PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN:

MOSLEH OD-DIN 'ABDALLAH OF SHIRAZ

1213

At about this point, Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di was born in Shiraz.

> WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA

1257

Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di's *BUSTAN*.[1]

1. THE ORCHARD, 1882 (in beautiful downtown Tehran in 1979, I lived in a shack on the roof of an apartment building on Kuche Bustan, directly across from the local masjed).

1258

Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di's *GOLESTAN*.[2]

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA

2. English translation by Francis Gladwin in 1806; English translation by James Ross in 1823; English translation by Edward Backhouse Eastwick in 1852; THE *GULISTAN*, OR ROSE-GARDEN, 1865; THE ROSE GARDEN, 1964. Pronunciation guide, courtesy of Alireza Taghdarreh: Stress in Persian is almost always on the last syllable. In "Sa'di," the "a" is as in "math" but held a little longer, "Saa-DEE." In "Golestan" there is a weak stress on "Gol." The "o" in "gol" is like the "o" in "short." The "i" is like the "e" in "bed." The "a" is like the "a" in "palm." So the word should be "GOL-e-STAHN" with primary stress on the last syllable. In "Shiraz," home town of Sa'di, the "shi" is read as in "sheep" and "raz" is read as in "palm" so the whole word would be "Shee-RAHZ."

1292

December 9: Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di died in Shiraz.

> WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA

1564

In this year or the following one a Persian miniature was created in which, with a Sufi watching, the poet Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di is depicted as going into one of his solitary ecstasies:

1774

English translation of the *GOLESTAN* of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, of 1258, began with some selections by Stephen Sulivan. This would be followed in 1805 by a translation which also offered the original text, published in Calcutta by James Dumoulin.

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA
MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

1805

English translation of the *GOLESTAN* of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, of 1258, had begun in 1774 with some selections by Stephen Sulivan. At this point a translation which also offered the original text was published in Calcutta by James Dumoulin. This would be followed in 1806 by the prose translation of Francis Gladwin.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA
MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

1806

English translation of the *GOLESTAN* of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, of 1258, had begun in 1774 with some selections by Stephen Sulivan. In 1805 a translation which also offered the original text had been published in Calcutta by James Dumoulin. At this point Francis Gladwin provided not only a Farsi edition but also a prose translation that would appear in 1808. Here is the passage that Henry Thoreau would extrapolate in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS as it was presented at this point in Francis Gladwin's volume:

Freedom.
They asked a wise man why, out of many trees which the Almighty hath created, lofty and fruit-bearing, the cypress alone is called azad or free although it beareth not fruit? He replied, "Every tree hath its appointed fruit and season, with which it is at one time flourishing and at another time destitute and withering; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing, as is the state of those who are free." Place not your heart on that which is transitory; for the river Tigris will continue to flow through Bagdad after the Califs

shall have ceased to reign. If you are able, imitate the date tree in liberality; but if you have not the means of be an azad or free like the cypress.

SA'DI IN THE FARSI

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. -Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA

1808

The English translation of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di's *GOLESTAN* by Francis Gladwin was published in England. This would be the edition accessed by Henry Thoreau. (Unfortunately, Google Books has not yet prepared this particular edition.)

1823

English translation of the *GOLESTAN* of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, of 1258, had begun in 1774 with some selections by Stephen Sulivan. In 1805 a translation which also offered the original text had been published in Calcutta by James Dumoulin. In 1806 Francis Gladwin had provided a prose translation, which had been published in England in 1808. This was followed in this year by a prose translation by James Ross which was based on the Gentius edition.

Waldo Emerson would read the *GOLESTAN* in translation in 1843. Henry Thoreau would know it by 1847, quoting from it twice in A WEEK and in his remarks on philanthropy in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. In 1852 prose and verse translations would be offered by Edward Backhouse Eastwick. In 1865 Emerson would pen a preface for the Boston edition of Francis Gladwin's 1806 translation, in which he would introduce the work as one of the world's sacred books.

SA'DI IN ENGLISH PROSE

In 1899 prose and verse translations would be offered by Edwin Arnold. Here is the passage that Henry Thoreau would extrapolate in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS as it was presented at this point in James Ross's volume:

> CXXI
> They asked a wise man, saying: Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied: Each has its appropriate produce and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents:— "Fix not thy heart on what is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tygris, will continue to flow through Baghdad after the race of Khalifs is extinct. If thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date-tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

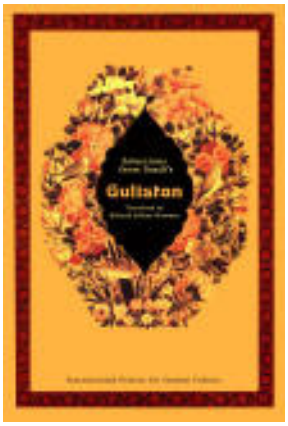
MOSHARREF OD-DIN MOSLEH OD-DIN 'ABDALLAH OF SHIRAZ

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA
MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

This Ross translation of 1823 seems to have created something of a controversy. The tempest in a teapot has to do with Ross's parsing of the Farsi term "azad" as designating "religious independents." In an Islamic context, such an interpretation would seem to point either toward the Sufi sect of mystic worshipers who are not universally in good repute, or else toward, that non-starter, irreligion. Peter Borst has inquired about this, of Professor Richard Jeffrey Newman of Nassau Community College, author of SELECTIONS FROM SAADI'S *GULISTAN* and of SELECTIONS FROM SAADI'S *BUSTAN*, both of which are available for purchase by way of the internet at <http://www.richardjnewman.com/publications/gulistan.htm>.



Professor Newman pointed out in response that although Sa'di obviously did have great sympathy for these mystics, their philosophy, way of life, etc., and although the Sufis do claim Sa'di as one of their sheikhs, there is a real question about whether he affiliated himself in this way. "At least one translation I have read [of the *BUSTAN*] is ripe with such interpolations because the translator wanted to make clear what he saw as the hidden religious meaning of Saadi's text. I once gave a talk about my translation at a local Iranian mosque and was treated afterward to a long lecture about how Sa'di was really Shiite rather than Sunni, and that if you looked carefully enough you could find coded evidence of this throughout the text." Here is Professor Newman's own very recent rendition of the segment in question:

> They asked a sage, "Of all the beautiful trees that God created, only the cypress, which bears no fruit, is called 'free.' Why is that?"
> The sage replied, "Every other tree bears fruit according to the seasons, which means it is sometimes beautiful and sometimes bare. The cypress, however, because it bears no fruit, is always fresh, and it is freshness we respond to when we call a living thing free."
>
> Do not value too much what will not last:
> The Khalifs of Baghdad will be long dead
> and still the Tigris will flow. If possible,
> choose the date tree's generosity.
> If not, take the cypress as your model.

Immediately, however, our Iranian friend Alireza Taghdarreh has pointed out to us that there is a translation error in the 1st line, as Sa'di simply does not describe, in the Persian original, all trees as beautiful. Rather than deploy the adjective "beautiful" in regard to the trees that bear fruits, he deploys merely the adjectives "famed" and "fruitful."

> There is a very delicate point here: these trees receive their ranks for what they **have** but Sarv (cypress) is beautiful and

Azad in our culture for what it **is**. So my translation of the first sentence would be: "They asked a sage, 'Of all the famed and fruitful trees God almighty has created....'" In general I think the word "beautiful" ruins the whole story if it is used there. Look at the trees which bear fruits and just compare them with cypress and then see for yourself where exactly you can find beauty.

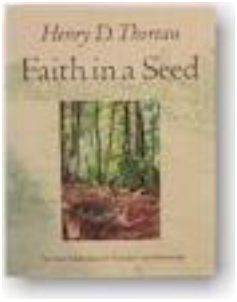
1837

The tamarisk is also known as the salt cedar, and is a native of Asia. In this year it was introduced into the USA as an ornamental. It would later be used to stabilize stream sides in the dry West. The problem that has occurred traces to a population explosion that occurred in about the 1930s, so that according to Dr. C. Jack DeLoach, a research entomologist at the Agricultural Research Service in Temple TX, it is now "the No. 1 weed pest in the West." Be that as it may, it is clear from ancient infallible documents that this species had been regarded as a weed pest even in the ancient Near East, a region in which it was not an intrusive but a native:

QUR'AN: But they turned aside, so We sent upon them a torrent of which the rush could not be withstood, and in place of their two gardens We gave to them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees.

Dr. DeLoach points out that "It has no value to native animals, it lowers the ground water table so that other plants can't reach it, it deposits layers of salt on the soil so that other plants can't grow there, it's extremely flammible and, after a fire, nothing but salt cedar can come back." For these reasons, the biological control authorities have been experimenting with the further introduction of intrusives: an Asian beetle that can eat the foliage of the salt cedar, an Israeli mealy bug that can suck the sap out of its twigs. The only hangup seems to

be that the southwestern willow flycatcher, an endangered species, is now nesting in the tree in some parts of Arizona, rather than in the willows that this tree has replaced. Killing off this intrusive is now contingent on persuading this flycatcher to go back to nesting in willows: "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to reseed!"



> FAITH IN A SEED: Pliny, whose work embodies the natural science of his time, tells us that some trees bear no seed. "The only ones," says he, "among the trees that bear nothing whatever, not so much as any seed even, are the tamarisk, which is used only for making brooms, the poplar, the Atinian elm [*Ulmus campestris* rarely does in England], and the alaternus"; and he adds that "these trees are regarded as sinister [or unhappy, *infelices*] and are considered inauspicious."

It is interesting to observe that although Thoreau would begin his manuscript "The Dispersion of Seeds," only recently published, by referring to the cypress he had referred to at the end of the 1st chapter of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, he would be seeing the cypress by that point through the eyes of Pliny the Elder rather than through the eyes of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, his topic would have become not liberation but interconnectedness, and the cypress which bears no fruit would be being portrayed as unlucky or unhappy rather than as free!

1843

English translation of the *GOLESTAN* of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, of 1258, had begun in 1774 with some selections by Stephen Sulivan. In 1805 a translation which also offered the original text had been published in Calcutta by James Dumoulin. In 1806 Francis Gladwin had provided a prose translation. This had been followed in 1823 by a prose translation by James Ross which was based on the Gentius edition. At this point Waldo Emerson read the *GOLESTAN* in translation. Henry Thoreau would know it by 1847, quoting from it twice in A WEEK and in his remarks on philanthropy in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA
MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

1847

At the end of the journal entries for this year, Waldo Emerson listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: "Plotinus; Synesius; Proclus; Institutes of Menu; Bhagavat Geeta; Vishnu Purana; Confucius; Zoroaster; Saadi; Hafiz; Firdusi; Ferradeddin."

The culture of the Imagination, how imperiously demanded, how doggedly denied. There are books which move the sea and the land, and which are the realities of which you have heard in the fables of Cornelius Agrippa and Michael Scott.

Sweetness of reading: Montaigne, Froissart; Chaucer.

Ancient: the three Banquets [Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch].

Oriental reading: [HE FORGOT TO FILL THIS OUT]

Grand reading: Plato; Synesius; Dante; Vita Nuova; Timæus (weather, river of sleep); Cudworth; Stanley.

All-reading: Account of Madame de Staël's rule; Rabelais; Diderot, Marguerite Aretin.

English reading: Clarendon; Bacon; Milton; Johnson; Northcote.

Manuals: Bacon's Essays; Ben Jonson; Ford; Beaumont and Fletcher.

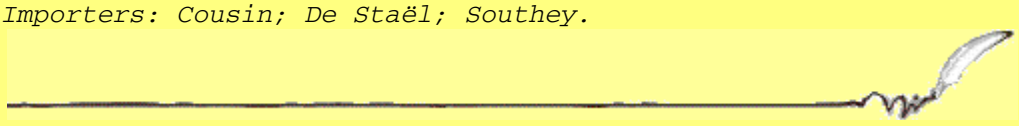
Favorites: Sully; Walpole; Evelyn; Walton; Burton; White's Selborne; Aubrey; Bartram's Travels; French Gai Science, Fabliaux.

Tonic books: Life of Michael Angelo; Gibbon; Goethe; Coleridge.

Novels: Manzoni.

Of Translation: Mitchell.

Importers: Cousin; De Staël; Southey.



Emerson also incidentally mentioned in his journal for this year someone he had been reading, Charles Kraitsir, mentioning all the languages in his head. A few pages later he included something that Kraitsir had written, that "All the languages should be studied abreast."

English translation of the *GOLESTAN* of Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di, of 1258, had begun in 1774 with some selections by Stephen Sulivan. In 1805 a translation which also offered the original text had been published in Calcutta by James Dumoulin. In 1806 Francis Gladwin had provided a prose translation. This had been followed in 1823 by a prose translation by James Ross which was based on the Gentius edition. In 1843 Waldo Emerson had read the *GOLESTAN* in translation. By this point Henry Thoreau knew it; he would quote from it twice in A WEEK and in his remarks on philanthropy in WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

> WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA
MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

In 1852 prose and verse translations would be offered by Edward Backhouse Eastwick. In 1865 Emerson would pen a preface for the Boston edition of Francis Gladwin's 1806 translation, in which he would introduce the work as one of the world's sacred books. In 1899 prose and verse translations would be offered by Edwin Arnold. Peter Borst has accessed a version which displays the original Persian, prepared in 1863, with an introduction in English which includes the following remark:

> [An] edition was reprinted and translated into English by Gladwin. A far superior edition, containing both text and translation, was published at Calcutta by James Dumoulin, in 1805; and more recently an amusing, if not altogether an accurate, translation has been given by J. Ross, Esq.

This 1863 editor provided a glossary of the terms used, in which we find:

آزاد *āzād*, free.

آزاد شدن *āzād shudan*, to be liberated, to be free.

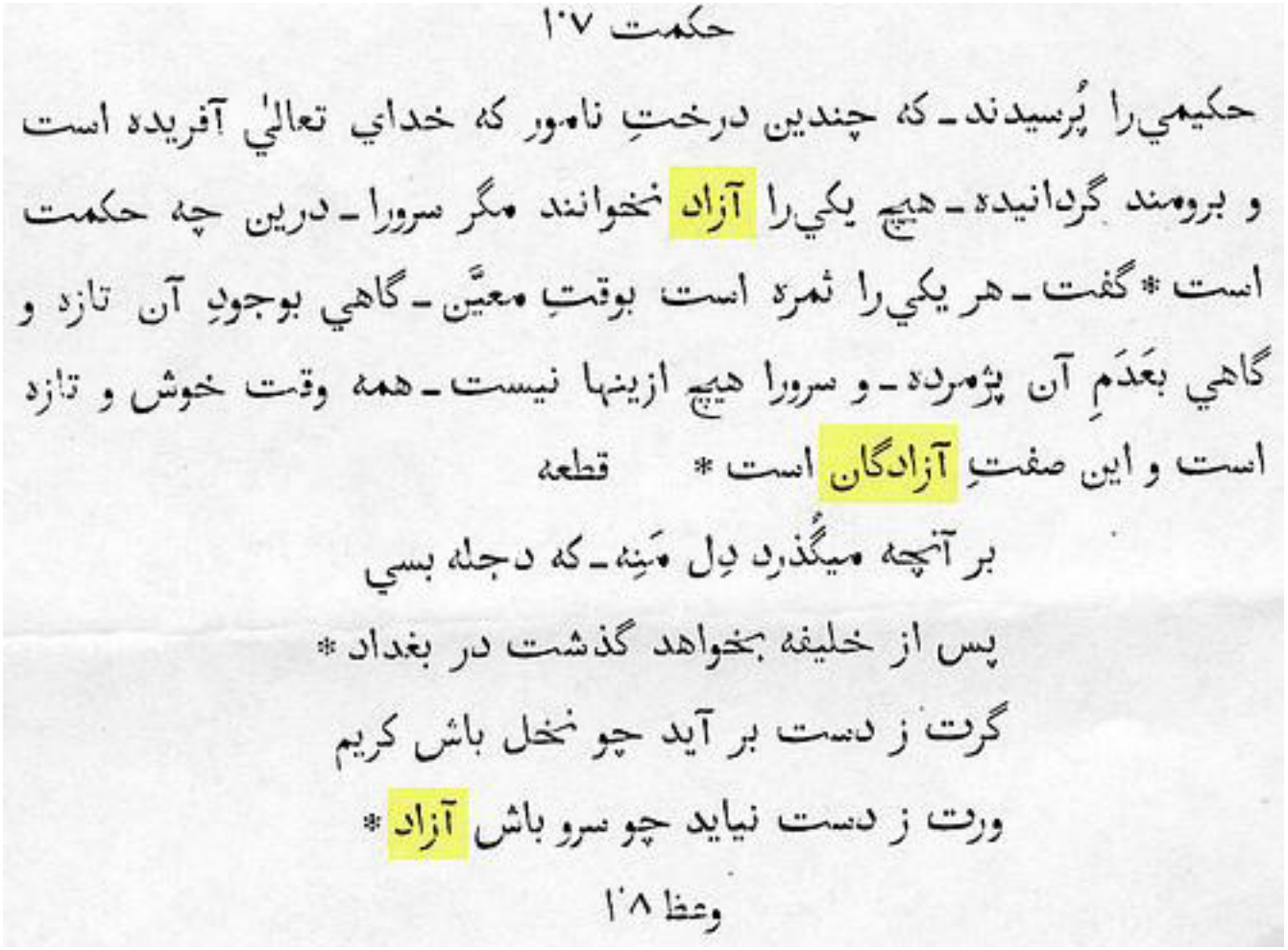
آزاد کردن *āzād kardan*, to free, set free, liberate, release.

آزادگان *āzādagān* (pl. of آزاده *āzāda*), the free from worldly cares, the religious.

آزادگي *āzādagī*, freedom, liberty.

آزاده *āzāda*, free.

In the Farsi original, one can clearly make out two uses of "*Azad*" and one of "*Azadgan*":



حکمت ۱۰۷

حکیمی‌را پُرسیدند ـ که چندین درختِ نامور که خدای تعالیٰ آفریده است و برومند گردانیده ـ هیچ یکی‌را آزاد نخوانند مگر سرورا ـ درین چه حکمت است * گفت ـ هر یکی‌را ثمره است بوقتِ معیَّن ـ گاهی بوجودِ آن تازه و گاهی بعَدَمِ آن پژمرده ـ و سرورا هیچ ازینها نیست ـ همه وقت خوش و تازه است و این صفتِ آزادگان است *

قطعه

بر آنچه میگُذرد دِل مَنِه ـ که دجله بسی
پس از خلیفه بخواهد گذشت در بغداد *
گرت ز دست بر آید چو نخل باش کریم
ورت ز دست نیاید چو سرو باش آزاد *

وعظ ۱۰۸

However, Alireza Taghdarreh points out to us that a Western interpretation of this Farsi term which made it stand for "religious freedom" would be very much in error. To be *Azad* in Sa'di's sense means that one does not degrade others before oneself nor oneself before others. This poet once ordered his belly to remain empty and then reassured his back, "Now you can stay straight and do not have to bend before anyone." When someone suggested he accept some sugar now and pay later, his reply was "I know I can be patient and not eat your sugar, but how can I know that you will not lose patience with me and humiliate me for your money? There is no sweetness in sugar followed by bitter words." Professor Mo'in's Persian-to-Persian dictionary, which is an ultimate source in Iran, provides the following:

Azade: Adj. Plural: *Azadgan* (in Pahlavi, a language spoken 2,000 years ago in Persia: *azatak*).
1. One who is not a slave or servant. Free. Opposite: Slave, servant.
2. One who has been freed.
3. Noble, gentle descent.

"*Azad*" is the single form of the category word "*Azadgan*" which indicates those of integrity and high character who are free from the attitudes of servitude. In Iran "*Azade*" (pronounce the last "e" as in "bed" and put the

stress on "de": ah-zah-DEH) is used as a given name for girls. One describes one's daughter as "free" in the same manner in which one might describe her as "lovely" or "humble" — these are positive words. However, a suggestion of religious freedom would make it very inappropriate for one to assign such a name to one's daughter. The reason for this is clear. Islam being, at its core, submission to the will of Allah, it necessitates a faith and a faithfulness that would stand as the very antithesis to "religious freedom." The *KOR'AN* emphasizes that "There must be no force or reluctance in the religion." The purpose of one's freedom from all that is unworthy is to enable one's entire submission to that which is alone worthy. No one is compelled to turn to Allah and yet no one is free from Allah. (No Farsi-to-Farsi dictionary, Alireza points out, would suggest there to be such a connotation. He also points out acerbically that just as only a fool would consult an English-to-Farsi translating dictionary to discover the exact and true definition of a word of the English language, only such a person would ever consult a Farsi-to-English translating dictionary to discover the definition of a Persian term.) Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di had been a Sunni Moslem and nevertheless his writings are adored by Shi'a Moslems. For him to have made any such "religious freedom" suggestion as this in this particular context would have made the story he was telling unusable in his Moslem context.

In a volume by the Reverend Edward Sell, B.D., M.R.A.S., fellow of the University of Madras, THE FAITH OF ISLÁM, 2d Edition Revised and Enlarged, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Ltd, Paternoster House, Charing Cross Road, 1896, we find the Ṣúfí movement described as divided into a large number of religious orders known as Darwíshes who live in Takyas or monasteries:

> Page 118: They are divided into two great classes, the Ba Shara' (with the Law) Darwíshes, and the Be Sharta' (without the Law). The former profess to rule their conduct according to the law of Islám, and are called the Sálik, travellers on the path (ṭaríqat) to heaven; the latter, though they call themselves Muslims, do not conform to the law, and are called Ázád (free), or Majẓúb (abstracted), a term which signifies their renunciation of all worldly cares and pursuits. The latter do not even pay attention to the namáz or other observances of Islám. What little hope there is of these professedly religious men working any reform in Islám will be seen from the following account of their doctrines....

The Reverend Sell goes on to explain that for his purposes, since such people are interested only in their own personal spiritual peak experiences, he could not expect to get anything generally helpful out of them.

I've found an interesting usage of this "*Azad*" term in a volume of reminiscences by a medical missionary to Turkey, Dr. Clarence Douglas Ussher, M.D., AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN IN TURKEY / A NARRATIVE OF ADVENTURES IN PEACE AND IN WAR (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1917). It appears that Dr. Ussher the medical missionary is not himself personally actually getting out of any actual Turkish prison; instead he is merely deploying this term "*Azad*" as part of an extended Christian-missionary parable:

> Pages 175-6: "Then I would go out of prison, as they did on Liberty Day when Abdul Hamid was deposed and all the prisons were thrown open; every man was free; men who were sentenced to be hanged, those who were imprisoned for life, or were confined, hopeless, for debt, rushed into the street shouting, 'Azad! Azad!' (Free! Free!) It would be joy to me to tell every one that I was free and who set me free...." "This," I said, "is as I understand Christianity. God is the King. Jesus Christ, his son, paid my debt and yours, too, yours just as much as mine.

I believe it and know I am free; if *you* will believe it, it will mean as much to you as it does to me."

1852

August 8, Sunday: Henry Thoreau wrote in his journal about the utter universality of the poetry of Sadi, who had succeeded in transcending all particulars of place and all particulars of period and all particulars of language and culture:


Aug. 8. 5 A.M. –Awoke into a rosy fog. I was enveloped by the skirts of Aurora.
To the Cliffs.
The small dewdrops rest on the *Asclepias pulchra* by the roadside like gems, and the flower has lost half its beauty when they are shaken off. What mean these orange-colored toadstools that cumber the ground, and the citron-colored (ice-cream-like) fungus? Is the earth in her monthly courses? The fog has risen up before the sin around the summit of Fair Haven. It does not make such perfect seas as formerly. It is too general and wandering. It must have a core over the river –as this has not– and be of sufficient density to keep down on the low lands in a clear white, not grayish, smoky mass, and there must be no wind to drift it about. However, the Bedford meeting-house, rising above it and dark toward the sun, looks like a ship far at sea with all sails set. Thus the clouds may be said to float low at this season, —rest on the ground in the morning, —so that you look down on them from the hills. The whole surface of the earth is now streaked with wreaths of fog over meadow and forest, alternating with the green. The sun, now working round the Cliffs, fires his rays into the battalions of fog which are collected over Fair Haven Pond and have taken refuge on the west side of the Hill; routs and disperses them. A dewy, cobwebbed morning. You observe the geometry of cobwebs, though most are of that gossamer character, close woven, as if a fairy had dropt her veil on the grass in the night.
Men have, perchance, detected every kind of flower that grows in this township, have pursued it with children's eyes into the thickest and darkest woods and swamps, where the painter's color has betrayed it. Have they with proportionate thoroughness plucked every flower of thought which it is possible for a man to entertain, proved every sentiment which it is possible for a man to experience, here? Men have circumnavigated this globe of land and water, but how few have sailed out of sight of common sense over the ocean of knowledge!
The entertaining a single thought of a certain elevation makes all men of one religion. It is always some base alloy that creates the distinction of sects. Thought greets thought over the widest gulfs of time with unerring freemasonry. I know, for instance, that Sadi entertained once identically the same thought that I do — and thereafter I can find no essential difference between Sadi and myself. He is not Persian — he is not ancient — he is not strange to me. By the identity of his thoughts with mine he still survives. It makes no odds what atoms serve us. Sadi possessed no greater privacy or individuality than is thrown open to me. He had no more interior & essential & sacred self than can come naked into my thought this moment. Truth and a true man is something essentially public not private. If Sadi were to come back to claim a *personal* identity with the historical Sadi he would find there were too many of us — he could not get a skin that would contain us all…. By living the life of a man is made common property. By sympathy with Sadi I have embowelled him. In his thoughts I have a sample of *him*, a slice from his core, which makes it unimportant where certain bones which the thinker once employed may lie; but I could not have got this without being equally entitled to it with himself. The difference between any man and that posterity amid whom he is famous is too insignificant to sanction that he should be set up again in any world as distinct from them. Methinks I can be as intimate with the essence of an ancient worthy as, so to speak, he was with himself.
I only know myself as a human entity, the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections, and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you. When the play –it may be the tragedy of life– is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. A man may be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, he *may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern him never so much.

At some early point in his life, Waldo Emerson would write a poem about Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di:

Trees in groves,
Kine in droves,
In ocean sport the scaly herds,
Wedge-like cleave the air the birds,
To northern lakes fly wind-borne ducks,
Browse the mountain sheep in flocks,
Men consort in camp and town,
But the poet dwells alone.

God who gave to him the lyre,
Of all mortals the desire,
For all breathing men's behoof,
Straitly charged him, "Sit aloof;"
Annexed a warning, poets say,
To the bright premium,—
Ever when twain together play,
Shall the harp be dumb.
Many may come,
But one shall sing;
Two touch the string,
The harp is dumb.
Though there come a million
Wise Saadi dwells alone.

Yet Saadi loved the race of men,—
No churl immured in cave or den,—
In bower and hall
He wants them all,
Nor can dispense
With Persia for his audience;
They must give ear,
Grow red with joy, and white with fear,
Yet he has no companion,
Come ten, or come a million,
Good Saadi dwells alone.

Be thou ware where Saadi dwells.
Gladly round that golden lamp
Sylvan deities encamp,
And simple maids and noble youth
Are welcome to the man of truth.
Most welcome they who need him most,
They feed the spring which they exhaust:
For greater need
Draws better deed:
But, critic, spare thy vanity,
Nor show thy pompous parts,
To vex with odious subtlety
The cheerer of men's hearts.

Sad-eyed Fakirs swiftly say
Endless dirges to decay;
Never in the blaze of light
Lose the shudder of midnight;
And at overflowing noon,
Hear wolves barking at the moon;
In the bower of dalliance sweet
Hear the far Avenger's feet;

And shake before those awful Powers
Who in their pride forgive not ours.
Thus the sad-eyed Fakirs preach;
"Bard, when thee would Allah teach,
And lift thee to his holy mount,
He sends thee from his bitter fount,
Wormwood; saying, Go thy ways,
Drink not the Malaga of praise,
But do the deed thy fellows hate,
And compromise thy peaceful state.
Smite the white breasts which thee fed,
Stuff sharp thorns beneath the head
Of them thou shouldst have comforted.
For out of woe and out of crime
Draws the heart a lore sublime."
And yet it seemeth not to me
That the high gods love tragedy;
For Saadi sat in the sun,
And thanks was his contrition;
For haircloth and for bloody whips,
Had active hands and smiling lips;
And yet his runes he rightly read,
And to his folk his message sped.
Sunshine in his heart transferred
Lighted each transparent word;
And well could honoring Persia learn
What Saadi wished to say;
For Saadi's nightly stars did burn
Brighter than Dschami's day.

Whispered the muse in Saadi's cot;
O gentle Saadi, listen not,
Tempted by thy praise of wit,
Or by thirst and appetite
For the talents not thine own,
To sons of contradiction.
Never, sun of eastern morning,
Follow falsehood, follow scorning,
Denounce who will, who will, deny,
And pile the hills to scale the sky;
Let theist, atheist, pantheist,
Define and wrangle how they list,—
Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer,
But thou joy-giver and enjoyer,
Unknowing war, unknowing crime,
Gentle Saadi, mind thy rhyme.
Heed not what the brawlers say,
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.

Let the great world bustle on
With war and trade, with camp and town.
A thousand men shall dig and eat,
At forge and furnace thousands sweat,
And thousands sail the purple sea,
And give or take the stroke of war,
Or crowd the market and bazaar.
Oft shall war end, and peace return,
And cities rise where cities burn,
Ere one man my hill shall climb,
Who can turn the golden rhyme;
Let them manage how they may,
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.
Seek the living among the dead:
Man in man is imprisoned.
Barefooted Dervish is not poor,

If fate unlock his bosom's door.
So that what his eye hath seen
His tongue can paint, as bright, as keen,
And what his tender heart hath felt,
With equal fire thy heart shall melt.
For, whom the muses shine upon,
And touch with soft persuasion,
His words like a storm-wind can bring
Terror and beauty on their wing;
In his every syllable
Lurketh nature veritable;
And though he speak in midnight dark,
In heaven, no star; on earth, no spark;
Yet before the listener's eye
Swims the world in ecstasy,
The forest waves, the morning breaks,
The pastures sleep, ripple the lakes,
Leaves twinkle, flowers like persons be,
And life pulsates in rock or tree.
Saadi! so far thy words shall reach;
Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech.

And thus to Saadi said the muse;
Eat thou the bread which men refuse;
Flee from the goods which from thee flee;
Seek nothing; Fortune seeketh thee.
Nor mount, nor dive; all good things keep
The midway of the eternal deep;
Wish not to fill the isles with eyes
To fetch thee birds of paradise;
On thine orchard's edge belong
All the brass of plume and song;
Wise Ali's sunbright sayings pass
For proverbs in the market-place;
Through mountains bored by regal art
Toil whistles as he drives his cart.
Nor scour the seas, nor sift mankind,
A poet or a friend to find;
Behold, he watches at the door,
Behold his shadow on the floor.

Open innumerable doors,
The heaven where unveiled Allah pours
The flood of truth, the flood of good,
The seraph's and the cherub's food;
Those doors are men; the pariah kind
Admits thee to the perfect Mind.
Seek not beyond thy cottage wall
Redeemer that can yield thee all.
While thou sittest at thy door,
On the desert's yellow floor,
Listening to the gray-haired crones,
Foolish gossips, ancient drones,—
Saadi, see, they rise in stature
To the height of mighty nature,
And the secret stands revealed
Fraudulent Time in vain concealed,
That blessed gods in servile masks

Plied for thee thy household tasks.

1858

April: The April issue of The Atlantic Monthly contained an article on Persian poetry, covering poets such as Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di. The article, like all submissions to this journal, was unsigned, but everyone would of course presume that it had been prepared by Waldo Emerson:

Persian Poetry.

To Baron von Hammer Purgstall, who died in Vienna during the last year, we owe our best knowledge of the Persians. He has translated into German, besides the "Divan" of Hafiz, specimens of two hundred poets, who wrote during a period of five and a half centuries, from A.D. 1000 to 1550. The seven masters of the Persian Parnassus, Firdousi, Enweri, Nisami, Dschelaleddin, Saadi, Hafiz, and Dschami, have ceased to be empty names; and others, like Ferideddin Attar, and Omar Chiam, promise to rise in Western estimation. That for which mainly books exist is communicated in these rich extracts. Many qualities go to make a good telescope, —as the largeness of the field, facility of sweeping the meridian, achromatic purity of lenses, and so forth,— but the one eminent value is the space-penetrating power; and there are many virtues in books, but the essential value is the adding of knowledge to our stock, by the record of new facts, and, better, by the record of intuitions, which distribute facts, and are the formulas which supersede all histories.

Oriental life and society, especially in the Southern nations, stand in violent contrast with the multitudinous detail, the secular stability, and the vast average of comfort of the Western nations. Life in the East is fierce, short, hazardous, and in extremes. Its elements are few and simple, not exhibiting the long range and undulation of European existence, but rapidly reaching the best and the worst. The rich feed on fruits and game, —the poor, on a watermelon's peel. All or nothing is the genius of Oriental life. Favor of the Sultan, or his displeasure, is a question of Fate. A war is undertaken for an epigram or a distich, as in Europe for a duchy. The prolific sun, and the sudden and rank plenty which his heat engenders, make subsistence easy. On the other side, the desert, the simoom, the mirage, the lion, and the plague endanger it, and life hangs on the contingency of a skin of water more or less. The very geography of old Persia showed these contrasts. "My father's empire," said Cyrus to Xenophon, "is so large, that people perish with cold, at one extremity, whilst they are suffocated with heat, at the other." The temperament of the

people agrees with this life in extremes. Religion and poetry are all their civilization. The religion teaches an inexorable Destiny. It distinguishes only two days in each man's history: his birthday, called *the Day of the Lot*, and the Day of Judgment. Courage and absolute submission to what is appointed him are his virtues.

The favor of the climate, making subsistence easy, and encouraging an outdoor life, allows to the Eastern nations a highly intellectual organization, —leaving out of view, at present, the genius of the Hindoos, (more Oriental in every sense,) whom no people have surpassed in the grandeur of their ethical statement. The Persians and the Arabs, with great leisure and few books, are exquisitely sensible to the pleasures of poetry. Layard has given some details of the effect which the *improvvisatori* produced on the children of the desert. "When the bard improvised an amatory ditty, the young chief's excitement was almost beyond control. The other Bedouins were scarcely less moved by these rude measures, which have the same kind of effect on the wild tribes of the Persian mountains. Such verses, chanted by their self-taught poets, or by the girls of their encampment, will drive warriors to the combat, fearless of death, or prove an ample reward, on their return from the dangers of the *ghazon*, or the fight. The excitement they produce exceeds that of the grape. He who would understand the influence of the Homeric ballads in the heroic ages should witness the effect which similar compositions have upon the wild nomads of the East." Elsewhere he adds, "Poetry and flowers are the wine and spirits of the Arab; a couplet is equal to a bottle, and a rose to a dram, without the evil effect of either."

The Persian poetry rests on a mythology whose few legends are connected with the Jewish history, and the anterior traditions of the Pentateuch. The principal figure in the allusions of Eastern poetry is Solomon. Solomon had three talismans: first, the signet ring, by which he commanded the spirits, on the stone of which was engraven the name of God; second, the glass, in which he saw the secrets of his enemies, and the causes of all things, figured; the third, the east wind, which was his horse. His counsellor was Simorg, king of birds, the all-wise fowl, who had lived ever since the beginning of the world, and now lives alone on the highest summit of Mount Kaf. No fowler has taken him, and none now living has seen him. By him Solomon was taught the language of birds, so that he heard secrets whenever he went into his gardens. When Solomon travelled, his throne was placed on a carpet of green silk, of a length and breadth sufficient for all his army to stand upon, —men placing themselves on his right hand, and the spirits on his left. When all were in order, the east wind, at his command, took up the carpet, and transported it, with all that were upon it, whither he pleased, —the army of birds at the same time flying overhead, and forming a canopy to shade them from the sun. It is related, that, when the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, he had built, against her arrival, a palace, of which the floor or pavement was of glass, laid over running water, in which fish were swimming. The

Queen of Sheba was deceived thereby, and raised her robes, thinking she was to pass through the water. On the occasion of Solomon's marriage, all the beasts, laden with presents, appeared before his throne. Behind them all came the ant with a blade of grass: Solomon did not despise the gift of the ant. Asaph, the vizier, at a certain time, lost the seal of Solomon, which one of the Dews, or evil spirits, found, and, governing in the name of Solomon, deceived the people.

Firdousi, the Persian Homer, has written in the *Shah Nameh* the annals of the fabulous and heroic kings of the country: of Karun, (the Persian Croesus.) the immeasurably rich gold-maker, who, with all his treasures, lies buried not far from the Pyramids, in the sea which bears his name; of Jamschid, the binder of demons, whose reign lasted seven hundred years; of Kai Kaus, whose palace was built by demons on Alberz, in which gold and silver and precious stones were used so lavishly, and such was the brilliancy produced by their combined effect, that night and day appeared the same; of Afrasiyab, strong as an elephant, whose shadow extended for miles, whose heart was bounteous as the ocean, and his hands like the clouds when rain falls to gladden the earth. The crocodile in the rolling stream had no safety from Afrasiyab. Yet when he came to fight against the generals of Kaus, he was but an insect in the grasp of Rustem, who seized him by the girdle, and dragged him from his horse. Rustem felt such anger at the arrogance of the King of Mazinderan, that every hair on his body started up like a spear. The gripe of his hand cracked the sinews of an enemy.

These legends, —with Chiser, the fountain of life, Tuba, the tree of life, —the romances of the loves of Leila and Medschun, of Chosru and Schirin, and those of the nightingale for the rose, —pearl-diving, and the virtues of gems, —the cohol, a cosmetic by which pearls and eyebrows are indelibly stained black, —the bladder in which musk is brought, —the down of the lip, the mole on the cheek, the eyelash, —lilies, roses, tulips, and jasmines, —make the staple imagery of Persian odes.

The Persians have epics and tales, but, for the most part, they affect short poems and epigrams. Gnomic verses, rules of life, conveyed in a lively image, especially in an image addressed to the eye, and contained in a single stanza, were always current in the East; and if the poem is long, it is only a string of unconnected verses. They use an inconsecutiveness quite alarming to Western logic, and the connection between the stanzas of their longer odes is much like that between the refrain of our old English ballads,

"The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,"

or

"The rain it raineth every day,"

and the main story.

Take, as specimens of these gnomic verses, the following:—

"The secret that should not be blown

Not one of thy nation must know;
You may padlock the gate of a town,
But never the mouth of a foe."

Or this of Omar Chiam [Omar Khayyam]:—

"On earth's wide thoroughfares below
Two only men contented go:
Who knows what's right and what's forbid,
And he from whom is knowledge hid."

Or this of Enweri:—

"On prince or bride no diamond stone
Half so gracious ever shone,
As the light of enterprise
Beaming from a young man's eyes."

Or this of Ibn Jemin:—

"Two things thou shalt not long for, if thou love a life serene:
A woman for thy wife, though she were a crowned queen;
And, the second, borrowed money, though the smiling lender say
That he will not demand the debt until the Judgment Day."

Or this poem on Friendship:—

"He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,
And he who has one enemy shall meet him everywhere."

Here is a poem on a Melon, by Adsched of Meru:—

"Color, taste, and smell, smaragdus, sugar, and musk,—
Amber for the tongue, for the eye a picture rare,—
If you cut the fruit in slices, every slice a crescent fair,—
If you leave it whole, the full harvest-moon is there."

Hafiz is the prince of Persian poets, and in his extraordinary gifts adds to some of the attributes of Pindar, Anacreon, Horace, and Burns the insight of a mystic, that sometimes affords a deeper glance at Nature than belongs to either of these bards. He accosts all topics with an easy audacity. "He only," he says, "is fit for company, who knows how to prize earthly happiness at the value of a night-cap. Our father Adam sold Paradise for two kernels of wheat; then blame me not, if I hold it dear at one grapestone." He says to the Shah, "Thou who rulest after words and thoughts which no ear has heard and no mind has thought, abide firm until thy young destiny tears off his blue coat from the old graybeard of the sky." He says,—

"I batter the wheel of heaven
When it rolls not rightly by;
I am not one of the snivellers
Who fall thereon and die."

The rapidity of his turns is always surprising us:—

"See how the roses burn!
Bring wine to quench the fire!
Alas! the flames come up with us,—
We perish with desire."

After the manner of his nation, he abounds in pregnant sentences which might be engraved on a sword-blade and almost on a ring.

"In honor dies he to whom the great seems ever wonderful."

"Here is the sum, that, when one door opens, another shuts."

"On every side is an ambush laid by the robber-troops of circumstance; hence it is that the horseman of life urges on his courser at headlong speed."

"The earth is a host who murders his guests."

"Good is what goes on the road of Nature. On the straight way the traveller never misses."

"Alas! till now I had not known
My guide and Fortune's guide are one."

"The understanding's copper coin
Counts not with the gold of love."

"'Tis writ on Paradise's gate,
'Wo to the dupe that yields to Fate!'"

"The world is a bride superbly dressed;—
Who weds her for dowry must pay his soul."

"Loose the knots of the heart; never think on
thy fate:
No Euclid has yet disentangled that snarl."

"There resides in the grieving
A poison to kill;
Beware to go near them
'Tis pestilent still."

Harems and wine-shops only give him a new ground of observation, whence to draw sometimes a deeper moral than regulated sober life affords, —and this is foreseen:—

"I will be drunk and down with wine;
Treasures we find in a ruined house."

Riot, he thinks, can snatch from the deeply hidden lot the veil that covers it:—

"To be wise the dull brain so earnestly throbs,
Bring bands of wine for the stupid head."

"The Builder of heaven

Hath sundered the earth,
So that no footway
Leads out of it forth.

"On turnpikes of wonder
Wine leads the mind forth,
Straight, sidewise, and upward,
West, southward, and north.

"Stands the vault adamantine
Until the Doomsday;
The wine-cup shall ferry
Thee o'er it away."

That hardihood and self-equality of every sound nature, which result from the feeling that the spirit in him is entire and as good as the world, which entitle the poet to speak with authority, and make him an object of interest, and his every phrase and syllable significant, are in Hafiz, and abundantly fortify and ennoble his tone.

His was the fluent mind in which every thought and feeling came readily to the lips. "Loose the knots of the heart," he says. We absorb elements enough, but have not leaves and lungs for healthy perspiration and growth. An air of sterility, of incompetence to their proper aims, belongs to many who have both experience and wisdom. But a large utterance, a river, that makes its own shores, quick perception and corresponding expression, a constitution to which every morrow is a new day, which is equal to the needs of life, at once tender and bold, with great arteries, —this generosity of ebb and flow satisfies, and we should be willing to die when our time comes, having had our swing and gratification. The difference is not so much in the quality of men's thoughts as in the power of uttering them. What is pent and smouldered in the dumb actor is not pent in the poet, but passes over into new form, at once relief and creation.

The other merit of Hafiz is his intellectual liberty, which is a certificate of profound thought. We accept the religions and politics into which we fall; and it is only a few delicate spirits who are sufficient to see that the whole web of convention is the imbecility of those whom it entangles, —that the mind suffers no religion and no empire but its own. It indicates this respect to absolute truth by the use it makes of the symbols that are most stable and reverend, and therefore is always provoking the accusation of irreligion.

Hypocrisy is the perpetual butt of his arrows.

"Let us draw the cowl through the brook of wine."

He tells his mistress, that not the dervis, or the monk, but the lover, has in his heart the spirit which makes the ascetic and the saint; and certainly not their cowls and mummeries, but her glances, can impart to him the fire and virtue needful for such self-denial. Wrong shall not be wrong to Hafiz, for the name's sake. A law or statute is to him what a fence is to a nimble

schoolboy, —a temptation for a jump. "We would do nothing but good; else would shame come to us on the day when the soul must hie hence; —and should they then deny us Paradise, the Houris themselves would forsake that, and come out to us."

His complete intellectual emancipation he communicates to the reader. There is no example of such facility of allusion, such use of all materials. Nothing is too high, nothing too low, for his occasion. He fears nothing, he stops for nothing. Love is a leveller, and Allah becomes a groom, and heaven a closet, in his daring hymns to his mistress or to his cup-bearer. This boundless charter is the right of genius. "No evil fate," said Beethoven, "can befall my music, and he to whom it is become intelligible must become free from all the paltriness which the others drag about with them."

We do not wish to strew sugar on bottled spiders, or try to make mystical divinity out of the Song of Solomon, much less out of the erotic and bacchanalian songs of Hafiz. Hafiz himself is determined to defy all such hypocritical interpretation, and tears off his turban and throws it at the head of the meddling dervis, and throws his glass after the turban. But the love or the wine of Hafiz is not to be confounded with vulgar debauch. It is the spirit in which the song is written that imports, and not the topics. Hafiz praises wine, roses, maidens, boys, birds, mornings, and music, to give vent to his immense hilarity and sympathy with every form of beauty and joy; and lays the emphasis on these to mark his scorn of sanctimony and base prudence. These are the natural topics and language of his wit and perception. But it is the play of wit and the joy of song that he loves; and if you mistake him for a low rioter, he turns short on you with verses which express the poverty of sensual joys, and to ejaculate with equal fire the most unpalatable affirmations of heroic sentiment and contempt for the world. Sometimes it is a glance from the height of thought, as thus: —"Bring wine; for, in the audience-hall of the soul's independence, what is sentinel or Sultan? what is the wise man or the intoxicated?" — and sometimes his feast, feasters, and world are only one pebble more in the eternal vortex and revolution of Fate:—

"I am: what I am
My dust will be again."

A saint might lend an ear to the riotous fun of Falstaff; for it is not created to excite the animal appetites, but to vent the joy of a supernal intelligence. In all poetry, Pindar's rule holds, —[Greek: sunetois phonei], it speaks to the intelligent; and Hafiz is a poet for poets, whether he write, as sometimes, with a parrot's, or, as at other times, with an eagle's quill.

Every song of Hafiz affords new proof of the unimportance of your subject to success, provided only the treatment be cordial. In general, what is more tedious than dedications or panegyrics addressed to grandees? Yet in the "Divan" you would not skip them, since his muse seldom supports him better.

"What lovelier forms things wear,
Now that the Shah comes back!"

And again:—

"Thy foes to hunt, thy enviers to strike
down.
Poises Arcturus aloft morning and evening
his spear."

And again:—

"Mirza! where thy shadow falls,
Beauty sits and Music calls;
Where thy form and favor come,
All good creatures have their home."

Here are a couple of stately compliments to his Shah, from the kindred genius of Enweri:—

"Not in their houses stand the stars,
But o'er the pinnacles of thine!"

"From thy worth and weight the stars
gravitate,
And the equipoise of heaven is thy house's
equipoise!"

It is told of Hafiz, that, when he had written a compliment to a handsome youth,—

"Take my heart in thy hand, O beautiful boy
of Schiraz!
I would give for the mole on thy cheek Samarcand
and Buchara!"—

the verses came to the ears of Timour in his palace. Timour taxed Hafiz with treating disrespectfully his two cities, to raise and adorn which he had conquered nations. Hafiz replied, "Alas, my lord, if I had not been so prodigal, I had not been so poor!"

The Persians had a mode of establishing copyright the most secure of any contrivance with which we are acquainted. The law of the ghaselle, or shorter ode, requires that the poet insert his name in the last stanza. Almost every one of several hundreds of poems of Hafiz contains his name thus interwoven more or less closely with the subject of the piece. It is itself a test of skill, as this self-naming is not quite easy. We remember but two or three examples in English poetry: that of Chaucer, in the "House of Fame"; Jonson's epitaph on his son,—

"Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry";

and Cowley's,—

"The melancholy Cowley lay."

But it is easy to Hafiz. It gives him the opportunity of the most playful self-assertion, always gracefully, sometimes almost in the fun of Falstaff, sometimes with feminine delicacy. He tells us, "The angels in heaven were lately learning his last

pieces." He says, "The fishes shed their pearls, out of desire and longing, as soon as the ship of Hafiz swims the deep."

"Out of the East, and out of the West,
no man understands me;
Oh, the happier I, who confide to none but
the wind!
This morning heard I how the lyre of the
stars resounded,
'Sweeter tones have we heard from Hafiz!'"

Again,—

"I heard the harp of the planet Venus, and
it said in the early morning, 'I am the disciple
of the sweet-voiced Hafiz!'"

And again,—

"When Hafiz sings, the angels hearken,
and Anaitis, the leader of the starry host,
calls even the Messiah in heaven out to the
dance."

"No one has unveiled thoughts like Hafiz,
since the locks of the Word-bride were first
curled."

"Only he despises the verse of Hafiz who
is not himself by nature noble."

But we must try to give some of these poetic flourishes the metrical form which they seem to require:—

"Fit for the Pleiads' azure chord
The songs I sung, the pearls I bored."

Another:—

"I have no hoarded treasure,
Yet have I rich content;
The first from Allah to the Shah,
The last to Hafiz went."

Another:—

"High heart, O Hafiz! though not thine
Fine gold and silver ore;
More worth to thee the gift of song,
And the clear insight more."

Again:—

"Thou foolish Hafiz! say, do churls
Know the worth of Oman's pearls?
Give the gem which dims the moon
To the noblest, or to none."

Again:—

"O Hafiz! speak not of thy need;
Are not these verses thine?

Then all the poets are agreed,
No man can less repine."

He asserts his dignity as bard and inspired man of his people. To the vizier returning from Mecca he says,—

"Boast not rashly, prince of pilgrims, of
thy fortune, Thou hast indeed seen the
temple; but I, the Lord of the temple. Nor
has any man inhaled from the musk-bladder
of the merchant, or from the musky morning-wind,
that sweet air which I am permitted to
breathe every hour of the day."

And with still more vigor in the following lines:—

"Oft have I said, I say it once more,
I, a wanderer, do not stray from myself.
I am a kind of parrot; the mirror is holden to me;
What the Eternal says, I stammering say again.
Give me what you will; I eat thistles as roses,
And according to my food I grow and I give.
Scorn me not, but know I have the pearl,
And am only seeking one to receive it."

And his claim has been admitted from the first. The muleteers and camel-drivers, on their way through the desert, sing snatches of his songs, not so much for the thought, as for their joyful temper and tone; and the cultivated Persians know his poems by heart. Yet Hafiz does not appear to have set any great value on his songs, since his scholars collected them for the first time after his death.

In the following poem the soul is figured as the Phoenix alighting on the Tree of Life:—

"My phoenix long ago secured
His nest in the sky-vault's cope;
In the body's cage immured,
He is weary of life's hope.

"Round and round this heap of ashes
Now flies the bird amain,
But in that odorous niche of heaven
Nestles the bird again.

"Once flies he upward, he will perch
On Tuba's golden bough;
His home is on that fruited arch
Which cools the blest below.

"If over this world of ours
His wings my phoenix spread,
How gracious falls on land and sea
The soul refreshing shade!

"Either world inhabits he,
Sees oft below him planets roll;
His body is all of air compact,

Of Allah's love his soul."

Here is an ode which is said to be a favorite with all educated Persians:—

"Come!—the palace of heaven rests on aëry pillars,—
Come, and bring me wine; our days are wind.
I declare myself the slave of that masculine soul
Which ties and alliance on earth once forever renounces.
Told I thee yester-morn how the Iris of heaven
Brought to me in my cup a gospel of joy?
O high-flying falcon! the Tree of Life is thy perch;
This nook of grief fits thee ill for a nest.
Hearken! they call to thee down from the ramparts of heaven;
I cannot divine what holds thee here in a net.
I, too, have a counsel for thee; oh, mark it and keep it,
Since I received the same from the Master above:
Seek not for faith or for truth in a world of light-minded girls;
A thousand suitors reckons this dangerous bride.
This jest [of the world], which tickles me, leave to my vagabond self.
Accept whatever befalls; uncover thy brow from thy locks;
Neither to me nor to thee was option imparted;
Neither endurance nor truth belongs to the laugh of the rose.
The loving nightingale mourns;—cause enow for mourning;—
Why envies the bird the streaming verses of Hafiz?
Know that a god bestowed on him eloquent speech."

Here is a little epitaph that might have come from Simonides:—

"Bethink, poor heart, what bitter kind of jest
Mad Destiny this tender stripling played:
For a warm breast of ivory to his breast,
She laid a slab of marble on his head."

The cedar, the cypress, the palm, the olive, and fig-tree, and the birds that inhabit them, and the garden flowers, are never wanting in these musky verses, and are always named with effect. "The willows," he says, "bow themselves to every wind, out of shame for their unfruitfulness." We may open anywhere on a floral catalogue.

"By breath of beds of roses drawn,
I found the grove in the morning pure,
In the concert of the nightingales
My drunken brain to cure.

"With unrelated glance
I looked the rose in the eye;
The rose in the hour of gloaming
Flamed like a lamp hard-by.

"She was of her beauty proud,
And prouder of her youth,
The while unto her flaming heart
The bulbul gave his truth.

"The sweet narcissus closed

Its eye, with passion pressed;
The tulips out of envy burned
Moles in their scarlet breast.

"The lilies white prolonged
Their sworded tongue to the smell;
The clustering anemones
Their pretty secrets tell."

Presently we have,—

—— "All day the rain
Bathed the dark hyacinths in vain,
The flood may pour from morn till night
Nor wash the pretty Indians white."

And so onward, through many a page.

The following verse of Omar Chiam seems to belong to Hafiz:—

"Each spot where tulips prank their state
Has drunk the life-blood of the great;
The violets yon fields which stain
Are moles of beauties Time hath slain."

As might this picture of the first days of Spring, from Enweri:—

"O'er the garden water goes the wind alone
To rasp and to polish the cheek of the wave;
The fire is quenched on the dear hearth-stone,
But it burns again on the tulips brave."

Friendship is a favorite topic of the Eastern poets, and they have matched on this head the absoluteness of Montaigne.

Hafiz says,—

"Thou learnest no secret until thou knowest friendship; since to the unsound no heavenly knowledge enters."

Ibn Jemin writes thus:—

"Whilst I disdain the populace,
I find no peer in higher place.
Friend is a word of royal tone,
Friend is a poem all alone.
Wisdom is like the elephant,
Lofty and rare inhabitant:
He dwells in deserts or in courts;
With hucksters he has no resorts."

Dschami says,—

"A friend is he, who, hunted as a foe,
So much the kindlier shows him than before;
Throw stones at him, or ruder javelins throw,
He builds with stone and steel a firmer floor."

Of the amatory poetry of Hafiz we must be very sparing in our citations, though it forms the staple of the "Divan." He has run through the whole gamut of passion, —from the sacred, to the borders, and over the borders, of the profane. The same

confusion of high and low, the celerity of flight and allusion which our colder muses forbid, is habitual to him. From the plain text,—

"The chemist of love
Will this perishing mould,
Were it made out of mire,
Transmute into gold,"—

or, from another favorite legend of his chemistry,—

"They say, through patience, chalk
Becomes a ruby stone;
Ah, yes, but by the true heart's blood
The chalk is crimson grown,"—

he proceeds to the celebration of his passion; and nothing in his religious or in his scientific traditions is too sacred or too remote to afford a token of his mistress. The Moon thought she knew her own orbit well enough; but when she saw the curve on Zuleika's cheek, she was at a loss:—

"And since round lines are drawn
My darling's lips about,
The very Moon looks puzzled on,
And hesitates in doubt
If the sweet curve that rounds thy mouth
Be not her true way to the South."

His ingenuity never sleeps:—

"Ah, could I hide me in my song,
To kiss thy lips from which it flows!"—

and plays in a thousand pretty courtesies:—

"Fair fall thy soft heart!
A good work wilt thou do?
Oh, pray for the dead
Whom thine eyelashes slew!"

And what a nest has he found for his bonny bird to take up her abode in!—

"They strew in the path of kings and czars
Jewels and gems of price;
But for thy head I will pluck down stars,
And pave thy way with eyes.

"I have sought for thee a costlier dome
Than Mahmoud's palace high,
And thou, returning, find thy home
In the apple of Love's eye."

Nor shall Death snatch her from his pursuit:—

"If my darling should depart
And search the skies for prouder friends,
God forbid my angry heart
In other love should seek amends!

"When the blue horizon's hoop
Me a little pinches here,
On the instant I will die
And go find thee in the sphere."

Then we have all degrees of passionate abandonment:—

"I know this perilous love-lane
No whither the traveller leads,
Yet my fancy the sweet scent of
Thy tangled tresses feeds.

"In the midnight of thy locks,
I renounce the day;
In the ring of thy rose-lips,
My heart forgets to pray."

And sometimes his love rises to a religious sentiment:—

"Plunge in yon angry waves,
Renouncing doubt and care;
The flowing of the seven broad seas
Shall never wet thy hair.

"Is Allah's face on thee
Bending with love benign,
And thou not less on Allah's eye
O fairest! turnest thine."

We add to these fragments of Hafiz a few specimens from other poets.

CHODSCHU KERMANI.
THE EXILE.

"In Farsistan the violet spreads
Its leaves to the rival sky,—
I ask, How far is the Tigris flood,
And the vine that grows thereby?

"Except the amber morning wind,
Not one saluted me here;
There is no man in all Bagdad
To offer the exile cheer.

"I know that thou, O morning wind,
O'er Kerman's meadow blowest,
And thou, heart-warming nightingale,
My father's orchard knowest.

"Oh, why did partial Fortune
From that bright land banish me?
So long as I wait in Bagdad,
The Tigris is all I see.

"The merchant hath stuffs of price,
And gems from the sea-washed strand,
And princes offer me grace
To stay in the Syrian land:

"But what is gold for but for gifts?
And dark without love is the day;
And all that I see in Bagdad
Is the Tigris to float me away."

NISAMI.

"While roses bloomed along the plain,
The nightingale to the falcon said,
'Why, of all birds, must thou be dumb?
With closed mouth thou utterest,
Though dying, no last word to man.
Yet sitt'st thou on the hand of princes,
And feedest on the grouse's breast,
Whilst I, who hundred thousand jewels
Squander in a single tone,
Lo! I feed myself with worms,
And my dwelling is the thorn.'—
The falcon answered, 'Be all ear:
I, experienced in affairs,
See fifty things, say never one;
But thee the people prizes not,
Who, doing nothing, say'st a thousand.
To me, appointed to the chase,
The king's hand gives the grouse's breast;
Whilst a chatterer like thee
Must gnaw worms in the thorn. Farewell!'"

The following passages exhibit the strong tendency of the Persian poets to contemplative and religious poetry and to allegory.

ENWERI.

BODY AND SOUL.

"A painter in China once painted a hall;—
Such a web never hung on an emperor's wall;—
One half from his brush with rich colors did run,
The other he touched with a beam of the sun;
So that all which delighted the eye in one side,
The same, point for point, in the other replied.

"In thee, friend, that Tyrian chamber is found;
Thine the star-pointing roof, and the base on the ground:
Is one half depicted with colors less bright?
Beware that the counterpart blazes with light!"

IBN JEMIN.

I read on the porch of a palace bold
In a purple tablet letters cast,—
'A house, though a million winters old,
A house of earth comes down at last;
Then quarry thy stones from the crystal All,
And build the dome that shall not fall.'"

"What need," cries the mystic Feisi, "of palaces and tapestry? What need even of a bed?

"The eternal Watcher, who doth wake
All night in the body's earthen chest,
Will of thine arms a pillow make,
And a holster of thy breast."

A stanza of Hilali on a Flute is a luxury of idealism:—

"Hear what, now loud, now low, the pining flute complains,
Without tongue, yellow-cheeked, full of winds that wail and sigh,
Saying, 'Sweetheart, the old mystery remains,
If I am I, thou thou, or thou art I.'"

Ferideddin Attar wrote the "Bird Conversations," a mystical tale, in which the birds, coming together to choose their king, resolve on a pilgrimage to Mount Kaf, to pay their homage to the Simorg. From this poem, written five hundred years ago, we cite the following passage, as a proof of the identity of mysticism in all periods. The tone is quite modern. In the fable, the birds were soon weary of the length and difficulties of the way, and at last almost all gave out. Three only persevered, and arrived before the throne of the Simorg.

"The bird-soul was ashamed;
Their body was quite annihilated;
They had cleaned themselves from the dust,
And were by the light ensouled.
What was, and was not,—the Past,—
Was wiped out from their breast.
The sun from near-by beamed
Clearest light into their soul;
The resplendence of the Simorg beamed
As one back from all three.
They knew not, amazed, if they
Were either this or that.
They saw themselves all as Simorg,
Themselves in the eternal Simorg.
When to the Simorg up they looked,
They beheld him among themselves;
And when they looked on each other,
They saw themselves in the Simorg.
A single look grouped the two parties.
The Simorg emerged, the Simorg vanished,
This in that, and that in this,
As the world has never heard.
So remained they, sunk in wonder,
Thoughtless in deepest thinking,
And quite unconscious of themselves.
Speechless prayed they to the Highest
To open this secret,
And to unlock *Thou* and *We*.
There came an answer without tongue.—
'The Highest is a sun-mirror;

Who comes to Him sees himself therein,
Sees body and soul, and soul and body:
When you came to the Simorg,
Three therein appeared to you,
And, had fifty of you come,
So had you seen yourselves as many.
Him has none of us yet seen.
Ants see not the Pleiades.
Can the gnat grasp with his teeth
The body of the elephant?'
What you see is He not;
What you hear is He not.
The valleys which you traverse,
The actions which you perform,
They lie under our treatment
And among our properties.
You as three birds are amazed,
Impatient, heartless, confused:
Far over you am I raised,
Since I am in act Simorg.
Ye blot out my highest being,
That ye may find yourselves on my throne;
Forever ye blot out yourselves,
As shadows in the sun. Farewell!'"

Among the religious customs of the dervises, it seems, is an astronomical dance, in which the dervis imitates the movements of the heavenly bodies by spinning on his own axis, whilst, at the same time, he revolves round the sheikh in the centre, representing the sun; and as he spins, he sings the song of Seid Nimetollah of Kuhistan:—

"Spin the ball! I reel, I hum,
Nor head from foot can I discern,
Nor my heart from love of mine,
Nor the wine-cup from the wine.
All my doing, all my leaving,
Reaches not to my perceiving.
Lost in whirling spheres I rove,
And know only that I love.

"I am seeker of the stone,
Living gem of Solomon;
From the shore of souls arrived,
In the sea of sense I dived;
But what is land, or what is wave,
To me who only jewel crave?
Love's the air-fed fire intense,
My heart is the frankincense;
As the rich aloes flames, I glow,
Yet the censer cannot know.
I'm all-knowing, yet unknowing;
Stand not, pause not, in my going.

"Ask not me, as Muftis can

To recite the Alcoran;
Well I love the meaning sweet,—
I tread the book beneath my feet.

"Lo! the God's love blazes higher,
Till all difference expire.
What are Moslems? what are Giaours?
All are Love's, and all are ours.
I embrace the true believers,
But I reek not of deceivers.
Firm to heaven my bosom clings,
Heedless of inferior things;
Down on earth there, underfoot,
What men chatter know I not."

1864

July: Waldo Emerson's piece on Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di was published in the July 1864 edition of The Atlantic Monthly.

SAADI.

WHILST the Journal of the Oriental Society attests the presence of good Semitic and Sanskrit scholars in our colleges, no translation of an Eastern poet has yet appeared in America. Of the two hundred Persian bards of whose genius Von Hammer Purgstall has given specimens to Germany,[3] we have had only some fragments collected in journals and anthologies. There are signs that this neglect is about to be retrieved. In the interval, while we wait for translations of our own, we welcome the announcement of an American edition, if it be only a careful

EMERSON ABOUT SA'DI

reprint, of the "Gulistan" of Saadi, — a book which has been current in Asia and Europe now for six hundred years. Of the "Gulistan or Rose-Garden" there exist three respectable English translations. That of Gladwin is to be preferred for its more simple and forcible style. Mr. Gladwin has not thought fit to turn into rhyme the passages of verse with which the "Gulistan" is interspersed. It is the less important, that these verses are seldom more than a metrical repetition of the sentiment of the preceding paragraph. Mr. Eastwick's metrical renderings do not make us regret their omission.[4] Mr. James Ross, in an "Essay on the Life and Genius of Saadi," has searched the works of his author, as well as outside history, for biographical facts or personal allusions.[5]

The slowness to import these books into our libraries –mainly owing, no doubt, to the forbidding difficulty of the original languages– is due also in part to some repulsion in the genius of races. At first sight, the Oriental rhetoric does not please our Western taste. Life in the East wants the complexity of European and American existence; and in the writing of the primitive nations a certain monotony betrays the poverty of the landscape, and of social conditions. Every word in Arabic is said to be derived from the camel, the horse, or the sheep. We fancy we are soon familiar with all their images. Medschun and Leila,[6] rose and nightingale, parrots and tulips; mosques and dervishes; desert, caravan, and robbers; peeps at the harem; bags of gold dinars; slaves, horses, camels, sabres, shawls, pearls, amber, cobol, and henna; insane compliments to the Sultan, borrowed from the language of prayer; Hebrew and Gueber [Zoroastrian] legends molten into Arabesque; — 'tis a short inventory of topics and tropes, which incessantly return in Persian poetry. I do not know but at the first encounter many readers take also an impression of tawdry rhetoric, an exaggeration, and a taste for scarlet, running to the borders of the negro-fine,[7] — or if not, yet a pushing of the luxury of ear and eye where it does not belong, as the Chinese in their mathematics employ the colors blue and red for algebraic signs, instead of our pitiless x and y. These blemishes disappear, or diminish, on better acquaintance. Where there is real merit, we

3. Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall (June 9, 1774-November 23, 1856) was an Austrian orientalist. His principal work was *GESCHICHTE DES OSMANISCHEN REICHES* (10 volumes, 1827-1835). Among his other works were *CONSTANTINOPOLIS UND DER BOSPOROS* (1822), *SUR LES ORIGINES RUSSES* (1825), an 1834 translation of the first two volumes, *ISTANBUL* and *ANATOLIA*, of Evliya Celebi's travelogue *SEYAHATNAME, GESCHICHTE DER OSMANISCHEN DICHTKUNST* (1836), *GESCHICHTE DER GOLDENEN HORDE IN KIPTSCHAK* (1840), *GESCHICHTE DER CHANE DER KRIM* (1856), and an unfinished *LITTERATURGESCHICHTE DER ARABER* (1850-1856).

4. Edward Backhouse Eastwick (1814-1883), who in 1847 published a Hindustani grammar, and, in subsequent years, a new edition of the *GULISTÁN*, with a translation in prose and verse.

5. James Ross, THE PERSIAN LITERATURE, COMPRISING THE *SHAH NAMEH*, THE *RUBAIYAT*, THE *DIVAN*, AND THE *GULISTAN*.

6. Medschun and Leila are the Romeo and Juliet of the Arab and the Persian literature, in a famous poem by Abû Muhammad Ilyâs ibn Yûsuf ibn Zakî Mu'ayyad (pen-name Nizâmî) of Gandja, written in 1188 CE. Leila is an Arabic name meaning "old wine," and this name is still common in Iran. Her Romeo's name is usually rendered now as "Majnoon."

7. Emerson was described, in his own era, as having what was then being termed "Negrophobia." This is not the only context in which he made use of this term "negro-fine," as he wrote elsewhere "What a negro-fine royalty is that of Jamschid and Solomon." What he seems to have meant in this context is that negroes seem to prefer the sort of loud clothing that white people cannot wear for fear of being taken for negroes, and likewise, Persians prefer a sort of obvious poetry that white people cannot write for fear of being taken for Persians.

are soon reconciled to differences of taste. The charge of monotony lies more against the numerous Western imitations than against the Persians themselves, and though the torrid, like the arctic zone, puts some limit to variety, it is least felt in the masters. It is the privilege of genius to play its game indifferently with few or with many pieces, as Nature draws all her opulence out of a few elements. Saadi exhibits perpetual variety of situation and incident, and an equal depth of experience with Cardinal de Retz in Paris [Cardinal Jean-François-Paul-Gondi de Retz (1614-1679), Archbishop of Paris] or Doctor Johnson in London. He finds room on his narrow canvas for the extremes of lot, the play of motives, the rule of destiny, the lessons of morals, and the portraits of great men. He has furnished the originals of a multitude of tales and proverbs which are current in our mouths, and attributed by us to recent writers; as, for example, the story of "Abraham and the Fire Worshipper," once claimed for Doctor Franklin, and afterwards traced to Jeremy Taylor [Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), Bishop of Down and Connor], who probably found it in Gentius [Georgius Gentius (1618-1687)].

The superlative, so distasteful in the temperate region, has vivacity in the Eastern speech. In his compliments to the Shah, Saadi says,— "The incurvated back of the sky became straight with joy at thy birth." "A tax-gatherer," he says, "fell into a place so dangerous, that, from fear, a male lion would become a female." Of dunces he says, with a double superlative,— "If the ass of Christ should go to Mecca, it would come back an ass still." It is a saying from I know not what poet,— "If the elegant verses of Dhoair Fariabi fall into thy hands, steal them, though it were in the sacred temple of Mecca itself." But the wildness of license appears in poetical praises of the Sultan: "Then his bow moves, it is already the last day [for his enemies]; whom his onset singles out, to him is life not appointed; and the ghost of the Holy Ghost were not sure of its time."

But when once the works of these poets are made accessible, they must draw the curiosity of good readers. It is provincial to ignore them. If, as Mackintosh said, "whatever is popular deserves attention," much more does that which has fame. The poet stands in strict relation to his people: he has the over-dose of their nationality. We did not know them, until they declared their taste by their enthusiastic welcome of his genius. Foreign criticism might easily neglect him, unless their applauses showed the high historic importance of his powers. In these songs and elegies breaks into light the national mind of the Persians and Arabians. The monotonies which we accuse, accuse our own. We pass into a new landscape, new costume, new religion, new manners and customs, under which humanity nestles very comfortably at Shiraz[8] and Mecca, with good appetite, and with moral and intellectual results that correspond, point for point, with ours at New York and London. It needs in every sense a free translation, just as, from geographical position, the

8. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiraz%2C_Iran

Persians attribute to the east wind what we say of the west. Saadi, though he has not the lyric flights of Hafiz,[9] has wit, practical sense, and just moral sentiments. He has the instinct to teach, and from every occurrence must draw the moral, like Franklin. He is the poet of friendship, love, self-devotion, and serenity. There is a uniform force in his page, and, conspicuously, a tone of cheerfulness, which has almost made his name a synonym for this grace. The word Saadi means Fortunate. In him the trait is no result of levity, much less of convivial habit, but first of a happy nature, to which victory is habitual, easily shedding mishaps, with sensibility to pleasure, and with resources against pain. But it also results from the habitual perception of the beneficent laws that control the world. He inspires in the reader a good hope. What a contrast between the cynical tone of Byron and the benevolent wisdom of Saadi!

Saadi has been longer and better known in the Western nations than any of his countrymen. By turns, a student, a water-carrier, a traveller, a soldier fighting against the Christians in the Crusades, a prisoner employed to dig trenches before Tripoli, and an honored poet in his protracted old age at home, — his varied and severe experience took away all provincial tone, and gave him a facility of speaking to all conditions. But the commanding reason of his wider popularity is his deeper sense, which, in his treatment, expands the local forms and tints to a cosmopolitan breadth. Through his Persian dialect he speaks to all nations, and, like Homer, Shakspeare, Cervantes, and Montaigne, is perpetually modern.

To the sprightly, but indolent Persians, conversation is a game of skill. They wish to measure wit with you, and expect an adroit, a brilliant, or a profound answer. Many narratives, doubtless, have suffered in the translation, since a promising anecdote sometimes heralds a flat speech. But Saadi's replies are seldom vulgar. His wit answers to the heart of the question, often quite over the scope of the inquirer. He has also that splendor of expression which alone, without wealth of thought, sometimes constitutes a poet, and forces us to ponder the problem of style. In his poem on his old age, he says,— "Saadi's whole power lies in his sweet words: let this gift remain to me, I care not what is taken."

The poet or thinker must always, in a rude nation, be the chief authority on religion. All questions touching its truth and obligation will come home to him, at last, for their answer. As he thinks and speaks will intelligent men believe. Therefore a certain deference must be shown him by the priests, —a result which conspicuously appears in the history of Hafiz and Saadi. In common with his countrymen, Saadi gives prominence to fatalism, — a doctrine which, in Persia, in Arabia, and in India, has had, in all ages, a dreadful charm. "To all men," says the Koran, "is their day of death appointed, and they cannot postpone or advance it one hour. Wilt thou govern the world which God governs? Thy lot is cast beforehand, and whithersoever it leads, thou must follow." "Not one is among you," said Mahomet,

9. The poet Shams ud-din Mohammed was one of those who had made themselves "Hafiz" by memorizing the entire Qur'an.

"to whom is not already appointed his seat in fire or his seat in bliss."

But the Sheik's mantle sits loosely on Saadi's shoulders, and I find in him a pure theism. He asserts the universality of moral laws, and the perpetual retributions. He celebrates the omnipotence of a virtuous soul. A certain intimate amid avowed piety, obviously in sympathy with the feeling of his nation, is habitual to him. All the forms of courtesy and of business in daily life take a religious tinge, as did those of Europe in the Middle Age. With the exception of a few passages, of which we need not stop to give account, the morality of the "Gulistan" and the "Bastan" is pure, and so little clogged with the superstition of the country that this does not interfere with the pleasure of the modern reader: he can easily translate their ethics into his own. Saadi praises alms, hospitality, justice, courage, bounty, and humility; he respects the poor, and the kings who befriend the poor. He admires the royal eminence of the dervish or religious ascetic. "Hunger is a cloud out of which falls a rain of eloquence and knowledge: when the belly is empty, the body becomes spirit; when it is full, the spirit becomes body." He praises humility. "Make thyself dust, to do anything well." "Near Casbin,"[10] he tells us, "a man of the country of Parthia[11] came forth to accost me, mounted on a tiger. At this sight, such fear seized me that I could not flee nor move. But he said,— '0 Saadi, be not surprised at what thou seest. Do thou only not withdraw thy neck from the yoke of God, and nothing shall be able to withdraw its neck from thy yoke.'"

In a country where there are no libraries and no printing, people must carry wisdom in sentences. Wonderful is the inconsecutiveness of the Persian poets. European criticism finds that the unity of a beautiful whole is everywhere wanting. Not only the story is short, but no two sentences are joined. In looking through Von Hammer's anthology, culled from a paradise of poets, the reader feels this painful discontinuity. 'Tis sand without lime, — as if the neighboring desert had saharized the mind. It was said of Thomson's "Seasons" [Thomson, James, 1700–1748, Scottish poet, THE SEASONS: WINTER (1726), SUMMER (1727), SPRING (1728), and AUTUMN (1730)], that the page would read as well by omitting every alternate line. But the style of Thomson is glue and bitumen to the loose and irrecoverable ramble of the Oriental bards. No topic is too remote for their rapid suggestion. The Ghaselle[12] or Kassida[13] is a chapter of proverbs, or proverbs unchaptered, unthreaded beads of all colors, sizes, and values. Yet two topics are sure to return in any and every proximity, — the mistress and the name of the poet. Out of every ambush these leap on the unwary reader. Saadi, in the "Gulistan," by the necessity of the narrative, corrects this arid looseness, which appears, however, in his odes and elegies, as in Hafiz and Dschami. As for the incessant return of the poet's name, –which appears to be a sort of registry of

10. Qazvin (Kazvin, Ghazvin), northwest of Teheran, was during the 16th Century the capital of Persia.
11. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthia
12. A term meaning roughly the same as "sonnet" in English.
13. This is a type of Arabic poem, usually in monorhyme, that may be satirical, elegiac, threatening, or laudatory.

copyrights,– the Persians often relieve this heavy custom by wit and audacious sallies.

The Persians construct with great intrepidity their mythology and legends of typical men. Jamschid [Jamshid, a mythical King of Iran], who reigned seven hundred years, and was then driven from his throne, is their favorite example of the turns of fortune. Karun or Corah, the alchemist,[14] who converted all things to gold, but perished with his treasures at the word of Moses, is their Crœsus. Lokman, the Æsop of the East, lived to an enormous age, was the great-grandson of Noah, etc. Saadi relates that Lokman, in his last years, dwelt on the border of a reedy marsh, where he constructed a cabin, and busied himself with making osier baskets. The Angel of Death[15] appeared to him, and said,— "Lokman, how is it, that, in three thousand years that you have lived in the world, you have never known how to build a house?" Lokman replied,— "O Azrael, one would be a fool, knowing that you were always at his heels, to set himself at building a house." Hatem Tai is their type of hospitality, who, when the Greek emperor sent to pray him to bestow on him his incomparable horse, received the messenger with honor, and, having no meat in his tent, killed the horse for his banquet, before he yet knew the object of the visit.[16] Nushirvan the Just [Khosrow Anüshirvan, king of Persia from 531 to 579] is their Marcus Antoninus, or Washington, to whom every wise counsel in government is attributed. And the good behavior of rulers is a point to which Saadi constantly returns. It is one of his maxims, that the "bons mots of kings are the kings of bons mots." One of these is,— "At night thou must go in prayer a beggar, if by day thou wilt carry thyself as a king." Again,— "Akino is like a great and massive wall: as soon as he leans from the perpendicular [of equity], he is near his ruin. Again,— "You, 0 king, sit in the place of those who are gone, and of those who are to come: how can you establish a firm abode between two non existences?" Dzoul Noun, of Grand Cairo,[17] said to the Caliph, — "I have learned that one to whom you have given power in the country treats the subjects with severity, and permits daily wrongs and violences there." The Caliph replied, — "There will come a day when I will severely punish him." "Yes," returned the other, "you will wait until he has taken all the goods of the subjects; then you will bestir yourself, and snatch them from him, and will fill your treasury. But what good will that do to your poor and miserable people?" The Caliph was ashamed, and ordered the instant punishment of the offender.

14. Karun, Corah: refer to the Qur'an.
15. Azrael the Angel of Death has a large book in which he writes your name as you are born; when you die he erases it.
16. Anonymous. THE VOYAGES AND ADVENTURES OF LA PEROUSE. TO WHICH IS ADDED THE LIFE OF HATEM TAI, OR THE GENEROSITY OF AN ARABIAN PRINCE. Embellished with eight coloured engravings. London and Derby: John Bysh, 8 Cloth Fair, West-Smithfield, and Thomas Richardson, Frear-Gate, Derby. 1st edition, 1829.
17. We should document who all these people are, what their full names are, and what the regularized Englished renderings of their names are:
Dhoair Fariabi
Dschami
Lokman
Akino
Dzoul Noun, of Grand Cairo

It appears, from the anecdotes which Professor Graf [H.K. Graf, *MOSLICHEDDIN SADI'S ROSENGARTEN* (Leipzig, 1846)] has rendered from the Calcutta manuscripts, that Saadi enjoyed very high respect from the great in his own time, and from the Sultan of the Mongolian court, —and that he used very plain dealing with this last, for the redress of grievances which fell under his notice. These, with other passages, mark the state of society wherein a shepherd becomes a robber, then a conqueror, and then sultan. In a rude and religious society, a poet and traveller is thereby a noble and the associate of princes, a teacher of religion, a mediator between the people and the prince, and, by his exceptional position, uses great freedom with the rulers. The growth of cities and increase of trade rapidly block up this bold access of truth to the courts, as the narrator of these events in Saadi's life plainly intimates. "The Sultan, Abake Khan (Abaka Khan, 1264-1282), found great pleasure in the verses. Truly, at the present time, no learned men or Sheiks would dare to utter such advice, even to a grocer or a butcher; and hence, also, is the world in such bad plight as we see."
The Persians have been called "the French of Asia"; and their superior intelligence, their esteem for men of learning, their welcome to Western travellers, and their tolerance of Christian sects in their territory, as contrasted with Turkish fanaticism, would seem to derive from the rich culture of this great choir of poets, perpetually reinforced through five hundred years, which again and again has enabled the Persians to refine and civilize their conquerors, and to preserve a national identity. To the expansion of this influence there is no limit; and we wish that the promised republication may add to the genius of Saadi a new audience in America.

1865

Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di's THE *GULISTAN*, OR ROSE-GARDEN, BY MUSLE-HUDDEEN SHEIKH SAADI, OF SHIRAZ was published by Boston's firm of Ticknor & Fields, in an English translation by Francis Gladwin, with an essay on Saadi's life and genius by James Ross, and a preface by Waldo Emerson.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

> WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

CYPRESS
ANDROMEDA
MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

SA'DI IN ENGLISH PROSE

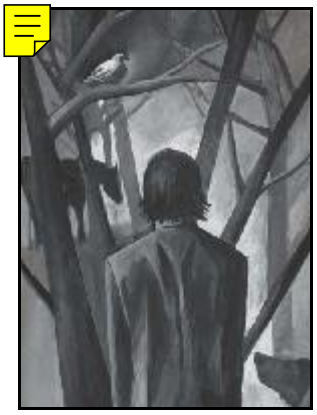
1882

July: John Burroughs placed an article "Henry D. Thoreau" in this month's The Century magazine **(for full text, click here)** in which he opinioned that the solution to "the mythical hound and horse and turtle-dove" would be that Henry Thoreau would never abandon his search for "some clew to his lost treasures, to the effluence that so provokingly eludes him."

WALDEN: In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint "No Admittance" on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.



What is this "effluence"? Burroughs referred us to the statement in Thoreau's JOURNAL, that:

The ultimate expression or fruit of any created thing is a fine

effluence, which only the most ingenuous worshipper perceives at a reverent distance from its surface even.

(The interest of this is, of course, that it furthers the inquiry not at all, and yet touts itself as a solution.)

Is this a picture of Thoreau selling paradox by the quart?

One of his chief weapons is a kind of restrained extravagance of statement, a compressed exaggeration of metaphor. The hyperbole is big, but it is gritty and is firmly held. Sometimes it takes the form of paradox, as when he tells his friend that he needs his hate as much as his love:

"Indeed, indeed, I cannot tell,
Though I ponder on it well,
Which were easier to state,
All my love or all my hate."

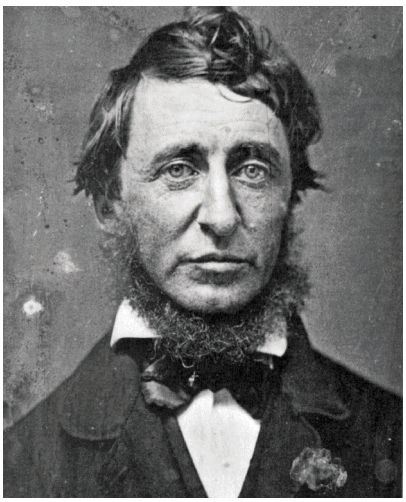
Or when he says, in WALDEN: "Our manners have been corrupted by communication with the saints," and the like. Sometimes it becomes downright brag, as when he says, emphasizing his own preoccupation and indifference to events: "I would not run around the corner to see the world blow up"; or again: "Methinks I would hear with indifference if a trustworthy messenger were to inform me that the sun drowned himself last night." Again it takes an impish, ironical form, as when he says: "In heaven I hope to bake my own bread and clean my own linen." Another time it assumes a half-quizzical, half-humorous turn, as when he tells one of his correspondents that he was so warmed up in getting his winters wood that he considered, after he got it housed, whether he should not dispose of it to the ash-man, as if he had extracted all its heat. Often it gives only an added emphasis to his expression, as when he says: "A little thought is sexton to all the world"; or, "Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk"; but its best and most constant office is to act as a kind of fermenting, expanding gas that lightens, if it sometimes inflates, his page.

His exaggeration is saved by its wit, its unexpectedness. It gives a wholesome jostle and shock to the mind. Thoreau was not a racy writer, but a trenchant; not nourishing so much as stimulating; not convincing, but wholesomely exasperating and arousing, which, in some respects, is better. There is no heat in him, and yet in reading him one understands what he means when he says that, sitting by his stove at night, he sometimes had thoughts that kept the fire warm. I think the mind of his reader always reacts healthfully and vigorously from his most rash and extreme statements. The blood comes to the surface and to the extremities with a bound. He is the best of counter-irritants when he is nothing else. There is nothing to reduce the tone of your moral and intellectual systems in Thoreau. Such heat as there is in refrigeration, as he himself might say, you are always sure of that in his books.
His literary art, like that of Emerson's, is in the unexpected turn of his sentences. Shakespeare says:

> "It is the witness still of excellency
> To put a strange face on his own perfection."

This "strange face" Thoreau would have at all hazards, even if it was a false face. If he could not state a truth he would state a paradox, which, however, is not always a false face.

"I would not run round a corner
to see the world blow up."
— Henry Thoreau,
"LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE"



Note, please, that already in 1882 John Burroughs was commenting upon the freedom with which Henry Thoreau manipulated Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di's THE *GULISTAN*, OR ROSE-GARDEN in WALDEN. He deployed the conceit "pretends to quote" to point up the fact that Thoreau was discovering the meaning he needed to derive "not in, but under, Sadi's lines." –Evidently, then, it has been clear for a long time, to those of us who have been paying attention, that Thoreau, as he accessed another language and another culture, was tweaking his materials somewhat.

WALDEN: I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "They asked a wise man, saying; Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied; Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. –Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

CYPRESS

ANDROMEDA

MOSLEH OD-DIN SA'DI

"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

– Remark by character "Garin Stevens" in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST

Prepared: September 29, 2012

MOSHARREF OD-DIN MOSLEH OD-DIN 'ABDALLAH OF SHIRAZ

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE

This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules

which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology — but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@brown.edu>.
Arrgh.