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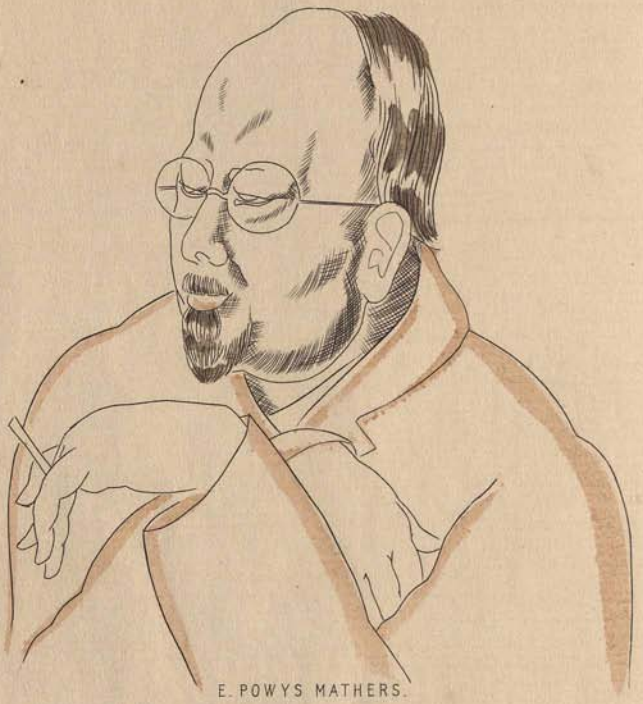
Anthology of
Eastern Love



E. POWYS MATHERS.

EASTERN LOVE

ANTHOLOGY OF EASTERN LOVE

II

ENGLISH VERSIONS &
TERMINAL ESSAYS BY
E. POWYS MATHERS

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VOLUME XII

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Tung-Shêng and the Hu

(*This tale from the Chinese Liao Chai Chih-I, 'Strange Tales Told in a Studio,' by P'u Sung-Ling, XVII century, was omitted by the late Professor H. A. Giles from his beautiful versions of the collection. I have translated from 'Contes Chinois,' by J. Halphen.*)

Tung-Shêng

THERE WAS ONCE A MAN NAMED TUNG-SHÊNG, known by the first names of Hsia-sseu, who lived in a sub-district in the West of the Prefecture of Ch'ingchou, a Province of Shan-tung.

One dreary winter evening he was getting ready to go to bed, and had already turned back the sheets, lit his stove, and was in the act of drawing the shade over the lamp, when some friends called and invited him to come and drink with them. He accepted this invitation, carefully locked his outer door, and followed them to their house, where he found a certain Doctor already seated at the table, who was exceedingly famous for his skill in foretelling the future by inspection of the veins. Each of the guests in turn submitted to his examination, and he gave but a cursory glance at Wan-shêng and Chui-ssu ; but when he came to Tung he said : 'I have had a long experience in this kind of divination : the two honourable persons whom I have just examined have nothing of particular interest to show me ; but here are some most extraordinary veins ! As for your life, I see such strange things that it would need a wiser man than I to explain them : and yet you appear to be quite robust.'

The guests felt ill at ease and asked him what he meant.

'Such or such eventualities,' he answered, 'may possibly falsify my foreknowledge; but in any case I warn these honourable persons to be equally on their guard.'

The company was still more disturbed at these equivocal words, but the Doctor either could not or would not give any further explanation; and in these depressing circumstances it was not long before the persons of this little party broke up, and at about midnight took leave of each other.

On arriving home Tung was not a little surprised to find the door of his private apartment half open; but, being slightly drunk, he could not be quite certain whether, in his hurry to follow his friends, he had forgotten to shoot the bolt or no. He went in and, without troubling to light the lamp, made ready for sleep. To try whether his bed was of the right temperature, he put his hand between the sheets and was amazed to find his place occupied by a plump and dimpled human body. In utter stupefaction he withdrew his hand and quickly lit the lamp. Then he saw in his bed a delightful girl with pleasing features and a child-like smile, truly celestial. He was filled with joy at the sight of her; but on

permitting himself certain familiarities, he encountered a long fox's tail with his hand, and was on the point of rushing away in terror when the girl awoke.

She put out one of her hands and grasped him by the arm, asking him why he wanted to escape, and he, poor fellow, being in increasing terror, tremblingly and beseechingly implored the spirit to have pity and pardon him. But the girl burst out laughing and said: 'What gave you the idea that I am a spirit? Does my head frighten you?' 'It is not your head which frightens me,' he answered, 'but your tail!' At this she laughed still louder, and said: 'What is all this about a tail? You must be seeing things.' And, guiding his hand, she made him feel again. The bottom of her back was sleek and smooth, and the coccyx entirely normal. 'Well,' she said, still laughing, 'you are a little drunk and fuddled: you are not too sure of what you are doing, and you are slandering a poor creature most undeservedly.'

Tung was much smitten by her beauty, but still he had his doubts: he allowed that he might well have made a mistake in the matter of the tail, but he could not understand how the girl came to be there at all. That was what troubled him. 'Do you not remember,' said the girl, 'a family who were your neighbours

when you lived in the East? An old lady with white hair? Count on your fingers, and you will see that it is ten years since you left that country. Neither of us had our hair done up then, and you were a boy with two top-knots.' In his astonishment Tung answered her: 'Then you are A-so of the family of Ch'on?' 'Yes.' 'I remember you now. But it is ten years since I saw you, and the shoot has grown to a glorious stem. To what do I owe your unlooked for arrival in my bed?' 'Four or five years ago,' answered the girl, 'I married a man of good family, but not of outstanding intelligence. One after the other he lost his father and his mother, and soon followed them to the grave himself. So, being left alone and without support, I remembered our childish friendship and resolved to come in search of the only friend that I knew. Yesterday evening I was crossing your threshold, just as your friends were inviting you to drink with them; therefore I hid myself in a corner and waited for your return. You were a long time away, and I grew weary of waiting there. So, since my feet were frozen and I was shivering all over, I took courage to find a little warmth in your bed, because I had given up hope of seeing you return.'

Tung was overjoyed at this explanation and,

burning with desire, lost no time in undressing and joining her in the bed.

A month passed, and his servants saw with distress that Tung grew thinner every hour. One day his speech suddenly became thick and impeded, and remained so for some little time; then his face began to be drawn, and his eyes looked across each other. At this he himself began to feel alarmed, and went to consult that same famous Doctor who foretold the future. 'I was not mistaken,' said the Doctor. 'The evil chance has come about, and to-morrow my prediction of death will be fulfilled: my skill is unavailing.' Tung collapsed into a chair and burst out crying; and the Doctor, being unable to calm him, took a needle and cauterised his navel, then gave him a draught, and admonished him, if there were a woman with him, to send her away before all else. Understanding from this the source of his danger, Tung returned to his house, where the girl greeted him with a smile; but he repulsed her, saying: 'All is over between us, for I am going to die.' Then he turned his back upon her and left her. She grew red with anger and shame, and told him that he still seemed to have plenty of will to live; but he would not listen to her complaint, and when night came swallowed his draught and slept

alone. Hardly had he closed his eyes before he dreamed that he had to do with her, yet on awaking he found the bed empty. He rose in terror and went to sleep by his legitimate wife in the inner apartment, and kept the lamp burning: but his dream returned to him. The girl was not seen after that day, and Tung's illness rapidly developed; he began to spit great clots of blood, and soon he died.

Wang-chiu-sseu was in his study when he saw a woman coming towards him in the full bloom of her youth. She pleased him at first sight, for she was indeed delightful, and his desires were kindled immediately. He asked her whence she came, and she answered: 'I was the neighbour of Hsia-sseu, and he was very good to me. But unfortunately he fell under the influence of a Hu*, and soon died in its formidable clutches. Therefore I became frightened for myself also, and have come, since you are a scholar, to ask for your protection.' Growing more and more smitten, Wang fell an easy prey to her, and the two lived together for many days.

The unfortunate man was securely taken in the coils of the girl's charm, and was already going into a decline, when Tung appeared to him one night in a dream, saying:

'My friend, you have to do with a sorceress,

who has killed me and now means to kill you also. I am going to tell you a secret, the divulging of which will bring upon me the wrath of the Judges of the Lower World. When the seventh night comes, light a joss-stick outside the room in which you sleep; but above all do not forget to have nothing to do with her.'

At this the Doctor awoke in great trouble, and said to the girl: 'I am ill, and fear that I will die. My death is certain if you remain with me.'

'You talk like an old man,' she answered. 'Let us love each other, since you are still alive and we are both young. If we no longer loved, then we should be dead indeed.' And, sitting by him, she persuaded him with a thousand caresses.

Wang was incapable of resisting her and again surrendered to her influence. He bitterly regretted the fact after each occasion, but could not make up his mind to break with her. Nevertheless, when the seventh evening came, he placed his joss-stick outside the door; but the girl perceived it, and took it and broke it. That night Tung once more appeared to him in a dream, and said: 'You have yielded to your weakness and have not obeyed my injunction; but there is yet time.'

So, on the following night, Wang ordered a trusted servant of his to wait until they were well asleep and then secretly to light a joss-stick. This was done; but although the girl was in bed she was aware and jumped up, saying: 'They have lit another joss-stick.'

'I know nothing about it,' answered Wang; but the woman rose up trembling and again went and destroyed the joss-stick.

On her return, she asked him who had told him to do this thing. 'I did not do it,' said Wang; 'though it may be that my wife is uneasy concerning my sickness and, believing it to be caused by magic, is trying to exorcise it.' This did not satisfy the girl, and she was still very ill at ease: but the servant had seen her destroy the joss-stick, and quickly lit another. Then she began to groan, and said: 'Lord, you are good and generous by nature. It is I who caused the death of Hsia-sseu, and I came to you from his house after his death. I make full confession of my crime, for in a few moments I shall be face to face with him in Hell. Lord, if you have not forgotten our love, promise that you will not destroy my mortal remnants.' Saying this, she rose from the bed and fell to the ground dead: and when they brought a light they found lying there nothing but a dead fox.

But fearing to see the girl return to life, Wang hurriedly summoned his trusted servant and ordered him to dismember the animal and to burn the skin.

Wang remained in danger of death for a long time; but one night he dreamed that a fox came to him and said: 'Lord, I have appeared before the tribunal of Hell. The Judge questioned Tung, and we were for a long time confronted with each other. But, since he let himself be led away by me, his death was pronounced just, and I was acquitted of all seduction. Now I have been sent back to the earth to find the Philosopher's Stone: but, in order to return to life, I must have my mortal remnants. What have you done with them?'

'They are no concern of mine,' answered Wang. 'My servant took them away and destroyed them.'

To this the fox sadly replied: 'I have killed many men; but now in my turn I am dead, and dead indeed. Lord, you have been pitiless. Now I go, and go hating you.'

Wang went on being ill for a long time; but at the end of six months he entirely recovered.

NOTE

PAGE 8 Hu

A creature sometimes regarded as a wizard or witch able to assume animal form, but, more properly, an animal able to assume human form.

Annam

(These examples of the popular literature of Annam have been selected and translated from 'Les Amours Jaunes' by Marcel Davray, 'Les Chantes et les Traditions Populaires des Annamites,' by G. Dumoutier, and 'Baisers d'Orient,' by Jean Hervez.)

THE BALLAD OF THE RICE-PICKERS

1

I HAVE NO HAT AND I MUST PICK
rice till the evening.
May the heat of the sun not strike me
and the rain withhold from me,
for I must pick rice till the evening.

2

Let us go forth and pick in the country of
Doai,
for though there is no pay
the men are handsome.
They give you a fine crying baby
and it is a comfort to you as you kiss it
at the end of the season.

3

What do you alone in the rice field,
handsome reaper?
You walk along the bank
and your face is pleasing to me;

let me follow you to your house
for I would eat betel with you.

4

Never, in a thousand thousand years,
pick rice in the village of La
for the men of it are ugly.
There is nothing to eat
that does not stink of brine
and the mad-apples are detestable.

5

Who brought me to this place
where are rivers everywhere
and mountains everywhere,
and my sadness has none to speak to
except the moon
as he looks down on me?

6

The golden knife must to the velvet sheath,
and who will want me?

A student is not for a rice-picker,
and yet my heart trembles
and I burn all over.

7

Ask your old mother to dye it black,
you in the white robe.
I call to the moon, he does not answer
but only looks and looks
and looks at me.

8

As you touch the comb
remember the mirror;
as you touch the turban
remember the purse, darling.
I am in the rice field and you are far,
O sweetly handsome boy, remember.

9

Seeing my wine gourd
they laugh as if I were drunk,
for the gourd is empty and my face is sad.

It is two o'clock and the day is passing
and I have nothing to eat.

10

Take care that you never marry a student
for they have long backs
and desire to wear fine robes,
they comb their hair
and let their nails grow
and only leave the table to go to sleep.

11

Confess you are thirty
and let me follow you to your house,
that I may know your parents.
I will salute your ancestors,
I will drink tea,
I will eat betel with you.

12

O you who pass,
are you in such a hurry?

The Ballad of the Rice-Pickers

The rice-picker has betel in her sash
and areca between the breasts of her bodice.
The way is long and the sun is very hot,
have you no story to tell me?

13

We must enjoy the full moon
and the flowers
as they come to be wide and scented.
You sang with your friends,
whence comes your sadness
now you have followed a husband of your own
choosing?

14

Your mother loves the sticky perfumed rice,
fat pigs and far-fetched belts.
Now there is a heap of belts
in the great chest;
but the stripes with a cane
are very painful.

15

Heaven send a good harvest
that you may sell the rice I pick
and buy me from them.
I would leave the pagoda and the betel box,
the village and the water-pipe,
to follow you.

16

You told me you had no husband,
but this child laughing upon your hip
is nine-tenths like you.
I think the rest
is rather like the man whose rice
you picked last year.

17

I long for the first two months of the year
when the land and the husbandmen are resting,
for the air is fresh
and the girls gather the grass
and the laughing boys
sit round and look at them.

18

Now is the time
when the man says to the woman :
'Leave your fool of a husband,
and I will leave my wife to follow you ;
also I will take great care
of any babies.'

19

The young man goes from the girl
and the woman from her husband ;
but this love
passes with the season
and the rice-pickers say :
'Your babies are young,
send them back to their father.'

20

Let us go to the East to pick rice,
for we shall see the pagoda of Pha Lai
and cross the river of Sau Dau.
It is very cold at night there
for one alone,
will you not come and share my mat with me ?

21

It is better to lie with two men
under the windy banana leaves,
than alone on a new mat.
I could not sleep last night,
for the mosquitoes and the mosquito thought
of you
kept me awake.

22

Go your ways,
for a wife like a bar of gold
is waiting in a fan-palm-leaf hut
for you,
you beast.

. . .

TALES OF SIMPLICITY

I

The Mirror

IN A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE THERE LIVED A VERY simple couple, and one day the wife, returning from market, told her husband that she had seen a pretty girl with a wonderful comb, and that she wished for a comb like it; but since she did not know the word 'comb,' she told him that what she desired was a shining something shaped like the moon.

The husband, wishing to please his wife, went to the town to buy this thing; but he in his turn could not explain what he wanted, and so asked for something like the moon. And the merchant gave him a mirror, which he bought and took home.

When his wife gleefully took it to look at, she saw a smiling face in it. Not understanding that this was her own face, she thought her husband was playing an evil trick on her and said to him: 'What need had you to bring this woman here? Do you mean to make her your concubine?' And she started weeping, and called her mother to witness how her husband had insulted her.

Her mother ran up and, seeing her own face in the mirror, exclaimed: 'If he had even brought

a young girl ! It is an insult to us all to bring this wrinkled old harlot into the house ! ' The two women fell upon the man and beat him, so that only with great difficulty was the poor wretch able to escape. At last he ran and complained to the mandarin, who at once gave orders for the two women and the mirror to be seized and brought before him.

But he was no better informed, and had himself never seen a mirror. So, when he took up the subject of the dispute and saw his own image reflected in it, he thought that here was some advocate who had been brought for the defence, and now dared to look him in the face. Irritated by this breach of manners, he broke the mirror on the floor and had the husband beaten and turned the two women out of the house.

2

The Daughter

THERE WERE ONCE A HUSBAND AND WIFE who lived alone in a hut high up in the mountains. And the wife dreamed a dream that she should bear a daughter who would become pregnant by the stars in the sky, and that the resulting girl child should wed the mandarin. All went well until the woman

bore a female baby, and the latter grew to that age when girls go abroad at evening. Then either the man or the woman would follow her as she went forth; and when the man saw her leaping under the boy of her choice beneath a palm, whose single fruit shone roundly in the light of the bright Heaven, he went back to his wife, saying: 'You dreamed wrong, for she is going to be pregnant by the moon.'

The wife was indignant, and when, a few nights later, the girl went out again, she followed her, and saw her leaping beneath her lover under the clear white flowers of the jasmine. So she returned to her husband, saying: 'Never dare to suggest again that my dreams are mistaken. Our daughter is most certainly pregnant by the stars in the sky, and her child will marry the mandarin.'

But the girl, being well instructed after the fashion of the French, had no child, and that is perhaps as well.

* * *

LOVE SONGS

1

Waiting

SITTING ALONE BEFORE THE DOOR
I try to cheer my heart a little
by singing softly.
Has that bird no care
that he sings full-throated?

Do you remember the day when we two sat
by the red waters of the great river,
telling each other hopes?
Come back to me.

Come back to me
and we shall drink cups of wine
to the spring breezes,
and listen to the grasshoppers in autumn,
and in the winter we shall play flute tunes
on bamboo pipes.
Come back to me.

2

The Netted Image

It is a pity to see flowers
growing in the forest
where none may breathe them,

it is a pity to see a beautiful woman
in the bed of a fool,
wiping away her cheeks' vermilion
as she dries her tears.

The flame flowers close against the dew
and the cold grasshopper cries.
A bird whistles in a tree, and his song
is like a tune on a flute.

You are more beautiful than peach bloom
and fresh as the hibiscus leaf,
when you go up to the Royal Pagoda
I lie in wait and net your image in my eyes
and carry it away.

I release your image by the lake
and she sits beside me,
while I dream that all are equal
over the earth.

3

Why do you weep
because the orchid tree
is dead for the winter?
He has forgotten the leafing and the flowering
of his green greatness;

he cannot love too early, as I can,
or too late.

4

Maiden's Prayer

My hope rises and falls like the sea
while I pray to God
for an accomplished husband.

I stood under the orange tree in the garden
troubled and red with shame,
hoping that my confused beauty
would get me an accomplished husband.

Lightning ploughed the sea last night
and the rain drowned the mountain ;
the shadow I saw in the yard
was not an accomplished husband.

The moon looked out from the storm
and kissed the flame of my lamp ;
he seemed to be floating there on the sea,
his face like a jewel,
the dear one, the accomplished husband.

The winter leaves
flutter like wounded birds,

and the eastern lake
is calm and bright and deep,
Oh, my black hair,
well-combed and glossy over the brow
for my accomplished husband !

5

My body is a parrot
screaming for joy over a nut,
a peacock-fish floundering to the sun
because it is too great
to be hurt by any ;
since he has fastened his boat to our stake
and walks up the path to me,
my body is a laden cabbage-palm
weeping with fruit.

6

Bitterness

The boat that love built
is fast to the bank,
I cannot use it to cross the river ;
my heart is torn by the eagle,
my heart is bleeding.

I burned a whole box of incense
all the night long,

for the eagle in his pride
despises the fruit of the Sung tree.
Only the rare cloud berry
will satisfy him,
and he keeps his height.

I have seen an eagle
come down in starving time,
and fawn on the back-yard poultry
for their muddy food.

7

The sun is twining his red legs
round the water chestnut tree,
the red lips of the orchid
kiss the night wind ;
boatman, where are you ?
The Woman Star is testing with her spear
throughout the village,
the moon is having connection with the sea,
where are you, boatman ?

8

Deserted

The bamboo leaves call in the wind all night
and the ravens are awake and croaking ;
the clouds and the tree-birds fly by the shore,

but the moon is too feeble
and they cannot find their nests.

I am a flower stung by a bee
or robbed of its scent by a butterfly.
Who will bring me love?
I am a fish thrown up by a wave
to die on the sand.
O other wave, come quickly.

. . .

PROSE RECITALS

I

Advantages

The Girl

I WILL BUY YOU FINE SILK ROBES AND A transparent tunic, trousers of thick silk and a red belt and a sun-shade, because I love you so ; and if you refuse them I shall be desolate. The gong has sounded the first watch. Come near to me, and we will tell each other happy stories. Who does not love a boy in red silk ?

The Boy

Have you lost some near one, or are you sighing to be wed ? Why are you sad, small sister ? Will you not have me for your husband, vermilion sweetness ? I am able in all things, and my talent is a byword among scholars. Who would refuse a gold piece, a scholar for a husband ?

The Girl

The thirtieth day of the Tet brings on the Spring, and the Spring is joy. I am young and gay and small, but I am clever. My lips know singing and my foot knows dancing ;

my hand is nimble on the dan strings. (*Music: tinh, tinh, tung, tang*) Listen to the princess singing in the forest.

The Boy

You are rich, but your money rises and falls like the waters of the sea, according to the good or ill fortune of your father; I love you as a scented branch. There are five watches in the night; I sleep for three watches only, going out for the rest to regard the sky and think of you. I have picked five kinds of savoury plant, and shall have them cooked in five different dishes. I shall serve them in five cups, and ask you to share my feast.

. . .

2

The Battle of Flowers

The Girl

I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE TIME WHEN WE went buying and selling together; but you have forgotten.

The Boy

This singing calls to my mind the strokes of a golden bell. It must therefore be the voice of my lover.

The Girl

Why am I not a belt, and you the belt string? We should be close then.

The Boy

Why are not you the slender-stemmed and graceful cabbage-palm? I would be the bind-weed over you.

The Girl

As I cross the bridge I take off my hat and lean over to count the columns. At each of the columns I form a wish for you.

The Boy

When I go to the pagoda, I take off my hat and count the images, and to each image I make a prayer for you.

The Girl

The bamboo is ever and everywhere graceful, though it rise in a hedge among all common trees. Even so is my beauty; for I am fair among the women.

The Boy

Go, please, and fetch your elder sister to sing with me and give me the counter-song. I fear you are too young to know how to do so.

The Girl

The lamp boasts in his pride that he is brighter than the moon; but there is a puff of wind and the lamp is out.

The Boy

The moon boasts in her pride that she is brighter than the lamp; but a little cloud comes up and hides the moon.

The Girl

Whether a man sits under the bamboo clumps or stands in the shade of the Mai tree, whether he works in the eastern rice fields, or clears the western forest, who knows what girl he will take for his mistress, seeing that he cannot live alone?

The Boy

If I could hope to have you for my wife, I would make a great half-moon basin, for you to bathe your feet in it.

The Girl

I like to eat sharp oranges, sitting under the shade of their tree; but if I married you, I should not follow you to China.

The Boy

I am no common man, nor have I caught the gambling pestilence. I am the King's servant; I fight for him, and row the royal junk.

The Girl

If the Golden Dragon bathes in dirty water, his shining body is covered over with filth. If the scholar weds an ignorant woman, his spirit is crushed and his learning flies away.

The Boy

Music is not for the ear of buffaloes. One does not shoot sparrows with a cannon, or kill the flies with a sword.

The Girl

When you are given betel it is wise to open it, for it might hold poison, or too great a proportion of lime.

The Boy

When you would eat a leechee it is wise to open it. Who knows but that some dirty maggot lies inside?

The Girl

I think of you so much that I forget to eat, and at night I cannot sleep.

The Boy

I seek you as one seeks a difficult bird; but how am I to find you? While I am looking on the eastern sea-shore, the bird is flying to the northern sea.

The Girl

None takes a golden pin to make a hook of it, nor do wise persons use bad words among themselves.

The Boy

You knew me, but tell me truly, do you know me?

The Girl

You are bright gold, and I dull bronze. You are the scented white flower of the averrhoa, and I am the lotus floating on the great lake. We are different, but equal.

The Boy

Who can surpass my skill upon the gong, in the scholars' games between examinations?

The Girl

I should like to join you, but I cannot. The village boat is being kept for the mandarin, and I have no money to pay the ferry.

The Boy

I have looked everywhere for your coming these two days. How have you spent your time?

The Girl

Listening to the grasshoppers and looking at the moon and watching the gold fish chase each other in the pond.

The Boy

I see a golden cloud in the sky, and that is a good omen. Let us be betrothed.

The Girl

First tell me how many trees there are in the forest, and how many rocks on the mountain, and how often the Red River turns upon itself.

The Boy

We have not paid them who cleared the ground and planted the tree, therefore we may not eat the fruit of it. But we may surely break off some flowering branches?

The Girl

I am promised to another, I am as a lock in which the key has been turned already. If I leave my betrothed and follow you, I break the lock and the key at the same time. Will you not thank me for it?

The Boy

If you will follow me, I shall fetch a rich palanquin in the pride of my victory and take you into a land where you shall feed buffaloes.

The Girl

You mock me, but I am the golden bell in the pagoda of Quan, guarded by a thousand soldiers.

The Boy

You are as beautiful as the girl in the picture, and I think I am the brush that painted you.

The Girl

I love you in spite of myself and secretly. I cannot rid myself of this love. It troubles me when I rest my eyes on you or touch your hand with mine.

The Boy

My heart is burning. I pray heaven to send a light breeze to refresh my heart.

The Girl

I go to the garden to pluck a fresh nut from the cabbage-palm. I shall divide it in four, and we shall eat it together.

The Boy

I love you, but your heart is in your neck. You are proud, and I am a hungry man reaching for a fruit too high for him.

The Girl

I took a golden knife to cut the savoury meat. I brought it to you on a Chinese dish. When I came to the trysting place, I only found your friend, and my soul was heavy, as if I had lost a bar of silver.

The Boy

We have met at last. Do you remember me?

The Girl

Shall we be as two silkworms eating the same leaf and making our nest in the same basket?

The Boy

You are a flower whose scent I have savoured. Your perfume is fled and I no more desire you.

The Girl

Spoken like a philosopher and scholar, disdainful and inconstant! You have a mirror in your hand, but do not use it. I am most unhappy.

The Boy

A woman who has lost her purity is like a cut flower, fallen in the road to be trodden under. One does not gather up such flowers.

The Girl

You do me wrong, I seek a husband worthy of my coral cheeks and black teeth. I care not for ponds and rice fields, and could not marry a farmer. I am for the brush and the ink-pot, desiring a student.

The Boy

You esteem oranges, but cannot eat all the many fruits upon the tree. When you are sated, you shake the rest to the ground, and look at them as you lie in the shadow.

The Girl

He who holds a goldsmith's balance should know pure gold, distinguishing good from evil.

The Boy

Do not forget that you are here to sing for entertainment. Whether you win or lose in the Battle of Flowers, there must be no bitterness.

The Girl

There is no bitterness, and I beg each side to withdraw for a little and leave me alone with this boy. Then we shall see who is victor.

The Boy

We are two pieces of silver, one standing and the other lying. We must be wed for ever.

The Girl

We shall be a beautiful and joyful pair, as pure as white rice, as savoury as sticky rice, and having the perfume of a cake with spices.

The Boy

Our love shall last as long as our bodies; we shall eat ginger together, like salt, and shall not complain.

. . .

3

A Letter

I WRITE YOU THIS LETTER IN THE INK OF MY unfaltering love. Now that I see you no more I can neither weave nor spin.

As we walked at evening by the river banks of Thien Tan, did you not offer me three cups of wine?

Did you not refresh me with grapes one burning day at the Hour of the Dog?

Did we not steer our moon-lighted canoe on the deep waters of the river all one silent night?

Have we not exchanged fans? Why have you broken your pledge?

I send you this letter by a swift boy. Remember that even the exiled stars contrive to meet each other once a year.

. . .

4

Streets of Hanoi

The Boy

DO NOT MEET IN THE STREET OF THE VEILS, for you are shameless; but rather in the Street of the Knives and the Street of Canes. How could I find you in any street but the Street of Sugar or of Pepper, how could I find you in any street but the Street of the Harrow?

The Girl

That is well enough; but I fear I would meet you in the Street of Copper or the Street of Clogs.

The Boy

If I met you in the Street of the Sculptors, the Street of the Sheets of Paper, you would be penniless, would you not?

The Girl

If I were waiting in the Street of the Silversmiths or the Street of Vermilion, what would you say to me?

The Boy

I would say that I expected you in the Street of the Eel-pots.

The Girl

O shameless, I would meet you in the Street of the Inlayers, I would meet you in the Street of the Money-Changers.

Annam

The Boy

I would be waiting in the Street of the Rafts and in the Street of Brine.

The Girl

And I would go in your boat for ever.

. . .

LAUGHTER AND INVECTIVE

1

THREE GIRLS BROUGHT RICE TO THE PAGODA
and the one in the red blouse
troubled the bonze.
He stutters in his prayer
through love sickness
and forgets to shave.

2

The girls love piastres
because of the birds on them,
therefore they leave their parents
to go to these fat Frenchmen
with mighty bananas.

3

O shy man,
you filled your lap with leechees
for my pleasure,
and with young golden bananas.
But, alas, I was greedy
and the last two leechees
and the last banana
have over-filled me.

4

Pretty lady in the green bodice,
why do you not leave my husband
and be content with yours?
Is it because your husband is clever,
and mine can do nothing
but sleep in the kitchen?

5

The moon has set
but the star has risen.
Your husband has gone out,
and I have come.

6

Because you would be grand
you have married a Customs Official,
but he has debts.
If you had married a blind beggar
he would have sung gay songs beside you
all day long.

7

I am late, mother,
because I was worshipping the Buddha
in the old pagoda up above the ford.
I made many prayers for you, mother,
and the new bonze told me what to say.
And these stains, daughter,
dripped, I suppose,
from the holy lamps?

8

I am growing great, mother:
daughter, I am two months gone.
I fear I shall seek my bed to-day, mother:
daughter, I go there now.

9

The French officers
take their food out of tin boxes,
but our girls have found their eggs and sausages
fresh enough.
The French officers
have a machine for cutting goat meat
into minces;

we shall know how to welcome
the beautiful girls of Annam
back to their villages.

10

She has let fall the tea-pot
and it is broken.
She has beautiful eyebrows
and distracting eyes.
When the light is out
she eats pig soup in secret
with a Frenchman.

11

I saw the bonzes in the pagoda,
the youngest was thirteen, the tallest fourteen,
and the eldest, O my heart, was fifteen.
Instead of going to worship Buddha
on the fifteenth day,
I shall go on the fourteenth
and lie all night with the bonzes
and eat rice biscuit.

12

The rain is thundering into the yard
and I had better marry an old man ;

old men are rich and have not long to live,
and soon I could choose a boy.

13

The girls press against me
and I feast upon dog's flesh
in secret.
I hide thorns under the mud of the path
to trouble the bare-footed.

The pickaxe was left in the deserted house,
the pickaxe is in my bag.
I am a priest of Buddha.

14

I lie all night on my mat
revolving a question,
and losing beauty since I cannot sleep.

Ought I to marry the boatman
whose arms are trees,
or the singer
whose pen is a gold flower,
or the Government Official
whose single limb
is greater than any tree?

My father and my mother do not help me,
for my mother tells me to marry no man
and my father that each has
something to give me ;
I lose my beauty because I cannot sleep.

The boatman would hold me
and row me where I willed,
and the singer would dress me in the gold
scarves
and rainbow necklaces
of his singing,
and the Government Official
would divide me and add to me
and I should multiply.

I lie all night on my mat
trying to choose between the three of them,
and lose my beauty because I cannot sleep ;
also, in case all three should die of the
plague
I retain my friendship with the delightful
priest of the pagoda in the Red Forest.

15

He is breath
and she the flute,
and there is too much music.

. . .

Forty Hokku of Kikaku, 1658-1707

(*Selected and Translated from 'Les Haïkaï de Kikakou,' by Kuni Matsuo & Steinilber-Oberlin. Only a few of these poems were originally titled; but I have ventured to give all of them more or less explanatory names, taking my data from the translation of the Japanese commentaries provided by the two authors above mentioned. My purpose in doing so was to save the reader from constant reference to notes.*)

1

Distance

HOUSE OF THE CONCUBINE.
Will not a firefly
bear her song to me?

2

Libertine Son

Driven from the house
now careless, under the moonlight,
he drinks the air.

3

Of Mothers-in-law

Can the water flowers
blossom under this
thin covering of ice?

4

Drifting

Faces in the shadow.
I look from my boat this warm night
and they look back at me.

5

In Black and White

I offer this branch
of the flowering plum tree
with my dark night dreams.

6

Before a poem

I cause my treasured one
to rub the stick of Chinese ink,
and I gaze at the plum tree.

7

Recluse

The woman who never comes forth
comes forth into the great storm.
A visit to the temple?

8

Grace of Pliancy

Skill of courtesans
as they tame the Great.
Bending willows.

9

Loneliness

Would he came, a flower in his hand,
following the little path.
That night there would be a moon.

10

Love

Spring rain.
Quilted coverlets
embroidered with azalea.

11

Before Welcome

Regarding the milky moon
I knock on the door.
House of the plum tree.

12

Gardening

Suddenly
between the flowers
the face of our small child.

13

Half-Light

The cool shade reaches the balcony
but the rose shadows of the sun
linger on faces.

14

*Spring in the Park**

I came to see a blossoming
of flowers, I see
a blossoming of curtains.

15

*Sentiment**

Now the wisteria has flowered again
I count the long days parting me
from my first bonito.

16

Beautiful, Tone-deaf Courtesan

Why cannot I give some medicine
to this nightingale,
to make her sing in tune?

17

*Timidity**

The red tassel
of her fan
smells very sweet.

18

Flower Intoxication

The messenger hands me
the branch of cherry blossom
and forgets the letter.

19

Tea-House

The courtesan sadly bends her head
after her scolding.
Peony in the dusk.

20

*Rose-in-Hand**

Is anyone obeying
the five commandments?
The cherry is flowering.

21

Yearly General Wash

Linen in the sun.
Is that my marriage
pillow?

22

Birth and Death

The hairy potato leaf
holds the rain drop,
making and unmaking.

23

Youth

A grasshopper is singing.
The little fan-seller
climbs the tree to it.

24

Nostalgia

A rainy day.
The lonely woman
looks from her window.

25

*Doubt in Spring Mist**

Vermilion door of a small temple.
House of the leaf goddess ?
Hill of azaleas.

26

The Geisha Manzaburo

Stepping up to her,
I offer a cup of saké
to this flower.

27

Temptation

A little priest hidden
in a pine thicket among
leagues of flowering cherry.

28

Walking Tour

O more than joy,
young girl rice planters
wash my feet.

29

After a Night at a Tea-House

The moon pales.
Cuckoo sings.
Good-bye moment.

30

*To a Small and Loved Girl Sleeping**

The cock is singing
and the mosquitoes have departed,
little Tamako.

31

*In the Country**

Veiled Fujiyama,
there is a harlot in the Town
admiring you also.

32

Death of a Friend's Wife

What has come to Enjo?
She lived, and is now as calm
as the Winter sea.

33

Drinking Alone

A small cup of saké
before a not very large doll,
yet I miss something.

34

Spring

A libertine
accosts the minions of the Court
under the flowers of the temple cherry tree.

35

Brothel

But at dawn
my neighbour is sick
to the clear song of the cuckoo.

36

*In the Fish Market**

This moving, living fish
is luminous in the dark,
as is Yokihi.

37

Spring Drinking

Season of flowers.
The saké is my wife,
my wife a concubine.

38

*To a Cat**

A rainy night.
Love me as if I had cherished you
for seven Springs.

39

*Precocity**

Flower of the world.
She was a woman when I knew her
some years ago.

40

*New Year**

Eight-hundred bell strokes.
New sins, the scent of night flowers
sends me astray again.

POEM

14 Young lovers have flocked to the Park and, according to custom, tented their privacies with various stuffs.

15 A gourmet's jest in anti-climax.

17 It is actually the fan's owner who smells very sweet, but he dare not say so.

20 The five Buddhist Commandments forbid intemperance, adultery, lying, theft and murder.

25 The eyes of the mind are troubled and uncertain. It may be any little temple, or one of the small rustic shrines to Tatsuta, the traditional guardian of mountain fruit trees.

30 Tamako means egg, and the image of a small, smooth egg seems to the Japanese applicable to a child.

31 Apart from the obvious interpretation, so common in Eastern verse, of the eyes of two distant lovers meeting at a common object, there is here a joke between the two, because the deep straw hat worn by men wishing to be anonymous on their visits to the courtesans' quarter was called Oborofuji, veiled Fujiyama.

36 A famous Court beauty who "woke up" at night, but was inert and melancholy by day.

38 The dog is proverbially faithful after three days, the cat dubitably so after three years.

39 Of Kamuru, a courtesan's servant, who was a woman in developed beauty when she was a little girl, and is now, being a woman, an old woman.

POEM

40 Referring to the eight-hundred strokes of the temple bell at New Year, rung as absolution for the average man's yearly eight-hundred sins. The poet starts again.

Twenty Arabic Poems

(Selected and translated from 'L'Amour Arabe' by Jevan Passeur, 'Les Colombes des Minarets,' by Franz Toussaint, and 'Une Vie Tunisienne,' by G. de Villeneuve.)

1

Absence

LET ME BE ACQUAINTED WITH YOU, O JOY, no more; be henceforth my companion, Sadness: for the tribe of the well-belovèd has departed and I still live.

Tell me to what shore they have steered the boats, the boats that bore the tents of her tribe, O waves of the Euphrates.

Be compassionate to my love sorrow, O waves of the Euphrates; for no man living mingles his sigh with mine. Yet when the ring-doves murmur their sorrows, the branches that bear them sigh therefor and sway to the rhythm of their complaining.

Unspeakable sadness floats on the shadow-circled lakes of your two eyes like a funeral boat, belovèd.

(Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Ansārī, *c.* 750–803.)

2

The Sacrifice

ARE THESE WATER-SPIRITS OR THE BODIES OF women? Youth flowers pomegranates upon each breast, the brighter for being twins,

and there are glances of sorcery, there is seductive walking.

My hand trifled upon the dimples of their haunches, my lips tasted each pomegranate; therefore my lips are scented with the scent of their bodies now, and the air about me is heavy.

I have taken my part in love, and it was a great part doubtless; for I have no longer the manhood to feel desire.

The business of the night was joyful to me, and I have been a cause of rejoicing: now, farewell! They salute me with a fluttering of lids, and I feel proud to have sacrificed to beauty.

(Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Ansārī.)

3

The Oath

WHEN YOU SHALL SET, WHO ARE THE SUN of my life, I and death will go hand in hand to the desert.

I will design your image in the sand and sprinkle it with tears, beseeching it to rise and console me.

My conscience will be at peace, since I have loved you. If that is my sin I will pray God not to pardon it on the Last Day.

(Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Ansārī.)

4

The Devil a Pimp

THE LONG NIGHT I PASSED WITH HER AT Kark was very short to me.

The apple-trees laughed in a green leafage before us. We drank alone together, and none saw what we drank, save he who poured it.

The wine was tawny gold, melting into the silver of the cups.

The smoke of the wine played in her head, its fire upon her cheeks; she pulled aside the veils of her timidity, and sleep showed in the languor of her eyes.

And when she had forgotten that a girdle held her robe, I loosed that girdle.

She, who had never let me pluck a kiss before, did not defend herself; thenceforward the Devil was in her, and the Devil guided her.

How useful is the Devil sometimes, though we curse his name.

The pride and inconsequence of the Devil astonishes me: he turned stubborn to Adam, and would not bow down before him; yet now he stoops to play the pimp for Adam's son.

(Abū Nuwās, *c.* 756–810.)

5

Namah

SHE IS A WILLOW BRANCH THAT GIVES WINE drunkenness.

She is a gazelle leaping in the desert of my eyes, a moon that rises in my solitude.

Her neck has the warm colour of amber, and her lips the tint of the wine of Karman spilled upon velvets.

A pyre of roses has been lighted upon either cheek, but they consume not; it is I who burn away.

When lightning ploughs the sky to the South, I think of her; for he who makes the water of Her lips his morning and evening libation alone is happy.

(Fadl, *d.* 873.)

6

The Excuses

IF ANY REPROACH ME, I WILL CRY: 'O MEN, she has long night-coloured hair. Her cheeks' roses can be fanned to tongues of fire, O men.

'Her brows are a bow, and her glance a quiver furnishing it with arrows; her mouth is sweetened by its own water, for the water is œnomel; her body bends like the track of a gazelle, hither and thither, men.

'Her breast is a marble plain on which are duplicate mountains; that perfume which is the most perfumed of the perfumes of the world flowers on her belly.

'High and fat below these things is the Mark of my Hope, bright as a royal throne I may cast down my cares before: high and fat and bathed in its own light, O men, a red eye between roses.

'As a mule touched on the muzzle will rear up, so will her Mystery rear up if you touch it strongly. It will be brave and mighty to welcome you, O men, and afterwards lie weak and still.'

(Al-Ma'arrī, 11th century.)

7

Ode

MY GOOD SENSE IS MY SHIELD, AND MY GIFT as a poet is my single jewel.

As the sun of evening is the sun of morning, so, even as I wrote when I made my first song, I write to-day.

I will leave Zaurah, where I have friends and flocks no more. My people have abandoned this city, and I am alone, a sabre without a sheath.

I will say to my horse: 'We go to Addam, we go up into the ranks of the warriors with long lances. We will protect the maidens of our tribe, keeping their dark hair and their shining robes from stain.

'On, on, in spite of the darkness, for the wind carries me the scent of my well-belov'd.

'Let us be gone! Her eyelashes are reeds about pools. I am impatient for her.

'Hearts take fire as she passes, and burn like beacons lighted upon the hill to guide the voyager home.

Weakness

'The honey of her mouth is balm for arrow wounds,' I will say to my horse.

(Al-Tughrā'i, *d.* 1121.)

8

Weakness

IF I COULD FORGET WHAT SHE HAS BEEN TO me, I would spur my horse into the solitude, nearer to Allāh.

If I went far from this dwelling where we have loved, where every small thing speaks of her, if I had the courage to leave this dwelling, would memory be as fierce, I wonder, in the desert?

'Do not weep on the tomb of happiness,' they say to the love sick, 'for despair can have no fruit. Rise up and depart without returning.'

'I would obey, but I dare not,' answers the heart of the love sick.

(Al-Tughrā'i.)

9

Wanderer's Love Song

IS IT LIGHTNING OVER THE SAND, OR DAWN already on the dunes of the Najd?

Or is it Lailah, a girl of the tribe of ʿĀmir, unveiling to light the sandhills?

Long life to you, O brother urging the vigorous camel, for you urge her well.

When you come to the valley of Naʿmān thick with areca, and turn towards Arīna of wild perfumes,

When you hear the flutes of the nomads singing, think of my heart that bled at evening beside the stream there,

And salute the people of that land from me, saying: 'Your friend is far, and cannot be consoled for you.

'Have you breathed me your thoughts upon the scented wind, O shepherds of the Najd, sometimes at twilight?

'How shall I know if you have pity on me, O shepherds? I fell into the chains of love, and would not cast them away.

'He whose heart flames to see you dares not hope, dunes and valleys, palm trees and singing fountains, that the joyful dew will fall upon the burning of his heart.

'My groans for you spread sadness and grieving through the land of Misr.

'O fortunate country, for my belovèd breathes your air; I stagger as if drunken with wine when I think of the fortunate country.'

Wherever my belovèd smiles, my land is. But what am I saying? For how can my belovèd smile?

I swear by Mecca and by the Station of Ibrāhīm, and by the holy visitors bowed before the Inviolable temple: a breeze from the Najd can turn into tender perfume the smell of the flowering wormwood on the hills where I am weeping.

. . .

Slacken your pace and have pity on me, O camel-driver.

Do you not see that the weary camels are dreaming of delightful pasturage?

Their wounded feet have become so aware to pain, that the sand burns them like red charcoal.

Let them browse on the springing grass of the lowlands. The ring of the nose cannot hold up the floating tether.

Walk before them to guide them, but do not weary them, for they are heading towards a holy valley.

Long life to you! If you cross the plain of Yanbū'on some morning and see Al-Dahna and Badr; if you cover the desert of Annaka, the desert of Ūdān'-Wadān and see the tents of Kudaid;

If you behold the palm groves of Khulais and Ūsfān, and the palm groves of Marr-al-Zarān, the wanderer's meeting-place; if you march out to Al-Jamūn and Al-Kasr and Al-Dākna, where waterless travellers tarry;

If you come to Al-Zāhir which is a cluster of flowers, and salute, at the last, Al-Khiān, thank Allāh and break your saddle!

Speak with the tenderness of the song of a water-flow in telling the Arabs of Al-Khiān of my pain.

I am in Egypt and my friends are in Syria, and my heart is in Ajiād.

If ever I am allowed again to bow myself on holy Arafat, what prayer, O Allāh, shall I make for her?

O Al-Musalla, bless'd place of my entering into the Way of Truth, abundant rains were cool to us, and a great perfume of flowers was on our nights.

I swear by the Wall Al-Hātim and by the Angles of the Temple and by the Sacred Veils ; I swear by the Hills of Safa and Marua and by the Shadow of Al-Jenāb ; I swear by the Stone of Ismā'īl and by the Porch where the pilgrim's prayer is granted : each time I catch the scent of a tuberose I am drinking the breath of Suād, my well-belovèd.

. . .

There is a battlefield where eyes and hearts meet cruelly, and I must die before I have unsheathed my sword.

She looked at me and then she smiled at me, and I cried out that I was lost ; I made not a stroke.

I am about to die for her, praise be to Allāh, but I would suffer very much more than that because of her.

I feel an affection for those who weep for love, and I would kiss the mouths that speak of it.

When will you bear away the last sigh of life that you have left to me ? A love that kills not is not love.

When she walks through the veil of her hair into the dark, the paleness of her brow troubles the sand with a false moonlight.

I slept in the night of her hair, and the dawn of her cheek awaked me.

I grew drunk, when she sighed, on all the essences of Spring.

Her smile so shone before my eyes that I had to close them, the lightning pitied me when I invoked her smile.

And when she looked at me I had no thoughts.

Months had the swiftness of a day when she was by. A day crawled like ten years when she had gone from me.

I hear her voice when I hear birds and flutes.

I see her dancing and laughing in the light mists that waver among the trees of this land of evening.

I hear the noise of her robe in the leaves, when the wind is among them.

I bite her mouth when my mouth presses the perfumed lips of a cup of wine.

She suffices me, she is my country. She is my water and my bread, my dagger and my

balm. She is that joy and sorrow which shall bring me to God.

The tent where she sleeps is a palace finer than that of Sulaimān, and the land where she walks is fairer than Paradise.

Happy the caravan your palanquin precedes, my love. The dawn of your eyes shall guide it in the night.

When I make the five prayers I murmur your praises. I stumble with joy when I think I see a cloud floating that is like you.

We met first in a solitude, and I lay down that you might set your foot upon my face.

And we passed the night as I desired, she sleeping beside me. I looked upon her, and all the kingdoms of the earth were mine.

('Umar ibn al-Farīd, 1181–1235.)

10

Sovereign Beauty

GIVE WELCOME TO MY DESIRE. BE FLATTERed that I desire you. I allow you to make me suffer, because you are beautiful.

Here is the offering of my life, my moments belong to you. If you bid me die I will do so, but speaking your name.

If you doubt my love, why do you not demand impossible deeds of me?

Why do you reproach me for humbling myself before you, when you know very well I could not win you with my glory?

My companions blame me for loving you to this degree; they are to be excused, because they do not know you.

The fire of my love has burned down my heart to ashes. Do not despise these ashes. They shall be hot for ever.

('Umar ibn al-Fārid).

II

Conceit

I HAVE SEDUCED UNCOUNTED MULTITUDES of women, and some were pregnant and some gave the breast. Some left a year-old child decked out with amulets, that they might lie below me.

If the boy cried, his mother turned one half of her body to him; but the other stayed implacably below me.

I have had virgins, many a time, whose palanquins men thought to be out of reach. I have taken my joy in them slowly, without fear; nothing could hasten me.

(Anon., 12th century.)

12

Descriptions

i

THIS NIGHT IS DRUNKEN WITH DARKNESS. She is like a wingless bird or a slave in chains. She is a desperate woman covered in her hair, she is a flooded sea that knows no ebb, she is dead and moves not.

ii

The khol of the Night is melting in the eyes of Day, so that the pearls thereof glimmer and run upon the roses. The opening of the roses is a smile.

(Anon., 13th century.)

13

Ailah

THOUGH I SAY OVER TO MYSELF THAT MANY before me have been mortally wounded by the brightness of a mouth, my suffering lessens not.

O Allāh, spread Your benediction over my love memories !

Her lips tasted of dates, and her neck was an ivory pillar. Her eyes were two stars shining in the arm of the moon.

Her hair was perfumed like a night of Destiny, her body was as the water of a waterfall.

Ailah, Ailah, what man is melting the dates of your lips within his mouth, or stands to warm himself before your eyes?

(Abū al-Taiyib, 1388–1470.)

14

She

HER BODY IS A STRAIGHT SWORD, A BENDING sword, and her face, with its eyes, the jewelled hilt of it.

(Anon., 15th century.)

15

A Night

THE SUN WAS SINKING, AND MY SLIGHT ONE had promised to come to me, at the hour when the moon should rise.

She walked as tenderly as dawn to me, as lightly as the breezes; and the air grew sweet with her.

I kissed the traces of her feet in the sand, as if they had been the words of the Book of God; and that night the whole world slept, except our love.

I was stretched out beside her, I veiled her body in kisses, or caught her to me.

The sudden flag of dawn flung out, and we had to part: come soon, at the hour of pleasure, O night of Destiny!

(Al-Mukri, 16th century.)

16

Kasīdah

i

LOOKING AT THE TWO COLOURS OF AN APPLE, I seem to see the cheek of a lover against that of his mistress. An intruder drove them apart, so that shame has covered the cheek of the mistress, and the pain of separation has paled the lover.

ii

I set my mouth to her cheek, and she turned her head to escape my kisses. Sweat was born upon her face, as dew on the myrtle: surely

the fire rising from my breast upon my sighs began to distil her roses.

(Anon., Early 17th century.)

17

Selections

i

The love you give me has the strength and brightness of the rose, whose life is short. But as the life and perfume of the myrtle is my love for you.

ii

Because I love all that is like you, O my prettiest, I have become amorous of the sun and languish for the moon.

iii

When I pass a rock I cover it with kisses, thinking I kiss your heart.

('Abd al-Gani's (1641–1731) Commentary on the Poems of Ibn al-Fārid.)

18

Day or Night

WHEN THE CROW OF NIGHT FLEW FROM THE nest and dawn drew his silver sword and She must leave me, darkness began for me.

(Al-Sanman, *d.* 1760.)

19

Lost

WHEN YOU COME TO ME, JASMINE-GARLANDed and tender, through my dreams, grudge not the journey and do not blame me; for we both know that you did not mean to come to me.

I eat at cafés now, places with which you were unacquainted, and never at home now; my walks are the few we did not take together.

If ever I come to you through your dreams, and kneel and wet your face with my weeping, do not blame me; for we both know that you did not mean me to come.

(Amor ben Amar, *c.* 1850–1906.)

20.

With Child

I THINK OF THE BEAUTY OF THE SPICE SHIPS, seeing you walk with pregnancy. Billowing in slow magnificence, they sought the Gulf; their lading was infinitely precious.

Once I loved you carelessly, as it might have been any woman; but now:

God has a blue carpet, and the lightning wove gold fortunate words in it last night, bidding me borrow God's blue carpet for your feet.

(Amor ben Amar.)

. . .

I

EASTERN LOVE

I FEEL THAT A FEW WORDS OF EXPLANATION are called for, to prevent readers from misunderstanding the scope of *Eastern Love*, and my reasons for producing it.

Certain subscribers to my translation of Dr. J. C. Mardrus's complete French version of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* claimed that they found in it an ability to bring over the spirit of the tales and verses at second-hand, and suggested that there was a place for a general anthology chosen by myself of amorous Oriental prose and verse. Theirs, therefore, I like to think, is the responsibility.

My only qualifications, beside this imputed ability, were a very sincere love of Oriental literature in translation, and, again, of course, in translation, a fairly large acquaintance with it.

Before deciding on the inclusion of any particular item, I had to be satisfied that I myself found it beautiful or interesting. That, at once, gives a personal bias to the Series. Then, it had not to have been given in English before, or at least not to my knowledge. This desideratum by itself, even if the element of chance in my happening to find a particular work in French or Italian had not already precluded the possibility, would have prevented the Series from being representative of even one aspect of Oriental literature. The third thing I required from an item was that it should form a contrast with some other. I was drawn alternately towards what

is entirely typical and what is entirely contrary to type, and have seemed to myself to have made a discovery when I could say : ' Surely no European would have thought of that,' or ' How utterly English ! ' And another contrast has fascinated me : the difference between the spiritual and the abandonedly physical in the work of one man or one community. It seemed to me desirable to show these two inspirations working side by side in the East, just as it is beginning to seem to the French desirable, for the ultimate benefit of letters, to show them working side by side even in moderns such as Verlaine and Hugo and Gautier, Pierre Louys and MacOrlan. The only other thing which I demanded of an item was that it should have been actually composed in the language of some Eastern country, by a native of that country. I abandoned one advertised part of the Series, *A Valley of Mares*, because I discovered that I had hold of a clever and entertaining French forgery.

Eastern Love, to put it briefly, is a purely personal and even capricious production, designed to appeal to a few who have the same amateur enthusiasms as myself. For this reason I do not apologise for having, by way of experiment, translated my verse sometimes in rhyme, sometimes in *vers libre*, and sometimes in prose of varyingly marked rhythm. Nor do I ask pardon for having once or twice, as in my selections from Kikaku and J. Wing, allowed my definition of love to extend to a passionate objective interest in other things than men and women.

A word or so will suffice to explain what *Eastern Love* is not. Firstly and emphatically, it is not a work of scholarship. I can lay claim to a very small smattering of Sanskrit and Arabic; but that does

not affect the question, for everything in the present series is translated at second-hand. Sometimes it has been translated from the work of a scholar, but quite as often from the notes of a government official or soldier or trader with a flair for colloquial language and an acute interest, typical of the French, in the people, and especially the women, among whom his lot was cast. It would have been, of course, impossible for any one man, however gifted, to have covered so wide a field while translating from the original tongues. And it may be worth while to point out here that the true European Oriental scholar not only is born and not made, but is only born occasionally. Great genius has descended in the past upon such men as Stanislas Julien, Richard Burton and Herbert Giles, and, in the present, upon such as Professor Margoliouth, Mr. Arthur Waley and Mr. Jacob Leveen; but, for the most part, the study of any Eastern tongue is a slogging business, and often the knowledge gained and the use to which it is put is, from the literary point of view, quite uninspired.

Secondly and with equal emphasis, my Series is not a study in the Eastern psychology of sex. I have not felt called upon to direct special attention to a phase or time in which, or an author in whom, homosexual has given place to heterosexual love; nor have I made more than passing mention of vagaries or personal abnormalities in the passion expressed. If any theorist find justification or disproof of his theory in *Eastern Love*, so much the better. My personal feeling has always been that the true lover is a nice balance of many fetishes, but if these translations at all bear me out, I leave the reader to decide.

So far I have only spoken of the text of *Eastern Love*; a short explanation must now be given of the scope of the introductory matter to each item. Having a passion for plain texts, which has got me into trouble with those writers of unsigned reviews who demand, or they are at sea, a certain amount of foreword to paraphrase, I would have liked each tale or poem to speak for itself, with only the barest statement on my part of the time and date and place of composition. This plan would have suited me all the better, since so many of the French writers from whom I have translated seem to have my own predilection for putting a plate before the reader with no more than a menu description of it. But, during the translation of the first two volumes, I was persuaded, by some of the subscribers before mentioned, that a little more help than this towards the understanding of the Series was certain to be needed. I therefore began to select and set down such aspects of the earlier items as might be likely to interest the amateur. I would have continued with my short, isolated introductory notes, had not the first of the two serious illnesses which have interrupted my work on *Eastern Love* made it desirable to publish, simply from a business point of view, the translations in hand and to postpone any consideration of them to these terminal essays, or, as I should prefer to call them, terminal notes. There has frankly, then, been a change of policy during the long publication of the Series, and I must sincerely apologise to the readers of this first limited edition for their having to refer backwards or forwards, as the case may be, in their contemplation of the work. My illness had one advantage to the reader: it enabled me to gather

my rather disjointed backgrounds into logical groups of country and language; but I should like it to be very distinctly understood that I have only—and that but within the limit of my knowledge and my interest—correlated my examples and given them a slight explanatory setting for lovers of the East as ill-equipped to specialise as myself. For those who wish to make a critical study of my subjects there is a vast literature of reference by the hand of scholars, who have devoted their lives to the various aspects of the civilisations involved.

Because this great storehouse of further information awaits my reader, I have, in the following terminal explanations, sometimes given a long note on something occupying a few pages, where supplementary facts would be hard to come by, and sometimes a short one on a whole volume, where recognised authorities will be found more than sufficient. Also, no further mention is made in cases where information, beyond that which I could give, however meagre, was nil, or where, as with *Ta'dīb Ul-nisvān*, everything essential had been said, or where, as with the light Turkish and Laotian tales, the examples speak for themselves.

After my first illness, and when my readers were beginning to be referred to terminal essays, there came, I have to confess, a second change of plan; but I trust that it will not be found to be a serious one. When those same subscribers or, as many were by then, personal friends, read of my threatened discussions, they requested that there should be a few more tales and verses and a little less explanation. I only mention this fact in case these end pieces, though not neglecting, as far as I can see, any promised

point of discussion, may seem even more slight than those foreshadowed.

Throughout my preparation of the Arabic, Chinese, Sanskrit, Turkish and Persian parts of *Eastern Love*, I have enjoyed the inestimable advantage of advice from and revision by an authority on each language. I wish to thank these gentlemen very cordially, and the more so because of their great patience with me in a venture which may well have outraged their instincts of scholarship. I do not name them, in case they should be held at all responsible for my errors or my choice of material.

Whenever the writers—to whom my great debt has already been acknowledged—of the French translations on which I have worked have provided their books with an introduction, I have availed myself freely of the facts and conjectures supplied in it. Out of many other works that have informed and stimulated me, and made it possible for me to give some sort of background to my prose and poetry, I wish to mention especially, both as an acknowledgment from myself, and as a guide to the reader: A. Berriedale Keith's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, R. W. Fraser's *A Literary History of India*, R. C. Dutt's *Literature of Bengal*, E. J. W. Gibb's *Ottoman Poetry*, Professor Herbert Giles's *History of Chinese Literature*, and Clément Huart's *Literature Arabe*.

II

ARABIC VERSE AND PROSE

VERSE

(*Volume IX, pages* 81–130, *Volume XII, pages* 69–88)

ANY POETRY, IF IT IS TO BE EXPLAINED AT ALL, is, even in translation, self-explanatory; and our only interest in the Arabic verses I have selected, beyond that in the things themselves, lies in the indication they give of the Islamic idea of sex. Translations in *vers libre* or prose tend, of course, to lessen the difference between a folk-song and a poem written to elaborate artistic specification, and also the difference of language and convention between compositions of different times. French prose versions, for instance, of a lyric by Spenser and one by W. H. Davies would not properly show the difference in time between the two, nor would translations in free verse of *The Trees They do Grow High* and a sonnet by Lord Alfred Douglas show the difference in consciousness and in technique.

My way, therefore, is the worst, though often the only, method if we wish to study an individual poet or poem in relation to others, but surely the best, if we want to find the spirit of a people or religion. I have reduced to an unrhymed common denominator twenty self-conscious poems, dating from the middle of the eighth century to the middle of the nineteenth, and forty-five simple, traditional, dateless songs. It

now remains, if possible, to state that denominator. Because anything else would be too vast for consideration here, I will try to give my own impression of the attitude towards sex in Islamic song with reference, if to anything beyond itself, only to the equivalent attitude in English poetry. A few words will be sufficient.

For both the English and Islamic poet, sex is also mystery and discontent and the unattainable. But the Islamic poet gives conscious expression to this, and we find singers, who are by no means in the ordinary sense mystical, saying, in effect: 'I have loved you and therefore I have known a little of love; I have drawn near to love.' The great mystics of the world have written in Persian and in Arabic and have used, as we see in Fuzuli and 'Umar ibn al-Fārid, the most abandonedly sexual images to express what is, in simplest terms, the love of God. But this loving of love *through* the woman, is not the same thing at all, though the mystic cast which the desert seems to have left on the mind of every Arab helps to foster it.

Again, every country has a convention of images with which to describe the beloved, and with us, the best images in love poetry are those we consider the most inevitable, the rightest; but Islām, with even a narrower range to-day of such images, has always honoured the inventor of the most extravagant: Al-Tughrā'i's 'Her eyelashes are reeds about pools,' or in *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* the monotonously recurring 'Her bottom is a mountain of moving sand; it is so great that she can hardly rise.' The poet is forgetting the human woman and by exaggeration worshipping the idea.

Again—and where this last is a vice in poetry, surely this next is a virtue—the Islamic poet takes his veneration and description from the navel to the knee without altering his key of worship. Few English poets have been able to do this. Donne comes to the mind as one who could, and he was for a very long time considered 'queer,' and Carew, who has always been held to be vicious, and Prior who is, on the whole, neglected. But Chaucer and the balladists, Drummond and the Elizabethans, and Rochester as representing the Restoration, and Swift and Burns, and certain of the great Victorians, could not mention the female pudenda without waiting, as it were, for the laugh to follow. Breasts they could manage and remain the devout lover; but the rest was a matter for mirth.

These three great differences help us to catch the Islamic point of view. To the English love poet woman is one thing: in off moments, of course, he can take a naughty pleasure with her, but he is in love with a single entity, here and hereafter, a Companion, a Queen, and, since she so frequently predeceases, a Saint beckoning Upwards. To the amorous poet of Islām, a particular woman is to be worshipped with fury, even to fainting and a unique subservience; but her friends, let us say, are socially and intellectually negligible. *Her* he respects, both as a person and a body, for the paradisal hint she gives of something he hopes for after death. He does not expect to meet her in Heaven; but he will find there Rewards with bodies as specific and more perfect and for ever young. Yet I think it will be found that this worship, through an imperfect worldly forecast, of the houri, does, often, in literary

practice, approximate to a more dignified unity than our own.

It is interesting to trace this unity in the least documented and, perhaps, the most intriguing of our African examples, *The Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān* (Volume IX, pp. 1–72). Islamic poetry has, of course, its root in pre-Islamic poetry; I have given no examples of the latter in *Eastern Love*, but the love song of the fighting Arab is well enough known to any reader of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*. The point of view is, roughly, that fighting is everything, and a girl cannot fight; what is her place then? Her practical place, of course, is as the breeder of more fighting men, but she must have an artistic place as well, she must inspire the fight. The Tuaregs are of the Faith, but only in their wild and particular way. They are the most warlike, cruel and implacable of the aristocratic fighting peoples of Africa, and the last to be subjected to Europeanism as represented by France. A Tuareg has but one wife and specially respects her; she is considered at least his social equal and her influence is visible in all things. She has perfect freedom to live her own sexual life before marriage, and insane bravery and masochistic gallantry are interchangeable terms with her males. (For the life of Musa-ag-Amāstān, see A. Maraval-Berthoin's introduction to his *Chants du Hoggar*, where the political situation is discussed and descriptions of Musa from the mouth of Father de Foucault, who knew him well, are freely quoted.) Yet the whole enthusiasm, including the horrible yet understandable murder of a prostitute in Marseilles, leads directly through the realities of the woman of the conscious and supra-conscious, the

one known unsatisfactorily on earth, perfectly suspected in vision, and perhaps finally and ecstatically realised beyond the tomb, to the Islāmic unity of which I have spoken.

This unity obtains, I think, both in the verse and the

PROSE

(*Volume VIII, pages* 1–140),

though in the prose there are certain complications and amplifications to be very briefly considered.

Because they are translated at second-hand, and because the Arab's special delight in anthologies of anecdote and character drawn haphazard from any historical era has made them in a way timeless, lacking, that is, the flavour of any particular time, though usually associated with some particular name, these short prose pieces seem to me disarticulated in much the same way as the verse; they are reduced to a common denominator of intention.

In spite of what has been said of the Arab's power to respect uncovered nakedness, it was not to be thought that he should prove an exception to the universal rule that man delights in the ribald smoking-room type of tale. Little need be said of our examples in this sort, save that Islamic indecency is excellent of its kind, and has this peculiar property, that it can make, as in *A Strange Reason for Love*, the most frankly sexual act seem beautiful without ceasing to appear humorous.

Perhaps nearly half of the rest of the tales are concerned with the comic or serious underlining of the character of the woman of this world: she is adulterous, insatiable, deceitful; and her exquisite quickness

of wit is considered, on the whole, cunning rather than intellect, and not sufficient to make her the companion of the soulful male; yet the man will always 'fall' for her, because she is the imperfect foretaste of an after life.

I do not want to seem to be riding a hobby, for after all I have selected mainly for entertainment, and indeed few volumes so small have gathered together so many differing points of view, but it does genuinely appear to me that the majority of the remainder of these tales—with their ecstasy of yearning, their insistence on madness and death through absence, not from woman but from a love that has been felt through woman, and their cold chivalry toward the love of others, rather than toward those others themselves—do give the same denominator that I have tried to establish in the case of the poems. Even in the sophisticated and sometimes cruelly beautiful sketches called *The Garden of Kisses* (Volume XI, pp. 25–112), where the author has acquired the cool eye for effect of the French pornographer, the same alternate mastery and slavery, the fighting man's mysticism and the Believer's superiority, can be traced through the conventional worry and flurry of sex. When Soliman's mind returns in death to the small Mimi of Alger, is it a touch of European pathos, or a throwback to the perfect Nomad lover of days before the Prophet came?

• • •

TALES OF FEZ

(*Volume IV, pages* 35–128)

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TELLING OF these fairy tales prove, I think, their primitive relation with religion and even with magic. Their recitation is no impromptu matter and may well be, in some sort, the memory of an incantation. They must not be told in the day time. 'My children would get ringworm,' a mother will say if asked to do so. And this prohibition is not peculiar to Fez. It is found in Algeria and among the Berbers. 'Who tells a tale by day is shamed by his children's ringworm,' they say at Blida. The same rule is sanctioned in Ireland and New Guinea, in Alaska and South Africa, by a supernatural chastisement which will fall upon the teller or upon some member of her family; and even where it is not explicit, it is usual to tell any stories involving marvel in the evening only. Among the Anti-Atlas, for a woman to tell such a tale by daylight will make horns sprout on her uncle's head, or cause her to bear minute weaklings or monsters.

The object of the formula which will be found to begin each tale is clearly to Islamise or monotheise stories whose heroes are often taken from among the Jinn, the exclusive cult of whom would be idolatry. The formula for ending, which is peculiar to Fez, runs as follows: *We let them eat stones, and we have come to eat dates.* Sometimes *iron* is substituted for *stones*, and *thrid*, a dish composed of pancakes of a sort, with sauce and sugar and little pieces of meat, for *dates*. This formula expresses the same idea as

the following, which concludes the majority of Berber tales: *I have left him in wretchedness; and am returned in peace*, or *I have left them in adversity, and am come back untroubled.* These formulæ are employed even when, as is usually the case, the story has a happy ending; their object is to deflect any evil influence on to the characters in the tale, and also, doubtless, to ensure prosperity, as in this Ntifa termination: *My story is finished, but the provision of corn and barley is not.*

These tales are purely of Fez, and have no connection with the long narratives of the public and professional story-tellers. They form the pabulum for the child mind of Fez, and, though belonging exclusively to oral literature, are usually superior in style and construction to the run of popular tales. This is notably so in the case of the Berber stories which have been brought into Morocco: the general character of the latter is quite different and they cannot stand comparison with the former.

The problem of the origin of these tales is much too great a one to be considered at length in this short note. Relations have been established between them and some Berber tales of Morocco and Algeria, but it would be impossible to determine whether the pure Berber folklore has influenced that of Fez, or vice versa. Also, it must be noted that the Berber tales, as we know them, are not necessarily pure Berber, and have certainly been subjected to Arabic influence. On the other hand, these tales of Fez show trace upon trace of many different Oriental influences. Some have more or less strong affinities with *The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night.* But for the most part these are circumstantial borrowings from

written Arabic literature; the common traits can themselves only be borrowings from universal folklore.

We meet numerous analogies between these folk tales and those of Europe and other continents. Folklore is, of course, common stock, although we may be able to assign to such and such a theme certain thematic provinces. In many instances we seem driven to explain analogies by the unity of the human mind, and the universality of primitive belief. And when we find a sequence of identical incidents, making a duplicate spontaneous origination improbable, there yet remain diffusion and imitation. We know that North Africa has been a high road for the diffusion of tales.

The reader who remembers the nursery stories of his childhood, or has read much among the popular tales of the world, will have no difficulty in finding common traits for himself. A few references will not be out of place; when the number of a volume is given without other indication it refers to my translation of Dr. J. C. Mardrus's *The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night:*

In *The Slipper Mender's Son* compare the leaving of the markets open with *The Tale of Kamar* (Vol. XII), and for the loss of the power of invisibility, compare *The Third Madman's Tale* (Vol. XIII) and *The Young Wives' Tale* in the present Series, Vol. IV. The same sort of induced vision will be found in *The Two Lives* (Vol. XIII). For a tale very like *The Merchant's Daughter and the Sultān's Son* in essential details see *La Fille du Menuisier* in Artin Pacha's *Contes Populaires de la Vallée du Nil.* Two very similar tales to *The Fatal House* are to be found in Rivière's *Recueil de Contes Populaires de la Kabylie* (pp. 61–70), and a Flemish fairy tale, *Pitje de Dood*, collected in Antwerp

(*Revues des Trad. Popul.*, 1890, Vol. V) tells of an analogous recompense for courtesy and bravery in a haunted house. Compare *Lalla Khallal the Green* with *Sleeping Beauty* in its various forms, and such Italian fairy tales as *La Locandiera*, *La bella ostessina*, and *La crudel Matrigna*. Compare *The Carpenter's Daughter* with *The Chick-Pea Seller's Daughter* (Vol. XIV) and the delightful tale of the Abbé Sans-Soucis, collected by Madame Morin at Troyes (*Rev. des Trad. Popul.*, 1891, Vol. VI). The hero's understanding of the language of animals, as in *The Language of the Birds*, is universal in heroic folk tales, *e.g.* Sigurd's acquirement of that power by eating the heart of Fafner. An exact parallel to this tale is to be found in *La Prophétie accomplie* in *Les Sept Sages de Rome*.

But the most interesting tale, among those which I have selected, with which to find an analogy is certainly *The Kaftān of Love Spotted with Passion*. In it we cannot fail to recognise a variant of Eros and Psyche; the succession of incidents, the marriage of a beautiful girl to a superhuman being, the husband who appears only at night and whose face must never be seen, the lighting of a candle or lamp, the hot drop of wax or oil which wakens the husband, the exile of the disobedient wife: these at least point to a common influence or source.

It can hardly be a recent borrowing, resulting from a contemporary citizen of Fez having read Apuleius or heard the story of Psyche from a European and retold it to a woman. (We must remember, though, the story of Maspero, who heard the old Egyptian tale of *The Two Brothers* from a Nile boatman, and found that a child had read it in the work of Maspero himself, and repeated it to the boatman.) Yet the

customs, the sum of the conditions amongst which the cycle of the folklore of Fez evolves, and the modified aspects of the tale itself, make this last possibility improbable. The story is not the property of one family, all the people of Fez know it, and we find fragments of the theme among much North African folklore.

Could it have been borrowed directly from Apuleius at a comparatively ancient date? Every Moroccan to whom this hypothesis has been submitted unanimously rejects it, considering it utterly opposed to the habits of the lettered Believer to have read *The Golden Ass* at any time, or to have taken the trouble to tell the story of it to his wife. Also, Apuleius can hardly have been translated into Arabic, or even known to the second century of the Hijrah. Under the Abbasid Khalīfah Ma'mūn, a number of Greek and Latin works were translated, but they were solely those connected with science and philosophy. The Arabs translated the books in which they felt they were lacking, rightly considering that their own ante- and post-Islamic poets were sufficient as literature. If any Persian or Hindu books of literary or historical character were brought over into Arabic, they were so translated by Persians and Hindus who, converted to Islām and gathered within its fold, wished to prove to the Arabs that they had a culture. It must be admitted, then, that either our Fez tale came very indirectly from Apuleius, by way of the folklore of the Berbers of North Africa, that home of Latin writers, or that both it and *The Golden Ass* have a common origin. It is an established fact that Apuleius took his theme from universal folklore, as is proved by the Greek and Hindu texts. I incline,

with M. Dermenghem, towards this second hypothesis, especially since the Fez version as closely resembles various other tales, notably *Sleeping Beauty*, as it does the story of Apuleius.

Apuleius was born in North Africa and after having visited Greece and Italy and Asia, returned to end his days in his own country. A fable born in Africa may have emigrated to the East, and returned again by another road.

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AUTHORS

I APPEND A FEW NOTES, IN CHRONOLOGICAL order on some of the chief poets and prose writers represented in the Series :

MUSLĪM IBN AL-WALĪD AL-ANSĀRĪ, *c.* 750–803 (Volume XII, page 69), or the Victim of the Fair, as Hārūn ar-Rashīd named him, was the son of a weaver in Kūfa. He was the earliest Arab poet in metropolitan surroundings to rise through sheer genius from penury, through a prodigal perfection of life and work, to a death of kingly drunkenness. Wine meant more to him than the women of whom he sang, as he himself confessed, more elegantly than sincerely. He says of wine : ' She is the daughter of magic; she is of the Faith by her marriage with good fellows. We have asked for her, and the mediator brought her to us, slowly and with solemnity.' In this beginning of the Golden Age, flyting, or competitive animadversion, was exceedingly popular, and

Muslim was of too careless and happy a disposition to excel in it. That is why there were many contemporary poets who considered that they had established supremacy over him, notably Ibn-Kanbar, and who are only remembered because they so considered.

ABŪ NUWĀS, 756–810 (Volume XII, page 71, Volume VIII, page 5), a half-Persian figure of beauty and fun about the court of Hārūn ar-Rashīd, was one of the great love poets of the world, and, even in the most scabrous scrap of his versification, a truly vivid and human writer. Like Muslim, he sang much of wine; unlike Muslim, he was a confirmed taker of hashish, and also poignantly real in his poems concerning both women and boys. His work is almost unknown in England, but his Dīwān was translated by A. von Kremer and published in Vienna as early as 1855. For further poems and anecdotes, see *The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night.* A fancy portrait of the poet will be found in my *Red Wise.*

AL-MUFADDAL, died 786 (Volume VIII, tales 25 and 79), is the first anthologist with whom we have to do; he is contemporary with the Mu'allakāt (the *Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia,* see Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, 1903, and my *Garden of Bright Waters*). His *Mufaddalīyāt,* containing about a hundred and twenty odes and fragments, is mostly drawn from the minor pre-Islamic poets. He was put in prison for religious contumacy by the Khalīfah Mansur, and afterwards pardoned and entrusted with the education of Mansur's son. It is from his collection of proverbs, in which subject he was an expert, that my examples are taken.

FADL, died 817 (Volume XII, page 72), was a poetess brought from central Arabia to amuse the favourites of the Khalīfah Mutawakkil, whose succession marks the end of the Abbasids, and consequently the end of the first wave of the Golden Age. Even my second-hand *Namah* will show, I think, that she was out of place in a suspicious court, one which for the first time preferred comic songs and ballets to pure music and poetry. Her whole life story, though she seems to have given her favour to the best of the youth and talent that came her way, is bound up with the very orthodox official court poet Sa'id ibn Hamid. He realised early in their relations that his style was being influenced by her, and yet remained, as she with her love of gold did not, entirely faithful. In death she wrote to him: 'I am at the end of my patience. Whither shall I go? My house is near, and yours is very far.'

MĀS'ŪDĪ, died 956 (Volume VIII, tales 27, 29, 35, 38 and 69), studied in early life, not theology like his master Al-Tabarī, but philosophy and science, and spent many years wandering by land and sea throughout the East. H. A. R. Gibb, in his brilliant introductory handbook to *Arabic Literature*, the best which has been written in so short a compass, says of him: 'The insight and experience gained by contact with other peoples, together with his early studies, supplied the material for his elaborate encyclopædia of the history, geography, philosophy, and religions of the Muslims, their neighbours, and predecessors. Unfortunately only one volume, and that the least valuable, of the thirty that made up his original work has come down to us, and only one of

his first abridgement. A second abridgement entitled *The Golden Meadows*, in some six hundred pages, is all that we have to judge our loss by. There is no more delightful work in Arabic. The inconsequent style of the author, as he ranges over natural history, history, geography, ethnology, religion, medicine, and what not, his breadth of view and innumerable anecdotes, keep the reader interested and amused; and though he almost always refers the curious to his larger works for detailed accounts, the summary preserves a good deal of valuable historical matter.'

AL-THA'ĀLABĪ, 961–1038 (Volume VIII, tale 73), was one of the most brilliant belles-lettrists of his century in Nishāpūr, and his fame rests mainly upon two books of perfect workmanship, his *General History*, of which only that part dealing with the early Persian kings has come down to us, and his biographical anthology of recent poets, *The Solitaire of the Age* (see Zotenberg, *Les Rois de Perse*, Paris, 1900, and C. Barbier de Meynard's *Tableau litteraire de la Khorassan*, Journal Asiatique, 1853–4). His ability to express a philosophic crisis is well illustrated in my selection from the former work.

AL-TUGHRĀ'I, died 1121 (Volume XII, page 74), is our first poet of the Silver Age. He was of Persian origin and born at Ispahan; but, during those years when Persian was slowly coming into its own as the language of poetry in the East, he wrote in Arabic. His best known work is his *L-poem of the Foreigners*, a cantankerous elegy, rhymed on l, concerning the evils of the times. A curious quality of thwartness will be seen in the two examples given

from the shorter poems of his Dīwān. He was taken prisoner and put to death on a charge of atheism after Sultan Mas'ūd, whose minister he had been in Mosul, was defeated by his brother Mahmūd at the battle of Hamadan.

IBN AL-JAUZĪ, 1116–1200 (Volume VIII, tales 5, 21, 61, 86 and 88), one of the most prolific and many-sided writers in the whole of Arabic literature, was born in Baghdad of an old family tracing kinship with the Khalīfah Abū Bakr. He was a great and magnetic teacher, a preacher at Mecca and in Baghdad, and a subtle disentangler of religious knots. He claimed that he had converted more than a hundred thousand men to a pious life, and had brought more than ten thousand youths, a much harder task, to reflection. The legend that he wrote an average of a hundred and eighty pages for every day of his eighty-four years is an exaggeration which underlines the truth of an inspired industry. He wrote standard works on the science of language, on history, on religion, on jurisprudence, on ethics, on medicine and on geography, besides collections of sermons and those volumes of anecdotal philosophy containing such incidents as I have given.

'UMAR IBN AL-FĀRĪD, 1181–1235 (Volume XII, page 75), the greatest Arabic mystic poet, and the only one who can at all challenge the great Persian mystics, was born and died at Cairo. His Dīwān, a volume of hardly more than twenty odes, was collected and put in order by his grandson 'Alī; it is a perfect model of the style used for the description of sūfī ecstasy, and instigated by Mutanabbī, a thing

of conceits and plays upon words, of tours de force and rhetoric. A pantheistic philosopher, he sings his love for, and desire for reunion with, the Great All, in the most fiery terms of earthly passion, and seeks in wine that exaltation which he hoped from the approach of the Supreme Being. One of his best known poems is the many times translated *Wine-Song*.

AL-DAMĪRĪ, 1344–1405 (Volume VIII, tales 17, 43, 58, 62 and 83), was one of the many scientists who flourished in Egypt in the fourteenth century. He died at Cairo. His *Hayāt al-Hayawān*, or *The Life of Animals*, was a zoological dictionary, treating also of the etymology of the names of beasts, and the proverbial anecdotes concerning them. The pleasant discursiveness of his work may be judged from the examples given, which all deal with subjects not scientifically within its scope.

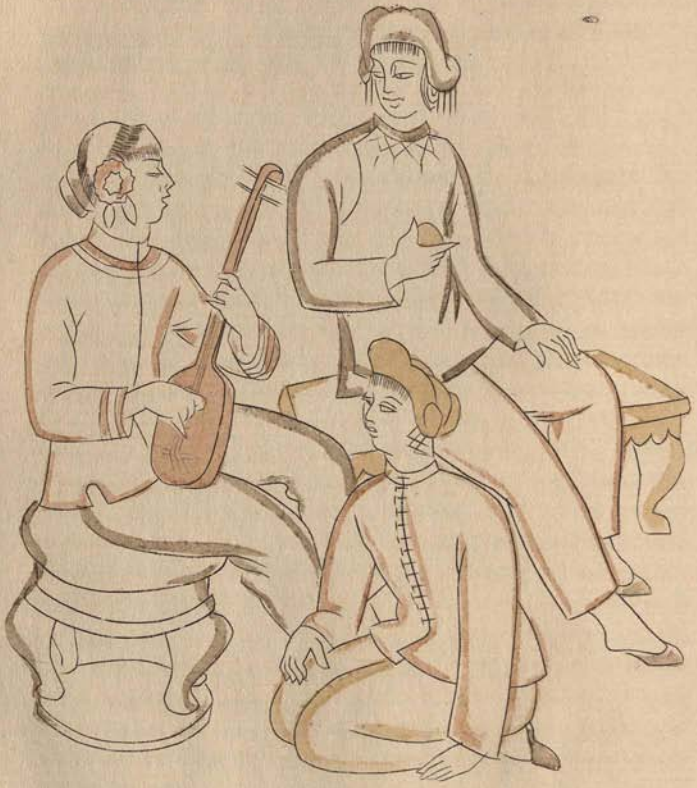
AHMAD AL-IBSHAIHĪ, 1388–1446 (Volume VIII, tales 3, 7, 23, 39, 44, 46, 47, 48, 51, 54, 55, 56, 64, 75, 81 and 87), achieved in his *Kitāb al-Mustatraf*, or *Literary Dilectus*, one of the greatest, both for richness of matter and excellence of style, of those collections of anecdotes which have been the favourite literary fare of Arabs from the tenth century, when the first drafts of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* were being made from the Persian and Indian, down to the present day. (See the excellent translation by G. Rat, Paris, 1899–1902.)

ABŪ AL-TAIYIB, 1388–1470 (Volume XII, page 83), studied law in the Hijaz, until failing health, due to an over-indulgence in anacard led him to

concentrate on the lighter task of literature. Apart from his own poems of dignified passion, of which *Ailah* is a good example, he made the only anthology of his time of popular ballad poetry, and also produced a little work, of which the British Museum possesses a copy, giving a table of the annual rise of the Nile since the year of the Hijrah.

'Abd Al-Gani, 1641–1731 (Volume XII, page 86), was a great scholar and a true poet in his own right. Though he is best known to foreigners for his commentary on the Dīwān of 'Umar ibn al-Fārid (q.v.), his songs are some of the sweetest composed during the literary decadence of the Age of the Mamlūks, and they spread throughout the Arabic-speaking world. He was born at Damascus, and as a young man studied law there. Because of the satires which he composed on his fellow townsmen, he was accused of impiety and variously ill-treated by them; but, after a 'retreat' of seven years in his own house, he began to be regarded as a saint. In Sālihiyya, where he settled in 1707, and where he died, he did much voluntary legal work for the poor, and is said, though he did not wish them to be spoken about, to have worked miracles.

Only two writers after the turn of the eighteenth century need to be touched upon: Ahmad Ibn Bakr (Volume XII, tales 16, 20, 32, 42 59, 78 and 90), a collector of entirely ribald stories, of which two or three editions were published at Constantine between 1860 and 1880, and Amor Ben Amar, *c.* 1850–1906 (Volume IV, pages 1–22, Volume XII, page 87), for whom see Volume IV, pages x–xi.



III

CHINA

LOVE STORIES AND GALLANT TALES

(*Volume VI, pages* 3–171, *Volume XII,* pages 1–12)

CHINESE FICTION FALLS ROUGHLY INTO FOUR groups according to subject-matter: plots and usurpation, superstition, bandits and crime in general, love and sexual intrigue. The short stories I have given belong to the last group. Those in Volume VI were written during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and at the decadent close of it, when misgovernment was already fomenting that rebellion which was to yield Peking into the hands of the Manchu Tartars. Much fiction was produced under the Ming dynasty, but, except in a very few cases, the authors of it are unknown. This is so with *Hsing shih hêng yen*, a collection of forty tales dating from 1627, and not mentioned in the late Professor Giles's *History of Chinese Literature*. The name means literally 'Wake-generation Constant-words.' The first two words are often used in the titles of religious exhortations and moral tracts, and the last two, quite frequently, in the sense of proverbial sayings. 'Tales conveying a Moral Lesson for the Edification of the World' would convey the sense. The *Chin ku ch'i kuan*, 'Marvellous Tales, Ancient and Modern,' was published a few years later and is also a collection of forty stories. These are said to have been the work of

various members of a society which met for the purpose of writing them.

It is from these two collections that my Volume VI is chosen, and I think that the seven tales contained in it give a fair idea of the elements which appeal to the Chinese in sexual romances for general grown-up reading. In *The Wedding of Ya-nei* and *A Complicated Marriage* we find two really sympathetic idylls of youthful love, a tasteful blend of poetry and humour. The comic mother, that angry force in the home, plays a leading part in each: India, Islām and China delight in dynamic old females. In these two tales young lyric love is rewarded, just as inevitably as true viciousness is castigated in all the rest. A pleased interest in Eonism (compare *A Danger Remembered*, Volume VIII, page 7) will be found in *A complicated Marriage*, and this aspect of sex is the foundation of *The Counterfeit Old Woman*, which for the rest is intended partly to amuse through its sexually picaresque shifts and devices, and partly as a serious warning to housewives and husbands against a form of exploitation which was quite familiar to the criminal courts. The same double purpose is to be traced in *The Monastery of the Esteemed Lotus*, with the addition of that anti-clerical bias which is so popular with all tellers of broadly humorous tales. The story contains some very trenchant satire, and the Superior's wild struggle for life at the end brings the reader suddenly into a world of real people. The idyll of the first two tales is repeated even more tenderly in *A Strange Destiny;* but the grave-robber and the pig-headed father, two types of criminal that are seriously treated in Chinese fiction, precipitate such a tragedy as would have delighted an Elizabethan audience—

the lover killing his betrothed in panic fear because he thinks she is a ghost. It is a detective story on a tender note, and *The Error of the Embroidered Slipper* is the same type of tale on an exceedingly grim one. This last seems to me worth reading for its study of a human bawd (as opposed to an epical one, such as may be found in Volume II), and its poetic insistence on Restifism or shoe-fetishism : so akin to foot-fetishism, a point of view whose especial home is China. *The Shame of a Singing Girl* is perhaps the first of these tales which can properly be called a tragedy of character; the natures of the three men are contrasted in an unusually modern manner, and it seems to me that Shih-niang is one of the most effectively romantic studies of a woman's character in the Series. The description of the condition of contemporary prostitution is interesting, though the general pathos of it, contrasted with the heroine's ability to make a collection of very valuable jewels during her time of hardship, a little detracts from its value as a document. I believe that this tale has been translated before into English, but I have not been able to find it.

In the few years dividing these two collections from *Liao chai chih I*, '*Strange Tales Told in a Studio*,' the Ming dynasty had fallen, and, as Professor Giles says : 'the great empire of China, bounded by the Four Seas, and stretching to the confines of the habitable earth, except for a few barbarian islands scattered on its fringe, with its refined and scholarly people, heirs to a glorious literature more than twenty centuries old, was in the power of a wild race of herdsmen, whose title had been established by skill in archery and horsemanship. Not much was to be expected on behalf of the "humanities" from a

people whose own written language had been composed to order so late as 1599, and whose literary instincts had still to be developed. Yet it may be said without fear of contradiction that no age ever witnessed anything like the extensive encouragement of literature and patronage of literary men exhibited under the reigns of two Emperors of this dynasty.'

P'u Sung-ling, who wrote these Strange Tales of the borderland, from which I have taken *Tung-Shêng and the Hu*, may be said to begin the literature of the new dynasty. He was born in 1672 and, after a sickly childhood in a poor family, took his first degree in 1641. Later he failed, to his bitter disappointment, in the examinations through which he hoped to enter upon an official career, and little is known of his life afterwards. An idea of his feelings and intentions may be gained from his own words written in 1679, when he had just completed the stories which were soon to give him a recognised place in the front rank of Chinese literature.

'My talents,' he says, 'are not those of Yü Pao, elegant explorer of the records of the gods; I am rather animated by the spirit of Su Tung-p'o, who loved to hear men speak of the supernatural. I get people to commit what they tell me to writing, and subsequently I dress it up in the form of a story; and thus in the lapse of time my friends from all quarters have supplied me with quantities of material which, from my habit of collecting, has grown into a vast pile. . . . Midnight finds me with an expiring lamp, while the wind whistles mournfully without; and over my cheerless table I piece together my tales, vainly hoping to produce a sequel to the *Infernal Regions* (by Lin I-ch'ing of the Sung dynasty). With

a bumper I stimulate my pen, yet I only succeed thereby in "venting my excited feelings," and as I thus commit my thoughts to writing, truly I am an object worthy of commiseration. Alas! I am but the bird that, dreading the winter frost, finds no shelter in the tree, the autumn insect that chirps to the moon and hugs the door for warmth.'

It is not so much the content of these tales, as the style, terse, beautiful and novelly combined, which has made them a Chinese classic; but the subject-matter is sufficiently interesting. P'u Sung-ling was the Poe of his time and country, the first author in the world to let the brain of a scientist adventure over the threshold; but the reader can get a much better idea of his compass and enthusiasms from Professor Giles's translation and consideration of many of the tales, than from anything I could say of the one tale I have given. The latter is, I think, typical, but, after all, it was chosen by me mainly because Professor Giles did not translate it.

The dignified use of dreams as a mechanism for moving the narrative forward will be noticed in most of these stories, and, in all of them, an essentially middle-class bias; instead of fire chariots and golden waterfalls, we find a typically Chinese interest in the bourgeois and an insistence upon family life. Another thing to be learned from them, it seems to me, is that Chinese popular authors do not conventionalise their plots as much as Europeans—sufficiently, but not as much—or pigeonhole them so strictly. They work with a full palette, humour and beauty mingle, humour and horror, rare beauty with comedy, tragedy with a music-hall joke, and poetry with a subtle pornography.

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J. WING

(*Volume XI, pages* 113–138)

A GREAT MANY TRANSLATIONS OF CHINESE poetry into English have been given to the public in the last fifteen years. They descend, if I may use a rough and ready declension, from the exquisite revelations of Mr. Arthur Waley, who—a distinction far greater than it may sound—knows both languages; through the collaboration of a great poet with a scholar in Mr. Ezra Pounds' *Cathay;* the collaboration of a true poet with a scholar in the late Miss Amy Lowell's *Fir-Flower Tablets;* through many enthusiastic translations by way of the French, such as my own in *Coloured Stars* and *The Garden of Bright Waters;* down to so-called direct renderings by some one, or some emotional two, knowing neither tongue. I have been tempted by French versions of eloquent poems which I believe to have escaped so far; but I could not be certain, and have therefore confined myself in this Series to a single Chinese poet, a modern with whom I had some justificatory personal relation.

J. Wing, or Julius Wing as he hated to be called, was born in 1876 of good merchant stock in China Town, San Francisco, and, like so many of his contemporaries, as opposed to later generations, was from the beginning bilingual. A natural genius developed his *pari passu* command of the two languages. He early showed that physical delicacy which was to war throughout his whole life with his poet's desire for change of air and water. He might have inherited a great charcuterie business, but preferred to wander.

He was a sort of chasseur at hotels in San Francisco and Saint Louis, and a gentleman's gentleman in New York and Boston. Later he shook cocktails, and contributed verse in English to three or four American journals. As a valet he visited England and France, Spain and Italy, with an employer whose spectacular death in the last country caused a week's sensation. He visited Europe a second time at his own expense, a slowly dying man, and perished of consumption in lodgings by the harbour at Vigo in 1925, just as the boat on which I had come to visit him was mooring under a green dawn cloudy with gulls.

After three years' correspondence, which Wing himself originated, and after I had given rough versions of his work in my *Coloured Stars* and *The Garden of Bright Waters*, we met, at the beginning of 1921, in Teneriffe, and for six months in that island were constant companions. Like any minor American poet, Wing was alternately shy and bold, bold, I mean, in proclaiming his beliefs in unsuitable company, and shy in alluding to his own work. His strangely assorted gods were, as preached to me in Oratava (where he wrote one or two of his water, and all, I imagine, of his flower poems), Li Po, Po Chü-I, Landor and Maxwell Bodenheim.

It was only after he had showed me cuttings of his rather romantic poems in American papers, and some of his own versions in prose of his hundred or so Chinese lyrics, that he himself suggested that I should, as it were, exploit him. There would have been no reason for this, if Wing's early life and injudicious reading in The Sates had not grafted on to him a kind of bastard poeticism. The versions he proffered to me were not crude gold, but, one might almost

say, a bromide of Mercury. After long talks on every word, I seemed to see the living bones through the dead flesh, and, because there was no other to do so, I ventured to produce about fifty free verse 'translations' of him: at first in the two books I have already cited, before I had met him, and in *A Green Paper Lantern* afterwards.

Opium and wine speak for themselves in these poems; and to-day we begin to realise that masochism is only the more sensitive skin below that one which the love poet has exposed to us since the world began. Wing's *Fans* are dramatic lyrics which it is interesting to disentangle, and his *Waters* and *A Garden*, though cheap and up-to-date if you will, are yet examples of that minute observation typical of older Chinese poets. His *Delicate Smallness* is dedicated to a worship of female youth as pure as Francis Thompson's, and quite as lonely.

If I had had nothing to do with these poems—and in essentials I have had little enough—I would say that Wing was a true poet, if only a true minor.

IV

INDIA

AMORES OF AMARU AND MAYŪRA

(*Volume V, pages* 139–183)

SETTING ASIDE THE MYSTICAL GITAGOVINDA of Jayadeva, the first great monuments of Sanskrit lyric verse after Kālidāsa are the poems of Bhartrhari, Bilhana and Amaru, and the greatest of these names, to my mind, is Amaru. Bhartrhari's work consists of three collections each theoretically of a hundred stanzas, one section of which gives us pictures of love; the other two deal with indifference to the things of sense, and of wise conduct. The amorous sketches are quick and coloured and unconventional enough, but, as might perhaps be expected from the other two sections, they are clouded and spoiled by a doubt. I-Tsing, the Bhuddist pilgrim, tells us that Bhartrhari died about 651 and ever wavered between the monastic and lay life, moving his full seven times between the cloister and the world, as the Rule allowed him. Once, when entering a monastery, he commanded a student to have a chariot waiting for him in case the flesh should prove too strong. His *Century of Love* opens with vivid pictures of enjoyment and of woman's beauty as they differ with the seasons, somewhat in the style of the *Rtusamhāra* of Kālidāsa (see my *Circle of the Seasons*), each completely and daintily finished; but we soon pass to stanzas in which these joys are contrasted with the abiding peace brought on by wisdom and penance, and

finally beauty is described as a sweet but poisonous illusion. This spoils Bhartrhari from our point of view. The one intensely interesting poem of Bilhana is his *Caurapañcāsikā*, the record in fifty stanzas of a secret love affair between a commoner and a princess, ending in the death of the former, or, as some say, in the recital of the poem by the former and his consequent pardon by the outraged father. (A free interpretation is to be found in my *Black Marigolds*.) It has sufficient variety in ideas to prevent it becoming wearisome, and, as a dramatic and therefore inevitably a slightly stereotyped lyric, gives vignettes of passion which are true and delightful, considered from the view-point of any civilisation.

Amaru, like Bhartrhari, is historically rather a person of mystery. His century of poems, unlike those of Bhartrhari, are marked by no indecision as to the value of human love. His polished miniatures of passion are clearer and subtler than Bhartrhari's, and, unlike Bilhana's, which acutely cover the reactions of the limited actors in his tale, cover, rather, the whole of human experience.

Three minor Sanskrit lyric poets, approaching these two in time, or at least—for in early Sanskrit lyric poetry no chronology worth the term exists—coming within the sphere of legitimate comparison with them, and well antedating the sweet eroticist Govardhana, are Mayūra, who flourished at Harsavardhana's court in the seventh century, Bāna, the reputed son-in-law or brother-in-law of Mayūra, and Pānini the Grammarian, or, more probably, another Pānini. The work of this last shows a sweet, feckless, conception of love, inferior in intensity to Bāna's striking religious praises of Shiva's consort and,

in especial, of her feat in slaying the demon Mahisa, and falling even further short of Mayūra's *Hymn to the Sun*, his *Mayūrāshtika*, and the erotic fragment discovered by M. Féval and rendered here by me.

To compare those with whom we are specially concerned, Amaru of the first class and Mayūra of the second: Mayūra, in his somewhat heavy and tedious style, and in spite of his overindulgence in double meanings, gives us a weighty insistence, unique, I think, among minor poets of the East, on all the symbols—from the large glory of the elephant's member to the tiny importance of the stains left by lacquered feet on the earth—which go to make up his love affair. He has no general insight, but he has half a dozen particular insights, and out of these he weaves his beautiful, unaccounted monotone. Amaru played, improvised, and intricated upon all the many notes of an instrument not yet invented, and the whole gamut of passion, from the most airy tiff of a summer's day, through the scented night fervours of realisation or frustration, down to the deep tearing apart and putting together of the flesh in absence and return, lay well within his easy, personal, accomplished interval. This volume of *Eastern Love* would, I think, be justfied if it did nothing more than introduce Amaru to some readers who had not otherwise known him.

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DAMODARAGUPTA AND KSHEMENDRA

(*Volumes I and II, see Introductory Note in Volume I*)

CHANDĪDĀSA

(*Volume V, pages* 1–135)

CHANDIDĀSA WAS BORN A SAKTA, A WORshipper of Durga, Chandi or Sakti, as the goddess was variously named, and in early youth indulged in that sexual and vinous excess which was typical of the Tantrikas. Sakta poets have sung the praise of spiritual drinking since time immemorial, that is intoxication with her faith, and the essence of their religion has been a deep disregard of and abstraction from all earthly things; but in practice, as with the Persian and Arabic mystics, the drunkenness has been found easier to attain in a physical sense, and a belief in the vanity of all worldly things has easily extended to a regard of all social sanctions as vanity. But these irregularities are often found mingled with great kindness of heart, praiseworthy candour, and a deep and faithful love for Sakti.

As a youth, Chandīdāsa worshipped an image of Durga called Bishalakshmi, and often apostrophises the goddess in his songs. 'As well may be imagined,' says Ramesachandra Datta, 'the conversion of Chandīdāsa to Vaishnavism is connected with many tales. It is said that, on a certain day, he saw a beautiful flower floating on the river where he had gone to bathe. He took it up and went to worship Bishalakshmi. The goddess appeared in person and asked for the flower that she might place it on her head. The worshipper was awe-struck, and inquired what strange virtue the flower could possess so as to induce the

goddess to appear in person, and to wish to keep it on her head instead of allowing the poet to place it on her feet, as usual. The goddess replied: "Foolish child, my Master has been worshipped with that flower, it is not fit for my feet, let me hold it on my head." "And who may *thy* Master be?" inquired the poet. "'Krishna,'" was the reply. And from that day the poet exchanged the worship of the inferior goddess for that of Krishna. . . . Chandīdāsa, it is said, was excessively fond of smoking. One night he was going to another village for fire, as there was none in his own. He was misled by a false light which moved before him, and when the light disappeared, Bhagavati appeared in person and ordered him to sing of Krishna; and of Krishna the poet sang to the end of his life.'

One tenet of the Tantrika faith is that Shiva abides in every man and Sakti in every woman, and that promiscuous congress, therefore, can never be sinful but must always be an act of virtue. And the Vaishnavas of Chandīdāsa's time not unnaturally borrowed so pleasant a theory, and contended in their turn that whatever pleasurable thing a male follower did to a female follower, Rādhā and Krishna, who were present in their bodies, enjoyed the deed and regarded it as one of worship. This idea gave birth to the mystic practice of Sadhan by the early Vaishnavas, a liaison of artistically erotic ritual, practised by a couple of worshippers, who thereby became Siddha. Bidyāpati performed these acts with the princess Lakshmi Devi and Chandīdāsa with Rāmi, of whom mention has been made in Volume V.

Chandīdāsa has given this washer-girl immortality in his songs, and many tales are still told about the two.

The poet was instructed that he could not become Siddha until his heart went forth spontaneously, without thought of money or marriage, to some woman with whom he could perform Sadhan. He saw Rāmi washing clothes by a river, felt the desired change and left his home and parents to live with her. At length his deeply offended mother went to the girl's house and forced the poet to return home with her. The ceremony for receiving him back into the caste which he had forfeited was put in progress, but in the middle of the feast Rāmi appeared and began to upbraid her lover. He ran to embrace her. His hands were filled with the food he was distributing to his guests, and hers with the washing she carried. Suddenly each was seen to be provided with a pair of supplementary arms in which to clasp each other, and thus Rādhā and Krishna were exalted.

I have already spoken of Bidyāpati's Sadhan with Lakshmi Devi. It is difficult not to consider these two great singers of Radha and Krishna together and in comparison. Bidyāpati Thākur sang their loves in Behar, in passionate and inimitable sonnets, setting, in some sort, an example to Chandīdāsa in Bengal. 'Bidiyāpati excels,' to quote again from Rameschandra Datta, 'in richness of imagery, wide range of ideas, skill and art of varied similies, Chandīdāsa has but his native, simple, excessive sweetness. Bidiyāpati ransacks the unbounded stores of Nature and of Art to embellish his poetry: Chandīdāsa looks within, and records the fond workings of a feeling, loving heart in simple strains. In Chandīdāsa's poetry there is an immense feeling and deep pathos; Bidiyāpati combines these with a quick fancy, a varied imagery, an exuberance of grace and ornament. Their

faults are also characteristic. Chandīdāsa is cloying and sometimes monotonous: Bidiyāpati too artistic, too abstract, in his images and ideas. At the same time both display the profoundest knowledge of the workings of a lover's heart; both sympathise deeply with, and portray feelingly and minutely its various phases, the first troubled impressions of love, its resistless force as the tide increases, the bitter pangs of separation, and the bitter woes of jealousy, the fond workings of hope, the ghastly effects of despair.'

The special form of surrender which they both sang, that which informs all the true mystic symbolism of Jayadeva (see Keith's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 190–199) reached, as R. W. Fraser contends, its tenderest, though perhaps not its truest, depths in the vision of Mira Bai, of Merwar, in the west of Hindustān, in the fifteenth century (See H. H. Wilson's *Sects of the Hindus*, p. 138, and Grierson's *Modern Literature of Hindustān*, p. 12), as it did in the sixteenth century in Spain in the ecstasies of Santa Theresa. Mira Bai's commentary on the *Gītagovinda* shows her passionate devotion to the body of Krishna.

The poetry of Chandīdāsa can be contrasted with the Sakta poems of admiration for the sexual in divinity, and the truly subtle secular erotic verse of India, such as that of Amaru, and, indeed, with the average of the world's love poems, in a very few words: the identification of the singer with both the Lover and the Loved is so strong that it passes beyond symbolism or interpretation; he becomes a mental hermaphrodite, with double powers. He fetches the god to earth and thus loses every trace of the stiffness of religion, and abandons himself with such completeness to those personalities, which he so desires because he so

desires to be, that first convention is forgotten and then every inhibition, one by one. The result is an insight into the refinements of the human passion which strikes the reader almost as a miraculous anachronism.

V

INDO-CHINA

ANNAM

(*Volume XII, pages* 13–52)

THE TALES, POPULAR SONGS AND DIALOGUES, which I have selected are from the vernacular Annamite tongue, and the poems, for the most part, from the Chinese or from Annamite of such an elevated style, so bristling with Chinese words, Chinese expressions and quotations, that they are only vaguely intelligible to the folk.

Songs hold the chief place in the public and private rejoicings of Annam, and the singer is nearly always a woman. She must have a good enough memory to learn by heart and recall at will, not only the songs momentarily in vogue, but also all the classic and ritual songs and poems, some of which are wearisomely long and monotonous. She accompanies her singing with slow gestures of her arms, ribald motions of her hands and fingers, and slight undulations of her body. She is generally promiscuous, as she must remain unmarried or abandon her profession.

When a mandarin or citizen is giving a dinner, he hires as many singers as he has guests, and these singers are provided by the musicians. During the meal, only one sings at a time, and when she has finished her special song she makes way for another. Sometimes she accompanies herself by beating two iron-wood batons together, while one of her companions strikes a drum, and the musicians play their

fiddles and guitars. After the meal, each guest takes a singer to sit by him, and offers her food and tea.

But at great houses and during public festivities, the singers work together, forming a corps de ballet called *Hat bo bo*. They stand in rows, sing in chorus, and give slow and simple dances, sometimes carrying on their backs a rather clumsy contrivance made of two lighted paper lanterns surrounded by artificial blossoms. These stand up over the shoulders, and are intended to make the chorus look like a garden of luminous flowers.

The musicians sit behind the singers, their instruments being usually eight in number: a small flute, a two-stringed fiddle, a three-stringed guitar, and one with an oblong belly, a discoid guitar with a short handle, a psaltery, a copper bell with a note like the triangle, and a little drum.

Music is a fairly lucrative profession in the larger towns, but in the villages its exponents are only paid by a share of the meal they have enlivened.

Some of the looser and more ephemeral of these songs are composed and sung by wandering male singers, who are either blind or for professional purposes feign to be so. If one of a poor family, for instance, happens to be blind, all the rest of the males sham the same affliction and form a band of singers. The orchestra of such a band is simpler than the one already enumerated and consists, apart from the inevitable *dan* or guitar, only of primitive instruments of percussion.

The Annamites love music and will spend hours of every day playing the *dan*, or the single or double flute. It is not surprising, then, that primitive singing should be the pivot of their sexual life. On the

fifth day of their eighth month, at the time of the October full moon, to give a typical example, they celebrate the festival called *Trung Tu.* They meet in the squares or public places, the boys on one side and the girls on the other, and there sing till day. A thick iron wire is stretched between two bamboos stuck in the ground, and vibrates over a great jar sunk into the earth, which acts as a sounding board. This wire is played upon with a stick and gives forth a long hollow note, as from the parchment of a tom-tom. Boys and girls sing alternately, provoking and answering each other, and each side trying to excel in verve and artistry. Expensive garments are usually the prizes for the winning group, and the latter is also entitled to a distribution of betel at the expense of the vanquished. This and other analogous public performances are held in great esteem by the Annamites, since they give the girls and boys an opportunity of showing off their knowledge and wit to each other —for some improvise, while others are content with saying the couplets they know by heart—and thereby finding affinities. The *Battle of Flowers* (page 33) gives a sort of average of the words of these competitions. The feast *Trung Tu* is generally followed by many marriages.

An abundant hatred of the French, a lack of original as opposed to debased Chinese inspiration, a delight in coarseness for its own sake coupled with genius for the suggestive (see *Streets of Hanoi*), and a knowledge of the outside world, distinguish the popular literature of the Annamites from that of the Laos or Shans (Volume X, pages 77–106).

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LOVE TALES OF CAMBODIA

(*Volume X, pages* 1–76)

IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED, IN READING THESE tales, that Cambodian customs are almost unalterable, being founded in legends of great antiquity, which have practically the force of religious instruction; the soul of the people, though simple enough, is so old as to appear mysterious to us. Some of the stories will strike the reader as childish, the non-erotic part of *How Not to Treat a Son-in-Law* for instance. Others, such as *Kung the Courageous*, show true psychological insight. All, I think, will be found amusing, and interesting because of the light they throw on the manners and customs, the religious beliefs and the mentality of the Cambodians.

Two things will be found to distinguish them from the tales of other simple civilisations: a fertility of imagination in the piling of incident on incident, each economically complicating the story, until a real subtlety is needed to disentangle the intrigue; and an artistic power of mixing true poetry and light-hearted fun without offence, which, making allowance for the more primitive materials in use, approaches the Chinese.

These tales have been passed up and down from mouth to mouth for centuries, and consequently, when written versions are found, as in the repertoire of one story teller or another, these show considerable and often important variations. My selection covers the only three kinds of tale or legend known in Cambodia: the pure fairy story, dealing with

royalty or at least nobility, old and untouched and rather long, such as *Sanselkey;* the tale dealing with characters of the same class as its audience, home-spun comedies or intrigues, such as *Kung the Courageous*, *A Woman's Artifice* and *How Not to Treat a Son-in-Law;* and the quite isolated Popusnokar cycle, where fertility, music and practical joking are identified and given flesh in a sort of half Panic and half Goha-like Autolycus.

Mention has been made of the many variants of these tales, and it is a typically Cambodian characteristic that most of them, and especially those in the second class, should have, like French engravings of the more romantic periods, an erotic and a non-erotic version, to be produced according to circumstance. Of *How Not to Treat a Son-in-Law* I have given the erotic version, which makes a much better tale; the reader will find no difficulty in determining how the other version, abruptly and not so truly, ends in a happy marriage, after the incident of the elephant and the bridge.

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SONGS OF THE LOVE NIGHTS OF LAO

(*Volume X, pages* 77–106)

THE LAOS OR SHANS ARE AN INDOLENT, LAUGHter-loving people, fond of gambling and cockfighting, not unwarlike, but orderly and trustworthy; their women have considerable influence and enjoy equal freedom with the men. The rule of the native

potentates is just and mild, and taxation light. Buddhism is the dominant religion, though it is overlaid with a great insistence on the male and female generative principles.

The Laotian girl takes everything in a spirit of fun, love and marriage and, perhaps especially, any kind of work. She is a coquette from the cradle, and dresses in a petticoat and scarf of brilliant colouring, designed less to hide her breasts than to accentuate the almost whiteness of her skin. Her hair is long and twisted into a knot directly behind her head, and this is surrounded by a little yellow handkerchief rolled into a crown. She marries very young; by sixteen she will be settled down. Generally speaking, the wooer buys his wife with a payment to the parents in money or kind.

Sexual love is publicly honoured in Lao, and the girls do not hesitate to have connection before marriage. Every evening, but especially when it is fine, the hut of each young girl becomes a sort of court of love, where the youths congregate: some of them talk and make jokes; others go from house to house, serenading those who please them. The parents discreetly retire. 'Youth must pass,' they say, 'it was so in our own time.' They hope that the lover will be caught on the marriage hook, and, if he be a good catch, that they have taught their daughter sufficiently well how to play him. If no marriage eventuate, the System of Fines will pay for all. If a lover is denounced as having offended a girl, he is called before the mother and father and questioned. There is a graduated tariff, and the young man can either marry or pay according to schedule. In certain localities it costs about three francs and a cake of

wax to hold the arm or hand of a girl; to hold her round the waist or thighs, five francs and two cakes of wax; complete possession, twelve francs and three cakes of wax; but with the daughter of a mandarin the tariff is somewhat higher.

The lover, coming to his mistress in the night, has to give three kicks on the partition separating the girl's room from that of the father and mother. The latter, now knowing that the intruder is not a robber, sleep on quite calmly, assured that the matter will resolve itself either into a marriage for their daughter or a desirable fine. Wedding ceremonies are ritual, extending from the asking with betel chewing, to the blessing of the couple in the marriage chamber. On the bridal night, when the couple are left alone, they light candles and incense sticks, bow themselves three times and ask the Buddhas that the child may be intelligent and well provided in all things. The marriage must be consummated on this first night, or else the two run the risk of being separated at once and for ever.

The Laos are perhaps the only civilised artistically erotic people left in the world; the songs I have given are specially concerned with ceremonial Wan-Pak nights, but one example of everyday procedure, serving the ends of love and obtaining throughout the whole of the Spring, may be given as typical. The young men go in bands to the woods in the afternoon to gather orchids, they climb the giant trees, and collect masses of the rainbow-coloured flowers; then, at twilight, the girls of the village come out to meet them, and the two bands, singing religious songs, go to deposit the flowers before the Buddhas in the local temple. As soon as this is

done, they go home, at first band by band, and then couple by couple, singing love songs and acting them as occasion serves. To do with such casual occasions are *A Man Alone*, 4, 5, and 6, *A Woman Alone*, 1, 3 and 5, and the section called *Canoe Men*. But our main concern, as has been said, is with the rest of the songs, which belong particularly to Love Nights.

A Love or Wan-Pak Night, on the eighth evening of the waxing or waning of the moon, is a night when all things sexual are excused, of love calls and free songs, of lightness and passion, and of dizzy music. Love making takes place in every thicket to the accompaniment of the *kane*, a panpipe of seven flutes; the singing is a kind of exchange of erotic songs, partially ritual, partially extemporary, and the bands of youths and bands of girls keep to themselves until one member of each, through successful wooing, breaks off into a couple. Both sexes carry poles of flowers. The boys sing with exaggerated contortions of their bellies, and it is they who show shyness and cover their heads with their scarves while singing some particularly daring song. Sexual license is complete, though all is determined by particular choice, and these connections, which take place often enough under the indulgent and appreciative eyes of the parents themselves, have not the least effect upon subsequent marriage. But the husband to be has his place on the right of the girl's mat, and the Wan-Pak lover his on the left only. The System of Fines is in abeyance on Love Nights.

These Laotian songs have no rhymes and the metre is utterly irregular; their merit does not consist in their prosody, but in their imagery, which is always

graceful and generally unexpected. The bamboo flute music to which they are sung has a certain affinity with Burmese and Siamese and Malay song accompaniments, but is very different from, and much more pastoral than, Annamite or Chinese music.

VI

JAPAN

COMRADE LOVES OF THE SAMURAI

(*Volume VII, pages* 1–99)

SAÏKAKU EBARA WAS BORN IN 1641 AND DIED in 1693. His youthful writings did not win success, but at the age of forty he wrote *The Amorous Life of Yonosuke*, which made him famous. He composed two sequels to this tale, but these did not reach the high level of the original. His other principal works are: *The Amorous Life of a Woman*, *Japan's Eternal Counting-House*, *Five Women in Love*, and the *Glorious Tales of Pederasty* which have provided most of these translations. He wrote many other stories during his short life, and seems to have composed with great swiftness and facility. One legend credits him with having written twenty thousand poems of sixteen syllables in a single day.

Saïkaku seems to have been the first Japanese writer to have taken the trouble to describe the life of soldiers, peasants and shopkeepers as opposed to that of the noble. In *Japan's Eternal Counting-House* he paints the everyday existence of the merchants of Osaka, the principal commercial centre of Japan. The love scenes are given with such frankness and freedom that many phrases and passages have been excised from the modern editions.

These Comrade Loves, as I have called them, give an exact picture of the feudal Japanese chivalry of the author's time, and of the Samurai spirit. The homo-

sexual love on which they insist was encouraged as a matter of course among the youth of the caste; for the Samurai held that love with a woman made a man cowardly, feeble and effeminate, and considered it infinitely more honourable to have a young boy as a lover.

When the boy became a man, cut the lock of hair on his brow and put on garments with short sleeves—he would also often change his name—physical relations ceased, but the lovers became intimate friends, sacrificing their interests to each other and helping each other in every way throughout their mutual lifetime. Sometimes even, as happens in these tales, one of them would die to save or follow the other.

Many lords and princes surrounded themselves with pages whom they had chosen from among the sons of their mistresses. These pages had no right to love other men while they were loved by their masters. This was an unwritten law.

Formerly, also, only a single sect among the Buddhist priests had the right to marry a woman publicly; therefore the priests as a class were obliged to have recourse to pederasty. Superior priests, abbots, cardinals and bishops made a parade of selecting beautiful boys for lovers; and these youths later became priests themselves.

Furthermore, those actors who took the female parts were naturally obliged to specialise in them. They were inevitably handsome, and sold their bodies to men and women alike; they were the life and soul of any gay assembly and of the Tea-Houses. Sometimes, even among this somewhat disgraceful class, as it was considered, there were real and beautiful love affairs. In this volume I have given one tale

concerning such. When these actors really excelled in their feminine impersonations, they would go on playing even until they were between forty and fifty. No single indecent or obscene expression is to be found in the originals of these tales, and no homosexual love stories in the world insist more, I think, on physical love as a guide to heroic conduct. Because I obtained this impression from the selection as it stands, I did not add to Volume VII Saïkaku's own jesting preface to *Glorious Tales of Pederasty;* the humour jars somewhat; but I quote part of it here as typical of the jealously censorious point of view of the average passive similisexual male throughout the ages: 'In these days our eyes are soiled by the sight of women with their hair falling about their necks in the old fashion, or else of these ultra-modern nageshimada (contemporary hair-dressings) sticky with plum blossom oil. Our eyes are soiled by the soft haunches and scarlet petticoats of women. These female beauties are good for nothing save to give pleasure to old men in lands where there is not a single good-looking boy. A young and healthy and warm-blooded man has nothing in common with these despicable creatures. If a man is interested in women he cannot know the blessed joys of pederasty.'

The style of Saïkaku is, I am told, very difficult to render into a foreign language, certain passages of his work being almost incomprehensible even to a Japanese. He used the sixteen syllable technique, often curtailing or omitting whole words, or else indicating them solely by allusion or suggestion. Many passages in his poems are the subject of modern controversy.

'I have done my best,' says Ken Sato, 'to remain

faithful to the original story in each case, and, though I have sometimes suppressed a few useless paragraphs and words and sometimes added an explanatory phrase, the tales are elsewhere almost literal translations. As much in the technique of their composition as in their spirit, these tales differ in every possible way from modern Japanese fiction, and are of great interest to those studying the social phenomena of Feudal Japan.'

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SONGS OF THE GEISHAS

(*Volume VII, pages* 100–135)

THESE POEMS AND SONGS BELONG TO THE old literary tradition of Japan, and some of them are celebrated. In whatever century a particular song may have been written, it has passed to join the others in the life of the people, and to-day is quoted, or appositely hummed, or sung to a few chords on that light three-stringed guitar, the samisen. As does no one instrument to the English, the frail tinkle of the samisen wakes a discreet and universal echo in the heart of a Japanese: usually that of a forgotten love affair in a Tea-House or Closed-House of the Yoshiwara. These accompaniments are neither loud nor gay, they are rather, to use a modern Japanese comparison, subtle and a little shrill like the taste of smoked salmon.

Every Japanese prostitute plays the samisen and sings these songs; so it is not surprising that we find in them complete thumb-nail sketches of her life and the colour of her usual feelings and sorrows. It is

not too extravagant to say that, if the brush which painted these pictures had a name, that name would be 'waiting.' As I have said in Volume VII, the supreme preoccupation of the women in the Yoshiwara is to free themselves by marriage; for the future husband can only obtain his bride by 'buying her out' from the proprietor of the house which has purchased her in her extreme youth from poverty-stricken or greedy parents. She has bound herself for a long period, usually for the whole of her youth, that is to say the whole of her life. There is nothing casual about the trade in Japan, and the apprenticeship is a long and difficult one. The girl must learn how to dance and sing and play at least the one musical instrument, to sustain her conventional and often highly technical part in every kind of ceremony; she must understand the tea-ritual, know how to dress well, and how to make elaborate bouquets of flowers. It will be seen that, in these poems, the image is drawn briefly, and that the emotion is always a contained one: the same can be said, of course, of all Japanese poetry; but it is worth noting, in amplification of what I have said about her apprenticeship, that in Japan, even, as we would say, to a prostitute, overflowing romantic lyricism seems a fault of tact and taste. An English poetess, who has made charming translations of Chinese verse, has said that you might as well go and catch a falling star as try to translate a Japanese lyric, and it seems worth while to remind the reader of the special difficulties I have evaded both here and in the Hokku of Kikaku in Volume XII.

In a Japanese certain expressions inevitably rouse certain emotions: as the *song of the cuckoo* an idea of

sadness. In one Japanese play, the cry of a cuckoo passing is considered sufficient to announce a tragic dénouement off stage. The *moon* implies love, *moisture* implies eroticism, *autumn* implies rupture at the end of a love affair. Again there are Makura-Katoba (pillow-words) traditionally related and evoking the same idea: such as *wife* and tender, *sky* and eternal. Finally much play is made upon words, many puns are used, since the Japanese language is rich, as ours is, in words sounding the same, but with different meanings. *Matsu*, for instance, sounds for 'pine tree' and 'wait.' De Rosny has delightfully translated:

> Je vous attends sur la montagne des sapins,
> Venez, ô vous qui demeurez cyprès (si près);

we would, of course, have the advantage of more simply playing with 'the pine' and 'to pine.' So far for Japanese rhythmic compositions in general, and if, as they may be, these reminders are commonplaces to most readers, I can only plead that it seemed safer to give them.

But these songs exhibit, from our point of view, a still further and special eccentricity: they employ purely transitional words by which the mind may leap from one idea to another, and others, of no precise meaning, used merely for their musical effect.

It is important to remember, also, that these songs of the geishas are not made to severe and constrictive rules, as are *tanka*, poems of thirty-one syllables, and *hokku*, poems of seventeen syllables, the great literary poetic forms of Japan. There is as much difference between them as between our most

inevitable folk-song and strictest sonnet. Both are next to impossible to bring over into English, but the former and more popular, with their freshness and gracious ignorance, are perhaps a shade easier and better worth attempting. But it must be realised of the former that they have not the same clarity of outline as the latter; that they are subjective and musical in very essence, and that they might almost be called, not so much poems and songs, as pretexts or chances or excuses offered to the emotional and artistic sensitiveness of the hearer.

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KIKAKU

(*Volume XII, pages* 53–66)

MENTION HAS BEEN MADE OF TANKA AND *hokku* poems in thirty-one and seventeen syllables respectively. The *hokku* came after the *tanka*, and, as Mr. Arthur Waley suggests in his *Japanese Poetry*—the only collection of translations in English which is at once scholarly, explanatory, and the work of a poet—it may seem strange that writers wishing to break away from the strict and narrow *tanka* should have escaped into the stricter and narrower *hokku*, a miniature poem of three lines, the first of five, the second of seven, and the third of five syllables. Yet this happened, and in trying to give an idea of the work of one of the subtlest of the exponents of the latter form, I feel that I have at least succeeded in presenting a contrast.

Enomoto Kikaku was born to a well-to-do family at

Kitaka, in the province of Omi, in 1658, and enjoyed a happy childhood. His parents gave him an excellent education, and his father, who was a doctor, destined him for the same profession. He devoted himself at first to severe scientific study, and also, we are told, became an expert calligraphist, and could have looked forward to success in more than one profession. But none tempted him, his single taste being for a fantastic and vagabond existence. He became careless and lazy, a dreamer and observer, an æsthete and a drinker, one very sensitive and easily moved to laughter.

Kikaku's master in poetry was Bashô (1643–94), whose favourite disciple he remained. Bashô was one of the great Classic poets of his century, and it was from him that Kikaku inherited that fine sensibility which makes certain of his poems masterpieces of pure emotion. But his genius was not in any way secondary or derived from the manner of his master or another; he soon developed an undisputed and indisputable originality, which made him, in the long run, one of the most curiously personal poets of Japan.

Though he knew well how to note down the most delicate of instantaneous impressions, it was his ironical and caricaturist manner which early began to distinguish him from other poets. Bashô was a Buddhist illuminate, abounding in virtuous charity, and Kikaku soon began to contrast with him by the witty unexpectedness of his poems, his gift for burlesque, and his flair for amusing or shocking incidents in the Human Comedy.

An anecdote expresses rather well the opposition between those two temperaments. Kikaku composed this *hokku:*

Red dragonfly.
Tear off its wings,
pimento.

Bashô indignantly condemned this as contrary to the Buddhistic commandment enforcing goodwill to all creatures. He immediately corrected his pupil's effort and thus transformed it:

Red pimento.
Give to it wings,
dragonfly.

Wit had come into collision with virtue.
Kikaku, as has been said, was a very exact observer of human oddities; this *hokku*, which does not occur in the forty I have given, is a good example:

Feast of herbs.
Since dawn they have been noisy
by bed of the son-in-law.

In seventeen syllables he notes the malicious, sex-frustrated eagerness with which the parents-in-law, on the pretext of bustling up early to prepare for the feast day, make a disturbance outside their son-in-law's door, to wake him from his sleep of sexual exhaustion.
As a caricaturist, it will be seen that Kikaku could pass through all the stages from discreetly veiled observation to slashing ribaldry, from Max to Rowlandson, from 3 to 35. Contrast was his chief tool in this kind, contrast between the sublime and the ridiculous in image, as when he pictures the perfume of the plum tree in Spring enchanting and upsetting the sense of man in the neighbourhood of an old and boring sage, and between the sublime and ridicul-

ous in language, as when he begins (15) as an almost over-poetical lover:

> Now that the wisteria has flowered again
> I count the long days parting me,

and ends with the prosaic, heart-felt phrase of a Bishopsgate merchant thinking of Sweeting's:

> from my first bonito.

If irony characterises the most of Kikaku's *hokku*, he may yet stand comparison with the greatest Japanese poets for delicate, unmalicious sentiment. He writes, for instance:

> Water enough and enough
> that you also wet
> the grasshoppers and birds.

He is ordering his servant in the great heat a little to over-water the garden, so that the creatures who share it with him may have their part.

Kikaku died in 1707, at the age of forty-nine, already enjoying a stupendous reputation in the Edo district, where he had founded a School. Since then he has become celebrated throughout Japan. As an ironist he has no equal, as a delicate he equals the greatest.

VII

TURKEY

SELIM I

(*Volume XI, pages 3–5*)

THOUGH SULTAN SELIM I IS STILL KNOWN, four hundred years after his death, as Selim the Grim, it was rather his calculated ruthlessness towards those of his vezirs whom he esteemed to stand in the way of his plans, than any wanton cruelty, which earned him this title. Indeed, he was a man of wide vision, not only in military and political matters, but also in the humanities. He was both a poet himself, and a friend and patron of other poets. When he was still only governor of Trebizond, his court there was a place of pilgrimage for the cultured, and after his accession all his leisure hours were devoted to the society of men-of-letters. He surrounded himself with poets and philosophers even upon his Persian and Egyptian campaigns, and rested himself with their conversation.

The three ghazels, *He*, *The Tomb at Rabk*, and *The Three Cypresses*, occur in Selim's *Diwan*, which was written in Persian and printed at Constantinople in 1888. The first two seem to me excellent examples of that use in a love song of personal pride for contrast, which is only to be found in poets who are also kings or megalomaniacs, and in some of the ancient Scottish and Irish singers.

The late E. J. W. Gibb, in the second volume of his monumental *Ottoman Poetry*, discusses Selim's choice

of Persian. 'Why Selim elected,' he says, 'to write in Persian rather than in Turkish is not clear; probably he considered that the former, being the more cultured speech of the two, was the better medium for the expression of poetic thought. In any case his choice is a matter for regret; for besides adding another star to the galaxy of Turkish poets, he must from his great literary talent have rendered valuable assistance in the work of refining and fixing the Ottoman language. The following couplet is the only piece of Turkish verse which the biographers attribute to Sultan Selim; it is not included in his *Diwan*:

How were't meet that thou should'st stand before me
while that I recline?—
Better far they make no prayer o'er me dead, my
Cypress-form.'

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FUZULI

(*Volume XI, pages* 6–9)

MUHAMMED BIN-SULEYMAN, WHO WROTE as Fuzuli, died about 1562, after an uneventful life spent almost entirely in Baghdad and quite without mention from contemporary biographers. He is the first great Turkish poet and one of the great love poets of the world; but early critics, when they noticed at all this provincial, writing in the dialect called *Azerbayjani* spoken along the Turko–Persian frontier, only mildly praised his novelty and fervour,

and deplored his simplicity. Because he had broken away from the artificiality and strained metaphor of the Persians, they could not appreciate his tender, passionate earnestness, or feel his pathos. Conscious of some such contemporary feeling about his work, Fuzuli began, in an evil hour, to study the science of poetry. Happily his instinct was too strong to be swamped by what he learned; but the result is a paradox: the poet whose reputation rests upon passion and simplicity, shows himself here and there capable of more frigid complication than any from whom he had revolted.

Fuzuli wrote two minor poetical works, the *Saqi-Nama* or Cup-bearer Book, in Persian, and the *Beng u Bada* or Nepenthe and Wine, in Turkish; but his greatness is only apparent in this *Diwan* of three hundred love ghazels, of which I have given two that I think typical, and his *Leyla and Mejnun*, that slight, world-famous narrative, which belongs to the end of his life, and is even simpler and more beautiful than the *Diwan*.

'His genius,' says Gibb, 'is intensely subjective; he reads himself into everything he sees. This subjectivity is a feature of the time, but finds its most eloquent expression in Fuzuli. A result is the tone of sadness pervading almost all his work. . . . The beloved is rarely presented to us as a human creature of flesh and blood; we are conscious only of a vague presence of more than mortal beauty, and clothed about with radiance, but intangible, impalpable as the vision of a saint. His love is such as the angels in Heaven might bear to one another. . . . The loves of the poets of this time were always more or less mystical, with an air of unreality about them. The

erotic aspect is hardly recognised before the more objective spirit of the Transition Period. But Fuzuli is free from the real or affected misogyny then fashionable among the learned of Persia and Turkey. One of his most plain-spoken poems in the Diwan is addressed to his "paynim maid."'

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FAZIL-BEY

(*Volume III, pages* 1–69, *see Introductory Note in the same volume*)

JENAB SHEHABUDDIN

(*Volume XI, pages* 12–21)

I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND OUT NO MORE about this very real poet than that he was born somewhere about 1870 and studied medicine and wrote much of his verse in Paris. Apart from what seems to me their intrinsic beauty, I have chosen these five poems because the first four show one interesting departure from the normal trend of modern Turkish verse, and the fifth a second.

There is little Ottoman love poetry of the last fifty years which is at all mystical; for, in breaking away towards the capitals of Europe for inspiration, writers have been attracted by those models which are most unlike those to be found in their own literature: they have absorbed sentimental eroticism from pre-war France and a sort of flat cleverness from post-war England and America. But in *Laughters, Grief*

and Desire, *After Possession* and *Your Mouth*, Shehabuddin has, it seems to me, brought the dead sex mysticism of his people to a second and subtler birth, psychologically subtler, that is, not, for this would be hardly possible, more intricate. He has learned to analyse passion for himself, and found that the language of the old mystics is a perfect vehicle for setting down the results of such analysis.

In *A Love Song*, on the other hand, there is a reaction under wine, and a letting go equally unusual. The poet swings back to the old severe intricacies of versification and, with them, to the homosexual ideal to which his fellows sporadically remained faithful from the dawn of Turkish literature up to the Eighteenth Century. Yet he does so with a defensive vigour which is wholly modern. To me this poem, because of its headlong quality, is one of the 'discoveries' of the Series.

END OF TWELFTH AND LAST VOLUME