



***OMAR KHAYYAM,
RALPH WALDO
EMERSON, JAMI***

***RUBÁIYÁT
OF OMAR
KHAYYÁM,
AND SALÁMÁN
AND ABSÁL***

Omar Khayyam, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jami

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, and Salámán and Absál

**Together with a Life of Edward Fitzgerald and an
Essay on Persian Poetry by Ralph Waldo Emerson**

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TO E. FITZGERALD.

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Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange
Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change
And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see, as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden tree,
And watch your doves about you flit
And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers;

* * * * *

But none can say
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well;
A planet equal to the sun;
Which cast it, that large infidel
Your Omar: and your Omar drew
Full-handed plaudits from our best
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Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LIFE OF EDWARD FITZGERALD.

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EDWARD FITZGERALD was born in the year 1809, at Bredfield House, near Woodbridge, Suffolk, being the third son of John Purcell, who, subsequently to his marriage with a Miss FitzGerald, assumed the name and arms proper to his wife's family.

St. Germain and Paris were in turn the home of his earlier years, but in 1821, he was sent to the Grammar School at Bury St. Edmunds. During his stay in that ancient foundation he was the fellow pupil of James Spedding and J. M. Kemble. From there he went in 1826 to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he made the acquaintance of W. M. Thackeray and others of only less note. His school and college friendships were destined to prove lasting, as were, also, all those he was yet to form.

One of FitzGerald's chief characteristics was what might almost be called a genius for friendship. He did not, indeed, wear his heart upon his sleeve, but ties once formed were never unloosed by any failure in charitable and tender affection on his part. Never, throughout a lengthy life, did irritability and erratic petulance (displayed 'tis true, at times by the translator of "that large infidel"), darken the eyes of those he honoured with his friendship to the simple and whole-hearted genuineness of the man.

From Oxford, FitzGerald retired to the 'suburb grange' at Woodbridge, referred to by Tennyson. Here, narrowing his bodily wants to within the limits of a Pythagorean fare, he led a life of a truly simple type surrounded by books and roses, and, as ever, by a few firm friends. Annual visits to

London in the months of Spring kept alive the alliances of earlier days, and secured for him yet other intimates, notably the Tennyson brothers.

Amongst the languages, Spanish seems to have been his earlier love. His translation of Calderon, due to obedience to the guiding impulse of Professor Cowell, showed him to the world as a master of the rarest of arts, that of conveying to an English audience the lights and shades of a poem first fashioned in a foreign tongue.

At the bidding of the same mentor, he, later, turned his attention to Persian, the first fruits of his toil being an anonymous version, in Miltonic verse, of the 'Salámán and Absál' of Jámi. Soon after, the treasure-house of the Bodleian library yielded up to him the pearl of his literary endeavour, the verses of "Omar Khayyám," a pearl whose dazzling charm previously had been revealed to but few, and that through the medium of a version published in Paris by Monsieur Nicolas.

FitzGerald's hasty and ill-advised union with Lucy, daughter of Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet and friend of Lamb, was but short-lived, and demands no comment. They agreed to part.

In later life, most summers found the poet on board his yacht "The Scandal" (so-called as being the staple product of the neighbourhood) in company with 'Posh' as he dubbed Fletcher, the fisherman of Aldeburgh, whose correspondence with FitzGerald has lately been given to the world.

To the end he loved the sea, his books, his roses and his friends, and that end came to him, when on a visit with his

friend Crabbe, with all the kindness of sudden death, on the 14th June, 1883.

Besides the works already mentioned, FitzGerald was the author of "Euphranor" [1851], a Platonic Dialogue on Youth; "Polonius": a Collection of Wise Saws and Modern Instances [1852]; and translations of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus [1865]; and the "Œdipus Tyrannus" and "Œdipus Coloneus" of Sophocles. Of these translations the "Agamemnon" probably ranks next to the *Rubáiyát* in merit. To the six dramas of Calderon, issued in 1853, there were added two more in 1865. Of these plays, "Vida es Sueno" and "El Magico Prodigioso" possess especial merit.

His "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám" was first issued anonymously on January 15th, 1859, but it caused no great stir, and, half-forgotten, was reintroduced to the notice of the literary world in the following year by Rossetti, and, in this connection, it is curious to note to what a large extent Rossetti played the part of a literary Lucina. FitzGerald, Blake and Wells are all indebted to him for timely aid in the reanimation of offspring, that seemed doomed to survive but for a short time the pangs that gave them birth. Mr. Swinburne and Lord Houghton were also impressed by its merits, and its fame slowly spread. Eight years elapsed, however, before the publication of the second edition.

After the passage of a quarter-of-a-century a considerable stimulus was given to the popularity of the "Rubáiyát" by the fact that Tennyson—appropriately enough in view of FitzGerald's translation of Sophocles' "Œdipus"—prefaced his "Tiresias, and other Poems," with some charmingly reminiscent lines written to "Old Fitz" on his last