ILLUSTRATED
THE RUBÁIYÁT OF
OMAR KHAYYÁM

THE FOU LIS BOOKS
RUBÁIYÁT
OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK BRANGWYN ARA
'For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,  
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay.'
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ILLUSTRATIONS

From Oil Paintings by
FRANK BRANGWYN, A.R.A.

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I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay.'

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The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.'

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Beside me singing in the Wilderness.'

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Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!'

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About it and about.’

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‘And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
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Bearing a Vessel on his shoulder.’

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‘But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.’

Page sixty-one
OMAR KHAYYÁM

OMAR was one of the most remarkable, as well as the most distinguished, of the poets of Persia, at the latter end of the twelfth century. He was altogether unprecedented in regard to the freedom of his religious opinions—or, rather, his boldness in denouncing hypocrisy and intolerance, and the enlightened views he took of the fanaticism and mistaken devotion of his countrymen. He may be called the Voltaire of
Persia, though his writings are not calculated to shock European notions so much as those of the followers of the Prophet. The priests were his great enemies, and he was peculiarly hated by the false devotees, whose arts he exposed. His indulgence to other creeds gave great offence, and his liberty of speech drew down upon him continued censure; yet was he extremely popular, and his compositions were read with avidity by those who were not bigots, and the admiration of this class consoled him for the enmity of the other.

He was born at Naishápúr, and devoted much of his time
to the study of astronomy, of which science he was a learned professor; but it is asserted by his ill-wishers, that instead of his studies leading him to the acknowledgment of the power of the Supreme Being, they prompted him to disbelief. The result of his reflections on this important subject is given in his poem, much celebrated, under the title of Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.

He was the friend of Hassan al Sabbah, the founder of the sect of the Assassins; and, it has been conjectured, assisted him in the establishment of his diabolical doctrines and fellowship. Some allowance must,
however, be made for the prejudices of his historians, who would, of course, neglect nothing calculated to cast odium on one so inimical to their superstitions.

Omar Khayyám seems particularly to direct his satire against the mysticism of Mo-asi, and the rest of the mystic poets.
"And lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light."
'And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.'
AWAKE! for Morning in
the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts
the Stars to Flight:
And Lo! the Hunter of the
East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose
of Light.
II

DREAMING when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry, 'Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry.'

III

AND, as the Cock crew, those who stood before The Tavern shouted—'Open then the door! You know how little while we have to stay, And, once departed, may return no more.'
IV

NOW the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the White Hand of Moses on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V

RÁM indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.
VI

AND David's Lips are lock't; but in divine High-piping Pehleví, with 'Wine! Wine! Wine! Red Wine!'—the Nightingale cries to the Rose That yellow Cheek of her's t'incarnadine.

VII

COME, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring The Winter Garment of Repentance fling: The Bird of Time has but a little way To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.
VIII

AND look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay:
And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

IX

BUT come with old Khayyám and leave the Lot Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosru forgot:
Let Rustum lay about him as he will,
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.
X

WITH me along some StripofHerbagestrown That just divides the desert from the sown, Where name of Slave and Sultán scarce is known, And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

XI

HERE with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough, A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou Beside me singing in the Wilderness—And Wilderness is Paradise enow.
XII

'How sweet is mortal Sovereignty'—think some:
Others—'How blest the Paradise to come!'
Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;
Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum!

XIII

Look to the Rose that blows about us—'Lo,
Laughing,' she says, 'into the World I blow:
At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.'
XIV

THE Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers;
and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

XV

AND those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.
“Here with a loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness.”
'Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness.'
XVI

THINK, in this batter'd 
Caravanserai 
Whose Doorways are alternate 
Night and Day, 
How Sultán after Sultán with 
his Pomp 
Abode his Hour or two, and 
went his way.

XVII

THEY say the Lion and 
the Lizard keep 
The Courts where Jamshýd 
gloried and drank deep; 
And Bahram, that great 
Hunter—the Wild Ass 
Stamps o'er his Head, and he 
lies fast asleep.
XVIII

I

SOMETIMES think that
never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried
Caesar bled;
That every Hyacinth the
Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some
once lovely Head.

XIX

AND this delightful Herb
whose tender Green
Fledges the River’s Lip on
which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for
who knows
From what once lovely Lip it
springs unseen!
XX

A H, my Belovéd, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears—
To-morrow? — Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

XXI

LO! some we loved, the love-liest and the best
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to Rest.
XXII

AND we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

XXIII

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

LIKE for those who for To-day prepare,
And those that after a To-morrow stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries
‘Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!’

XXV

WHY, all the Saints and Sages who discuss’d
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter’d, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.
OH, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk ; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

MYSELF when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.
And this delightful Herb whose tender Green Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!
"And this delightful Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!"
XXVIII

WITH them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow:
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
I came like Water, and like Wind I go.'

XXIX

INTO this Universe, and why not knowing,
Nor whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing:
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.
XXX

WHAT, without asking, hither hurried whence?
And, without asking, whither hurried hence!
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence!

XXXI

UP from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.
XXXII

THERE was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seem'd—and then no more of Thee and Me.

XXXIII

THEN to the rolling
Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, 'What Lamp had Destiny to guide
Her little Children stumbling in the Dark?'
And—'A blind Understanding!' Heav'n replied.
XXXIV

THEN to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn
My Lip the secret Well of Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—' While you live
Drink!—for once dead you never shall return.'

XXXV

I THINK the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And merry-make; and the cold Lip I kiss'd
How many Kisses might it take—and give!
XXXVI

FOR in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—'Gently, Brother, gently, pray!'

XXXVII

AH, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
Unborn To-morrow and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if To-day be sweet!
XXXVIII

ONE Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing
—Oh, make haste!

XXXIX

HOW long, how long, in definite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadder after none, or bitter, Fruit.
YOU know, my Friends,
how long since in my
House
For a new Marriage I did make
Carouse:
Divorced old barren Reason
from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the
Vine to Spouse.

XLI

FOR 'Is' and 'Is-not'
though with Rule and Line,
And 'Up-and-down' without,
I could define,
I yet in all I only cared to
know,
Was never deep in anything
but—Wine.
XLII
AND lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

XLIII
THE Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.
"And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?
'And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of
Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for
whom?'
XLIV

THE mighty Mahmúd, the victorious Lord,
That all the black and misbelieving Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

XLV

BUT leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.
XLVI

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

XLVII

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in—Yes—
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what
Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou shalt not be less.
XLVIII

WHILE the Rose blows
along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby
Vintage drink:
And when the Angel with his
darker Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that,
and do not shrink.

XLIX

'TIS all a Chequer-board of
Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for
Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves,
and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the
Closet lays.
THE Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes, But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes; And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field, *He knows about it all—He knows—HE knows!*

THE Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.
LII
AND that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coopt we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to It for help—for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

LIII
WITH Earth’s first Clay
They did the last Man’s knead,
And then of the Last Harvest
sow’d the Seed:
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.
LIV

TELL Thee this—When, starting from the Goal,
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal
Of Heav’n Parwín and Mushtara they flung,
In my predestin’d Plot of Dust and Soul.

LV

THE Vine had struck a Fibre; which about
If clings my Being—let the Súfi flout;
Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.
'Myself when young did eagerly frequent Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument About it and about.'
"Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument,
About it and about."
LVI

AND this I know: whether
the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrath—
consume me quite,
One glimpse of It within
the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost
outright.

LVII

OH, Thou, who didst with
Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander
in,
Thou wilt not with Prede-
tination round
Enmesh me, and impute my
Fall to Sin?
LVIII

O H, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;  
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

KÚZA—NÁMA
LISTEN again. One Evening at the Close
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone
With the clay Population round in Rows.

AND, strange to tell, among the Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
'Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?'
LXI

THEN said another—
'Surely not in vain
My substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
Should stamp me back to common Earth again.'

LXII

ANOTHER said—'Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy;
Shall He that made the Vessel in pure Love
And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy!'
"And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder."
'And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder.'
LXIII

NONE answer'd this; but after Silence spake
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:
'They sneer at me for leaning all awry;
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?'

LXIV

Said one—'Folks of a surly Tapster tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
They talk of some strict Testing of us—Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well.'
LXV

THEN said another with a long-drawn Sigh, 'My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:
But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-bye!'

LXVI

SO while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:
And then they jogg'd each other, 'Brother, Brother!
Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a-creaking!'
LXVII

Ah, with the Grapemy fading Life provide,
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.

LXVIII

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.
LXIX

indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my Credit in Men’s Eye much wrong:
Have drown’d my Honour in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

LXX

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

AND much as Wine has play’d the Infidel,
And robb’d me of my Robe of Honour—well,
I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the Goods they sell.

LXXII

ALAS, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth’s sweet-scented Manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!
LXXIII

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

LXXIV

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me—in vain!
LXXV

AND when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!

TAMÁM SHUD
Take home of that which makes as much of these:

And, in some corner of the hither shore,

The quarter of the universe let be:

But leave the wise to sometie, and still me.
'But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.'
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