

OMAR KHAYYAM AND CHRISTIANITY.

TWENTY-SIX QUATRAINS OF THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM CONTRASTED WITH TWENTY- SIX CHRISTIAN HYMNS.

BY WALTER C. GREEN.

ABOUT the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam in English verse, by Edward Fitzgerald, I can say nothing new to those who know these quatrains. To those who do not know them, I would say that Omar Khayyam, the Astronomer Poet of Persia, was born in the latter half of our eleventh and died in the first quarter of our twelfth century; that these quatrains are independent stanzas of four lines, sometimes all rhyming, but usually the third line is a blank; and last but not least, that Omar Khayyam would not have been as much heard of had it not been for Edward Fitzgerald.

The relation of Edward Fitzgerald to Omar Khayyam is best expressed in the following from Nathan Haskell Dole¹: "The growth of the Omar Khayyam cult, which during the past twenty years has assumed such extraordinary proportions, resulting in Omar Khayyam clubs and societies, and calling for edition after edition of the Rubaiyat, may be attributed almost wholly to the interpretation of Edward Fitzgerald. He ingeniously wove into a life-circle of agnosticism a number of originally disconnected and isolated quatrains, informing the whole with the unity of his own personality and with the flamboyant brilliancy of his peculiar genius. He took the Persian's thought and the Persian's manner, but made it his

¹ *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, English, French, and German translation, comparatively arranged in accordance with the text of Edward Fitzgerald's version, with further selections, notes, biographies, bibliography, and other material collected and edited by Nathan Haskell Dole, in two volumes. Boston: Joseph Knight Co., 1896.

with just such high-handed lordly rapine as Shakespeare displayed towards the predecessors whom he robbed to glorify."

I take these quatrains as I find them, and as they plainly read. Their interest here in this compilation comes from the fact that the sentiments and the ideas found therein express the feelings and beliefs of many persons to-day. These feelings of the fixity of fate, the helplessness of man, the vanity of the world, the mysteries of birth and death, the doubt whether we shall ever meet the loved and the lost, perhaps the conviction that they are gone forever, the moral unresponsiveness of nature, the yearnings after some faintly possible good amid the strongly present evil, and most of all the question whether the world could not have been better made—all these feelings and many other allied ones are but the common property of mankind. The man or woman who has never experienced such feelings is in some way abnormal, for these are the natural and in some cases the instinctive feelings of humanity, and in other cases these feelings, broadly speaking, of moral doubt, social despair, personal dependency, and mental distress, remain and take possession of them.

But there are other men and women who are swayed and owned, and we may say, uplifted by an entirely different set of feelings, which in a general way, for want of a better word, we call religious. They believe that they will meet again the loved and the lost, that the moral life is more than the life of pleasure, that evil is but unexplained good in the making, that the external world and the voice of conscience proclaim the existence of God, that goodness is to triumph over evil, that God heareth prayer, that He doeth all things well, and that the highest pleasures of life are best expressed in the spiritual terms of prayer, praise, self-denial, trust, resignation, peace, righteousness, divine pardon for sins committed—and in a vision beatific.

I do not dogmatize and say that one is right and that the other is wrong. I only wish to call attention to the poetical expression of these two great and fundamentally different views of life. For we must remember that all men and women have the same experiences of the outward life, joy and pain, work and play, love and hate, loss and gain, and that all alike are born into the same world, and that all alike are taken away from it. But the great thing, which is to some a glorious divine gift and to others an irremovable and unexplainable curse, in each man's conception of that which is above and within and beyond and behind and underneath this outward world. If I shall have helped any one from a study

of these quatrains and these hymns to realize the vast difference between these two views of life, my purpose will have been fulfilled.

* * *

Omar Khayyam, the Persian poet, who was born at Naishapur in Khorasan, calls to us to fling away repentance and to note the flight of time.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) the famous abolitionist, bids us lead the stern but joyous life.

Hast thou, 'midst life's empty noises,
Heard the solemn steps of Time,
And the low, mysterious voices
Of another clime?
Early hath life's mighty question
Thrilled within thy heart of youth
With a deep and strong beseeching,—
What, and where is Truth?

Not to ease and aimless quiet
Doth the inward answer tend;
But to works of love and duty,
As our being's end;
Not to idle dreams and trances;
Folded hands, and solemn tone;
But to faith, in daily striving
And performance shown:

Earnest toil and strong endeavor
Of a spirit which, within,
Wrestles with familiar evil
And besetting sin;
And, without, with tireless vigor,
Steady heart, and purpose strong,
In the power of Truth assaileth
Every form of wrong.

The Persian mathematician, who solved equations of the third degree geometrically, tells us that wherever we may be or whatever we may do, time flies.

VIII.

Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), a Scotch clergyman who wrote nearly one hundred hymns, points out the way to lengthen our lives.

He liveth long who liveth well ;
All else is life but thrown away ;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly done each day.

Then fill each hour with what will last ;
Buy up the moments as they go ;
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below.

Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure ;
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright ;
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor ;
And find a harvest of light.

* * *

Here the astronomer, who could foretell eclipses of the sun, gives us his conception of paradise on earth.

XII.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow.

John Taylor (1750-1826), for nearly fifty years a deacon at the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, England, shows us the way man

should live, worthy of himself, useful to those about him, and acceptable to his God.

Lord, what offering shall we bring,
At thine altars, when we bow?
Hearts, the pure, unsullied spring
Whence the kind affections flow;
Soft compassion's feeling soul,
By the melting eye expressed:
Sympathy, at whose control
Sorrow leaves the wounded breast;

Willing hands to lead the blind,
Bind the wounded, feed the poor;
Love, embracing all our kind;
Charity, with liberal store.
Teach us, O thou heavenly King,
Thus to show our grateful mind,
Thus the accepted offering bring,—
Love to thee and all mankind.

* * *

The Persian poet, never popular in his own country, reflects hopelessly upon the transitoriness of human splendor.

XVII.

Think, in this battered Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his destin'd Hour, and went his way.

Arthur Cleveland Coxe 1818-1896) was consecrated Bishop of the Western Diocese of New York in 1865. He finds in the church a divine institution that is to live forever.

Oh, where are kings and empires now,
Of old that went and came?
But holy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same!

Mark ye her holy battlements,
And her foundations strong;

And hear within her solemn voice,
And her unending song!

For, not like the kingdoms of the world
The holy Church of God!
Though earthquake-shocks are rocking her,
And tempest is abroad;

Unshaken as the eternal hills,
Unmovable she stands,—
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A fane not built by hands.

* * *

The pupil of Imám Mowaffak of Naishapur, "one of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassan," meditates in despairing tones upon the silent journey of the loved one who have gone.

XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

John White Chadwick (1840-1904), a well-known Unitarian preacher and poet, also meditates upon the silent journey of the loved ones who have gone, but with reverence and hope.

It singeth low in every heart,
We hear it each and all,—
A song of those who answer not,
How ever we may call;
They throng the silence of the breast,
We see them as of yore,—
The kind, the brave, the true, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down:
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown;

But, oh! 'tis good to think of them,
 When we are troubled sore;
 Thanks be to God that such have been,
 Though they are here no more!

More homelike seems the vast unknown,
 Since they have entered there;
 To follow them were not so hard,
 Wherever they may fare;
 They cannot be where God is not,
 On any sea or shore;
 What'er betides, thy love abides,
 Our God, forevermore.

* * *

This Persian philosopher, who was especially hated and dreaded by the Sufis, preaches the doctrine that Death ends in Dust.

XXIV.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
 Before we too into the Dust descend;
 Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
 Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and sans End.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) proclaims, "Dust thou art to dust returnest," was not spoken of the soul.

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
 Life is but an empty dream;
 For the soul is dead that slumbers
 And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! life is earnest!
 And the grave is not its goal:
 Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
 Is our destined end and way;
 But to act, that each to-morrow
 Find us further than to-day.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
 With a heart for any fate;
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labor, and to wait.

* * *

The Persian philosopher speaks in deep despair of his fruitless search after wisdom.

XXVIII.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
 And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
 And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
 "I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

The following from Michael Spruce (1746-1767) is a Scotch paraphrase of the satisfying "Ways of Wisdom."

Wisdom has treasures greater far
 Than east or west unfold;
 And her rewards more precious are
 Than is the gain of gold.

In her right hand she holds to view
 A length of happy years;
 And in her left the prize of fame
 And honor bright appears.

She guides the young with innocence
 In pleasure's path to tread;
 A crown of glory she bestows
 Upon the hoary head.

According as her labors rise,
 So her rewards increase;
 Her ways are ways of pleasantness
 And all her paths are peace.

* * *

Omar Khayyam, who spoke rash words² in saying "My tomb shall be in a spot where the northwind may scatter roses over it," cannot understand the why and the wherefore of the universe.

² The rashness of the words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Koran: "No Man knows where he shall die."

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
 Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
 And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
 I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

Frederick Lucian Hosmer (born 1840), a contemporary Unitarian clergyman, the author of many beautiful hymns, is content in life with the thought of God.

One thought I have, my ample creed,
 So deep it is and broad,
 And equal to my every need,—
 It is the thought of God.

Each morn unfolds some fresh surprise,
 I feast at Life's full board;
 And rising in my inner skies
 Shines forth the thought of God.

At night my gladness is my prayer;
 I drop my daily load,
 And every care is pillowed there
 Upon the thought of God.

I ask not far before to see
 But take in trust my road;
 Life, death, and immortality
 Are in my thought of God.

* * *

The Persian student of the seven planets questions in vain the earth and the seas and the heavens for an answer to the problem of human fate.

XXXIII.

Earth could not answer; nor 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.

The American Quaker poet Whittier (1807-1892) finds his solution in nature, seeing how the stars and the ocean and the earth pray to and praise God, though man is prayerless.

The harp at Nature's advent strung
Has never ceased to play;
The song the stars of morning sung
Has never died away.

And prayer is made, and praise is given,
By all things near and far;
The ocean looketh up to heaven
And mirrors every star;

The green earth sends her incense up
From many a mountain shrine;
From folded leaf and dewy cup
She pours her sacred wine.

The blue sky is the temple's arch;
Its transept, earth and air:
The music of its starry march
The chorus of a prayer.

So nature keeps the reverent frame
With which her years began;
And all her signs and voices shame
The prayerless heart of man.

* * *

The Persian philosopher, "busied in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in astronomy, wherein he attained a very high preeminence," contrasts the "*Thee in me*" with the "*Me Within Thee*."

XXXIV.

Then of the *Thee in Me* who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without—"The *Me Within Thee Blind!*"

Jane Fox Crewdson (1809-1863), an Englishwoman, in this hymn written during a long illness, contrasts the "glad Forever," with "earth's little While."

Oh, for the peace that floweth as a river,
 Making life's desert places bloom and smile;
 Oh for that faith to grasp the glad Forever,
 Amid the shadows of earth's little While!

A little while for patient vigil keeping,
 To face the storm, to wrestle with the strong;
 A little while to sow the seed with weeping,
 To bind the sheaves and sing the harvest song.

A little while 'mid shadow and illusion,
 To strive by faith love's mysteries to spell,
 Then read each dark enigma's bright solution,
 The hail sight's verdict,—He doth all things well.

And He who is himself the Gift and Giver,
 The future glory and the present smile,
 With the bright promise of the glad Forever,
 Will light the shadows of earth's Little While.

* * *

It was said of Omar Khayyam that "under the sultanate of Malik Shah he came to Merv and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the sultan showered favors upon him." In this quatrain he calls upon the departing one to drink his cup like a Stoic.

XLIII.

So when the Angel of the darker Drink
 At last shall find you by the river-brink,
 And, offering his Cup, invite your soul
 Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847), a clergyman of the Church of England who wrote over eighty hymns, in this hymn written a few months before his death, calls upon the one "who changest not" to abide with him.

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
 The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
 Change and decay in all around I see:
 O thou who changest not, abide with me!

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless:
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
 Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
 I triumph still, if thou abide with me!

Hold, then, the cross before my closing eyes!
 Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies!
 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
 In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!

* * *

The Persian poet has no fear that human life will ever cease, but sees no glory in its continuance.

XLVI.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
 Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
 The Eternal Sáki from that Bowl has pour'd
 Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

Samuel Johnson (1822-1882), a Unitarian clergyman, author of *Oriental Religions*, feels that because of its growing dignity human life will always continue.

Life of Ages, richly poured,
 Love of God, unspent and free;
 Flowing in the prophet's word
 And the people's liberty.

Never was to chosen race
 That unstinted tide confined;
 Thine is every time and place,
 Fountain sweet of heart and mind!

Breathing in the thinker's creed,
 Pulsing in the hero's blood,
 Nerving simplest thought and deed,
 Freshening time with truth and good.

Consecrating art and song,
 Holy book and pilgrim track,
 Hurling floods of tyrant wrong
 From the sacred limits back,—

Life of Ages, richly poured,
 Love of God, unspent and free,
 Flow still in the prophet's word
 And the people's liberty!

* * *

The Persian author of a monograph on "Some Difficulties of Euclid's Definitions," here contrasts the Unseen in this universe with the Seen, and comes to an agnostic conclusion.

LI.

Whose Secret Presence, through Creation's veins
 Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains;
 Taking all shapes from Mah to Mahi; and
 They change and perish all—but He remains.

William Brightly Rands (1826-1882) also contrasts the Unseen with the Seen, and finds in the universe a revealing God of Love.

I saw the beauty of the world
 Before me like a flag unfurled,
 The splendor of the morning sky,
 And all the stars in company;
 I thought, How beautiful it is!—
 My soul said, "There is more than this."

Sometimes I have an awful thought
 That bids me do the thing I ought;
 It comes like wind, it burns like flame;
 How shall I give that thought a name?
 It draws me like a loving kiss,—
 My soul says, "There is more than this."

Yea, there is One I cannot see
 Or hear, but he is Lord to me:
 And in the heavens and earth and skies,

The good which lives till evil dies,
 The love I cannot understand,
 God writes his name with his own hand.

* * *

Omar Khayyam, who made perhaps his most noteworthy contribution to science as an algebraist, reminds us that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

LIV.

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
 Of This and That endeavor and dispute;
 Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
 Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

This anonymous selection from *Hymns of the Spirit* reminds us that in life there is a place for other things besides still waters, green pastures and ease.

Father, hear the prayer we offer!
 Not for ease that prayer shall be,
 But for strength, that we may ever
 Live our lives courageously.

Not forever in green pastures
 Do we ask our way to be;
 But the deep and rugged pathway
 May we tread rejoicingly.

Not forever by still waters
 Would we idly quiet stay;
 But would smite the living fountains
 From the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness;
 On our wanderings, be our guide;
 Through endeavor, failure, danger,
 Father, be thou at our side!

* * *

Although the Persian poet could foretell the return of a comet, he is perplexed because no human being who has passed through the dark door ever returns to tell what lies beyond.

LXIV.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
 Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
 Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
 Which to discover we must travel too.

Richard Barton (1784-1849), an English Quaker poet, does not require proof, but conceives of the dead under the similitude of a star in the day time.

The dead are like the stars by day,
 Withdrawn from mortal eye,
 Yet holding unperceived their way
 Through the unclouded sky.

By them, through holy hope and love,
 We feel, in hours serene,
 Connected with a world above,
 Immortal and unseen.

For death his sacred seal hath set
 On bright and bygone hours;
 And they we mourn are with us yet,
 Are more than ever ours;—

Ours, by the pledge of love and faith,
 By hopes of heaven on high;
 By trust, triumphant over death,
 In immortality.

* * *

The Persian sage, who could compute the times of the rising and the setting of the moon, mourns that the devotion and the learning of mankind amounts to nothing.

LXV.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
 Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
 Are all but stories, which, awoke from Sleep
 They told their comrades and to Sleep return'd.

Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892), a Unitarian clergyman who wrote many beautiful hymns, feels in his heart that revelation is not sealed.

God of ages and of nations,
 Every race and time
 Hath received thine inspirations,
 Glimpses of thy truth sublime.
 Ever spirits, in rapt vision,
 Passed the heavenly veil within;
 Ever hearts, bowed in contrition,
 Found salvation from their sin.

Reason's noble aspiration,
 Truth in growing clearness saw;
 Conscience spoke its condemnation,
 Or proclaimed the Eternal Law.
 While thine inward revelations
 Told thy saints their prayers were heard,
 Prophets to the guilty nations
 Spoke thine everlasting word.

Lord, that word abideth ever;
 Revelation is not sealed;
 Answering unto man's endeavor,
 Truth and Right are still revealed.
 That which came to ancient sages,
 Greek, Barbarian, Roman, Jew,
 Written in the heart's deep pages,
 Shines to-day forever new!

* * *

The Persian poet here gives us his conception of heaven and hell.

LXVI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible
 Some letter of that After-life to spell:
 And by and by my soul return'd to me,
 And answered, "I Myself am Heaven and Hell."

Joseph Tuckerman (1778-1840), a Unitarian clergyman who was remarkably successful as a minister-at-large in Boston, tells of a different conception of heaven.

Father divine, this deadening power control,
Which to the senses binds the immortal soul;
Oh, break this bondage, Lord! I would be free,
And in my soul would find my heaven in thee.

My heaven in thee!—O God! no other heaven,
To the immortal soul, can e'er be given:
Oh, let thy kingdom now within me come,
And as above, so here, thy will be done!

My heaven in thee, O Father! let me find,—
My heaven in thee, within a heart resigned;
No more of heaven and bliss, my soul, despair;
For where God is found, my heaven is there.

* * *

The Persian algebraist here likens life unto a most perplexing game of chess, wherein we are the helpless pawns.

LXIX.

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days:
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back into the Closet lays.

William Brightly Rands (1826-1882), the English "Laureate of the Nursery," likens life unto a happy game of love and law, to be entered by the asking of divine help.

One Lord there is, all lords above;
His name is Truth, his name is Love,
His name is Beauty, it is Light,
His will is everlasting Right.

But ah! to wrong what is his name?
This Lord is a consuming Flame,
To every wrong beneath the sun;
He is One Lord, the Holy One.

Lord of the Everlasting Name,
Truth, Beauty, Light, Consuming Flame!
Shall I not lift my heart to thee,
And ask thee, Lord, to rule in me?

If I be ruled in otherwise,
 My lot is cast with all that dies,
 With things that harm, and things that hate,
 And roam by night, and miss the gate,—

The happy Gate, which leads to where
 Love is like sunshine in the air,
 And Love and Law are both the same,
 Named with an Everlasting Name.

* * *

Here Omar Khayyam, one of the eight learned men employed to reform the Persian calendar, reflects upon the omniscience of the Great Unknown.

LXX.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
 But Here or There as strikes the Player goes;
 And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
 He knows about it all—He knows—HE knows!

William Gaskell (1805-1884), an English Unitarian clergyman who contributed seventy-nine hymns to Beard's *Unitarian Collection of Hymns for Public and Private Worship* (1837), gives his idea of the omniscience of God.

Mighty God, the first, the last,
 What are ages in thy sight?
 But as yesterday when past,
 Or a watch within the night?

All that being ever knew,
 Down, far down, ere time had birth,
 Stands as clear within thy view,
 As the present things of earth.

All that being e'er shall know,
 On, still on, through farthest years,
 All eternity can show,
 Bright before thee now appears.

In thine all-embracing sight,
 Every change its purpose meets,
 Every cloud floats into sight,
 Every woe its glory greets.

Whatsoever our lot may be,
 Calmly in this thought we'll rest,—
 Could we see as thou dost see,
 We should choose it as the best.

* * *

The Persian poet-astronomer, who compiled some astronomical tables entitled *Zîji-Malikshâhi*, feels that the heavens are as helpless as he.

LXXII.

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
 Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
 Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for it
 As impotently moves as you or I.

Joseph Addison (1672-1719), the English essayist and author of "The Vision of Mirza," expands the theme, "The Heavens declare the Glory of God.'

The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue ethereal sky,
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
 Their great Original proclaim.
 The unwearied sun, from day to day,
 Does his Creator's power display,
 And publishes to every land
 The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
 And nightly to the listening earth
 Repeats the story of her birth;
 While all the stars that round her burn,
 And all the planets, in their turn,
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
 Move round this dark terrestrial ball!
 What though no real voice nor sound
 Amid their radiant orbs be found!—
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice;
 Forever singing as they shine,
 "The hand that made us is divine."

* * *

The poet of the Rubaiyat, who has been compared with Lucretius, "both as to natural temper and genius," proclaims the doctrine of a perfect predestination.

LXXIII.

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

Robert Seagrave (1693-1764), an ardent follower of the Wesleys and Whitfield, reminds us that we are free to rise from the transitory things of life to something higher.

Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,—
 Thy better portion trace;
 Rise, from transitory things,
 Towards heaven, thy native place;
 Sun and moon and stars decay,
 Time shall soon this earth remove;
 Rise, my soul, and haste away
 To seats prepared above.

Rivers to the ocean run,
 Nor stay in all their course;
 Fire ascending to the sun,—
 Both speed them to their source;
 So a soul that's born of God
 Pants to view his glorious face,
 Upward tends to his abode,
 To rest in his embrace.

The philosophy of this Persian poet, whose *Takhallus* or poetical name (Khayyam) signifies a tent-maker, leads him into a profound fatalism.

LXXIV.

YESTERDAY *this* Day's Madness did prepare;
 To-MORROW's Silence, Triumph, or Despair:
 Drink, for you know not whence you came, nor why:
 Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

America's Quaker poet, Whittier (1807-1892), feels that the human race is advancing age by age.

Oh, sometimes gleams upon our sight,
 Through present wrong, the eternal Right;
 And step by step, since time began,
 We see the steady gain of man.

That of all good the past hath had
 Remains to make our own time glad,
 Our common daily life divine,
 And every land a Palestine.

Through the harsh noises of our day
 A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
 Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
 A light is breaking calm and clear.

Henceforth my soul shall sigh no more
 For olden time and holier shore;
 God's love and blessing, then and there,
 Are now and here and everywhere.

* * *

The Oriental mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine-bearer, speaks of his coquetting with Repentance.

XCIV.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
 I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
 And then and then came Spring and Rose-in-hand
 My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888), the American Unitarian clergyman who wrote the *Ten Great Religions*, tells how the prodigal may return at any time.

Brother, hast thou wandered far
From thy Father's happy home,
With thyself and God at war?
Turn thee, brother, homeward come!

Hast thou wasted all the powers
God for noble uses gave?
Squandered life's most golden hours?
Turn thee, brother, God can save!

Is a mighty famine now
In thy heart and in thy soul?
Discontent upon thy brow?
Turn thee, God will make thee whole!

He can heal the bitterest wound,
He thy gentlest prayer can hear;
Seek him for he may be found;
Call upon him, he is near.

* * *

Omar, the tent-maker, yearns and hungers and thirsts for some certainty in this world.

XCVII.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
To which the fainting traveler might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) is sustained by an unshakable conviction in the eternal goodness of the world.

Firm, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings,—
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
 And seraphs may not see,—
 But nothing can be good in him,
 Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
 I dare not throne above ;
 I know not of his hate,—I know
 His goodness and his love.

And thou, O Lord, by whom are seen
 Thy creatures as they be,
 Forgive me, if too close I lean
 My human heart on thee.

* * *

Though Omar could calculate the orbits of the planets, he laments his absolute inability to change the roll of fate.

XCVIII.

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late
 Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
 And make the stern Recorder otherwise
 Enregister, or quite obliterate!

William Tidd Matson (1833-1866), an English Congregational clergyman whose hymns are said to be far above the average and deserving wide acknowledgment, sings of "The Blessed Life."

O blessed life! the heart at rest
 When all without tumultuous seems ;
 That trusts a higher will, and deems
 That higher will, made ours, the best.

O blessed life! the mind that sees,
 Whatever changes years may bring,
 A mercy still in everything,
 And shining through all mysteries.

O blessed life! the soul that soars,
 When sense of mortal sight is dim,
 Beyond the sense,—beyond, to him
 Whose love unlocks the heavenly doors.

O blessed life! heart, mind, and soul,
 From self-born aims, and wishes, free,
 In all at one with Deity,
 And loyal to the Lord's control.

* * *

The Persian poet, who died at Naishapur in the year of the Hegira 517 (A. D. 1123), felt that he could have made a better world if he had been given the chance.

XCIX.

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
 Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
 Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's desire!

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), the greatest English convert to the Roman Catholic church in the nineteenth century, feels a sublime trust in God.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead thou me on!
 The night is dark, and I am far from home,—
 Lead thou me on!
 Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
 The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
 Shouldst lead me on.
 I loved to choose and see my path; but now
 Lead thou me on!
 I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
 Pride ruled my will, remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
 Will lead me on,
 O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone;
 And with the morn those angel faces smile
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!