exhorts him to be just and liberal, and have only good ministers. It is evident here that under the garb of the story, Jami is in reality conveying advice to his own sovereign. Verse 1075 brings the story to a close, and from verses 1076 to the end, Jami explains his allegory. Salaman, he says, is the soul and Absal the sense-adoring body; the whole story is about the Soul's deliverance from earthly love in the contemplation of Heavenly love typified by Zuhrah.

#### Conclusion:

In the third edition of his Salaman, FitzGerald took great liberties with the text, but he retained the Oriental atmosphere of the poem. It seems that when he was revising for the third edition he had not got the original before him: his effort was to make his poem readable. He believed himself that the third edition version was superior to the first, but in the present writer's opinion this is not so; many passages that he cancelled for the third edition made his translation unnecessarily bald. From the artistic point of view, both the translations fail as poems. This is due to two things: (1) Jami himself is insufferably dull in most of his poem. Three-fourths of it is ordinary prosaic stuff.

(2) It was impossible for FitzGerald to convey the artifices of the original in his translation. In the Persian, the serious and the comic, the exalted and the grotesque hob-nob together in the conventional Oriental fashion. But in English the artificial beauties of form cannot be conveyed successfully.

It was necessary, therefore, that FitzGerald should have an emotional sympathy with the subject matter of the poem. This unfortunately, was impossible for him. Jami was a Sufi, with a strong faith in the goodness of God. FitzGerald was a sceptic, the very opposite of a Sufi. He had no emotional sympathy therefore, with the subject matter of Jami's poem, as he had with the poetry of Umar Khayyam.

1857 we find him writing to Cowell, - "While I think of it, why is the sea (in that Apologue of Attar once quoted by Falconer) supposed to have lost 906? Did the Persians agree with something I remember in Plato about the sea and all in it being an inferior

The second Persian poem to attract FitzGerald's <sup>attention</sup> ~~attraction~~ was the Mantiqu't-Tayr or "Language of the Birds", a mystical allegory in verse of Abu Talib Mahammed, son of Abu Bakr Ibrahim (1150?-1222? A.D.) generally known by the name of Fari'ud-Din Attar<sup>1</sup>; the pen name or Takhallus of Attar signifying the occupation of the poet as a "druggist" or one who deals in 'itr, or otto of roses.

FitzGerald's interest in Attar was first aroused by his reading an extract from The Mantiq given by Forbes Falconer in the Asiatic Journal for 1843. It was the policy of that excellent journal to give selections from Persian texts now and then and when FitzGerald began reading the back numbers under the influence of Cowell he was at once struck by the <sup>lines<sup>2</sup></sup> ~~following lines~~ beginning:

which in translation read:

"An observer of spiritual things approached the sea and said "O sea, why wearest thou a blue dress? Why hast thou put on a dress of mourning? There is no fire, why art thou boiling' The sea made answer to that pure-hearted one, "I weep for my separation from the beloved. Since by reason of my impotence I am not worthy of Him, I have put on blue garments in my sorrow for Him.

1. See Prof. E.G. Browne's Literary History of Persia, new edit. 1928 in four volumes, vol. II. p. 506 ff.
2. The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany, vol. I. May - Oct. 1843, p. 39.

I have seated myself dry-lipped and confounded; my waters are boiling from the fire of love. If I find one drop of water from his jewel, I shall live for ever by his side. But if not, a hundred thousand dry-lipped ones like me will die in His path day and night."

FitzGerald was very much impressed with the idea of the sea having lost God. It haunted him for a long time. As late as 1857 we find him writing to Cowell, - "While I think of it, why is the sea (in that Apologue of Attar once quoted by Falconer) supposed to have lost God? Did the Persians agree with something I remember in Plato about the sea and all in it being an inferior nature? in spite of Homer's 'Divine Ocean,' etc ....."<sup>1</sup>

Such a glamour did this idea hold for him that he based a quatrain of his Omar on it. No wonder that those who looked for its original in Umar Khayyam were disappointed.

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

There was one other book which helped to increase FitzGerald's interest in Attar, namely the Pend-Nama (or Pend-Nameh). Silvestre De Sacy had published a French translation of the "Pend-Nameh ou Livre Des Conseils de Ferideddin Attar" in Vol. II of "Mines de l'Orient". That was in 1787. In 1819 he published the Persian text with the French translation.<sup>2</sup> In his notes he gave a large number of extracts from the works of Attar, Sa'di, Hafiz, etc. Among other extracts, De Sacy quotes a few pieces from Attar's Mantiq-ut-Tayr.

It is these small pieces quoted by De Sacy which first turned FitzGerald's attention towards the Persian poet's allegory of the birds. FitzGerald used De Sacy's Pend-Nameh as a reference book and in his notes to Salaman we meet many allusions to it.

Cowell's departure for India did not interfere with FitzGerald's pursuit of Persian studies. He went carefully over two-

1. Letters. I. p. 320.

2. Pend-Nameh ou Le Livre Des Conseils De Ferid-Eddin Attar, Traduit et Publie par M. Le Bon Silvestre De Sacy ... Paris 1819.

thirds of Hafiz and continued his study of Jami and Nizami. He also borrowed a MS. of Attar's Mantiq-ut-Tayr from his friend Napoleon Newton of Hertford and began to study/with the help of it Garcin De Tassy's 'Memoire sur la poésie philosophique et religieuse chez les Persans'. a pamphlet in which the French savant gives an account of Persian mysticism, basing it on Attar's allegory of the birds. He also gives a detailed analysis of the poem. This analysis was FitzGerald's only help in mastering the difficulties of the Persian text. By January 1857 he had gone over nearly two-thirds of the MS. He liked the story very much. "It has greatly interested me" he wrote to Cowell, "though I confess it is always an old story. The Germans make a fuss about the Sufi doctrine; but, as far as I understand, it is not very abstruse Pantheism, and always the same. One becomes as wearied of the Man-i and du-i in their Philosophy as of the bulbul, etc. in their Songs. Attar's Doctrine seems to me only Jami and Jelal-eddin (of whom I have poked out a little from the MS. you brought for me), but his Mantic has, like Salaman, the advantage of having a Story to hang all upon; and some of his illustrative Stories are very agreeable: better than any of the others I have seen. He has not so much Fancy or Imagination as Jami, nor I dare say, so much depth, as Jelaleddin; but his touch is lighter. I mean to make a Poetic Abstract of the Mantic, I think; neither De Tassy nor Van Hammer<sup>1</sup> gives these Stories which are by far the best part, though there are so many childish and silly ones. Shah Mahmud figures in the best."<sup>2</sup>

In 1857 Garcin De Tassy published his edition of the "Mantic Uttair" and presented a copy to FitzGerald in return for the favour the latter had shown him by copying out for him the quatrains of Umar Khayyam. FitzGerald was glad to have a printed text, for the MS. of the Mantiq was taxing his eyesight a good deal.

By the end of 1858 FitzGerald had almost finished the translation - 'a metrical Paraphrase and Epitome' as he himself called

1. In his 'Geschichte der schönen Redekunste Persiens'.

2. Letters of Edward FitzGerald. Vol. I. page 312.

it; but it received the last finishing touches in the winter of 1859.

In 1862 he sent the translation to Cowell at Calcutta hoping that it might be published in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society. But it was too free a version for the pages of a scientific and scholarly journal and after a time, realising this difficulty, FitzGerald himself gave up the idea. We find him writing to Cowell in August, 1863:-

"One can be more utterly indifferent than I am whether these Birds are printed or not: and I suppose I distinctly told you not to put yourself to any Trouble. Indeed I dare say I should only be bored with the Copies when they were printed: for I don't know a Soul here who would care for the Thing if it were ten times as well done as I have done it: nor do I care for Translation or Original, myself. Oh dear, when I do look into Homer, Dante, and Virgil, AEschylus, Shakespeare, etc., those Orientals look - silly! Don't resent my saying so. Don't they?"<sup>1</sup>

Here the matter rested, with the result that FitzGerald's version of the Mantiq was not published in his lifetime. In 1889 Aldis Wright brought out an edition of the Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald in three volumes, and the Mantiq occupies pp. 431-482 in the second volume. The poem is entitled "A Bird's Eye View of Farid-uddin Attar's Bird-Parliament" and is prefaced by a brief note on the translation written by Cowell.

Attar's Mantiqu't-Tayr in Mathnawi form, and Ramal metre, is an allegorical poem of something over 4,600 couplets.<sup>2</sup> Its subject is the quest of the birds for the mythical Simurgh, the birds typifying the Sufi Pilgrims and the Simurgh, God, "the Truth!" The book begins with the usual doxologies, including the praise of the Prophet, and of the Four Caliphs. The narrative portion of the poem begins at verse 593, and is comprised in 45 "Discourses" (Maqala) and a "Conclusion" (Khatima). It opens with an account of the assembling of the birds, some Thirteen species

1. Letters. Vol. II. pp. 44-45.

2. See E. G. Browne's Literary History of Persia, in 4 vols, Cambridge 1928, 5 which I am indebted here & elsewhere.

of whom are separately apostrophised. They decide that for the successful pursuit of their quest they must put themselves, under the guidance of a leader and proceed to elect to this position the Hoopoe (Hudhud), so celebrated amongst the Muslims for the part which it played as Solomon's emissary to Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba. The Hoopoe harangues them in a long discourse.

No sooner, however, has the quest been decided upon than the birds "begin with one accord to make excuse". The nightingale pleads its love for the rose; the parrot excuses itself on the ground that it is imprisoned for its beauty in a cage; the peacock affects diffidence of its worthiness because of its connection with Adam's expulsion from Paradise; the duck cannot dispense with water; and so on. All these excuses typical of the excuses made by men for not pursuing the things of the Spirit, are answered in turn by the wise hoopoe, which illustrates its arguments by a series of anecdotes.

The hoopoe next describes to the other birds the perilous road which they must traverse to arrive at Simurgh's presence and relates to them the long story of Shaykh San'an who fell in love with a Christian girl, and was constrained by his love and her tyranny to feed swine, thus exposing himself to the censure of all his former friends and disciples. This anecdote is one of the best, and inspires the birds with zeal. They decide to set out under the guidance of the hoopoe to look for the Simurgh, but they shortly begin again to make excuses or <sup>rise</sup> difficulties, which the hoopoe answers, illustrating his replies by numerous anecdotes. The objects of the twenty two birds, with the hoopoe's answers to each, are given in detail. The remaining birds then continue their quest and passing in succession, through the seven valleys of Search, Love, Knowledge, Independence, Unification, Amazement, and Destitution and Annihilation, ultimately, purged of all self and purified by their trials find the Simurgh, and in finding it, <sup>lose</sup> themselves.

FitzGerald called his version of the Mantiq a "Paraphrase of a Syllabus of the poem: quite unlike the Original in Style".

the significance of Persian mysticism vary successfully. But the

There is a great deal of truth in this statement. FitzGerald's poem, written in five-foot couplets, is only about one sixth of the original poem.

It is heavily abridged throughout; but in places FitzGerald also expands the original; for example the first 657 verses of the original in praise of God etc. are entirely omitted, while the opening 31 lines of FitzGerald's poem are based on the five lines (658-662) of the original.

There are two important elements in all literature - the racial and the universal. Both these elements are essential. Just as it is the differences between individuals which make them interesting, in the same way it is the racial differences between various nations that lend to their literatures their distinctive flavours. The literature of the English has its racial characteristics - we might say that it reflects the Englishman's idealism and love for nature. The literature of the French, similarly, reflects the Frenchman's love of order. But there is also in the literatures of both countries a universal element which makes them significant to other races besides themselves. Now Persian literature is no exception to this rule. It has its universal aspects - mysticism, love of God and man, piety - these are after all traits common to all races and all literatures. It may be that poetic mysticism is more developed in Persian literature than in English, but it is certainly not the monopoly of the Persians and the Arabs only. The Europeans have their Assis as the Persians have their own saints, and the English have their mystical poets in Blake and Vaughan. A translator from a foreign language, therefore, has two problems before him. The first, comparatively simpler, is to convey the universal traits of his original in the translation; the second, much more difficult, is so to modify the racial characteristics of the original, that the readers of his translation should have no cause to complain of conventions and ideas which evoke no response in their souls. FitzGerald has succeeded eminently in conveying the universal aspects of the Mantiq in his translation. He has grasped the significance of Persian mysticism very successfully. But the

more racial elements in Persian poetry could not command his undivided sympathy. If there is one quality which distinguishes the Eastern races from the Europeans, it is the utter lack of dramatic sense in the former. Why is it that there is no great drama in Indian or in Persian literature - the drama of conflict, of the interplay of character? The only answer seems to be that there is something lacking in the imagination of the Eastern poet, something that imposes order on chaos. The Eastern poet never bothers to subordinate the parts to the whole; he just loses himself in details. The brilliance and colour of these details can in no case fully compensate for the lack of unity in the whole. Attar's Mantiq is a very good illustration of this racial characteristic of the Persian poets. The number of its anecdotes alone, is not less than 175. Indeed, the real story of the journey of the birds is an insignificant part of the poem. It was natural for FitzGerald that for the sake of literary and dramatic effect, he should ruthlessly cut down the original. Of the 175 anecdotes he translated only 25.

FitzGerald explained his practice to his friend Cowell in a letter written in 1867, eight years after he had completed the translation of this poem. On the occasion of his receiving from Garcin De Tassy his edition of the complete French translation of the Mantiq FitzGerald remarked that he "was struck by this; that eight years had made little or no alteration in my idea of the matter: it seemed to me that I really had brought in nearly all worth remembering, and had really condensed the whole into a much compacter image than the original. This is what I think I can do, with such discursive things: such as all the Oriental things I have seen are."

In order to make his version dramatic, therefore, he altered the sequence of episodes in the original. In FitzGerald the anecdote of Bajazyd ( *Verses 93 ff* ) for example follows immediately after the long speech of the Tajidar (lit. 'Crown-wearer' - another name for the Hudhud, Hoopoe) who expatiates on her fitness to lead the birds to the abode of the Simurgh.

In the original, this anecdote comes after verse 1590, while in FitzGerald it follows line 93. By giving it immediately after the speech of the Hoopoe, FitzGerald has invested it with dramatic significance; in the original it is merely one of the many anecdotes scattered about in confusion all through the book.

Many more instances could be given of such transpositions by FitzGerald, e.g. Lines 397-416 in FitzGerald correspond to verses 915-937 in Attar; lines 417-435 to verses 938-949; lines 442-459 to verses 904-914, and so on. But a multiplication of such instances will serve no useful purpose; as we have already seen, in these correspondences how FitzGerald expands the original verses to suit his own fancy. But a few more examples must be given showing how FitzGerald brought about a dramatic unity in his version, a virtue which does not exist in the Persian poem.

In Attar the Hoopoe describes with many anecdotes the seven valleys before the birds actually start to cross them. The allegorical details of these valleys are often confused. FitzGerald mentions only three Valleys, the Vale of Search, the Mountain Range of Knowledge, and the Table Land of One and Wonder. But he does not stop at this; he makes the Hoopoe glance at the dangers of the valleys when the birds are actually in them, rather than let the Leader recount them before. This is a very good device from the dramatic point of view. In Attar, after the description of the Valley of Annihilation, there are five more anecdotes, and then we are told that most of the birds perished at the very idea of the hardships they would have to encounter while crossing these Valleys.

After this account of their sufferings there are three more anecdotes before we come to the description of the audience given to the birds by Simurgh. That is to say, there are eight anecdotes in addition to the narrative portions, between the description of the Valley of Annihilation and the 'audience' scene. The long-windedness of such a procedure is obvious. FitzGerald, very wisely connected the description of the valleys with the final scene,

giving only one anecdote in between: that of the moth who entered into the flame of a burning taper and became one with it:-

"The Moths had long been exiled from the Flame  
 They worship: so to solemn Council came,  
 And voted One of them by Lot be sent  
 To find their Idol. One was chosen: went.  
 And after a long Circuit in sheer Gloom,  
 Seeing, he thought, the TAPER in a Room  
 Flew back at once to say so. But the chief  
 Of Mothistan slighted so slight Belief,  
 And sent another Messenger, who flew  
 Up to the House, in at the window, through  
 The Flame itself; and back the Message brings,  
 With yet no sign of Conflict on his wings.  
 Then went a Third, who spurr'd with true Desire,  
 Plunging at once into the sacred Fire,  
 Folded his Wings within, till he became  
 One Colour and one Substance with the Flame.  
 He only knew the Flame who in it burn'd;  
 And only He could tell who ne'er to tell return'd.

This anecdote fits in dramatically, for it illustrates the condition of the birds who too are going to find life in death, baqa after fana.

But Attar does not stop at this climax of the union of the birds with the Simurgh; from verse 4233 to 4647 there are still more anecdotes and moralisings which serve no dramatic purpose, at all, and which FitzGerald therefore very wisely cancelled. From the dramatic point of view, it must be admitted that FitzGerald's poem is vastly superior to the Oriental. But by virtue of this very economy it becomes less Oriental in character, though it must be mentioned that in other respects FitzGerald tried to rub off as little Oriental colour as possible. His practice of giving the Oriental form of proper nouns - like Sulayman, Tajidar, Shah Mahmud, Sultan,- helped him to preserve the atmosphere of the original. At places he did not even disdain to incorporate Persian words in English, as for example in the line "And like a bitter Sarsar of the North", where Sarsar is the Persian word meaning a cold blast. Even where he took liberties with the original, he took care that some of the words and phrases he was going to introduce on his account should be Oriental in character. In the opening passages, for example, where he expands five verses of the original into thirty one lines, he introduces such words as Circles Seven, rolling heaven, Divan, Sultan Khalif, which are distinctly

Oriental in flavour and association.

Considering all these facts, it is safe to say that artificially, FitzGerald's Bird Parliament is a much more satisfactory piece than his Salaman. As a translation, it is much too free, but then he never pretended that he was giving a faithful translation. FitzGerald had a passion for retaining only the concentrated essence of things; as his biographer, Thomas Wright, has remarked, he had a parrot's skill in extracting kernels and scattering the shells. He was always saying, 'Abridge, concentrate, distil'. The comparative excellence of his Bird Parliament is due to this habit of fastidious selection and pitiless condensation. With the possible exception of the story of Shaykh San'an, FitzGerald retained all that was worth while in the original and rejected the rest.

FitzGerald's opinion of the Persian poets was generally not very favourable. "It is an amusement to me" he wrote to Cowell in March 1857 "to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who (as I think) are not poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little art to shape them".<sup>1</sup> But apart from the artistic defects of the Persian poets, there were certain traits in them which could not but alienate FitzGerald's sympathies. The most conspicuous of these traits was their unswerving faith in some ultimate reality; a devout belief in the goodness of God. This attitude did not arise out of any smug optimism; the lives of the Persian poets contradict such a supposition. Living as they did very often in troublous times, at the mercy of tyrants of their own race, or ferocious conquerors of other races, smugness was the last thing they could be blamed of. They needed sharp wit and intelligence to keep them-

1. Letters, I. page 319.

selves in the good books of their patrons. Besides, many of them were great travellers who had seen life and its vicissitudes; Firdawsi died in utter poverty, while Sa'di served many years as a slave in Asia Minor. No; this faith of the Persian poets could not have been due to any lack of experience. It is not our business here to find out its real causes; it is the results of this faith that concern us. And it must be admitted that however satisfying such a faith may be spiritually, from the literary point of view it was responsible for much lack of variety in Persian literature. The literature of positive belief may be the noblest, but it were a pity, nevertheless, if we had no literature of doubt, of scepticism, of troubled questionings.

Now FitzGerald was a sceptic. His friend W.H. Thompson once observed of him that "during the latter half of his life he was a prisoner in Doubting Castle". This explains why the Sufi-ism of the Persian poets which attracted most continental scholars, did not exercise any lasting glamour over FitzGerald. This explains too the comparative failure of his Salaman and Absal and Bird Parliament. His heart was not in the philosophy preached in these two poems. Even while he was translating the Mantiq he wrote to Cowell about the Persian poets. "Their Religion and Philosophy is seen through, and always seems to me cuckooed over like a borrowed thing, which people, once having got, don't know how to parade enough." FitzGerald was a sentimentalist, an epicurean and a sceptic rolled into one; the untroubled faith of the Persian mystics naturally failed to touch any sympathetic chord in his heart.

But there were two poets in whom ran a vein of thought familiar to his own temperament: Hafiz and Umar Khayyam. Even before he had learned Persian we have seen that FitzGerald admired Hafiz in the translations of his friend Cowell; in 1857, when he knew Persian very well, he studied the whole of the Diwan of Hafiz and found it satisfying. "I am sure" he wrote to Cowell, "that what Tennyson said to you is true: that Hafiz is the most Eastern - or, he should have said, most Persian - of the Persians. He is

the best representative of their character, whether his Saki and Wine be real or mystical ..... To be sure, their Roses and Nightingales are repeated enough; but Hafiz and old Omar Khayyam ring like true metal. The Philosophy of the Latter is, alas', one that never fails in the World. 'To-day is ours, etc.'<sup>1</sup> And in another letter: "But in truth, I take old Omar rather more as my property than yours; he and I are more akin, are we not? You see all (his) Beauty, but you don't feel with him in some respects as I do."<sup>2</sup> But FitzGerald's pessimism was not merely personal; he lived in times "when there was a wave of pessimism astir in the world, the pessimism of an age that dares not live without pleasure, in whose mouth simplicity is a synonym for dullness, tortured alike by its desires and by the satiety of their satisfaction, and overshadowed by the inherited conscience which it contemns but cannot disregard."<sup>3</sup>

It was the time of Darwin and Spencer, when evolutionary philosophy first began to upset old doctrines and to shake the faith of the educated classes. Now the sudden introduction of startling ideas produces two effects. In some people it destroys old ways of feeling and thinking; in others it creates a violent reaction in favour of them. The middle of the 19th Century witnessed both these types of people. But between these two classes of people there was another class comprising those who were religious in feeling but much too intelligent to shut their eyes altogether to the new implications of science. They could not continue to believe in the old way, and yet the new way caused them much sorrow. They suffered from the conflict between their natural character and their new doubts. Most noteworthy among them were Arthur Hugh Clough, Matthew Arnold, and Edward FitzGerald, Perhaps it is too much to say that FitzGerald actually suffered from

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1. Letters I. p. 320.

2. Letters I. Page 343.

3. Edward FitzGerald, by A.C. Benson. pp. 96-97.

1. See FitzGerald's two letters to Harpiss and Cowell, Letters I. p. 325-327. and ibid 337-339.

2. The Kasidah (complete) of Hafi Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: A lay of the Higher Law. Translated and annotated by the Editor and pupil F.E. London, 1890. (F.E. at that time was a member of Havelock's namah-De-Duana.)

this conflict; nevertheless, the consistent melancholy which runs through his life and work could not have been merely an easy luxury of grief. His life clearly shows both the strains in his character - the religious, the old fashioned; and the intellectual, the sceptical, the modern. He was deeply stirred by the religious fervour of Matthews the evangelist; but the new conceptions of Science moved him equally; so much so that he regarded them even more wonderful than the conceptions of Dante and Milton.<sup>1</sup>

It was not often that the new Science inspired FitzGerald to a pitch of speculative fervour. Generally speaking it filled him with pensive melancholy. The bent of his mind was towards scepticism. We have pointed out before that FitzGerald shared these doubts with other fine intellects of his age - Matthew Arnold, Clough, Tennyson. The works of these poets are well known and in our earlier pages we have referred to the note of melancholy pessimism in their works. But there is one work of the same period which has been undeservedly neglected, and which sums up the doubts and difficulties that beset all thinking men of FitzGerald's day. We mean The Kasidah of Haji Abdu-El-Yezdi,<sup>2</sup> written by Sir Richard Burton in 1853, though not printed till 1880. Yezdi was one of Burton's Eastern noms -de-plume. Though this remarkable poem does not, on account of its date of publication fall into our prescribed period, we shall make a few remarks here on its connection with FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and its reflection of the temper of the Age.

Lady Burton, whose strictures on the character of her husband are usually too idolatrous, wrote, however, with a great deal of truth of the Kasidah:

"It is a poem of extraordinary power, on the Nature and Destiny of Man, anti-Christian and Pantheistic. So much wealth of Oriental learning has rarely been compressed into so small a com-

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1. See FitzGerald's two letters to Carlyle and Cowell, Letters I. p. 226-227. and Ibid 229-230.
  2. The Kasidah (couplets) of Haji Abdu El-Yezdi: A lay of the Higher Law. Translated and annotated by his friend and pupil F.B. London, 1880. (F.B. or Frank Baker was another of Burton's noms-de-plume.)

pass. It is a great revelation of the strange phases of Eastern Thought and speculation; it is learned in every tongue and science, it shows a thorough acquaintance with Persian and Greek mythology with Mormonism and Cantism, Huxley and Milton, as well as Buddhist philosophy. It sets forth the Gospel of Self-Cultivation, it shows a philosopher of much contemplative power, and those who did not know the authorship thought it must have been written by a polyglot Eastern with Cosmopolitan tendencies."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed Burton's poem "is a crystallisation of his interpretation of the Oriental mind on life and destiny". "It is the confession of faith of a modern Westerner ~~and~~ steeped in the learning and mysticism of the East; a replica thus of Burton himself."<sup>2</sup>

Burton's & FitzGerald's biographer Thomas Wright appears to be unnecessarily contemptuous of Lady Burton's statement that the Kasida was written in 1853, before Burton had heard of FitzGerald's Rubaiyat. "FitzGerald's version of Omar Khayyam" says Wright, "appeared in 1859 and Burton no sooner read it than he burned to rival it. So he drew from the pigeon-hole what he called his Lay, furbished up the few old verses, made a number of new ones, reconstructed the whole, and lo, The Kasidah!"<sup>3</sup>

Even if we admit that FitzGerald's poem was the stimulus and the model for Burton's Kasidah, the merit of the poem as a powerful and individualistic expression of the doubts and beliefs of an extraordinary personality, still remains unchanged. Burton's poem is a record of his earnest but fruitless groping after a coherent philosophy of life, a search sustained by his conviction that the path leading to daily battle with ignorance is worth a man's journeying. As a student of religions and a specialist of ceremonials in widely scattered temples of the East and the West, he grew to have an anthropologist's view of religion and narrowed his own creed to a few fundamentals of all religions, "the affect-

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1. Preface to The Kasidah by Captain Richard F. Burton, London, MDCCCXCIII, p. 4.-5.
  2. Foreword to The Kasida by Roger Ingpen, reprinted 1933.
  3. The Life of Richard Burton by Thomas Wright, 1906, vol. II. p. 20.

ions, the sympathies and the 'divine gift of pity'," making thereby "Self-cultivation with due regard to others, the sole and sufficient object of human life."<sup>1</sup> In the learned notes to the poem which display a remarkable grasp of Eastern and Western philosophies, Burton characterises the faith of the mythical Hajji or Pilgrim of the poem as "an Eastern Version of Humanitarianism blended with the sceptical or, as we now say, the scientific habit of mind" or again "the Pilgrim's view of life is that of the Soofi, with the usual dash of Buddhistic pessimism". Space does not permit us to discuss Burton's rebust, rather than profound strictures on Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Jainism, and other religions. But we must quote here a few lines ~~on~~ which sound the sceptical note so familiar to us in FitzGerald's Rubaiyat. Burton's poem is written in the Persian Kasidah form, in the metre called Bahr Tawil (long verse) and should be transcribed in couplets and not in the quartrain form employed in the most editions of the Kasidah. Is truth to be found anywhere, asks the poet?

"Yes; Truth may be, but 'tis not Here; mankind must seek and  
 find it There,  
 But Where nor I nor You can tell, nor aught earth-mother  
 ever bare.

Enough to think that Truth can be, come sit we where the roses  
 glow  
 Indeed he knows not how to know, who knows not also how to  
 unknow."<sup>2</sup>

"As stand we perchd on point of Time, betwixt the two Eternities",  
 many doubts perplex us:

"But we? Another shift of scene, another pang to rack the heart  
 Why meet we on the bridge of Time to 'change one greeting and  
 to part;

Why must we meet, why must we part, why must he bear this yoke  
 of Must  
 Without our leave or asked or given, by tyrant Fate on victim  
 thrust."<sup>3</sup>

But all these questionings of "Whence and Whither, When and How",  
 do not lead Burton to a fatalistic hedonism, such as FitzGerald's,  
 to whom he says in effect:

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1. Burton's foreword to the Kasidah.
  2. The Kasidah Sect. VI. 17, 18.
  3. Ibid, 11, 13.

"Ah me! my race of threescore years is short but long enough  
to pall  
My sense with joyless joys as these, with Love and Houris,  
Wine and all".<sup>1</sup>

"Eat, drink, and sport, the rest of Life's not worth a fillip',  
quoth the King  
Methinks the saying saith too much: the swine would say the  
selfsame thing."<sup>2</sup>

No; Burton's questionings lead him to a characteristically different conclusion, which if not as 'poetical' as FitzGerald's is perhaps more consistent and philosophical:

"With ignorance wage eternal war, to know Thyself forever  
strain  
Thine ignorance of thine ignorance is Thy fiercest foe, Thy  
deadliest bane."<sup>3</sup>

As for any practical rules of life and religion:

"Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from none but self expect  
applause;  
He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps his  
self-made laws.

All other life is living Death, a world where none but Phan-  
tom's dwell,  
A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling of the Camel  
bell."<sup>4</sup>

It will have been observed from the verses quoted that Burton's lines possess none of that perfection of apt phraseology and image, that delicate iridescence of Eastern colours and Eastern atmosphere, that have made FitzGerald's Rubaiyat so popular, perhaps too popular. The Kasidah is more remarkable for its vigorous expression of a robust and manly view of life, Oriental in its sentimentousness and its "dash of pessimism" but ultimately Western in its destructive criticism and its clear-cut conclusion.

Whatever the poetical merits of The Kasidah, and they are more considerable than Burton's biographer allows, it bears evidence of the temper of the age in which Arnold preached his "Hindoo Greek philosophy" and FitzGerald made a Persian poet the mouth-piece of his views. In the Persian poet FitzGerald believed that

1. Ibid. I. 7.

2. Ibid., I. 15. The quotation in the first line is from Byron's Sardanapalus. *Act I, Scene II*, 253.

3. Ibid. IX. 14.

4. Ibid. VIII, 37, 38.

he had found a kindred spirit; one who was a sceptic and a sentimentalist like himself: one who would have liked to believe but could not.

Was Umar Khayyam what FitzGerald believed him to be? The question is not rhetorical. There have been critics who thought that FitzGerald was wrong in interpreting Umar Khayyam as a sceptic, that in reality the latter was a mystical poet like other Persian poets, and that his wine was only a symbol of divine love. The problem needs some investigation, for if these critics are right then FitzGerald's Omar Khayyam should be regarded as a classic example of literary and philosophic misinterpretation.

In Persia the fame of Umar Khayyam rests more on his mathematical and astronomical achievements than on his poetry. The oldest accounts of Umar are found in the Chahar Maqala<sup>1</sup> or "Four Discourses", of Nidhami of Samarqand, a contemporary of the Persian astronomer. It is worth noting that Umar is treated not in that section of the work which treats of poets, but that which deals with Astrologers. It is curious that these oldest accounts of Umar by one of his disciples should contain no reference to his poetry. Awfi, the author of the oldest biography of Persian poets, the Lubabul - Alhah (early thirteenth century) does not mention Umar Khayyam at all; even Dawlatshah who completed his Memoirs of the Poets in A.D. 1487 does not mention Umar as a poet, but speaks<sup>2</sup> of him only in connection with his descendant, Shahfur -i-Ashhari.

After the Chahar Maqala, the oldest reference to Umar is that contained in the Mersadu l - Ibad or "Observatory of God's Servants", composed in A.D. 1223 by Najmu'd -Din Daya. The importance of this reference lies in the fact that its author who was a very devout mystic, speaks of Umar as "an unhappy philosopher, atheist and materialist." Daya proves the assertion by quoting two of Umar's quatrains, one expressing his complete agnosticism, the other reproaching God for suffering His imperfect crea-

1. Anecdotes XXVII and XXVIII p. 100-101 of Prof. E. G. Browne's translation of the Chahar Maqala, 1921

2. See The Tadhkiratu Sh Shurara, edited by E. G. Browne, London, - Leide, 1901. p. 138.

tures to exist and His perfect creatures to perish, "the height of confusion and error," according to Daya.<sup>1</sup>

The next notice appears in Al-Qifti's History of the Philosophers (written in the second quarter of the thirteenth century) where Umar is represented as a champion of Greek Philosophy, as an advanced free thinker, constrained only by prudential motives to bridle his tongue. Far from regarding him as a Sufi mystic, Al Qifti thinks that "The later Su-fis have found themselves in agreement with some part of the apparent sense of his verse, and have transferred it to their system and discussed it in their assemblies and private gatherings; though its inward meanings are to the ecclesiastical Law stinging serpents, and combinations rife with malice."

It is interesting to note that by Al-Qifti's time there had already arisen a section which hailed Umar as a brother Sufi. But the chief conclusion that any impartial historian will draw from these notices of Umar is that, according to his contemporaries, & those who lived within a period of 150 years after his death, Umar Khayyam was preeminently a sceptic, a man of Science, a declared enemy of mysticism.

There would indeed have been no problem if we possessed some genuine MS of Umar's poem dating even from a hundred years after his death. Unfortunately the oldest MS of Umar's quatrains dates from 1423, nearly three hundred years after the poet's death.

This MS was discovered in Lucknow only about a year ago, and contains 206 quatrains, of which 45 cannot be traced in any of the old editions of the Rubaiyat. Up to FitzGerald's day, however, the oldest MS was in the Ouseley MS in the Bodleian containing

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1. See the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1898 vol. XXX pp 349-366 for Sir E. Denison Ross's translation of Prof. Valentin Zhukovski's "Umar Khayyam and the Wandering Quatrains."

This article gives all the important notices of Umar from the thirteenth to the end of the sixteenth century. I am indebted to this article for much information regarding this section of my thesis.

only 158 rubais. It is dated 1461 A.D. nearly three and a half centuries after Umar's death. The biggest is that in the Cambridge University Library containing 801 quatrains. There are many other MS, the more important among them being that in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Public Library at Bankipore. For a long time it was believed that the quatrains collected under the name of Umar Khayyam were substantially by his hand, but this belief received a rude shock when it was discovered by Zhukovski that about 82 of these quatrains occurred in the the works of other Persian poets, e.g. Ansari, Anwari, Attar, Avicenna.

On this subject of the "Wandering Quatrains", E. H. Whinfield has remarked in the introduction to his Quatrains of Omar Khayyam emphasizing the difficulty of differentiating the work of Omar from that of poets writing two or three centuries after his time, because the literary Persian of 800 years ago differs singularly little from that in use. "Again, if, as has been supposed, there were anything exceptional in Omar's poetry, it might be possible to identify it by internal evidence; but the fact is that all Persian poetry runs very much in grooves, and Omar's is no exception. The poetry of rebellion and revolt from orthodox opinions, which is supposed to be peculiar to him, may be traced in the works of his predecessors Avicenna, as well as in those of Afzul Kashi, and others of his successors".<sup>1</sup>

The fact is that the spurious quatrains are indistinguishable from the genuine. But from what we gather from the notices of Umar's life by his contemporaries and successors, is it too much to presume that there is more chance of the mystical quatrains being spurious than the non-mystical ones? Granting that there have been other Persian poets besides Umar who have written the poetry of revolt, there is no doubt that the general tradition of Persian poetry is more mystical than sceptical. There was much more likelihood therefore, that quatrains of the latter sort should

1. The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam by E. H. Whinfield, London, 1883, p. XXII.

have been interpolated into the work of Umar Khayyam. It is a significant fact that in the Ouseley MS which was the oldest up to FitzGerald's time, the number of such quatrains is the least; the younger the texts the bigger is the number of pious and mystical quatrains. In his excellent edition of the Rubaiyat which Arthur Christensen<sup>1</sup> brought out after infinite labours, the most notable fact is the almost complete absence of mystical quatrains.

It was the Ouseley MS of which Edward Cowell made a copy in 1856 and gave to FitzGerald. The latter's opinions about Umar, therefore, were based on the reading of this MS, and naturally these opinions could not favour Umar with being a mystic in the conventional Persian sense of the word. Furthermore, Cowell's views had a great influence on FitzGerald, and Cowell most certainly believed that Umar Khayyam was no mystic. Indeed he felt sorry for Umar and believed that if the Gospel of Christ had been preached in Persia in the days of Umar, the Persian sceptic would have certainly discovered a certitude in Christianity which he failed to discover in Islam. In the Calcutta Review for March 1858, Cowell in the course of reviewing "L'Algebre d'Omar al Khayyami" - Paris 1851, wrote:-

"Omar lived in an age of poetical mysticism, but he himself is no mystic. His exact sciences kept him from the vague dreams of his contemporaries; he next loses himself in the one and the all; he plants his foot on the terra ferma of to-day and builds on it as if it were rock, and not a quicksand:-

"Sweet blows on the roses' face the breeze of  
the new spring,  
Sweet down in the garden are the faces of the  
heart inflamers:  
But nought is sweet that thou canst tell of a  
yesterday passed;  
Come be glad, nor talk of yesterday, - to-day  
is so sweet."

But Omar for all his insight, had not made the wise choice. The mysticism, in which the better spirits of Persia loved to lose

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1. Critical Studies in the Rubaiyat of Umar-i-Khayyam. by Arthur Christensen. Kobenhavn, 1927.

themselves, was a light thing, after all, than his keen worldliness, because this was but of the earth, and bounded by the earth's narrow span, while that, albeit an error, was a groping after the divine. There was a depth in that vague mysticism which Omar's science had never sounded; it sprang from wants and feelings, to which his own heart was a stranger; and hence though his poetry was real, and full of passion, it moves "Cabined, Cribbed, Confined" in the animal life of the sense and seems dazzled at any prospect beyond the grave. His very ideas of death seem confined to the body; he can feel like Keats, "the flower growing over him"; but he rarely looks or thinks beyond. And yet it is not always so; a few rare tetrastichs testify that Omar could not always prove a traitor to his own genius, - that sometimes it over-mastered his habits and wrung unwanted aspirations perforce from his lips:

Oh heart, wert thou pure from the body's dust,  
 Thou shouldst soar naked spirit above the sky;  
 Highest heaven is thy naked seat, - for shame,  
 for shame,  
 That thou shouldst stoop to dwell in a city of  
 clay."

According to Cowell Omar was sad and gloomy because he was false to his better self. He tries to ignore the future and the spiritual and anchor only by the material and the tangible - hence his unhappiness and a lack of harmony. "We have said that Omar was no mystic - we find no trace of Sufeyism in his book. His roses bloom in an earthly Summer, his wine, is of mortal vintage; unlike all other Persian poets, everything with him is real and concrete. That tone of revelry which <sup>in</sup> Hafiz and Jami was but a passing fashion under which their genius veiled its higher aspirations, - like the Petrarchan Sonnet in the hands of Shakespeare or Milton, - is in Omar Khayyam the matter itself not the form .....

....."Omar is ill at ease within, and his internal discord reflects itself in an angry defiance of the world and its opinions and beliefs. Like the Roman Lucretius, his very science leads him astray; he has learned enough to unsettle his ancient instincts, but not enough to build them on a sure basis .....

"Omar Khayyam builds no system, - he contents himself with doubts and conjectures, - he loves to balance antitheses of belief and settle himself in the equipoise of the sceptic .....

"His clear strong sense revolted from the prevailing mysticism where all the earnest spirits of his age found their refuge, and his honest independence was equally shocked by the hypocrites who aped their fervour and enthusiasm; and at that dark hour of man's history, whither out of Islam was the thoughtful Mohammedan to repair? No missionary's step, bringing good tidings, had appeared on the mountains of Persia ....."

There is no ambiguity in Cowell's views about Umar Khayyam. The Persian is to him a sceptic, a man divided in himself, without any strong faith to guide him. Did Cowell change his views later? It does not seem probable, though it must be pointed out that Thomas Wright, the biographer of FitzGerald reports Cowell to have stated to him in a private interview that Umar was a mystic and that his wine and roses should be understood in an allegorical sense. The present writer has very serious doubts about the accuracy of Wright's statements on this vexed question. He puts Cowell at the head of those critics who regarded Umar as a Sufi. He writes in his 'Life of Edward FitzGerald's (London 1904):-

"As to the result of Omar's Sufic Studies, opinion is divided. There are two principal theories. The first we will call the FitzGerald theory, not because FitzGerald believed absolutely in it, but because he leaned to it: the second the Cowell theory, Professor Cowell having been its chief exponent. According to the FitzGerald theory Omar Khayyam's Sufic Studies had the result of causing him in the end, to turn with contempt both from the faith and its interpreters, whether ascetic saint or visionary poet. Henceforth he was the agnostic, the Sufis were his butt, he was their aversion and head.

According to the Cowell theory, Omar always remained true to Sufism, and his great poem is a diatribe not against the tenets of the Sufis, but against the bigotry of the Mahometans. When I visited Cambridge in November 1901, I was able to hear Professor Cowell's opinions from his own lips.

"Are we", I said, "to take Omar's words literally, or is there a hidden meaning?" "The poem", he replied, "is mystical. I am convinced of it. When in India I had many conversations with the Moonshees on the subject, and they were all of this opinion. They ridiculed the idea that the poem is not allegorical."

"Omar's laudation of drunkenness" said I, "is difficult to explain away."

"By drunkenness" said Professor Cowell, with a smile, "is meant 'Divine Love'".

"Then Omar was Sufi, and not, as some will have it, Heterodoxical?"

"Certainly, Omar was a Sufi."

"But if his Laudation of drunkenness is a difficulty, still more must we regret some of the expressions he uses towards the Deity."

"They merely illustrate", observed Professor Cowell,

"Omar's disbelief in the Mohametan heaven and hell. He ridicules the very orthodox Pharisees among the Mohametans with their strict observance of minutiae."

"Then" said I, "what it all means is this - trouble not your head about the rewards of Heaven or the pains of Hell, as understood by the Mohametans; do not puzzle your brains about anything: but live a right life, and trust, never/<sup>cease</sup> to trust, in the goodness of God."

"It is so."

"But FitzGerald did not agree with you?"

"Sometimes he inclined to this belief, though generally not. He could never quite make up his mind."

In view of Cowell's article in the Calcutta Review, the above conversation is most surprising. FitzGerald at any rate never understood Cowell to mean that Omar was a Sufi. In 1867 when M. Nicolas brought out his edition of "Les Quatrain De Khayyam". FitzGerald wrote to Cowell:-

"I only returned from my Ship last night: and have only just been looking at the new Omar to-day. If the Editor is right, I am wrong, and You, E.B.C., who directed me - in this grand respect; the Frenchman makes out Omar to be a Sufi, and that his Wine etc,

is all mystically spiritual - How shall this be? Some of the quatrains favour his view; some ours (for surely you, my Master, thought so?) - "1 This shows clearly what FitzGerald thought of Cowell's views on this subject. If any more proof were needed, we might refer the reader to the preface to the Second Edition of FitzGerald's Rubaiyat (1868) where he again alludes to this question. He writes:

"While the second edition of this version of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Resht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubaiyat, with translations and notes of his own. Mons. Nicolas whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken <sup>him</sup> for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, etc. as Hafiz is supposed to do; in short, a Sufi poet like Hafiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was more than a dozen years ago when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other literature.<sup>2</sup> He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning as Mons. Nicolas' if he could. That he could not, appears by his Paper in the Calcutta Review already so largely quoted; in which he argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life."

It must be said in Mons. Nicolas' favour that when he brought out his edition of "Les Quatrains De Kheyam", it was believed that the quatrains passing under Umar's name were substantially by his hand. Khukovski's researches were to come much later. In Mons. Nicolas' Edition we do get quatrains which are genuinely Sufistic and which cannot be interpreted otherwise than mystically-

1. Life and Letters of E. B. Cowell by George Cowell. page 233.

2. i.e. Professor Cowell who taught both Spanish and Persian to FitzGerald.

e.g. Nos. 30 and 47 in Nicolas.

It is impossible to tell with certainty whether these and other such mystical quatrains come from Umar Khayyam's pen or are later interpolations. Mons. Nicolas took it for granted that they were genuine. But where he erred more seriously was in his interpretations of quatrains which sing of wine, the wine-bearer and the cup. Mons. Nicolas was essentially a Sufi and consequently dragged in Sufistic interpretations wherever he could, attributing allegorical meanings to Umar's most obviously materialistic passages by way of apology for the "sensualité quelquefois revolante" of the Persian poet.

Now ~~there is no~~ there is no denying the fact that many Oriental critics, chiefly Sufis, in their desire either to vindicate Umar, or enroll him in their own sect, do indulge in such extravagant interpretations; they were encouraged to do so by the fact that many other Persian poets had employed figurative language to express their conceptions of God and the universe. Mahmud Shabistari who composed his Gulshan-i-Raz (The Mystic Rose Garden) in A.D. 1317, in answer to fifteen questions on the doctrines of the Sufis, gives a detailed exposition of this mystical point of view. In answer to the question: "What meaning attaches to wine, torch, and beauty? What is assumed in being a haunter of taverns?"

He replies:-

"Wine, torch, and beauty are epiphanies of Verity,  
For it is that which is revealed under all forms so ever.  
Wine and torch are the transport and light of the 'Knower',  
Behold, The Beauty for it is hidden from none .....  
Quaff the wine of dying to self, and for a season  
Peradventure you will be freed from the dominion of self."

And in answer to the question:-

"What means the mystic by those expressions of his  
What does he indicate by 'eye' and 'lip'?  
What seeks he by 'cheek', 'curl', 'down' and 'mole'?"

Shabistari replies:-

"Whatsoever is seen in this visible world,  
Is as a reflection from the sun of that world.  
The world is as curl, down, mole and brow,  
For everything in its own place is beautiful.  
The epiphany is now in beauty, now in majesty,  
Cheek and curl are the similitudes of those verities.  
The attributes of "The Truth" are mercy and vengeance.

Cheek and curl of fair ones are types of these two.  
 When these words are heard by the sensual ear,  
 At first they denote objects of sense.  
 The spiritual world is infinite,  
 How can finite words attain to it?  
 How can the mysteries behold in ecstatic vision  
 Be interpreted by spoken words?  
 When mystics treat of these mysteries,  
 They interpret them by types.  
 For objects of sense are as shadows of that world,  
 And this world is as an infant, and that as the nurse,  
 I believe that these words were at first assigned  
 To those mysteries in their original usage.  
 They were afterwards assigned to objects of sense by usage  
 of the vulgar  
 (For what know the vulgar of these mysteries?)  
 And when reason turned its glance on the world,  
 It transferred some words from that place.  
 The wise man has regard to analogy,  
 When he turns his mind to words and mysteries.  
 Although perfect analogies are unattainable,  
 Nevertheless continue steadfast in seeking them."<sup>1</sup>

It was according to this theory that whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc. occurred in the text, Mons. Nicolas carefully annotated "Dieu", "La Divinité", etc. But what is reasonable in the case of professed mystics like Rumi and Jami, becomes extravagant if applied to a reputed sceptic like Umar Khayyam. The solution in the last resort lies in using common sense.

No wonder FitzGerald's English common-sense rejected such naive interpretations. "I must say", he wrote in the preface to his second and subsequent editions, "that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Hafiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Sufi Pantheism, so long as the poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning of and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jelaluddin, Jami, Attar and others sang; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating. Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People: much more so when, as some think Hafiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image; Hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew

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1. Gulshan-i-Raz: The Mystic Rose Garden of Sa'd Din Mahmud Shabistari", edited and translated by E. H. Whinfield, London 1880. pp. 70-78.

grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalized with Images of Sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God, who according to the Doctrine, is Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after death, without hope of any posthumous Beatitude, in another world to compensate for all one's self-denial in this. Lucretius' blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Sufi; and the burden of Omar's Song - if not "Let us eat" - is assuredly - "Let us drink, for tomorrow we die!" And if Hafiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from this day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than spiritual Worshippers. However, as there is some traditional presumption, and certainly the opinion of some learned men, in favour of Omar's being a Sufi - and even something of a Saint - those who please may so interpret his Wine and Cup-bearer. On the other hand, as there is far more historical certainty of his being a Philosopher, of scientific Insight and Ability far beyond that of the Age and Country he lived in; of such moderate worldly Ambition as becomes a Philosopher, and such moderate wants as rarely satisfy a Debauchee; other readers may be content to believe with me that while the Wine Omar celebrates is simply the Juice of the Grape, he bragged more than he drank of it, in very defiance perhaps of that Spiritual Wine which left its Vetaries sunk in Hypocrisy or Disgust."

More recent scholarship has confirmed FitzGerald's views on this subject. Arthur Christensen in his "Critical Studies in the Rabaiyat of Umar-i-Khayyam" comes to the conclusion that "FitzGerald, for all the liberties he has taken with the original, has grasped with a sure psychological and esthetical instinct the true kernel of the "Umarian poetry".<sup>1</sup> One reason for this was that one of the main sources consulted by FitzGerald, the Bodleian

MS, contains "comparatively few decidedly spurious quatrains and is, as a whole, a rather faithful representation of the spirit of 'Umar'".

This estimate is substantially correct.

A note on FitzGerald's method of translating the Rubaiyat of Umar Khayyam.

The rubāi which is the oldest Persian verse form, contains four lines, of which the first, second, and fourth must rhyme with one another, while the third may or may not rhyme with the rest. Such an arrangement of rhymes however does not exhaust the definition: a certain metrical scheme is also necessary. As A.F.E. Tessam-Zadeh observes in the preface to his "Les Rubaiyat D'Omar Khayyam" (Teheran 1931)

"En outre, les Rubaiyat se font sur un rythme, unique special, toujours le même. Donc, au point de vue technique, le rubai est soumis a des règles sévères qu'il faut observer à tout prix, sans quoi il n'y/aurait plus de rubai. Au point de vue poétique, les règles sont tout aussi rigides. Un rubai est un petit poème complet qui doit exprimer une idée précise. En outre, il doit être clair, concis, très gracieux s'il traite un sujet galant, très profond s'il exprime une pensée philosophique. En un mot, le rubai persan ressemble étrangement au sonnet français; et les poètes persan qui ont produit de beaux rubaiyat, sont aussi rares que les poètes français ayant réussi de parfaits sonnets."

This fact must indeed be borne in mind: the rubai is always a complete unit, unrelated to any larger whole. Each rubai is independent, and its place in the series is determined by the alphabetical position of the letter that concludes the rhyme. There is no such thing in Persian literature as a poem made up of a number of consecutive quatrains. If the poet's statement exceeds the austere limit of the two bayts, and requires one or more additional rubaiyat to complet itself, he may be said to have written a poem of eight, twelve of more verses, as the case may be, but not a rubai.

It will be seen therefore that in the original Persian there

is no such continuity between the various quatrains as we get in FitzGerald. FitzGerald's Rubaiyat are, as he himself said, "most ingeniously tessellated into a sort of Epicurean eclogue in a Persian garden," which the original are not.

There is one more point of difference that is worth noting. The rubai has simplicity and directness of style, but a trifle too much point or snap turns it into an epigram, which a good rubai should not be. In this respect too, FitzGerald differs from the original. He often gives a new turn to the Persian rubai, an 'epigrammatic point' which is not characteristic of Umar.

"For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blacken'd - Man's forgiveness give - and take! -"

is more FitzGerald than Umar.

The major portion of FitzGerald's material were the Ouseley MS in the Bodleian; a copy of the Calcutta MS (noted as No. 1548 in the Negal Asiatic Society's Library) made by Cowell and sent to FitzGerald from India, and the Calcutta printed edition of 1836. Edward Heron-Allen has very exhaustively and conscientiously worked out the relations between FitzGerald's translation and the original in his masterly book entitled "Edward FitzGerald's Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam ..... London 1899", and we can only gratefully quote in his own words the conclusion at which he arrived after infinite labour:-

"Of Edward FitzGerald's quatrains, forty-nine are faithful and beautiful paraphrases of single quatrains to be found in the Ouseley or Calcutta MS. or both.

Forty-four are traceable to more than one quatrain, and may therefore be termed the 'composite' quatrains.

Two are inspired by quatrains found by FitzGerald only in Nicolas' text.

Two are quatrains reflecting the whole spirit of the original poem.

Two are traceable exclusively to the influence of the Mantik ut-tair of Ferid ud din Attar.

Two quatrains primarily inspired by Omar were influenced by the Odes of Hafiz.

And three, which appeared only in the first and second editions and were afterwards suppressed by Edward FitzGerald himself, are not - so far as a careful research enables me to judge - attributable to any lines of the original texts. Other authors may have inspired them, but their identification is not useful in this case."<sup>1</sup>

There were four authorised English editions of the Rubaiyat published in FitzGerald's lifetime - the first edition in 1859, the second in 1868, the third in 1872 and the fourth in 1879. Between these editions there are variations which throw interesting light on FitzGerald's methods. The first edition contains seventy-five quatrains, the second one hundred and ten, the third one hundred and one, and the fourth also one hundred and one. But into this discussion we need not enter here."<sup>2</sup>

FitzGerald's free rendering of his original has naturally invited the hostile criticism of some critics. It is the misfortune of all translations or renderings, to be assailed by two kinds of critics, the professional scholars of the original language from which the translation is done, and the critics or men of letters of the language into which it is translated. It can be said to the credit of FitzGerald that his rendering has been applauded by both kinds of critics, the professional Persian scholars and English critics; though by no means unanimously. Among the dissenters,<sup>3</sup> perhaps the most notable criticism was that of the Persian scholar Mrs. Caddell who in a learned article in the Fraser's Magazine for May 1879, called "The True Omar Khayyam", accused FitzGerald of misrepresenting Umar Khayyam:

"As very beautiful English verse", said Mrs. Caddell "no one can doubt that Mr. FitzGerald's Khayam fully deserves its fame. As a translation, we are less satisfied with it. While acknowledging that the translator has been on the whole successful in

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1. Pages XI-XII of the Preface.  
2. On this see The Letters and Literary Remains edited by W. Aldis Wright in 7 vols, 1902. vol. VII.  
3. See also John Payne, who in his Villon Society translation of Omar Khayyam, 1898, also blames FitzGerald for falsifying the Persian Poet.

catching the sound of the Persian lines, wonderfully so in setting thoughts and phrases from the Persian in his English verses, we contend that this is hardly enough to satisfy us in the translation of a set of epigrams. It is a poem on Omar, rather than a translation of his work, and its very faults, <sup>have</sup> /to English readers, taken nothing from its charm and added much to its popularity. Its inexactness has allowed for the infusion of a modern element, which we believe to exist in the Persian only in the sense in which the deepest questions of human life are of all time. Its occasional obscurity, too, has rather helped than hindered the impression of the whole. People expect obscurity in a Persian writer of the twelfth century - even like it - as it leaves dark corners which the mind can light up any way it pleases, and regard what it finds there as one of the peculiar beauties of Eastern thought. These points have less attraction for those who, knowing Khayam in the original, have learnt to value him for himself."

But this is obviously unjust to FitzGerald whose aim was not to give a literal translation of the original but a free paraphrase "a variation upon a given theme not a transcript of it. Nevertheless, while indulging in liberty he kept on the right side of license", and his success has indeed justified his methods. One can set against Mrs. Caddell, the verdict of such renowned Oriental scholars as Sir E. Denison Ross<sup>1</sup> and Prof. R.A. Nicholson<sup>2</sup>, who have had nothing but praise for the way in which FitzGerald has conveyed without being literal, the spirit of the original and has even improved upon the original, thanks to his own talent and to the greater expressive power of the English language, as compared to Persian. A successful translation after all implies, a capacity in the translator to re-live the experience of his original in all its completeness and intensity and the power to transmute it in a moment of poetical heat into something as vital as the original. And this FitzGerald has been eminently

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1. See The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam with a commentary by H. M. Batson and a Biographical introduction by E. Denison Ross, 1900.
  2. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, 1909, with an excellent introduction by Professor R.A. Nicholson.

successfully in doing, with an adroitness of craftsmanship, that overrides all considerations of literalness. The most correct valuation of FitzGerald's translation of Umar Khayyam was, perhaps that of Professor Charles Eliot Norton, when he said: "He is to be called "translator" only in default of a better word, one which should express the poetic transfusion of a poetic spirit from one language to another, and the representation of the ideas and images of the original in a form not altogether diverse from their own, but perfectly adapted to the new conditions of time, place, custom and habit of mind in which they reappear .... It is the work of a poet inspired by the work of a poet; not a copy, but a reproduction, not a translation but the redelivery of a poetic inspiration .....

.....Moreover, a minor key of sadness, of refined melancholy, seems to occur in the English composition more frequently than in the Persian. The sentiment of the original Omar is often reinforced by the English, is expressed in stronger, tenderer and more delicate strokes. Every now and then a note of the nineteenth century seems to mingle its tone with those of the twelfth; as if the ancient Oriental melody were reproduced on a modern European instrument. But it is very striking to see, and much more to feel, how close the thought and the sentiment of the Persian poet often are to the thought and sentiment of our own day. So that in its English dress it reads like the latest and freshest expression of the perplexity - and of the doubt of the generation to which we belong."<sup>1</sup>




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1. Northern American Review, No. CCXXV, October, 1869.

C O N C L U S I O N .

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Miss Conant in her book The Oriental tale in England in the Eighteenth Century defined the Oriental or pseudo-Oriental tale of that period as follows:

"In form this fiction includes within its wide range the frame-tale in which stories sometimes in letter form - are enclosed; isolated apologues and other short tales used to point the moral of an Addisonian or Johnsonian essay; fantastic tales in which adventure is everything; tales equally fantastic but coloured by satire; and tales with the thinnest possible thread of plot to sustain the predominant satiric, moralistic, or philosophic purpose"<sup>1</sup>.

A survey of the compositions inspired by the Orient in the nineteenth century, on the other hand, displays a diversity of forms, that can hardly be included in a single serviceable definition. This is undoubtedly due to the more complex timbre of the latter age, in which so many artistic, philosophical and political movements converged. As one expects, the moralistic "Oriental tale" of social satire, entirely disappears in the romantic period. The only two compositions that come nearest to it are perhaps Beckford's Vathek and George Meredith's Shaving of Shagpat (1856). We have seen in an earlier chapter, how Vathek in marking the end of the eighteenth century Orientalism of Voltaire also announces the nineteenth century Orientalism of Byron. Meredith's beautiful and poetical imitation of the Arabian Nights, though it has a subdued moral and satirical aspect, is altogether different from the Oriental tales of the eighteenth century in its charming lyricism and its droll fantasy. Except for its romantic love episodes, which are definitely European in spirit, Meredith's tale is probably the only European composition that succeeds, even more than Vathek, in catching the true manner

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1.. Conant, op.cit. p. 226.

of The Arabian Nights.

But these two, and a few others are stray examples of an old, and out of date fashion. We have discussed in detail in our first chapter how the more realistic type of prose-fiction, exemplified in the works of Hope's Anastasius, Morier's Hajji Baba of Ispahan, Meadows Taylor's Confessions of a Thug etc, novels of the picaresque type, grew, not out of the Oriental tale of the 18th century but from the accounts and sketches of the Eastern travellers, put in dramatic form.

But the most characteristic examples of the new Orientalism of the nineteenth century were the verse-tales of Southey (who ambitiously insisted <sup>on</sup> calling them 'epics') of Byron and Moore and a host of slavish imitators; writers who can be further subdivided, according as their Orientalism was a product of books, as in Southey and Moore or was partially the result of an Eastern tour, as in Byron, Gally-Knight, Medwin and others. Much has been said in the previous pages about these tales, their greater concern for an historical and more elaborately bookish Orientalism, their melodramatic and sentimental monotony of plots, their amusingly inaccurate notions of the East and so on. On these aspects we need not dwell any more.

A second type of Oriental composition was a poem, part of a poem or a short lyric, in which the author did not set out as in the above poems to illustrate or portray the life of the Oriental people but simply elaborated a hint gathered from some Oriental book, or echoed in his poem the exotic images and sentiments out of some book of Oriental travel. Examples of this kind of writing can be found in nearly all writers of the period, from Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, to Tennyson, Arnold and James Thomson. A recurrent example in this kind of writing is what we may call a poetical 'Travelogue' an imaginative tour which the poet makes to foreign lands, characterising the geographical features, antiquities and the flora and fauna of each land in a sort of rapid survey. One of the earliest instances of the 'picturesque' tour to the East we noticed

3. Travels & Curves of the East.

4. India Recollections, Works (1841), VI, p. 105.

5. Alastor 100 ff.

6. Endymion 17, 217 ff. 12 several other passages.

was in James Thomson's Summer<sup>1</sup>. After him Wordsworth's Prelude,<sup>2</sup> Southey's Poems,<sup>3</sup> Lalla Rookh,<sup>4</sup> Alastor<sup>5</sup>, Endymion,<sup>6</sup> Tennyson's Persia and Recollections of the Arabian Nights and many other poems contain passages in the same tradition of geographical exoticism.

Another feature which recurs more or less in some poems of the time is the presence in them of radiantly beautiful, spiritual-minded Oriental maidens. Southey started this fashion in his two Oriental poems by borrowing some traits of the Arabian and Hindu maidens from the Moallakat and Sakuntala, respectively. Shelley followed suit and introduced several Arab and Indian maidens; Keats probably under the influence of Shelley introduced a "swan of Ganges" in Endymion; Byron's Turkish heroines, "soft as the roses they twine", though somewhat different, come under the same category. Then follow all the writers of Oriental tales, with their troupes of "gazelle-eyed" beauties. Tennyson too spoke of an "argent lidded" Persian with all the young passion he could command. In the same category come the 'Oriental lyrics', celebrating the swooning and passionate ardour of supposedly Oriental love. Perhaps the earliest examples of this kind of writing were Moore's lyrics and Shelley's two pieces, Indian Serenade and From the Arabic: an Imitation. In the early Victorian Annals and Keepsakes these 'Oriental lyrics' had become such a menace as to call for the parodies of Martin and Aytoun.

Similarly in a class by themselves are those passages in the poems of the time which deal with the grandeur and magnificence of Oriental halls and palaces, descriptions of voluptuous paradises, complete with trees bearing precious stones, Oriental spices and fruits, forbidden wines, houris and other more general suggestions of lasciviousness necessary for a Mohammedan paradise. Once again it was Southey who spread the contagion by elaborately Orientalising

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1. Summer Lines 629-1102.
  2. Prelude, edit: Selincourt, p. 555, 98-109.
  3. Thalaba & Curse of Kehama.
  4. Lalla Rookh, Works (1841), VI, p. 165.
  5. Alastor 106 ff.
  6. Endymion IV. 257 ff. And several other passages noted.

the Spenserian and Miltonic paradises to suit his own epics. Coleridge's subtler lines in Kubla Khan also exerted an influence in this direction.

Further examples of this kind of general and diffused exoticism of images and sentiments have been given in the body of this work and need not be reproduced here. They all seem to point to the fact that as the Orientalism of the last century was a vehicle of contemporary morality or satire, so the Orientalism of the Nineteenth century was a symbol through which the writers of the period adumbrated their various cults of cosmopolitanism, exoticism, picturesque, horror-romanticism, 'return to nature', primitivism, passion-worship and so on. Perhaps the easiest and the best way to describe English romanticism is to consider it as the sum of tendencies most prominently displayed in English literature between 1780-1830, the underlying bond between these tendencies being a desire to find the infinite within the finite, to affect a synthesis of the real and the unreal. Regarded in this light, Orientalism, like the other cults mentioned above, is a sort of by-product of the romantic tendency 'to return to nature' in the hope of finding more than really exists there. The writers of the time transferred from their own nature strange and alluring attributes of gorgeousness, sensuous beauty and passion to the Orient of their imagination and instead of saying to themselves that such states are always internal by their very nature, they hoped to realize them in other places. In all this there was no doubt an erotic element. As Praz says "the exotic and the erotic ideals go hand in hand and this fact also contributes another proof of a more or less obvious truth that is, that a love of the exotic is usually an imaginative projection of a sexual desire. This is very clear in such cases as those of Gautier and Flaubert whose dreams carry them to an atmosphere of barbaric and Oriental antiquity where all the most unbridled desires can be indulged and the cruellest fantasies can take concrete form."<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Romantic Agony, op.cit. p. 197.

But eroticism, at least in the Orientalism of the English poets, is only one factor. As we have seen there were other less objectionable cults, which blended with and reinforced their Orientalism. The formula of eroticism can be stretched to include Beckford and Moore, but not Southey and Byron; the former of whom was too consciously on guard against any such wicked indulgences, and the latter too healthily virile to succumb to any narcotic cults. There is surely something very naive about these presumptuous 'psychological' methods that pretend to explain away a complex literary phenomenon, or the many-sided personality of an individual, simply by uttering the sesame of a 'complex' or an 'inhibition'.

No; if we have to condemn the aberrations of the romantics, we must not do it from some dry, ultra-rational, 'modern' standpoint, but from the point of view of history and artistic execution. They failed because they were unequal to the tremendous tasks they set themselves. As W. P. Ker has said penetratingly in this connection: "Modern poetry is capricious in its choice of subjects, and the romantic authors particularly, as compared with the poets who are secure in their own world and in the inherited traditions, like Pope and Burns, seem too often feverish and excited, craving for the romantic thrill, and trying to get it as Southey and Victor Hugo try, by means of scenery and properties and excursions to remote unfamiliar, medieval or Oriental ground. They have no depth of earth, they wither away. They wither not because their subjects are too romantic but because they trust too much to the strangeness of their subjects. The subjects of Racine's Bazajet is Oriental and he explains in his preface that distance in place and an unfamiliar scene may have the same effect as antiquity; he understood the romantic policy. But this is not the subject of his drama."<sup>1</sup>

Historical poetry which aims at the resurrection of an age distant in time or space or both, must end in mere history or antiquarianism if the writer lacks the imaginative power to vitalise his theme, or is deficient in sympathy for the ideals of the ~~circumstantial~~ ~~circumstantial~~ age he is portraying. No amount of erudition in circumstantial detail, no profusion of foot notes can compensate for that broader

1. Form & Style in Poetry, by W. P. Ker, p. 113-114.

truth which lies in penetrating into the feelings of the characters, in portraying them from inside. To write an Indian poem the author must be pantheistic at heart, as to write a Greek poem he must be polytheistic at heart, fundamentally pagan. This is the reason that Heine spoke so fitly of India and Goethe of Greece. A genuine historian is not sure that his own civilization is perfect; he lives as gladly out of his country as in it. Sympathy alone can restore extinguished or foreign manners, and it is sympathy which the English writers on Oriental themes lacked. An average Englishman's feeling for exotic creeds and foreign nations, was put in a nutshell by Lamb, when he said of Southey's Oriental poems: "I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs, or out of the way creeds or places. I never read books of travels, at least not further than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians, but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux Dervises and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner ... I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, Templer."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say that there are advantages as well as disadvantages of such a view. One must also quote here Peacock's eloquent denunciation of contemporary poets, which though unsympathetic and one-sided, expresses the contemporary revulsion of 'healthy' classicism against 'diseased' romanticism:

"While the historian and the philosopher are advancing in, and accelerating the progress of knowledge, the poet is wallowing in the rubbish of departed ignorance and raking up the ashes of dead savages to find gewgaws and rattles for the grown babies of the age. Mr. Scott digs up the poachers and cattle stealers of the ancient border. Lord Byron cruises for thieves and pirates on the shores of the Morea and the Greek Islands. Mr. Southey wades through ponderous volumes of travels and old chronicles, from which he carefully selects all that is false, useless and absurd, as being essentially poetical; and when he has a common-place book full of monstrosities, strings them into an epic. Mr. Wordsworth picks up village legends

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1. Works of Charles Lamb, London, 1855, vol. I. p. 250-751.

from old women and sextons; and Mr. Coleridge to the valuable information acquired from similar sources superadds the dreams of crazy theologians and the mysticisms of German metaphysics, and favours The world with visions in verse, which the quadruple elements of sexton, old woman, Jeremy Taylor and Emanuel Kant are harmonised into a delicious poetical compound. Mr. Moore presents us with a Persian and Mr. Campbell with a Pennsylvanian tale, both formed on the same principle as Mr. Southey's epics by extracting from a perfunctory and desultory perusal of a collection of voyages and travels, all that useful investigation would not seek for and that commonsense will reject."<sup>1</sup>

Such denunciations which recur from time to time in the course of literary history are, on the whole, good for the health of English poetry, especially when directed against morbid and extravagant tastes, such as Peacock enumerates. That precious heritage of Englishman, commonsense, helps to preserve the solidity of the racial ideals. We have seen how Coleridge invoked the help of a somewhat similar "euphrasy of common-sense" in the beginning of the century to keep out the enervating Eastern philosophies, "those motley aliens from a distant world", and how English poetry followed a different course from that of contemporary Germany, so far as the influence on it of Oriental though was concerned. The enthusiastic prophecies of Sir William Jones, forecasting a deeper contact between Eastern and Western literatures, were belied or bore but scanty fruit in England. It was left for the leaders of the new German movement to grasp their possibilities. In Germany this movement came just at the time when the idea of Universal literature had taken hold of the minds of leading literary men. The names of Herder, Goethe, the Schlegels, Rückert, Heine, Bodenstedt, Von Schack and others testify to the greater prestige of Orientalism in Germany as compared to England. Most of these writers, in addition to being poets, were also great scholars and linguists & studied Oriental literatures in firsthand; this fact is responsible

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1. The Four Ages of Poetry, Works of T. L. Peacock, edit. H. Cole, 1875, vol. III, p. 334-335.

for the less superficial nature of their Orientalism, their deeper contact with Oriental thought and their experiments in Oriental verse forms. But the chief value of the Oriental movement in Germany did not consist in its original contributions to German literature but rather in the reproductions and translations it inspired. In England the Orientalists who continued the tradition inaugurated by sir William Jones of giving translations of the masterpieces of Oriental literature, could only give mechanical and unimaginative renderings; while the writers and poets of a better imaginative calibre, felt too out of sympathy with the real Orient to tackle such tasks. It is only later in the century that we find J. C. Mangan, partly under the influence of German Orientalists and partly, on account of his own Irish-Oriental temperament, giving free paraphrases from the Turkish poets in the contemporary German fashion. FitzGerald's Omar Khayyam, in which again the influence of continental Orientalists is noticeable, is the only example in the latter half of the century of a really worth while composition based on a firsthand study of Oriental literature. Just as Beckford had created in Vathek the synthesis of the Oriental and the Gothic tale, so now FitzGerald demonstrated the power of an Eastern poet to penetrate to the heart of Western poetry. FitzGerald's Omar Khayyam is at once truly Persian and truly English, not a translation but a recreation. If the mood expressed in the famous quatrains is unheroic and Oriental, none the less they caught the exact tone of the age, and voiced it as perfectly as eight centuries earlier they had voiced the polished hedonism of the cultured society of Ispahan.

Yet here again it is significant that Omar Khayyam, is the product of an Irish poet, not an English poet.

The question naturally arises: Why, inspite of the efforts of enthusiastic Orientalists and scholars, has not Oriental literature influenced the literature of the West in general and of England in particular, to any great extent? Single elements of technique and occasionally certain established literary motives have been, no doubt, from time to time been transplanted. It may be remarked, however, that Oriental literature has exerted an influence, less through its directness from the East than through its skill-

through its differences from that of Europe than through its similarities. The literary taste of Europe has consistently rejected the strikingly unfamiliar features of Eastern literature and has been attracted instead to those elements of which the germ already existed, or had begun to develop in a tentative way in European thought and letters. In such cases the Oriental parallels have simply stimulated the innate Western tendencies, and as in the Romantic Revival in England and Germany, helped to liberate the imagination from a narrow and oppressive discipline. The movement once started has gathered momentum from its own internal resources, and such Oriental elements as have been absorbed are so blended with native elements that in the finished development they are often difficult to recognize. Why is this so? Why has not Oriental literature influenced Western literature to the same extent as for example Latin and Greek literature?

E. J. W. Gibb, the great Oriental scholar, whose knowledge of both Eastern and Western Literatures, qualified him to give an opinion on this matter replies as follows:

"Any attempt to draw an analogy between the influences exerted by Oriental and classical literature respectively, overlooks the differences between them, a difference not merely of degree, but of kind. The literature of Persia and Arabia is essentially 'romantic'. The student brought up to Greek ideals of literary excellence will find in it few of those qualities which constitute the perennial fascination of Greek literature. There is as full, or fuller, mastery of form, but it is rigid where Greek is various, extravagant where Greek is severe. The classics achieve greatness by restraint and simplicity, the Oriental weaves a laborious fabric of precious and obscure language decorated with imagery often far-fetched and fantastic. The Greek appeals through beauty to intellect, the Arab or Persian through richness of colour to the senses and the imagination. The assertion that Greek literature is creative, Oriental literature fundamentally imitative and poor in intellectual qualities, though not without an element of truth is an overbearing and an extravagant generalisation where the Muslim writer excels is

in clothing the essential realism of his thought with the language of romance. But it would be false to conclude from this that there is an essential antithesis between the Oriental spirit and the spirit of Europe. The antithesis exists but it is between the Oriental spirit and the classical spirit....."

This would be an admirable summing up of the matter, but for the presence of those "thought-confounding" words classical and romantic. As we have already remarked in our section on Coleridge and elsewhere, Oriental poetry is not romantic in the sense that the poetry of the early nineteenth century is romantic. Whether we accept Prof. Abercrombie's definition of romanticism as "a withdrawal from outer experience in order to concentrate on inner experience,"<sup>1</sup> or agree with Logan Pearsall Smith's linguistic sense of the word romantic as a "special subjective feeling ... a literary emotion (as indeed the derivation of the word from romance implies), nature seen through the medium of literature, through a mist of associations and sentiments derived from poetry and fiction",<sup>2</sup> in both cases romance in the West is oftenest an escape from reality. Eastern art is not romantic in this special, deliberate sense. It is romantic in essence. There is neither any severe tradition of realism or classicism to fly to when the pleasures of a day dream cloy nor is there a sharp antithesis) of 'inner' and 'outer' experience, of dream and reality. "It is the conscious contrast with reason that makes romance in the full sense."<sup>3</sup> This contrast is but seldom present in an Oriental poet; there is no division in his mind, no weighing the rival claims of a dream world and an actual world and a deliberate decision in favour of the former; he is 'all of a piece', unhesitatingly and almost unconsciously he prefers the dream. Dream and reality are one and the same thing to him; his all embracing, transcendent faith does not differentiate, it merely accepts.

In this varying response to the visible and the invisible world, lies the chief difference between the Western and the Eastern point of view. The fundamental belief of the Oriental is the trans-

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1. Romanticism by L. Abercrombie, 1926 p. 52.  
2. Four Words, Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius, by Logan Pearsall Smith, Society for Pure English Tract XVII, 1924.  
3. The Background of English Literature by Prof. H. J. C. Grierson, "Classical and Romantic", p. 289-290.

gendent irreality of the phenomenal world; the only immediate and incontestable reality is that given internally by the consciousness, the intuition that reveals beneath the deceiving aspects of the personality. The Westerner, on the other hand, is divided between the sway of the actual and the dream world; while aspiring for the latter he does not <sup>lose</sup> touch with the former. For the Oriental the universal is essentially something that happens in himself; the universe absorbs and penetrates him, while it offers itself to the contemplation and activity of the Westerner. Thus Western art attempts to retain all the freshness and vividness of the perceptual level of thought and at the same time to win some of the advantages of higher conceptions of unity and truth. Eastern art, on the other hand is always aspiring to transcend the perceptual level and concern itself with the other-worldly, the mystical.. Its aim is like that of Julian of Norwich to "noughten all else that is made for to love and have God that is unmade." Western art explores Man and Nature, depicts dramatic conflicts of the two, analyses and idealizes the passions of man, shows, in fact a passionate preoccupation with the human body as the sufficing symbol of human desires, sorrows, triumphs and tragic frustration.

What Eastern art does we shall let Ruskin describe. "It is quite true," Ruskin says "that the art of India is delicate and refined. But it has one curious character distinguishing it from all other art of equal merit - it never represents a natural fact. It either <sup>forms</sup> its compositions out of meaningless fragments of colour and flowings of line; or if it represents any living creature, it represents that creature under some distorted and monstrous form. To all the facts and forms of nature it wilfully and resolutely opposes itself, it will not draw a man, but an eight armed monster, it will not draw a flower, but only a spiral or a zig-zag.

It thus indicates that the people who practise it are cut off from all possible sources of healthy knowledge; that they have wilfully sealed up and put aside the entire volume of the world, and have got nothing to read, nothing to dwell upon, but that imagination of the thought of their hearts, of which we are told that "it is

only evil continually". Over the whole spectacle of creation they have thrown a veil in which there is no rent. For them no star peeps through the blankets of the dark - for them neither their heaven shines nor their mountains rise - for them the flowers do not blossom - for them the creatures of field and forest do not live. They lie bound in the dungeon of their own conception, encompassed only by doleful phantoms, or by spectral vacancy."<sup>1</sup>

This is eloquently, though rather strongly put but it describes the very essence of the matter - the Oriental's neglect of, and contempt for, this world and his preoccupation with the next, which is mainly responsible for the abstract, conventional and undramatic quality of most Oriental art. To the European brought up in the humanistic Renaissance tradition it is apt to prove repulsive and anaemic. We have seen that to Coleridge Oriental literature appeared as "deficient in truth", the product of Fancy rather than Imagination. Similarly Landor, Southey, Mangan and even Fitzgerald complained of its relative poverty as compared to Western art. Professor Mario Praz sums up the attitude of the Westerner to Eastern art when <sup>he</sup> says of the Alhambra at Granada: "A world which is complicated only in appearance; in reality it is intoned on a single note, like the Arabian Nights in which the more you read them, the less does the variety of names and events serve to conceal the fundamental monotony, so that in the end the differences appear too thin to stand out, and everything seems arrayed in the same plane, by a two dimensional technique with fixed formulas and stereotyped endings. An art without individuality, where the wealth of decoration is calculated to conceal the poverty of the inspiration. An art which is generally attributed to boundless fantasy, whereas it never leaves a groove and by a multiplication of its elements never succeeds in producing a tertium quid a miracle . . . . The Eastern mind tries to convey the idea of the infinite through the repetition of the similar, by an exclusively quantitative, mathematical process. A figure is caused to pass through its

1. The Two Paths, p. 10-11. Library Edition.

multiples, until the mind, having set out upon the unfallible progression, gets lost in the infinity of the suggested spiral. But while the Eastern mind affects the open, inorganic form, the European mind demands the closed, organic form ...."<sup>1</sup>

There is a danger in such sweeping generalisations about the East and the West but nevertheless, from what has been said above it would be clear that there is something alien and uncongenial for the Westerner in Eastern art. Their ideals if not diametrically opposed are at least very different. It is not our business here to assert the superiority of one ideal over the other, All that we have attempted to do in the past few pages is to demonstrate some of the fundamental differences between the Eastern and the Western literatures, which are responsible for the lack of influence exerted by one on the other.

Yet if English literature, at least of our period, has been relatively uninfluenced by Oriental arts and philosophies, the Orient has ever been the El Dorado of English poetry, the mysterious and enigmatic Mona Lisa, as it were, whose fascination even to this day is unchanged. "The East is full of secrets", wrote Gertrude Bell ~~towards the end of the nineteenth century~~ <sup>in our own day</sup>, "and because she is full of secrets she is full of entrancing surprises. Many fine things there are upon the surface: brilliance of colour, splendour of light, solemn loneliness, clamorous activity; these are only patterns upon the curtain which floats for ever before the recesses of Eastern life: its essential charm is of more subtle quality. As it listeth, it comes and goes, it flashes upon you through the open doorway of some blank windowless house you pass in the street, from under the lifted veil of the beggar woman who lays her hand on your bridle, from the dark, contemptuous eyes of a child; then the East sweeps aside her curtains, flashes a facet of her jewels into your dazzled eyes and disappears again with a mocking little laugh at your bewilderment; then for a moment it seems to you that you are looking at her face but while you are

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1. Unromantic Spain by Mario Praz. London 1929. p. 101, 112.

wondering whether she be angel or devil, she is gone."<sup>1</sup>

This East though it is not so crude and melodramatic as that of the romantic poets is still colourful and mysterious. On this new and more subtle appeal of the Orient, we can do no better than quote Professor John Livingstone Lowes, with whose suggestive words in Convention and Revolt in Poetry, we can fitly conclude as we began, this thesis.

The Orient, says Professor Lowes, "had come to be as it still remains to us Occidentals, seductive with all that is cryptic and unfathomable in humanity itself. 'The mysterious East faced me', wrote Conrad in 'Youth', 'perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave.'" And I cannot serve my purpose better than by quoting the unforgettable continuation of the passage in which the Orient, silent, impassive and motionless looks down in the morning at the shipwrecked boats come up from their tussle with the sea: "And then I saw the men of the East - they were looking at me. The whole length of the jetty was full of people. I saw brown, bronze, yellow faces, the black eyes, the glitter, the colour of an Eastern crowd. And all these beings stared without a murmur, without a sigh, without a movement ... Nothing moved. The fronds of palms stood still against the sky. Not a branch stirred along the shore, and the brown roofs of hidden houses peeped through the green foliage, through the big leaves that hung shining and still like leaves of forged heavy metal. This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and sombre, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise." And that is the East which has exercised its spell upon Occidental poetry for centuries - on Goethe, and Rückert and Heine; on Flaubert, and Baudelaire, and Gautier; on Marlowe, and Byron and now, very particularly on the poets who are writing at this moment.<sup>2</sup> And they are doing both an old and a new thing.....For whenever poetry finds the uses of its special world gone flat and stale, it is very apt indeed, before the reaction runs

1. Persian Pictures ( 1728 ), p. 34.

2. The 'Imagists', Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, J. G. Fletcher & others.

its course, to turn its eyes to the exhaustless East.

And that is what it is doing now. But the interesting thing is that it is doing it in a fashion entirely in keeping with its own peculiar tendency. It isn't the vastness or the mystery of the East that this time exercises its old compulsion. For very modern poetry has set its face like a flint against all vastness and mystery whatsoever. These are among what it would call the "cosmic" qualities and from the cosmic its very soul revolts. That which does allure it in the East is an amazing tininess and finesse - the delicacy that is to say, and the deftness and the chrystalline quality of the verse of China and Japan. Bits of chinoiserie, and Japanese jewels five-syllables-long are our chief modern treasure trove. And all that is as inevitable as gravitation. If you happen to be rebelling against what you regard as too much soul in poetry, you can't be expected to set out forthwith in quest of the illimitable. And that is why a new and significant phase of the immemorial Oriental influence is coming into English poetry."<sup>1</sup>

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(2) Books of Oriental travel and history and other miscellaneous works relating to the Orient. The list of books in this section can be greatly multiplied, but here we have mentioned only those books to which the writers of the period, Southey, Moore, Beckford and others, refer in their notes, or those which are otherwise valuable for our subject.

(3) Poems on Oriental themes. Here again not all the poems dealt with in the body of the work have been reproduced, but only those which are comparatively unknown. Most of these are after the manner of Byron and bear witness to the popularity of that writer.

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(4) Books, articles, and dissertations published for the subject.

1. Convention & Revolt in Poetry, by John Livingston Lowes, London, 1930, p. 105-107.

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y.

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In the following pages no attempt is made to present a complete bibliography of the subject. Only those books are mentioned which the present writer has had to consult. Even out of those the books on the Romantic period in general, books of Criticism, biographies, <sup>tellers,</sup> editions of poetical works etc. of the authors dealt with, have been left out. As the footnotes in the body of the work provide the necessary references to these kinds of books, it has not been found necessary to reproduce them here again.

For convenience the list has been divided into four sections:

(1) Oriental & pseudo-Oriental sources which include the works of the Orientalists and translators, encyclopaedists etc. The books by contemporary Continental Orientalists, of which there were no translations in English, and to which the writers of the period do not make many references have been generally omitted. For an exhaustive bibliography for this section see M. Victor Chauvin's Bibliographie des Ouvrages Arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes, publiés dans l'Europe Chrétienne de 1810 à 1885.

(2) Books of Oriental travel and history and other miscellaneous works relating to the Orient. The list of books in this section can be greatly multiplied, but here we have mentioned only those books to which the writers of the period, Southey, Moore, Beckford and others, refer in their notes, or those which are otherwise valuable for our subject.

(3) Poems on Oriental themes. Here again not all the poems dealt with in the body of the work have been reproduced, but only those which are comparatively unknown. Most of these are after the manner of Byron and bear witness to the popularity of that author rather than show any intrinsic literary merit.

(4) Books, articles, and dissertations valuable for the subject of this Thesis. Works of a general nature are again omitted.

1. Oriental and Pseudo-Oriental Sources; Works of the Orientalists & Translators &c.

Arabian Nights Entertainments:

Trans: from A. Galland, Les Mille et une Nuits, contes Arabes, traduits en Francais ... 1704-; another edit: in Le Cabinet des Fées 1785-86; trans: into English 1707- etc. Many later editions and translations.

E. W. Lane: The Thousand and one Nights, commonly called in England The Arabian Nights' Entertainments. A New translation from the Arabic, with copious notes, London, 1838-1840.

John Payne: The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, its History and Character, London, 1884.

Sir Richard F. Burton: A plain and literal translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, now entitled the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, with introduction, explanatory notes on the manners & customs of Moslem men and a terminal Essay on the History of the Nights, Benares 1885; Library Edition

(For a complete bibliography of the Arabian Nights, see Chauvin op.cit. vol. IV-VII; also W.F.Kirby's bibliographical notes in Burton's Nights, vol. X, p. 512 ff and supplemental Nights, vol. VI, p. 370 ff. Kirby also gives a list of imitations and adaptations of the Nights.

Most of them being in prose, we need not reproduce them here).

Asiatic Miscellany. Consisting of translations, imitations, fugitive pieces, original productions and extracts ... by W. Chambers, Sir W. Jones and other - Gentlemen in India ... Calcutta, London 1787.

Asiatick Researches. or translations of the Society instituted in Bengal for inquiring into the history and antiquities, the arts, Sciences and literature of Asia vol. 1-20, Calcutta 1788-1839. Printed verbatim from the Calcutta edition vol. 1-11, London, 1801-1812.

Burder, Rev. Samuel. Oriental Customs: illustrations of the sacred scriptures by an application of the manners and customs of the Eastern Nations, London, 1802.

Carey, William & Marshman, J. The Ramayuna of Valmeeki in the Original Sanscrit, with a prose translation ... vol. I. Serampore 1806.

Carlyle, J.D. Specimens of Arabian Poetry ... Camb. 1796.  
Poems suggested by scenes in Asia Minor, Syria & Greece, London, 1805.

Castell, E. Lexicon Heptaglotton ... 1669. see also Walton.

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19. xii. 34