

it will be necessary to revert to this pitcher, which confirmed in such cogent manner conclusions arrived at from hundreds of single reasons before. Like the Rosetta stone, a lucky chance has preserved for us in it a monument which is not likely to exist in duplicate. I am also glad that it was found and described long before I came to the deductions which are now confirmed by the cycle of pictures on the pitcher, and that it remained unknown to me then. Otherwise the question would probably have been asked whether the pitcher had not been manufactured solely in support of my "fantastic notions."

OMAR, THE HERETIC.

BY JOHN T. BRAMHALL.

THE quatrains of Omar Khayyám, or al-Khayyámi, as the Arabians and Persians called him, offer an interesting study of the influence of Islam upon the millions of the human race that gather under the banner of the Prophet. In reviewing the writings of the Persian radical (Sufi, Shi'ite, heretic, Epicurean, or what you will), it is important that we get as nearly as possible to the real Omar. We have, unfortunately, no manuscript dating from his time (-1123), and the oldest accounts of him are but fragmentary. It was not until several centuries had elapsed (A. D. 1460), that anything like collections of the now famous quatrains were made, for Omar was not considered by his contemporaries as a poet of high rank.

It is important, however, to study the man before we base estimates on translations of apocryphal fragments. The *Charhár Maqála*, or "Four Discourses," of Nidhámí i' Arúdi of Samarqand, (about 1180, A. D.), in the section devoted to astrologers and astronomers, relates that in the year A. H. 506 (A. D. 1112-1113), Kwája Imám 'Umar Khayyám and Kwája Imám Mudhaffar-i-Isfizári (the same who was associated with Khayyám at the command of the sultan in the revision of the calendar), met in Balkh at the house of Amir Abú Sa'd, (Abú Sa'd Sharafu'l-Mulk, the minister of Malikshah?). "In the midst of that friendly gathering I heard that Proof of the Truth (Hujjat-i-Haqq), 'Umar say: 'My grave will be in a spot where the trees will shed their blossoms on me twice a year.'" And the narrator says that when he visited Nishapur, "it being then some years since that great man had veiled his countenance in the dust and the lower world was bereaved of him,"

he went to visit his grave and found it hidden with flowers. Then he fell to weeping, "because on the face of the earth, and in all the regions of the habitable globe I nowhere saw the like unto him. May God (blessed and exalted is He!) have mercy upon him, by His grace and favor." Such is the testimony of a contemporary scribe.

About fifty years later, in the *Mirşádu'l-Ibád*, or "Observatory of God's Servants," Khayyám is called "an unhappy philosopher, a fervent Sufi mystic, a theist and materialist," and his quatrains are condemned as "the height of confusion and error." Without pausing to ask how a Sufi mystic could be an atheist and materialist, we may note the contradictory testimony given in al-Qifti's *History of the Philosophers* (about 1250 A. D.), in which Khayyám is represented as a champion of the Greek philosophy. "The later Sufis," says al-Qifti, "have found themselves in agreement with some part of the apparent sense of his verse (*n. b.*), have transferred it to their system, and discussed it in their assemblies and private gatherings; though its inward meanings are to the [Moslem] Law stinging serpents, and combinations rife with malice." Here also Omar is represented as "without an equal in astronomy and philosophy," but as an advanced freethinker, constrained only by prudential motives to bridle his tongue.

The *Nuzhatu'l-Arwah*, "Recreation of Souls," of ash-Shahrazúrí, was also compiled in the thirteenth century, and contained thirteen couplets from the poet. His account is much fuller than al-Qifti's. It describes 'Umar, (to use the Persian form of the name), as a follower of Avicenna, but ill-tempered and inhospitable, a scholar of wonderful memory,—when memory itself was talent,—and with a knowledge of Arabic philology and the seven readings of the Koran that was remarkable among the critical scholars of that day. It is claimed that he was frowned upon by the great theologian al-Ghazzali, who conversed with him, but that he was held in high esteem by Malikshah. Immediately before his death, writes ash-Shahrazúrí, he was reading in the *Shifa* of Avicenna the chapter treating of the One and the Many, and his last words were: "O God! Verily I have striven to know Thee according to the range of my powers, therefore forgive me, for indeed such knowledge of Thee as I possess is my only means of approach to Thee."

Al-Qazwini, in his *Atharu'l-Bilad*, "Monuments of Countries," about the same period, relates how the philosopher covered with shame and confusion a certain theologian who, while denouncing

him in the mosque as a freethinker and atheist, used to come to him privately early in the morning to take lessons in philosophy. And note that "freethinker" meant then, as now among Pharisees, "atheist" and "unbeliever."

I am indebted to Prof. Edward G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*¹ for the above data, who in turn gives credit for the references to Nuzhatu'l-Arwah to Prof. Valentin Zhukovski, and to Dr. E. Denison Ross, principal of the Madrasa at Calcutta. (See Methuen's edition of FitzGerald's rendering of the *Ruba'iyát*, 1900).

Professor Browne tells us that Khayyám is strangely ignored by the great biographer Ibn Khallikan, and by Ibn Shakir, who strove in his *Fawatu'l-Wafayat* to supply the omissions of his predecessor. Hajji Khalifa, the great Turkish biographer, mentions Khayyám in connection with the science of algebra and with Malik-shah's reformed calendar. Dr. Ross has compiled a list of ten books ascribed to him by different authorities. Most of these were scientific or philosophical treatises in Arabic, one of which, his *Treatise on Algebra*, was edited by Woepeke with a French translation in 1851, while another, containing some observations on Euclid's definitions, exists in manuscript in the Leyden library. (Fortunate that it was not at Louvain!)

A reference by Robert Arnot to Shahrazúri's history gives additional light to the relations between al-Khayyámi, as he was familiarly called, and the Arabian scholar, and suggests that a humorous aside by the theologian has been misunderstood as an expression of dislike of the younger scientist. Referring to the astronomer as the successor of Abú 'Ali (Avicenna) in the various branches of philosophic learning, he relates an incident of al-Khayyámi visiting the Vizir, Abd-ur-Razzak, the chief of the Koran readers, Abú'l-Hassan al-Ghazzali being present, and as Omar entered the Vizir said: "Here we have *the* authority," and proceeded to ask al-Khayyámi for his opinion (the conversation was on the construction of a certain verse in the Koran). Omar gave it and al-Ghazzali exclaimed: "May God add such men as thee to the number of the learned! Of a truth, I did not think any one of the Koran readers knew the readings by heart to this extent—much less one of the secular philosophers."

This al-Ghazzali is referred to by Professor Browne as "the great theologian," and as one of the most influential if not one of the greatest thinkers of the period, who did more than any one else to bring to an end the reign of philosophy (Greek thought)

¹ Edward G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, p. 249 et seq.

in Islam, and to set up in its stead a devotional mysticism which is "at once the highest expression and the clearest limitation of the orthodox Muhammadan doctrine." In modern parlance, a conservative, or reactionary.

As for Avicenna, "the prince of physicians," it is scarcely necessary to explain that he was for ten years or more the physician and general literary and scientific secretary of Abú Ya'far, the sultan of Isfahan, and so learned that he was accused by his enemies of burning the royal library of the Saminids, after having stored its learning in his mind. Forty times, it was said, he had read through the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. Indeed, the career of the Bokharan master may shed some light upon that of his disciple, if we may call him so. "Amid his restless study," says Rev. Griffithes Thatcher of Camden College, N. S. W., "Avicenna never forgot his love of enjoyment. Unusual bodily vigor enabled him to combine severe devotion to work with facile indulgence in sensual pleasures. His passion for wine and women was almost as well known as his learning. Versatile, light-hearted, boastful, and pleasure-loving, he contrasts with the nobler and more intellectual character of Averroës."

From the above résumé we get a glimpse, "if dimly, yet indeed reveal'd," of Omar's personality. Scientist and scholar, deeply versed in the Koran, he unquestionably was. Claimed by some as a Sufi, or mystic, he was also denounced as a heretic. As a Persian, it is much to his credit that he was a Shi'ah, and was looked upon with suspicion by the Sunnis, followers of "the path," or traditional rule of the *Sunna*, for though Islam, theoretically, has no priesthood, the Ulema and the dervishes made a very effective substitute and arrogated to themselves the custodianship of the keys of heaven and hell.

Having considered the character and scholarship of Khayyám, as testified by contemporaries and by writers of the period, let us now turn to the influences which Islam and such other theological systems as he may have studied, exerted upon his mind. Why was Omar a heretic? Doubtless for the same reason which has impelled every religious insurgent to rebel,—the natural result of ecclesiastical tyranny upon a mind at once active, inquisitive, and independent. What was the Law of Islam, as handed down and amended by the Prophet, added to by custom and tradition, and interpreted by the mollahs? To understand the position of the Mohammedan Voltaires, Heines, and Tom Paines, we should have some knowledge of Islam and the Koran, of the mystic school of Sufism, and of the

"two and seventy jarring sects" which have grown up among the dervishes chiefly, who would either out-Sufi Sufism, or take the other extreme and denounce it altogether. And it is most singular that scholars still differ as to whether Khayyám was of one or the other class.

But, back of Sufism—back of Islam—is the desert. "The heat of the climate," says Gibbon, "influences the blood of the Arabs, and their libidinous complexion has been noticed by the writers of antiquity." (Cf. "The Chapter of The Mount," "The Chapter of The Inevitable," and others, Koran). The torridity of the climate seems to intensify religious ardor. The inflamed imagination of the camel-driver and the watching shepherd under the stars, where the intense heat of the day is reflected from the boundless waste of sand, must naturally tend to an exaggeration of all the passions. We know that in our own southwestern deserts Mexican herders are employed to watch the flocks, because white men of more active brain and more vivid imagination are apt to "go loco," or insane, and our deserts are Paradise compared to the furnace of Arabia.

Imagine the gentle scholar, through whose writings one may search in vain for a single threat, reading this anathema (from "The Chapter of The Covered," in the Mecca Suras), directed against the Prophet's enemy, Walid ibn Mughairah, one of the chiefs of the Qurais:

"Leave me alone with him I have created and for whom I have made wealth and sons that he may look upon, and for whom I have smoothed things down. Then he desires that I should increase! Nay, verily, he is hostile to our signs! I will drive him up a hill! May he be killed,—how he planned! Then he looked; then he frowned and scowled. . . I will broil him in hell-fire! and what shall make thee know what hell-fire is? It will not leave and will not let alone. It scorches the flesh! . . ."

Or this, from "The Chapter of The Smiting:"

"In the name of the merciful and compassionate God!

"The smiting!

"What is the smiting?

"And what shall make thee know what the smiting is?

"The day when men shall be like scattered moths, and the mountains shall be like flocks of carded wool!

"But as for him whose balance is heavy, it shall be in a well-pleasing life.

"But as for him whose balance is light, his dwelling shall be in the pit of Hell.

“And who shall make thee know what it is?—a burning fire!”
Again, “The Chapter of The Mount”:

“In the name of the merciful and compassionate God!

“By the mount! By the book inscribed upon an outstretched vellum! By the frequented house!² By the elevated roof!³ By the swelling sea! Verily the torment of thy Lord will come to pass;—there shall be none to avert it! The day when the heavens shall reel about,—then woe upon that day to those who call the apostles liars, who plunge into discussion for a sport!

“On the day when they shall be thrust away into the fire of Hell,—this is the fire which ye used to call a lie!—is it magic, this? or can ye not see?—broil ye therein, and be patient thereof, or not patient, it is the same to you; ye are but rewarded for that which ye do!

“Verily, the pious shall be in gardens of pleasure, enjoying what their Lord has given them; for their Lord shall save them from the torments of Hell!”

I have not, perhaps, in my haste, or my ignorance of the Koran, selected the most characteristic suras for my purpose, but they are sufficiently illustrative.

But consider that Khayyám was no Arabian, and much less a Turk, but a Persian whose not very remote ancestors were followers of Zoroaster, by whom fire was not considered as an instrument of torture, but as a symbol of divine power and beneficence. And while there is little reason to believe that Khayyám, scholar though he was, had a knowledge of the Sanskrit of ancient Persia, he had, no doubt, read the *History* of Tabari, which had been translated into Arabic and was a standard work in all libraries and gave some account of the Avesta. If he had not listened to the recitations of the Parsees, whose bloody persecution at the hands of the Seljuq conquerors he may have witnessed, he must have had some knowledge of their meaning and of the sentiment of the ancient faith of his people. The Gathas, or hymns of Zoroaster, may have arrested his attention, particularly the Haoma Yasht, which might supply a source of the “spiritual wine” of the Sufis, and of the hasheesh of his alleged friend, Hassan ben Sabbah, the chief of the Assassins, as well as offer an excuse, perhaps, for Omar’s devotion to “the cup.” He could not have missed, if he had come upon fragments of the *Vendidad*, the Parsee priestly code, the striking fact that the whole of the Zoroastrian Law is subordinate to the one great point

² The Kaaba in Paradise.

³ The roof of Heaven.

of view, the war against Satan and his noxious creatures, from which the book derives its name, "vendidad," *vi-daevo-datem*, the "anti-demonic law." That it is didactic in the extreme, as stated by Dr. Geldner, would not have repelled the Persian scholar, and as the most important document of the Zoroastrian faith, the sole literary monument of ancient Iran, it may be assumed that such an inquiring mind as that of al-Khayyámí would have studied every line he could obtain.

But this carries us too far into the realms of speculation, which allows us at best to assume that Khayyám might have contrasted the more merciful and just code of the great Persian teacher with the relentless cruelty and injustice, of which he constantly complained, of the Arabian prophet. We may say, indeed, that if he had studied the character and the words of Jesus, of whom as a recognized prophet he was not unacquainted,⁴ he might have contrasted the abounding love of the one with the unforgiving fanaticism of the other. But he did not. We are driven to the conclusion that Khayyám yielded blind obedience to the Prophet and the Koran, though not without many a jibe and protest; or else, while perceiving the contradictions and the injustice of the whole system of Islam, he may have concluded that it would be most unwise to renounce the patronage and protection of the sultan and his minister for the punishments inflicted upon avowed heretics, and that he would be, like Avicenna, "all things to all men,"

"And in some corner of the Hubhub couch,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee."

But the writer cannot pretend to be any wiser than the many who have already attempted to unravel the mystery of Omar, and the very best he can do is to pick up some of the crumbs that they have dropped and perhaps find some meat in a re-hashing. Assuming that the Nicolas prose translation is the nearest we have to the original, and also that the verses he has transcribed are the genuine productions of Khayyám (which is taking much for granted, but we can do no better),⁵ we find Omar to be sometimes a Sufi mystic, yet more often an avowed Epicurean; a confessed sinner and humble penitent, even like the Publican; an obedient son of Islam, and a most rebellious heretic; a cutting whip to the mollahs, but, withal,

⁴ Persia, and especially eastern Persia, was a melting-pot, (too often literally such), of religions, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Brahman, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, Moslem.

⁵ See Whinfield's introduction to Khayyám, and Browne, (*supra*), p. 256 et seq.

never with a curse upon his lips or any claim for holiness for his own part. Whatever Omar was, Sufi, infidel, materialist, he was no Pharisee.

“How long will you blame us, O ignorant man of God!⁶ We are the patrons of the tavern, we are constantly overcome with wine. You are given up entirely to your chaplet, to your hypocrisy, and your infernal machinations. We, cup in hand and always near the object of our love, live in accordance with our desires.” (N. 278.)

Can we wonder that the astronomer, who could calculate the orbit of Parwin and Mushtari, should be so confused with the contradictions, abrogations, customs, traditions (of which over seven thousand were sifted out of 300,000 by Bukhári and made into a code of Moslem law),—to say nothing of the dogmas of predestination, eternal punishment, annihilation, etc., as to exclaim:

“At this moment, when my heart is not yet deprived of life, it seems to me that there are few problems that I have not solved. However, when I call intelligence to my aid, when I examine myself with care, I perceive that my existence has slipped away and that I have still defined nothing.” (N. 113. See also N. 45.)

Here he becomes distinctly Epicurean:

“To drink wine and rejoice is my gospel of life. To be as indifferent to heresy as to religion is my creed. I asked the bride of the human race (the world) what her dowry was, and she answered: My dowry consists in the joy of my heart.”

But the poet was not always so light-hearted. At times he was oppressed with a “conviction of sin,” and would cry out:

“I am worthy neither of Hell nor a celestial abode. God knows from what clay he has moulded me. Heretical as a dervish and foul as a lost woman, I have neither wealth, nor fortune, nor hope of Paradise!” (N. 57.)

And this:

“No smoke ascends above my holocaust of crime: could man ask more? This hand, which man’s injustice raises to my head, no comfort brings, even though it touch the hem of saintly robes.” (N. 74.)

But his sins, as he confesses them, might find condonation, or excuse, in the Koran.

“The world will ever count me as depraved. Natheless, I am not guilty, men of holiness!⁷ Look on yourselves, and question

⁶ Mollah, dervish.

⁷ Mollahs.

what you are. Ye say I contravene the Koran's law. Yet I have only known the sins of drunkenness, debauchery, and leasing." (N. 88.)

Still, free will denied him, he indignantly faces his critics with this, which we are familiar with in FitzGerald:

"Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!"⁸ (F. lxxx.)

Omar revolted against the injustice, but he still cried to the Omnipotent for pardon and mercy.

"I am such as Thy power has made me. I have lived a hundred years⁹ filled with Thy benevolence and benefits. I would like still a hundred years to commit sin and to see if the sum of my faults outweighed Thy pity."

Perhaps from the standpoint of the true Musselman, and allowing for Eastern extravagance of expression, this is not as irreverent as might appear to a Christian. Mad, he seems at times, but there was a method in his madness.

"A slave in dire revolt am I: where is Thy will? Black with all sin my heart: where is Thy light and Thy control? If Thou giv'st Paradise to our obedience alone, it is debt of which Thou quit'st Thyself and in such case we need Thy pity and benevolence." (N. 91. Cf. F. lxxix.)

Predestination was the inexorable law of the Koran, as was held in the Christian Church by Augustine and Aquinas, and also by Luther and Calvin. Such a heart as Omar's, inclined to mercy and love, and a mind directed by justice, could not but demur, even while he submitted.

"When God fashioned the clay of my body, he knew what would be the result of my acts. It is not without His orders that I have committed the sins of which I am guilty; in that case, why should I burn in hell-fire at the last day?" (N. 99. Cf. N. 115.)

Here is a cry for mercy that recalls the timid and gentle logic of Sir Thomas Browne:

⁸ This is a very literal rendering of N. 390. In FitzGerald's lxxxi, the debated line about the snake may be ignored, but the presumptuous closing,

"—Man's forgiveness give—and take!"

may well be questioned. F. has out-Omared Omar. As given by Heron-Allen, the original reads very differently:

"Oh, Lord! grant me repentance and accept my excuses,
Oh, Thou who grantest repentance and acceptest the excuses of all."

⁹ A characteristic hyperbole.

“O my God! Thou art merciful, and mercy is kindness. Why then has the first sinner been thrown out of the terrestrial Paradise? If Thou pardonest me when I obey Thee, it is not mercy. Mercy is present only when Thou pardonest me as the sinner that I am.” (N. 101.)

Heretic he was, if hatred to man be orthodoxy,—Epicurean by force of logic,—sinner confessed; but yet he recognized in this seven-times sinful world the predominance of good.

“There is no shield which is proof against an arrow hurled by Destiny. Grandeur, money, gold all go for naught. The more I consider the things of this world, the more I see that the only good is good; all else is nothing.”

Love, not fanaticism, was Omar’s rule of life, inbred in his gentle soul. Hence he could not be a good Moslem.

“Each heart that God illumines with the light of love, as it frequents the mosque or synagogue, inscribes its name upon the book of love, and is set free from the fear of Hell while it awaits the joys of Paradise.” (N. 60.)

Nevertheless, Omar’s conception of Jesus seems to have been limited by the orthodox Moslem view of the prophet who was sent in succession to Moses and who was given the divine power of the “breath of life.”¹⁰

And if he often confessed that he was “steeped in wine,” with an ardor of contrition that seems, like the prayers of Luther, to belie his words, we may charitably believe, with Whinfield, Nicolas, and others, that these expressions very often bore a mystic meaning, and that the intoxication of wine was something more than sensual. As for his religion, to use the words of the author of the *Religio Medici*, “though there be several circumstances that might persuade

¹⁰ FitzGerald (iv) is too well known to repeat. Whinfield gives three renderings, and Nicolas only one. The two following are from Whinfield, and if we take Nicolas’s prose translation which follows as the more literal it is clear that the former cannot resist taking a poet’s license.

“Death’s terrors spring from baseless phantasy,
Death yields the tree of immortality;

Since ’Isa breathed new life into my soul
Eternal death has washed its hands of me.”—W. 43.

“Now springtide showers its foison on the land
And lively hearts wend forth, a joyous band,
For ’Isa’s breath wakes the dead earth to life
And trees gleam white with flowers like Musa’s hand.”

—W. 116, cf. 201.

“This is the moment when verdure begins to ornament the world, when, like the hand of Moses, the buds begin to show themselves upon the branches; when revived, as if by the breath of Jesus, the plants spring forth from the earth, when finally the clouds begin to open their eyes and weep. (N. 186.)

the world he had none at all, (as the general scandal of his profession, the natural course of his studies, the indifference of his behavior in matters of religion, neither violently defending one, nor with that common ardor and contention opposing another), yet in despite hereof he might without usurpation assert the honorable style of a follower of Allah, holding, indeed, a faith so catholic as to include not Islam alone, but all the worshippers of God.

“The temple of idols¹¹ and the Kaaba are places of adoration; the chime of the bells is but a hymn chanted to the praise of the All-Powerful. The *mehrab*,¹² the church, the chapel, the cross, are, in truth, but different stations for rendering homage to the Deity.” (N. 30. Cf. N. 248.)

And so we will take leave of al-Khayyami (God be merciful to him).

THE PROTOTYPE OF THE MODERN MEAT-INSPECTOR.

BY S. MENDELSON.

WRITERS on Preventive Medicine or Hygiene do not devote much, if any, time to details of the history of meat-inspection. They carefully and minutely treat of the objects and methods of the inspection, but not of its origin or evolution. Even veterinarians who are naturally deeply interested in this branch of their science, fail to furnish the information as to the origin and age of practical meat-inspection for purposes of averting causes of disease. They lead us back to distant lands and days of yore, but only to show that institutions, bearing more or less similarity to modern scientific inspection of meats intended for human food, have existed in other countries in former ages; they do not show the genesis of the institution.

In the scant historical data they do cite, the reader can find little palpable proof of meat-inspection in the modern sense. The standard *Text-Book of Meat Hygiene* (Mohler and Eichhorn, Washington, 1908), for example, summarizes the ancient history of meat-inspection within the space of one page (367), and advises the student: “For details see Ostertag’s *Handbuch der Fleischbeschau*,”

¹¹ The Kaaba in Mecca with its sacred black stone was built around a temple of the heathen gods of the Koreish, of whom Allah was the chief.

¹² The pulpit in the mosque.