

MISCELLANEOUS.

AKBAR THE ECLECTIC.

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To the memory of the Hon. C. C. Bonney, Inaugurator and President of the Religious Parliament held in Chicago in 1893.

PROEM.

O! ye to whom, in quest of truth etern,
Beneath whatever guise it hap to masque,
The simplest cult of some untemped god,
Cathedral mass and gorgeous liturgy,
The feeblest feeling after the divine,
Ingenious systems of theology,
An esoteric unity import,
A world-wide craving to externalize,
In rite or writ, the innate thought of God;
List to this tale of Asian potentate
Who, hampered by no bigotry of mind,
Deemed nothing human foreign to himself.
What time the battle-fields of Europe reeked
With blood of the fanatic devotees
Of Christian sects whose bitter feud in naught
Save sanguinary clash assuagement knew,
The worshipers of whatsoever god
And the philosophers of every school
Equality and liberty enjoyed
Beneath the ægis of his gracious sway.
Akbar the Great was he most justly hight,
And lauded as the Guardian of Mankind.

THE EMPIRE.

Where Junna laves the Agra fortress walls,
Upon the throne of the Great Mogul sat
A ruler sprung from mighty Timur's loins,
Acknowledged lord of all the varied tribes
That dwelt by Indus or Gangetic banks,
In Cashmere vale, Himalaya-begirt,
Or by the Deccanese Godavari,

The Brahman, Parsi and the Mussulman,
The Buddhist and the Jew his word obeyed;
Conflicting claims of hostile tribes and states
Impartial justice, wise administration found.
Full measure and just weight to all alike
Within the market-places were proclaimed.
Throughout the empire well-built roads did serve
The lonely traveler and the caravan;
The highway robber and the petty thief
In vain sought refuge from the keen-eyed law.
Reluctant maid no more was wed perforce,
Nor 'gainst her will need widow mount the pyre.
Not all preoccupied by state affairs,
Great Akbar prized the fruits of intellect,
The painter's vivid portraiture of life,
The sculptor's chiseled block, the poet's dream,
While the creations of his architects
Evoked before the spellbound gazer's eye
The dazzling beauty of Alhambra's halls
Or marvels of the Eastern Caliphate.
Constructions vast as the Cyclopes reared.
They seemed the work of a Titanic hand;
Yet decorations delicate bewrayed
Artistic goldsmith, lapidary deft.
Like birds with wings outspread, the palaces,
In labyrinthine courts and colonnades,
With shady groves and cooling fountains girt,
Recalled what time their nomad ancestors,
A tented tribe, with nature did consort.
The blue enamel roofs did simulate
Celestial azure; on the walls of stone,
Sculptured in bold relief, stood forth to view
The pomegranate, the grape, and every vine
And fruit and blossom that the tropics yield.
In plentitude of life and might, aware
No human king the King of Terror stays,
Where bloomed Sikandra's gardens, Akbar reared
Palatial mausoleum to abide
Imperishable witness to his fame;
In mingled Arabesque and Buddhist styles,
Symbolic of the toleration broad
Enjoyed by votaries of every faith
That lodgment found within his empire vast.
To Akbar's catholic and cultured court,
From north and south, from east and west, repaired
The pilgrim, scholar, and the merchantman.
Of whatsoever men of every race
Were thinking, doing, saying, tidings came;
E'en rumor told of Albion's Queen Bess
And lands new found o'er evening's purpled tide.

THE DIVAN.

'Tis Islam's Sabbath; on this holy eve,
The moon, enskied in full-orbed brilliancy,
Effuses floods of mellow radiance
To enhance the emerald hue of field and grove,
And shed a silver sheen o'er lake and stream.
Within the boscaje trills the nightingale,
While from far jungle sounds the tiger's roar.
The Town of Victory which, from her proud height
Surveys the fertile lowlands, groves and streams,
Is in a rare effulgency enwrapped.
The slender minarets and walls inlaid
Gleam with the lustre of Golconda's gems.
Within the royal hall of audience,
The Emperor is seated on his throne,
Surrounded by his gay and brilliant court,
To hear expositors of divers faiths
Set forth the merits of their several creeds.
The Moslem Mollah, gaudily attired;
The Parsi priest, in flowing, snow-white robe;
The Buddhist monk, in yellow vesture clad;
The Twice-born Brahman with the sacred cord;
The Jew in all his pride of lineage;
Are present to address this court august
As champions of their respective faiths.
The Vizier silence now proclaims and says:
Your Emperor, in royal purple dight,
Extends his sceptre, as a sign of grace,
And deigns to hearken to your spoken words,
While promising to be impartial judge.
With the permission of his majesty,
In order due, set your religions forth.
The Moslem, taking up the proffered word,
Relates the necessary duties five
Imposed on Mussulmans by the Koran:
Belief in Allah, one and only God,
Omnipotent, omniscient, everywhere,
And in his holy prophet Mahomet;
Due distribution to the poor of alms,
And fasting in the month of Ramadan
From daybreak till the going-down of sun;
Prayer with the face to holy Mecca turned.
At dawn, noon, afternoon, at eve and night.
Announced by the muezzin from the mosque:
The Hajj to Mecca and the Kaaba shrine,
Obligatory once in life on all.
Usury, wine, and every game of chance,
Making the likeness of whate'er hath life,
Are to the followers of the Faith forbid.

In Paradise, the least of the redeemed,
 'Mid sweetest music, fragrances most rare,
 Shall be in costliest of raiment clad,
 And evermore on luscious viands feast,
 While those to whom most recompense is due,
 Throughout an endless day that knows no night,
 The Beatific Vision shall behold.
 The Parsi priest, whose ancestry of yore,
 Amid the fair Iranian hills and dales,
 Like sunflowers turned to greet the orb of day,
 Proclaims the sacred and Protean fire
 An emblem of Ahura Mazda's might.
 At war with Ahriman, the power of ill,
 From the beginning; in the latter days
 Will Ormazd found a realm of righteousness
 And all Hell's opposition overthrow.
 To purity of thought and word and deed,
 The prophet Zarathustra recommends
 The soul devout, to reverence of the good,
 Dread of the Evil One, and charity.
 The Buddhist next the might of Karma tells
 Which predetermines each successive link
 Within that misery-entailing chain
 Of mortal births which men must undergo
 Until Nirvana be through virtue gained.
 Desire is the engenderer of pain;
 Pain may be ended through the Eightfold Path
 Revealed to Buddh beneath the peepul-tree;
 Right judgment, language, purpose, practice, faith,
 Right meditation, effort, and right thought.
 To abstain from lying, thieving, homicide,
 And show unlimited unselfishness,
 Such was the message Gautama addressed
 To castes and outcasts hanging on his lips,
 And seeking a release from mortal ills.
 The Brahman with o'erweening pride of caste,
 In Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads,
 And philosophic systems erudite,
 Takes up in turn apologetic speech.
 Amid the multiplicity of gods
 And worship rendered beasts and stocks and stones
 By the unlettered proletariat,
 The truly philosophical discern
 A single, all-pervading deity.
 Constrained to sojourn here in many lives,
 The true believer, as the highest goal
 Of life and conduct meritorious
 And end of self, a reabsorption seeks
 Into the Atman, Brahma, the All-soul.
 The Song of the Celestial One reveals

Its special line of duty to each caste ;
 To reverence, rectitude and purity,
 Religiousness of act and speech and mind,
 Doth Krishna, avatar of Brahm, incite.
 Before th'august, imperial divan,
 As last apologist stands forth the Jew,
 Declaring how Elohim viewed the world,
 Newly create, to find that all was good,
 But man through sin from Paradise did fall
 And forfeited his sonship in the skies
 Unless atonement with his God be made.
 With waxing eloquence, the speaker paints
 The great historic moments of his race :
 How Moses did receive, 'mid lightning flash
 And thunder peal, on Sinai's lofty head
 The God-writ marble tablets of the Law,
 And taught of Yahveh, theocratic king,
 Founded the commonwealth of Israel ;
 Egyptian bondage, desert wanderings o'er,
 The welcome entrance to that Promised Land
 Where milk and honey for God's folk should flow ;
 The golden age of Hebrew monarchy
 Beneath the sway benign of Solomon,
 For wisdom far as Sheba's borders famed ;
 The splendor of Moriah's temple cult,
 With sound of trumpet, psaltery, flute and harp,
 With purple-girdled priests that serve in course
 With altar smoke conveying to the skies
 A savor grateful unto the Most High ;
 Within the Holiest, behind the veil,
 The luminous Shekinah brooding o'er
 The wingèd cherubim and Mercy-seat ;
 The Babylonian captivity,
 The imposition of the yoke of Rome,
 The desolation of Jerusalem,
 And the dispersal through the ethnic tribes :
 Yet how a new Jerusalem will rise,
 To be the marvel of the latter days,
 So that all nations from earth's utmost bounds
 With gladsome footsteps Zionward shall haste.
 The speaking o'er, the Emperor applauds
 The eloquence the orators have shown.
 While pleased to note the jealous eagerness
 With which each champions his special faith,
 A higher pleasure has his mind received,
 Since, 'neath exterior diversity,
 Appears a common faith in might unseen,
 A common code of duties ethical.
 As from his presence he dismisses now
 The orators and members of his court,

He would exhort his subjects, one and all,
 To banish from their minds, with firm resolve,
 Religious, race and caste antipathy,
 To seek the welfare of the commonweal,
 And in fraternal harmony to dwell.

BIBI MIRIAM.

Upon the coral strand of Malabar,
 Engirt with spice-trees and with cocoa-palms,
 The Lusitanian emporium
 Of Goa vies in brilliancy of life
 With Mogul Agra, Delhi, Fathipur.
 Da Gama found the ocean highway there,
 While Albuquerque by his sword acquired
 A second Portugal in India
 And second Lisbon, the renown of which
 Inspired the epic muse of Camoens.
 To Goa came the holy Xavier,
 To preach to Ind the Tidings of Great Joy,
 And thence embarking for the farther east,
 He sought to win by his apostolate,
 For Holy Church, Zipangu and Cathay.
 To Akbar's court have travelers brought report
 Of white-winged fleets that crowd its busy docks,
 Or with rich cargoes sail for western seas;
 Of marshalled troops assembled for parade,
 And prancing chargers rich caparisoned;
 Of Goanese hidalgos congregate
 Within the Viceroy's palace to enjoy
 The feast's good cheer or whirl in merry dance:
 Of the cathedral ceremonial,
 The swelling music echoing through the aisles,
 The vested priests intoning Latin prayers,
 And of the mitred metropolitans.
 To Goa Akbar sends an embassy,
 The choicest of his brilliant entourage,
 With greeting to the Viceroy and request
 That he some faithful priests will delegate
 To preach the Gospel to the Agra folk
 And to expound the new Christianity.
 With benison in name of Mother Church,
 The Viceroy sends an apostolic band
 With gifts and greetings unto Akbar's court.
 In Agra now, the cross of Christ is raised;
 The nave and choir resound with organ peal
 And with the canticle antiphonal,
 And fragrant incense fills the peopled aisles,
 What time the priest doth consecrate the Host;
 While holy men, inspired of God, set forth
 In the divans the doctrines of the Church,

The sacred Gospels, and the new command
 That men love one another as their Lord
 Loved the disciples of his special choice.
 'Tis well to hear the weighty words and thoughts
 The erudite and philosophical
 With pregnant emphasis enunciate;
 But sweeter still to learn of love divine
 In silver accents dropped from ruby lips,
 While tendril arms enclasp the listener
 And thrill with gentle touch the pulsing veins;
 To anticipate the joys of Paradise
 And holy fellowship of saints on high
 In soul communion with the best beloved,
 Two lives conjoined in perfect unison.
 Another embassy to Goa hies
 To seek a bride of Portuguese descent
 And by a nuptial bond unite the states
 In close association amical.
 A maid of royal lineage appears,
 A willing representative of Christ
 Amid the glories of the Mogul court,
 With meekness and humility endowed,
 Her comeliness of form and countenance
 A reflex of the purity of soul.
 Become the spouse of the great potentate,
 Her presence doth the whole zenana bless;
 Her queenly charm enthral the monarch's heart,
 And in the hours when passion flames his breast,
 Her quiet will of turmoil brings surcease.

THE DEMISE.

Upon his death-bed lies the King of kings,
 Surrounded by his household and grandees.
 Aware the hour of his departure nears,
 His sceptre he delivers to his son,
 And with these words bids all his last farewell:
 "Religious liberty I have conferred
 Upon the worshipers of every god.
 And thus have welded with a jointure firm
 The sects and peoples of my broad domains.
 Alas! that I, misled by arrogance,
 And the success of my despotic sway,
 While standing on the balcony at dawn
 And worshipping the rising orb of day,
 In course of my eclectic Faith Divine,
 Have let my prostrate subjects render me,
 Mere man, an homage due to God alone.
 In the relentless grasp of Death's cold hand,
 I find a king is to a Sudra kin.
 So, son Jehangir, let humility

And toleration be thy watchwords aye.
 Gifted at death with prophet's prescience,
 Amid the thronging scenes of time to come
 Which pass before my spiritual gaze,
 I see a vision of a future age
 When sons of men no more will meet in war
 To settle questions of theology,
 But, gathered in some peaceful Parliament,
 Will harmonize divergency of creeds,
 And through comparison will come to know
 They worship one and the same deity
 Whose image was in the beginning stamped
 Upon the mind when Godhead fashioned man;
 Unity will plurality replace,
 And thus a universal cult arise,
 To honor, till the ages are no more,
 The sole existent, sempiternal God.

THE ORIGINAL OF THE DROESHOUT SHAKESPEARE.

The Droeshout engraving published in the first folio edition of 1623, seven years after the poet's death, is commonly considered the most authoritative portrait of Shakespeare. That it bore a resemblance to the poet is testified to by Ben Jonson in an adjoined poem; in which, however, he expressed at the same time his dissatisfaction at the poor workmanship. It is certain that Martin Droeshout must have worked after an oil painting, for the young engraver was only twenty-one years of age at the time of its appearance.

Now there is an oil painting in existence to which attention has only lately been drawn, and which is now in the possession of the Shakespeare Memorial of Stratford-on-Avon. Mr. W. Salt Brassington, curator of the Shakespeare Memorial, describes the history of this interesting painting in his attractive book *Shakespeare's Homeland* as follows:

"In the eighteenth century the portrait belonged to a member of the Hart family, and was exhibited in London. It next passed to another owner who sold it to Mr. Clements of Sydenham, in whose possession it remained for nearly forty years, and by whom it was exhibited at the Alexandra Palace, where a fire occurred and the portrait narrowly escaped destruction. Being afterwards sent to Stratford-on-Avon, it remained at the Shakespeare Memorial until after the death of Mr. Clements, when it was purchased from his family by Mrs. Flower of Avonbank, and presented to the Shakespeare Memorial Association.

"The portrait is painted upon a panel of elm wood, composed of two pieces, with transverse braces; and the whole panel is covered with a coating of white, upon the top of which a light red pigment is spread. The face is solidly, but the rest of the picture rather thinly painted, and the detail is much finer than that of the engraving, though the resemblance between the two is obvious to the most casual observer.

"A closer inspection leads to the conviction that this portrait is the orig-