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ART. I.—*Gulistani Cheïkh Moslih-eddin Sâdi Chirazi—Le Parterre de Fleurs du Cheïkh Moslih-eddin Sâdi de Chiraz. Edition Autographique, publiée par Mr. N. SEMELET. Exécutée par les presses de M. Y. Cluis, Lithographe, Place de Chatelet. Paris: 1828. 4to. pp. 194.*

WHEN we undertake to review such books as this, for the benefit of general readers, we feel ourselves not only authorized, but bound, to be somewhat desultory, superficial, and erratic, dealing more in entertaining generalities, than in dry though recondite particulars. The Orientalist need, therefore, look for no instruction in our lucubrations, as we fear we shall find it hard enough to keep the uninitiated in good humour with the subject. We say this, by way of protestation against any inferences to our disadvantage from the very slight tincture of erudition which we shall infuse into our strictures. The truth is, we cannot handle such a topic so as to give any thing like general satisfaction, without risking the displeasure of two formidable classes. The learned will indubitably brand us as mere sciolists; the unlearned, as mere pedants. We are clear, however, as a judge would say, that the case is within the rule laid down by Horace:

Certis medium et tolerabile rebus

Recte concedi.

We have determined to take notice of this curious publication for several distinct reasons. In the first place, it is interesting in itself, as presenting a corrected text of a celebrated work, and also as a specimen of art. In the next place, it furnishes us with an opportunity of saying something, in the small way just alluded to, on a branch of learning, which, though long familiar to a chosen few in Europe, has with us not yet begun to be in vogue: we mean the language and literature of the modern Persians. Our third reason is a little more remote, but has had more

influence in determining us to review the book than either of the others. We allude to the fact, that it has grown fashionable, during a long course of years, for superficial writers to select Oriental literature as the subject of their vapid commonplaces and sentimental ravings. Except in works professing to be learned works, and intended exclusively for the perusal of the learned, this matter has for nearly half a century been handled in a way well adapted to make the judicious grieve. One or two of the most striking peculiarities of Eastern imagery and expression, have been pressed into the service of a thousand poetasters and tritcal essayists, until they are at length past service altogether. That roses and nightingales are favourites with Oriental bards, particularly those of Persia, it certainly required no miracle of learning to discover. That the Mohammedans shut up their women, veil them, eat apart from them, worship in mosques, and make use of criers and high towers instead of bells and steeples, are items of information equally abstruse. Yet these, and such as these, have been thought sufficient by a multitude of puny intellects, to give an Oriental character to any dullness and absurdity, however Occidental in its form and intrinsic qualities.

Those who are at all familiar with the periodical literature of the last half century, need not be informed what vast quantities of doggerel have been palmed upon the world as imitations and translations from the Asiatic poets, merely by means of an infusion of such words as *gul*, *bulbul*, *harem*, *peri*, and allusions to such things as deserts, camels, caravans, angels of death, and simooms. For a great deal of this stuff we are indebted to Lord Byron and Mr. Moore, not directly, but remotely, through the effervescence into which their captivating copies of true Oriental scenes threw the herd of vulgar imitators. But whatever may have been the occasion of these lamentable travesties, there can be no doubt that they have powerfully contributed to warp the judgment of the western world upon Oriental matters. The more superficial class of readers, and we may add, of scholars, caught by the factitious atmosphere of misty brightness thrown around the subject, by the sickly exhalations of these muddy intellects, have thought and talked about the genius and productions of the Eastern writers in a style of ridiculous exaggeration. Intoxicated with the imaginary perfume breathed from these beds of roses, they have reeled through the columns of gazettes and magazines, in all the delirious extravagance of prose run mad. And yet, notwithstanding this fire of imagination, it is melancholy to observe the poverty of Oriental topics and expressions under which they labour. We have already mentioned almost all the hobbies—the *arundines longæ*—upon which they caper in their puerile career. Roses and rose-gardens, crescents,

minarets, and a few other commonplaces already worn to tatters by Sir William Jones and some of his contemporaries, furnish their whole stock, and serve by their familiarity to make the darkness still more visible.

But while this class has been carried away by the vagaries of an unchastised imagination, into an extravagant and foolish admiration of a few *purpurei panni* clinging to the surface of Oriental literature, without any knowledge of its body, form, and pressure, a still more unfortunate effect has been produced upon minds of a higher order. The same sparkling prettinesses, which lead into captivity the hearts of the rhymester and the newspaper *savant*, have a tendency to give disgust to heads more sound and tastes more delicate. Had these same prettinesses been first seen in connexion with the more important properties, of which they are, to use the phrase, mere *scintillations*, they would have been estimated as they ought, as things too trivial to be taken into the account, in forming a judgment on so grave a subject. But these things having been made the standing topics, the *communes loci*, of so many writers on the subject, it is natural for those who are contented with receiving facts at second hand, to ascribe to them a relative importance far beyond the truth, and to argue from them as sufficient data, in drawing conclusions on the general subject. The consequence has been, that partly by reasoning from these unfair premises, and partly through the influence of mere association, the highest minds have, for the most part, turned away from Oriental literature as from a "vain show" of gaudy decoration and inflated emptiness. How far this estimate would be confirmed by a more intimate acquaintance with the subject is not, just now, the question. Whatever might be the result of fairer and more accurate research, it is certainly unfortunate, that this branch of learning should have been so lavishly commended, and so scornfully condemned, with so little reason upon either side. For our own part we are zealous neither way, and are heartily tired of seeing the matter pushed to such extremes. We are, therefore, not unwilling to embrace an opportunity of saying something on the merits of the question, in a style at least more temperate, if not more learned or profound than that which has so long been fashionable. This, though the last enumerated of our three designs in noticing the book before us, claims precedency in the order of discourse. We shall, therefore, be excused for taking it up first.

We believe that the facts stated or alluded to above, may be traced to a source a little further back than any we have mentioned. The distinguished scholars to whom we are indebted for the first satisfactory opening in this exotic mine, and of whom we would ever speak in terms of unaffected reverence, with all their genius, taste, and judgment, were a little beside themselves

through the excess of learning. The consciousness of having led the way, as pioneers, into a region altogether new to the *vulgus* of the literary world, and at first sight more dazzling than any before known, very naturally betrayed them into some unintentional exaggeration and embellishment of what they had discovered. We speak now of those writers who first made Eastern literature *popular*. Our observation can by no means be extended to the grammarians and lexicographers who furnished the necessary implements for mastering the difficulties of the Oriental tongues. Happily for the cause of sound learning and good sense, these elder worthies had sufficient strength of nerve to botanize in the spice-groves and rose-gardens of the East, without being thrown into deliriums or synopes of sentimental rapture. The succession of events was, in this case, as in all analogous cases. First came a series of indefatigable verbal critics, mastering by diligence almost miraculous the most stupendous difficulties, and elaborating, in the course of their long lives, grammatical helps for their successors, which can hardly be improved. Then comes the epoch of polite learning, refined scholarship, busied with literature more than language, and better fitted to attract the public gaze than to stand the test of rigorous inspection. Between these classes there is little similarity, and no bond of union but the identity of their pursuits, and the aid afforded to the latter by their predecessors.

There are not, indeed, in the republic of letters, two orders more distinguished from each other than those of which Erpenius and Sir William Jones may be considered representatives. Sir William has himself hinted slightly at the difference between them, in a sentence of the preface to his Persian Grammar:—“The state of letters seems to be divided into two classes, men of learning who have no taste, and men of taste who have no learning.”\* We are, of course, not so absurd as to imagine, that the latter terms are at all descriptive of their author in the abstract. But we do not hesitate to say, that in that sort of learning which consists in verbal accuracy, he was as far below his continental predecessors, as he was above them in vivacity, refinement, taste, and generality of knowledge. At the risk of offending by prolixity, we shall venture to present here the conclusions which we have derived from an attentive study of the writings of this celebrated scholar. His extraordinary talent for the rapid acquisition of diverse and multiplied particulars, is universally acknowledged. That his mind was disciplined, and his taste formed at an early age by the accuracy and extent of his classical reading, is no less certain. His other prominent peculiarities were an insatiable thirst for curious and varied in-

\* Page v, first edition.

formation, and an unhesitating confidence in his own ability to master any intellectual difficulties of whatever magnitude. This latter quality, we apprehend, is never altogether wanting in the minds of those who are called by a favourite synecdoche, universal scholars, nor indeed of any who have made extraordinary acquisitions in any branch of learning. The difference of its degree, and of its combination with other traits of character, has chiefly contributed to that peculiar cast of disposition which distinguishes *great scholars* from the rest of men. In Scaliger, it generated an insufferable arrogance; in Erasmus, a bland and harmless self-complacency; in Bentley, a fierce rashness, amounting to intellectual fool-hardiness. On others it has wrought effects varying with their temperaments and habits; but in none has it degenerated into pure, unmingled, pedantry. That attribute is only to be found in minds weighed down by an enormous load of inherent and inextricable dulness. In Jones, this sort of confidence existed in a high degree; but it was chastened by a taste as correct as it was delicate, and by a judgment scrupulous to rigour. No man can open any volume of his works without perceiving, that through all the nicely adjusted periods there runs not only a rich vein of well-digested learning, but a lofty air, if we may use the phrase, of gentlemanly self-importance. It is precisely the air of a well-bred man, who knows his own value, and is not ashamed, at proper seasons, to assert it, but has too nice a sense of honour and propriety to play the coxcomb or the braggadocio. Without this ready confidence in his own powers, he could never even have attempted the vast schemes of acquisition which he finally accomplished. At the same time, it appears to us, that this very quality, essential as it was to the achievement of his intellectual conquests, could not fail to render him incapable of that sort of mental effort which is necessary to produce the verbal critic. No man with such a mind as Jones, could sit down to the intense study of minutiae. It grasped at too many things to fasten upon one; and moreover, it is certain that his taste was, not so much for languages themselves, as for the literary stores locked up in them. He has himself somewhere forcibly expressed the sentiment, that the gift of tongues is only valuable as a key to other knowledge. Such being his recorded sentiments, it may easily be believed, that his acquaintance with the languages of which he was reputed master, was no more like that of the laborious lexicographer, than the soldier's acquaintance with the properties of steel is like that of the armourer who hammered it. But we are not left to mere conjecture on the subject of Sir William's scholarship. Some of the subjects comprehended in the wide sweep of his acquisitions, lie beyond the reach of ordinary scholars; but there are others not so inaccessible, upon which it is possible to

found a judgment. The Arabic and Persian languages, for instance, were among the earliest of his acquirements, beyond the ordinary bounds of academic discipline. They were subjects, too, to which he continued to pay more or less attention throughout life, and with which his name and reputation as a scholar are particularly associated. Now we speak neither from hearsay nor at random when we assert, that his numerous translations from these tongues afford abundant evidence, that he was more familiar with their genius and spirit than with their grammatical minutiae and idiomatic niceties. We do not infer this from the fact, that his versions are often free. We regard that as an excellence. But in some cases, there are variations from the original, which indicate either that he presumed upon his reader's ignorance, and therefore ventured to be negligent, or that his views were so exclusively directed to catching the general spirit of his author, that he looked upon philological exactness as a matter of small moment.

His Persian Grammar is, throughout, an illustration of what we have said. It is wholly unlike any grammar that preceded it, though many imitations of it have appeared in later times. The style is more colloquial than one expects to meet with, in didactic works of any kind, especially in grammar. It seems as though the author meant to humour the pupil's indolence as much as possible. Dry details are kept in the back ground, or interspersed so copiously with more pleasing matters, that the task of learning them is scarcely felt. This was evidently the object of the numerous citations which are introduced. Though purporting to be mere examples of the rules inserted for the purposes of illustration, they are in fact without utility in that respect. Their connexion with the rules to which they are appended, is generally slight, and sometimes very hard to be discovered; while the English versions are, in almost every case, so far from being literal, that it requires some knowledge of the language to reconcile them with the text. Besides, nearly all these extracts are in verse, a fact, sufficient of itself to show, that they were selected rather to affect the imagination and the eye, than to illuminate the understanding, or assist the memory. In short, this celebrated grammar is one of the most agreeable, and yet unsatisfactory, that ever has appeared. It has seldom failed to fascinate the student who has ventured on the study; and, defective as it is, when considered as a proof of the depth and accuracy of its author's learning, has met with a reception, and enjoyed a popularity, almost unexampled in the history of grammars.

The same may be said, with some restriction, of all Sir William's works on Oriental subjects. He possessed the happy gift of rendering his subject popular, without being altogether super-

ficial ; and it is for this reason that his rise to notoriety deserves to be regarded as an epoch in the annals of Oriental learning. But, though Sir William Jones deserves all the prominence which we have given him, as one of the new school of Orientalists, who choose rather to make Oriental literature popular, than to oppress the public with new loads of frigid erudition, there is one celebrated name to which we have done injustice, by not giving it the precedence. *Bartholomew D'Herbelot* deserves, we think, to be regarded as the first genuine Orientalist in Europe, who conceived the good-natured design of making his vast stores subservient to the entertainment of the uninitiated. His erudition we conceive to be unquestionable. His reputation as a scholar rests on a foundation not easily moved. The compilation of so vast a miscellany as the *Bibliothèque Orientale*, exclusively from Oriental sources, rich both in instruction and amusement, yet without a tinge of pedantry, and, we had almost said, without a shade of dulness—even waiving the suspicious story of its having been at first composed in Arabic—is as unequivocal proof as could be given, not only of his learning, but of his taste and judgment. He holds, indeed, a middle place between the old and new school of Orientalists, uniting the unconquerable diligence and patience of the former, with a portion of the lighter and more popular endowments of the latter. One circumstance, and perhaps one only, prevented his accomplishing what was actually left to be accomplished in the eighteenth century. He lived in the age of folios, before tracts and pamphlets, upon learned subjects, were considered lawful. Had the vast amount of curious and interesting matter brought together in the columns of the *Bibliothèque*, been given to the world in a more attractive form, distributed in numerous portions through detached treatises, or lighter miscellanies, or the pages of periodicals, or any other of the thousand and one methods of diffusing knowledge practised in our day, he would have spoiled the retail trade of some fifty petty dealers. It is astonishing to what extent more recent Orientalists have drawn upon D'Herbelot for their resources, often without acknowledgment, and sometimes with open disrespect. Even Sir William Jones, though commonly so liberal and candid, suffered himself, in the first edition of his *Persian Grammar*,\* to mention a trivial mistake of D'Herbelot, in terms which were afterwards properly expunged. That errors should occur in so large a compilation, not a paragraph of which had previously passed through the filter of translation, no more disproves the learning of the author, than the fortunate discovery of one or two such errors demonstrates an equality of learning in the critic. To say that

there is little depth in D'Herbelot's work, is merely to say, that he succeeded in accomplishing his purpose, which, no doubt, was, to present to the European reader all that was at once instructive and amusing in the Oriental authors whom he had perused, apart from the learned and pedantic trash with which other scholars had encumbered it. In point of fact, however, this great work has merely furnished others with materials for building up a reputation, while its author's name has obtained no more than a small portion of the praise which his labours and abilities so richly merited. Folios never can be popular. The *Bibliothèque Orientale* found its way into the library of every university and great savant in Europe; but it remained upon the shelf as a heavy book of reference, its form and price denying it all access to the book-case of the ordinary scholar. In this state of partial obscurity, the rich stores amassed by D'Herbelot continued, till Sir William Jones unlocked the treasure-house, and threw it open to the multitude.

It is well known that Sir William owed much of his passion for Eastern literature, to his intercourse with Count Reviczki. The latter was by no means deficient in enthusiasm; but, it is apparent, from a memorable passage of their correspondence, that his friend went far beyond him, betraying even a defect of judgment, in the warmth of his expressions on the subject. It was during this period of his life, that his first publications were prepared and issued. It is not surprising, therefore, that, in communicating to his readers a strong taste for Oriental literature, he imparted with it an infusion of this juvenile enthusiasm. As he advanced in years and knowledge, this effervescence of imagination rapidly subsided, and was superseded by a tempered ardour in the pursuit of learning altogether different. But the effect of his earlier writings on the minds of those who were captivated by their spirited and finished elegance, was not to be counteracted by the change of his own views. From him and the learned Austrian, the literary public caught the rage for lavishing hyperboles upon the captivating theme of Oriental literature—and the mania has continued. The edge of novelty has long since been worn off; but the instrument, all blunted as it is, has never been abandoned. Since the days of Count Reviczki and Sir William Jones, it seems to have been thought unlawful to allude to the Eastern languages, in any terms short of the most vehement superlatives.

This we believe to be a correct statement of the circumstances which have led to the style of habitual exaggeration adopted by so many writers on this subject. Had not their knowledge of the subject been as defective as their taste and judgment, these other causes never would have operated thus; but, unfortunately, most admirers of Sir William Jones have affected his juvenile



enthusiasm, without aspiring to his erudition. We cannot think it necessary to go into any argument, with a view to prove that the hyperboles vented so profusely by these sciolists, have been misplaced. That there are particulars in which the Eastern writers manifest a natural superiority, may be admitted. But none of these are of primary importance, and indeed they may all be reduced to one—fecundity of fancy. Now, that any man of balanced intellect and cultivated taste, should, for this secondary merit, be disposed to sacrifice the glorious remains of Attic genius, to say nothing of the borrowed but resplendent lustre of the Romans, may well be matter of astonishment. For our own part, though we fully appreciate the real excellencies of the Oriental writers,\* and are sometimes moved to indignation when we see them treated with unmerited contempt, we subscribe, *ex animo*, to the spirited profession made by Count Reviczki, of his sentiments, in answer to a hasty burst of unchastised enthusiasm, on the part of his more ardent, and, at that time, less judicious correspondent. “Quoique je ne puisse pas nier qu’il y a quelques genres de poesie où les Orientaux et particulièrement les Persans, ont atteint un degré de perfection et de superiorité, je ne me ferois point de scrupule de renoncer plutôt à la connaissance de ces trois langues,† qu’à la seule langue Grecque.”

The truth is, that these zealots in the cause of Eastern learning, have entirely mistaken the true causes which impart a value to their favourite pursuits. We believe it is a fact which cannot be too positively or emphatically stated, that it is not the literary merit of the Asiatic writers, which gives, or ought to give, them an importance in the eyes of western scholars. There are, at best, few books—we are not sure that there are any—in the whole circle of Persian and Arabian literature, from which a taste formed upon good models would not turn away with some contempt. Their rhetoric, an art which they have cultivated with unrivalled diligence, is puerile in the extreme. Jingle, with them, supplies the place of all excellence in style; and nothing is considered more impressive, even in their gravest compositions, than a ridiculous accumulation of synonymous expressions, rendered more absurd by the rhythmical exactness with which they are made to correspond in sound. Indeed, the distinctive properties of Oriental literature—as well excellencies as defects—may be summed up in the single one of puerility. There is something childish in the cast of thought, the imagery,

\* To prevent all misconception of our meaning, it may be well to remind the reader, that in most of our remarks, we use the phrase of *Oriental language* in the limited sense, to which it was confined in Europe, for some hundred years, as denoting the Arabic and Persian tongues.

† Persian, Arabic, and Turkish.

the expression, of their most elaborate productions, which might please, if there were any thing like naïveté about it, but can only excite ridicule, when seen to be the product of hard labour and an artificial system. This censure, it is true, is not so fully applicable to the older writers, such as Ferdusi and the authors of the Moallakat; but even in their compositions, though the elaborate rhetorical inanity is wanting, there is an air of juvenility, arising evidently not from poverty of intellect, but from a radical defect of taste. We do not mean, of course, that sort of taste, which must be the result of patient cultivation and familiarity with elevated models, but that instinctive power of distinguishing the proper and the beautiful from the absurd, which seems to have sprung up among the rocks of Attica, as naturally as the olive and the fig.

Let those who suspect us of having formed this judgment through the influence of prejudice or want of knowledge, turn to the express declaration of the greatest Orientalist in Europe. The Baron de Sacy, in the last edition of his *Chrestomathie*, repeats, after twenty years' reflection, the opinion expressed in the first edition of the same work, that the literature of Arabia is, in all points, superior to that of Persia; and even adopts, as a motto for his title-page, an Arabic sarcasm to the same effect. What shall we say, then, when we find him, after this avowal, explicitly asserting that he could not find, in the whole course of his Arabic reading, any one entire book worth translating! So much for the mere rhetorical or literary merits of the Oriental writers; that is, for their fitness to gratify the taste. We would gladly here reverse the picture, and show the importance of these languages, as sources of historical information, and still more as instruments in the great moral enterprise of improving the condition of the species.\* But such a discussion would be quite beyond the limits even of this desultory and digressive article. We must now close these more general remarks, and glance, for a moment, at the Persian language in particular.

It is not our design to weave into a new tissue the historical details so entirely accessible to ordinary readers, in the Asiatic

\* After all, we must call in the aid of Sir William Jones, to give elegant and forcible expression to our views. "As to the literature of Asia, it will not, perhaps, be essentially useful to the greater part of mankind, who have neither leisure nor inclination to cultivate so extensive a branch of learning; but the civil and natural history of such mighty empires as India, Persia, and Arabia, cannot fail of delighting those who love to view the great picture of the universe, or to learn by what degrees the most obscure states have risen to glory, and the most flourishing kingdoms have sunk to decay; the philosopher will consider those works as highly valuable, by which he may trace the human mind in all its various appearances, from the rudest to the most cultivated state: and the man of taste will undoubtedly be pleased to unlock the stores of native genius, and to gather the flowers of unrestrained and luxuriant fancy."

Researches and the works of Sir William Jones. Etymological history, or the science which traces the progress and ramification, of languages, is apt, even in the ablest hands, to become either intolerably dry or ludicrously fanciful, as any one may satisfy himself by opening Dr. Murray's whimsical work on the languages of Europe. We shall not, therefore, run the risk of being laughed at, or of wearying the reader by attempting to detail the formation of the Deri dialect from the Pehlavi and Zend. All necessary information on these points may be obtained, by a reference to the authorities already specified. We shall content ourselves with the more entertaining and less hackneyed task, of endeavouring to give the uninitiated some idea of the language as it is. This inquiry is, to our taste, as much superior to the one before alluded to, as the inspection of a full blown rose is to that of a dried specimen, or the anatomy of a recent subject to the dissection of a mummy.

Sir William Jones appears, from some passages in his writings, to have entertained the notion that Persia was the cradle of the human race, and the old Persian language the dialect of Paradise. He has no where propounded this as a set theory; but it seems to have been one of those lofty musings in which genius loves to lose itself, and which gives so peculiar a charm to his works in particular. Without going into a discussion of the matter upon geographical and scriptural foundations, we would merely hint, that the Persian language, even in its present state, affords some ground for the presumption that it is very ancient, if not substantially primitive and underived. The structure of the language is intrinsically simple. The names of those things which are universally familiar, and which enter of necessity into the vocabulary of all nations, are with few exceptions short. It is more philosophical and true to nature in its principles and forms of grammar, than either of the classical languages, or any of the modern dialects of Europe, *penes nos*, with one exception. That one exception is the English, which, with all its orthographical anomalies, is as far above most contemporary tongues in genuine simplicity and philosophical consistency, as it is inferior to some of them in softness, grace, and flexibility.

There is another circumstance which might suggest or justify the theory alluded to. The Persian language is remarkable for its analogies, in certain points, to a variety of other tongues, having little mutual connexion or resemblance, and differing in nothing more than in the very points where the analogy alluded to subsists. Like the Latin, it has no article. Like the Hebrew, when two nouns are in construction, it changes the termination of the first, while the other stands unaltered. Like the Arabic, it places cardinal numbers, in many cases, before nouns

in the singular. Like Spanish and German, it has two verbs which signify *to be*, one of which is used to form the passive voice, the other never.\* Like the Greek, it has aorist tenses in the verb; and, like the Syriac, a definite or emphatic form in nouns, produced in the same way, by the addition of a vowel to the simple word.† Now, this curious circumstance of its coinciding with so many tongues, in relation to particulars, wherein those tongues diverge most widely from each other, might easily suggest to an inventive mind, the notion that the Persian language may have been the stock from which all other dialects were propagated.‡ This hypothesis, however, merits more respect for its parentage than its intrinsic merits. We shall therefore dismiss it with this passing notice, but must take the liberty to dwell a little longer on an analogy more striking than any we have mentioned—we mean that between the Persian language and our own. Some learned men have taken no small pains to show a strong affinity between the Persian and the German. Their proof has rested chiefly on a copious induction of particular vocables, the same in sense, and either identical or similar in form. In our opinion, there is much more ground for supposing an original affinity between our own tongue and the Parsee. Many of the German terms from which these writers argue, are common to that language and the English. But the analogy which we assert between English and Persian, lies far deeper, and relates to points in which the latter tongue is radically diverse from the German. We mean the essential forms of grammatical inflexion. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that of all the leading European languages, the German comes the nearest to the Greek and Latin forms of declension and arrangement. It maintains, in all its length and breadth, the artificial difference of gender recognised in the grammar of those languages. The French, Spanish, and Italian, though legitimate

\* We do not mean to be understood too strictly. The German *seyn* and *werden*, and the Spanish *ser* and *estar*, are certainly not, in every point, precisely correspondent, either to the Persian *booden* and *shúden*, or to one another.

† This paragogic vowel has, by some grammarians, been called an article.

‡ Besides these curious grammatical analogies, there are many most remarkable coincidences in the form and sound of insulated words, between the Persian and other languages. Every one must be struck with the resemblance between *merden* to die, and the German *mürden*, *afrachten* to erect, and the German *aufrichten*, *bruder* a brother, and the German *bruder*, *dokhter* a daughter, and the German *dochter*, *peder* a father, and the Latin *pater*, *mader* a mother, and the Latin *mater*—or, to come nearer home, between *lib* and *lip*, *ebus* and *eyebrow*, *bed* and *bad*, *tundur* and *thunder*, *nam* and *name*, *stara* and *star*, *berber* and *barber*, *behter* and *better*. This last instance is remarkable. The English *better* is an irregular comparative, containing not a letter of the positive. The Persian *behter* is formed, according to strict rule, from the adjective *beh*, good. What does this imply? The present tense of the substantive verb in Persian, presents two remarkable coincidences. The first person *am* (I am) is English, and the third person *est* (he is) good Latin.

descendants from the Latin, have not scrupled to discard the neuter gender and the oblique cases as unnecessary ; while the German, though sprung from another parent, has adopted and maintains them all with scrupulous tenacity. In these particulars, the German forms are diametrically opposite to the Persian, which coincide precisely with the English. In neither of the latter is there any grammatical variety of gender. There are, it is true, in many cases, distinct terms to designate animals of different sexes ; but such terms are no more *grammatical* varieties of the same thing, than *dwarf* and *giant*, *negro* and *mulatto*. Again, in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, French, Spanish, and Italian, to proceed no further, the adjective obsequiously follows all the movements of the noun, being furnished to that end with a variety of genders, cases, numbers, accurately corresponding to the accidents of the substantive. In opposition to all these, the English grammarian will tell you, that the adjective ought to suffer no change, but that which is requisite to indicate what are called degrees of comparison. For when you say *white horse*—*white horses*, though the subject varies in respect to number, and ought therefore to be changed in form, the quality remains the same ; but when you say *fine horse*, *finer horse*, the degree of the quality is changed, and calls for a corresponding change in the form of a qualifying word. Now, reasonable as all this appears, and no doubt is, its discrepancy with the principles of other languages, ancient as well as modern, might give us pause, were it not that in every tittle of these singularities, the Persian coincides. Nor is this something which it has in common with its Oriental neighbours. The languages with which it is geographically and colloquially connected—the Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, and Syriac—not only recognise the difference of gender, but push it to an extent unknown in any western language. How would Priscian have been startled at the apparition of a female future or a male imperative, unless previously notified, that in Hebrew grammar the tenses of a verb marry and are given in marriage !

∴ We might here go into an analysis of the Persian verb, and by ~~breaking~~ ~~away~~ some unessential forms, demonstrate that the principle of the inflexions is the same as in English. But as this would lead us far into grammatical details, and as we have already said so much upon the subject, we shall push the analogy no further.

The Persian language is undoubtedly a beautiful one ; for it possesses in a high degree two essential constituents of literary beauty—~~simplicity~~ ~~and~~ ~~regularity~~. It is perhaps as regular, that is to say, ~~free~~ ~~from~~ ~~exceptions~~ and anomalies, as any language upon earth. The only irregularity presenting any thing like difficulty to the student, arises from the corruption of some verbal

forms about the time of the Mohammedan conquest, when the Arabs interpolated their harsh consonants between the softer elements of the Parsee vocables. The roots of the verbs, however, thus affected, have remained unchanged, and the formations all proceed upon a uniform principle, from which fact and the paucity of these abnormal verbs, it results, that the whole difficulty may be mastered by the diligent attention of a very few hours.\* With this exception, the grammar of the language is a unique specimen of regularity. The idiomatic forms, as in all other cases, are numerous and often very different from those of other languages. But this is an obstacle which every where exists, and can never be overcome except by patient assiduity and practice.

Though we are forced in this sketch to content ourselves with outlines, we must not omit one circumstance by which the language is remarkably characterized. We mean the abundance of its compound verbs and adjectives. Sir William Jones, in his grammar, allows it the precedence in this respect, not only of the German, but the Greek. This comparison, however, savours of the period of life in which the book was written. We are well persuaded, that the author would not have been willing, when his judgment was matured and his knowledge more enlarged, to hazard this assertion. The compounds of Greek and German grammar are specifically different from those of Persian grammar, because formed upon a different principle. The latter impart neither strength nor richness to the language. The compound verbs are mere periphrases, and the compound adjectives so exclusively descriptive, that they can only serve as florid epithets in poetry or prose run mad. In Greek and German, on the contrary, the nicest shades of variation in the meaning of a primitive, are definitely indicated by its compounds. Such compounds, it is evident, are so many additions to the expressiveness and copiousness of the language, while those with which Sir William has compared them can only serve, at best, to give a diffuse elegance to prose style, and a languid voluptuousness to poetical description. This circumstance, we are persuaded, has largely contributed to render Persian poetry so different from that of classical antiquity, as well as from the better sort of modern European compositions, and we may add, so decidedly inferior to both.

The notice of one other curious fact must close what we have to say upon the Persian language. A large proportion of the

\* It is to us astonishing, that no Persian lexicographer has treated the imperative as the root of the verb. A glance at the paradigm evinces, that it is, in almost every case, the simplest form, as it always is in *English*. This is one out of the many points of resemblance, which we have been obliged to omit in hinting at the analogy between the languages.

words, which at present make up its vocabulary, are pure Arabic, a circumstance which renders some acquaintance with the latter tongue essential to a thorough understanding of the former. The way in which these exotic terms are incorporated in the language, is probably unparalleled, and certainly astonishing. There is no mutilation or corruption of the borrowed word, no modification of its sound or form, to render it congenial with the tongue into which it is transplanted. It passes, without alteration, from one language to the other; but no sooner is it fairly embodied in the latter, than it becomes subject to the same rules which would have governed it had it been indigenous. The parts of speech most freely interchanged in this way, are adjectives and verbal nouns; but no class is excluded altogether from the privilege, except the finite verb. It certainly deserves to be regarded as a singular phenomenon, that the union of the two tongues could proceed so far, and yet proceed no farther; that the one could be indebted to the other for so large a portion of its words, and yet maintain its own inflexions, syntax, and idioms unaltered. Such, however, is the fact. Though the Persian language, has been inundated by this vast influx of foreign terms, its grammatical forms have been wholly unaffected, a circumstance which argues much for their simplicity and philosophical consistency.

We cannot leave this topic, after all, without a breach of promise. Our *more last words*, however, shall be few. All that we have to say is, that the common notion of a strong affinity and similarity between the Arabic and Persian languages, is entirely erroneous. In their structure, idiom, and spirit, they are as dissimilar as the respective nations; and we need not add, that this is saying much. It is impossible to draw perfect parallels in character; but it does not seem too fanciful to represent the Arabs and the Persians as the Spaniards and the French, or rather as the Spartans and Athenians of the East. Unlike as they consequently must be, they cannot well be more so than their respective languages, in all essential properties. We may resume this subject on some future occasion.

The existing literature of the Persians is entirely modern. The oldest compositions extant in the dialect now spoken, were unquestionably written long after the Mohammedan invasion in the caliphate of Omar. Whether the Arabs, as the Persians say, destroyed the treasures of a former literature in their savage fury, or whether the Persian literature owed its first existence to the example of the Arabs, are questions with which we decline to meddle. The writings palmed upon the world as ancient Persian compositions, are of doubtful origin, and worthless in themselves; for all which possess the least intrinsic value are indisputably modern.

One advantage has undoubtedly attended modern Persian literature, ever since its origin, in no stinted measure—that of patronage. The poets of that country have especially enjoyed the countenance of the sovereign and the enthusiastic favour of the people. It seems as if a taste for literature was the only honourable feeling able to resist the blasting influence of despotism. The most brutal tyrants have in many cases been munificent protectors of the arts; and often have the stores amassed by grinding the faces of the miserable poor, been applied to the encouragement of genius and the promotion of refinement. The Persian bards, however, are indebted for their immortality much less to the largesses of their royal patrons, than to the devoted admiration of the populace. The acute and imaginative vulgar of the East crave intellectual aliment of some sort, even in the lowest deep of civil and moral degradation. Hence the infinite series of wild fictions which constitute the staple of their conversation. Hence, too, the tenacity with which they cling to the writings of some favourite authors. It is highly probable, that most Persian writers have had constant reference to the established taste of the *profanum vulgus*, and been led thereby to greater lengths in the false taste and puerility which we have charged upon them. Certain it is, that some works have attained a circulation among all ranks of the Persian population, which has never been attained, even by the help of printing, by any original English book, except perhaps the dreams of good John Bunyan. The books alluded to are few in number, and of different descriptions. They are all either partially or wholly couched in verse. They may be divided into three varieties. The first consists of epic legends—fragments of the half fictitious annals of the earliest times, expressed in simple but sonorous verse, by such bards as Ferdusi. The second comprehends light songs of wine and love, the only branch of composition in which Persia can assert a marked superiority to ancient Greece; for we have no hesitation in asserting that Anacreon is inferior, in every estimable quality, to Hafiz. The third and most popular of these three sorts of composition, is perhaps peculiar to the Eastern nations. It consists of simple and familiar anecdotes in prose, partly fictitious, partly culled from history, but all conveying an intelligible moral, which is amplified and illustrated in verse. It is merely an extension of the ancient apologue beyond the bounds assigned to it by Esop, or whoever first reduced it to a form. The substitution of anecdotes for fables allows more scope to the author, and furnishes the reader with more varied entertainment; while the metrical application or improvement of the stories affords ample room for the display of poetical ability. Of this species of composition Sadi is es-



teemed the greatest master, and his famous Gulistan the finest specimen.

Having at last brought the reader, by a circuitous route, indeed, but safely, and we trust not disagreeably, to land, we invite his attention to a rapid sketch of the worthy sheikh himself, preparatory to some notice of the work before us.

Of Sadi himself we have little to communicate. He was born at Shiraz, the Persian Athens, near the close of the twelfth century. We are somewhat doubtful what degree of credence should be given to the scraps of autobiography scattered through his writings, and particularly through the Gulistan. If these may be considered as authentic, his father was a strict Mohammedan and rigid moralist, and the bard himself was brought up under that ascetic discipline, common to the Christian monk and the Oriental dervish. This latter word in strictness means a *poor man*, but, like *fakir*, its synonyme in Arabic, has been appropriated, by the usage of the East, to denote the voluntary poverty assumed from religious motives. Mohammedan monachism is an interesting subject, and one which has as yet been but partially elucidated. How far it has been reduced into a system, and what the precise nature of that system is, we are unable to determine. Certain it is, however, that convents of dervishes are numerous in Western Asia, and that it is impossible to open any Oriental work of history or fiction, without meeting with allusions to religious mendicants as a distinct and organized class of the community.

The manner in which Sadi passed the earlier period of his life, is unknown to us in its details. We should infer, however, from some passages of the Gulistan, that his youth, notwithstanding the restraints to which he was subjected, was stained with immoralities of no small magnitude. It is probable that on escaping from the rigid discipline of the cœnobium, where he received his first instructions, he was overcome by the temptations of the world, and plunged into its pleasures, with that headlong eagerness peculiar to those who pass abruptly from a strict life to a loose one. Another circumstance which leads us to the same conclusion is, that there is still extant in the East a production of his younger days, now known by the appropriate name of the *Book of Impurities*, though it, no doubt, bore originally a less startling title. This work presents us with a lamentable instance of the depth to which genius can be sunk by moral depravation. Though written in the language of Shiraz, the most elegant and pure dialect of Persia, and containing many indications of its author's talents, it is perfectly disgusting from its undisguised and gross licentiousness. We are happy to add, that its author was eventually fortunate enough to form a just estimate of its merits, and looked back upon its com-

position with remorse and shame. These feelings may indeed be traced in all his later writings. There runs through such of them as we have seen, a vein of compunctious feeling on the subject of morality, which, though frequently expressed in general terms, or wrought into the texture of a lively fiction, has evidently something personally referrible to the author. This is particularly visible in the serious prefaces or proems, which, according to the Oriental custom, are prefixed to all his writings. In the *mukeddemah* or prologue to the *Gulistan*, he assigns as his reason for the composition of the book, a deep sense of the obligation resting on him, to promote the welfare of his fellow-men, and of his own remissness in discharging it. The same feeling is still more observable in the beautiful preface to the *Pundnameh*. With his other writings we have no direct acquaintance.

We cannot leave this topic without hinting at the coincidence in this respect, between the Persian moralist and a celebrated English poet of the present day. The first publications of the latter were no less remarkable for poetical ability, exercised with the worst of purposes upon the worst of objects. His subsequent publications, at least the more recent,\* have been no less remarkable for their correct and even moral tendency, as well as for a strong infusion of the same penitential spirit which pervades the later works of Sadi. Nor are these cases singular. It might be proved by multiplied examples, that no remorse stings more severely, than that suffered by the man who has contributed to vitiate the public taste and deprave the public morals. Multitudes never feel its salutary pangs; but when once felt, it seldom fails to rouse its victim to some active efforts to redeem his own fame, and neutralize the poison which he has infused into the public mind.

Of the personal qualities of Sadi, we know little by report. From his works we should infer, that he was of a cheerful temper, a keen wit, a lively rather than a strong mind, a memory well stored with facts and sentiments, and an honest disposition to do good, the whole somewhat qualified and tintured with an inoffensive vanity. This last, which might have made a large deduction from the aggregate value of a European writer, should have no such influence in computations which relate to Orientals. The literati of the East, especially those gifted with what we call popular abilities, are raised so far above the mass of their society, and treated with such boundless admiration and respect, that they seem almost to form another species. Oriental genius is accustomed to a sort of homage never yielded to the most ex-

\* It may be well to say, that the remarks which have allusion to Mr. Moore, were written before the *Memoirs of Lord Byron* had appeared.

alted intellects with us. The warmest admirer, or to use the phrase, adorer of a Byron or a Goëthe, clings fast to his own independence all the while, and would rather see the object of his adoration perish, than abandon his own right to play the critic. The Persian, on the contrary, with Sadi, Hafiz, or Ferdusi in his hands, resigns the privilege of thinking for himself, and drinks in every thing with just as much unhesitating confidence as if it were a revelation from the skies. This circumstance has, no doubt, tended greatly to stereotype the taste and judgment of the Orientals. Instead of bringing their best writers to a standard founded upon just principles of criticism, they judge them altogether by themselves, and are no more likely, therefore, to pronounce an unfavourable sentence, than we are to complain of a standard weight or measure as fraudulently light or unlawfully contracted. The fact which we have stated is, however, quite sufficient to evince, that the same language which in the mouth of a European would be absurdly egotistical, may be almost reckoned modest in the mouth of an Asiatic; because, in the latter case, it falls immensely short of the extravagant expressions which he daily hears applied to him by others. Bearing this fact in mind, and also recollecting that radical deficiency of taste which generally (for there are exceptions) tarnishes all issues from the Oriental mint, we think the most fastidious may afford to pardon the slight dash of self-conceit which is apparent in our author. For ourselves, we find no difficulty in forgiving even such transgressions of decorum as the following:—

“ *Vizae*, in the eye of an enemy, is the grossest vice :

So, Sadi, a rose, but in the eyes of his enemies, a thorn ;”

Or the still stronger case, in which after enumerating the staple commodities of different countries, he sums all up with this genuine Orientalism,—

“ From Egypt comes sugar, but from Shiraz *Sadi* !”†

The refined taste will perceive, in such examples, something much more disagreeable than the mere vanity which prompted them. We mean the puerility of the conception. In Sadi, it is true, this weakness is redeemed by divers excellencies. But of this anon.

From his youth, Sadi appears to have been a traveller. His works contain numberless allusions to his pilgrimages, which seem, indeed, to have supplied him with a large proportion of the matter here wrought into such a popular and entertaining form. Like most of the Eastern devotees, he probably performed the great hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, more than once, be-

\* “ *Huner-becheshm-i-adawet-buzurgter-aib-est :*  
*Gul-est-Sadi-wa-der-cheshm-i-dushmanan-Khar-est.*” p. 109.

† “ *Shekr-az-Misr-va-Sadi-az-Shiraz.*”

sides visits of the same kind to minor keblas, or consecrated places of less note. All his voyages seem to have been undertaken with religious views; for though he often speaks of having been in company with merchants, in most parts of Asia, there is no intimation of his having been himself engaged in trade. In the second book or chapter of the work before us, (page 71,) we have an account of an important incident in his biography. He there states, that having left Damascus, for the purpose of performing his devotions in the wilderness, he fell into the clutches of the Franks,\* and was forced to labour in the trenches at Tripoli, until he was redeemed by a merchant of Aleppo, who, not content with this kindness, took him home and married him to his daughter. How long he was a captive, we are not informed. It was long enough, however, to inspire him with a strong dislike to his new masters; for we meet with more than one ill-natured and contemptuous allusion to the Christians in his writings.

We have already mentioned, that our author was a dervish. We may add, that he was a khateeb or public preacher. There are many expressions in the *Gulistan* from which this might be gathered; but, on page 59, we have proof positive. He there not only speaks of his having said a few words in the mosque at Baalbec, by way of exhortation, (be-tarik-waaz,) but records his text, and gives an abstract of the sermon, with an account of its effect upon the congregation. It would seem, indeed, from his phraseology throughout this book, that he spent most of his time, when not upon his pilgrimages, in the mosques of Syria and Persia, engaged in religious services or attending the levees of the Ulema.

These are all the detached fragments of our author's history worth preserving that we are able to communicate, and the reader is, perhaps, already satisfied. We shall pass, therefore, to his works. Of these not one within our knowledge is composed in prose. A mere prose work is, indeed, the *niger cygnus* of Oriental literature. Even their most systematic works of science teem with poetical quotations and allusions, while a large proportion of the prose itself would, with us, be denominated doggerel. But Sadi's works are not even prose in this sense. They are either wholly metrical, as the *Bostan* and *Pundnameh*, or mixed, as the *Gulistan*. These, with the *Moallamat* or Rays of Light, are by far the most popular of his productions; and indeed, few books in any language have enjoyed so wide a circulation as the *Pundnameh* and the work before us. The former is a compendious manual of ethics, comprising the most valuable moral precepts, in less than two hundred couplets.

\* The Crusaders.

It is used as a class book in all schools wherever the language is vernacular, and quoted by the gravest writers as infallible authority.

In popularity, however, it must yield to the *Gulistan*, which, in addition to the merits common to it with other works, possesses a peculiar claim in the variety of the subjects which it comprehends, and of the styles in which it is composed. While the others are applauded by the Eastern critics as so many master-pieces, the *Gulistan* is in every body's mouth, furnishing the philosopher with argument, the wit with repartee, and all with mingled entertainment and instruction. It is indeed an interesting fact, that a book may be, nay that one has been written, capable of affording exquisite delight as well as sound instruction to all classes of society, from Cape Comorin to the Caspian, from the Indus to the Nile.\* That any book, with such a circulation, for six hundred years, must have excited a decisive influence, is quite self-evident. And here we must beg leave to interpose a few words in behalf of the whole class of writings to which this belongs. We have already said, that this style of composition is a favourite with the writers and readers of the East. With us, on the contrary, it is apt to be regarded with contempt, as puerile. Sitting down to the perusal of such works, with principles of taste derived from higher models, and without allowance for circumstances, we can have no relish for their beauties or forbearance for their faults. Rhetorically, this contempt is just. We see nothing admirable in the Oriental style as such. But the works of which we speak may plead exemption, upon other grounds, from a sentence of entire condemnation. For our own part, we believe that they have been employed as instruments in the accomplishment of most important ends. With all their deficiencies in point of taste, and sometimes of good sense, they have served to insinuate a tincture of sound morals into the putrescent mass of Mohammedan society; just as the Mohammedan religion has itself been instrumental in the preservation of whole nations from idolatry. With more depth and less vivacity, they might have made their readers more profoundly skilled in ethics; and with less gaudy decoration, they would, no doubt, have been more agreeable to Western taste. But these very qualities have been their passport to the understanding of vast multitudes, who would have turned away from better books. We are far from meaning to assert, that the moral standard which these works establish is the highest possible; but we do mean to say, that it is far higher than the standard of

\* The Persian is the language of judicial proceeding in Hindostan, and is also spoken at the courts of all the native princes. In Egypt it is not, we believe, spoken by any class; but that it is understood, may be inferred from the fact, that the Pacha has recently published an elegant edition of the *Gulistan*.

the Koran or the Soana, and that their grossest passages are less demoralizing than the impostor's pictures of his sensual paradise.

But it is not merely from their moral tendency that we conceive these books to have been highly useful in the East. Strange as it may appear, we entertain no doubt that they have strongly influenced the civil and political condition of the people. The reader need not be informed, that the Persian monarchy is one of the purest despotisms on earth. The absolute power of the sovereign over the lives and liberties of his subjects is no more doubted by the former or disputed by the latter, than their own existence. Indeed so perfectly despotic is the government, that there is actually no diversity of ranks among the people. The constitution recognises but two orders, king and slave. All further distinction emanates entirely from the king, and being merely personal, expires with the possessor. The constant tendency of such a system must be to extremes—to rouse the subject to resistance, or to sink him in stupid apathy. Had the populace sufficient strength of character and light of understanding, the frequent revolutions which diversify their history might better their condition. But as it is, they amount to a mere change of masters. To prevent the opposite extreme of entire stagnation, two things are necessary,—a strong check on the sovereign, and as strong a stimulus to act upon the people. Both these important safeguards, Providence has vouchsafed in the case before us. The Mohammedan religion, though perfectly absurd as a system of belief, and wholly deficient as a moral code, has been instrumental in controlling the condition of the people who profess it, in several important points. One of these has been already mentioned; another may be introduced at present. Despotic as the Eastern monarch is, Mohammedism is more despotic still. He grinds the faces of the peasantry, but it binds him down as with a chain of adamant. No force, no subterfuge, can emancipate the Moslem prince from the grasp of his religion. Unable as it is to touch the heart or change the character, it possesses in an eminent degree the power of controlling men in elevated stations. Turkey and Persia both bear testimony to this fact. Open the history of either people, or the writings of travellers among them, and it will be seen that without the counter-despotism of the ecclesiastics, the grasping and oppressive spirit of their kings would have no barrier. Here then is the check upon the sovereign. The stimulus we spoke of is presented in such books as that before us. Their subject, form and manner, are precisely suited to procure them access to the very lowest peasants, (for almost all Mohammedans can read;) while the truths which they inculcate, are precisely such as their condition calls for. It is a singular phenomenon, that in

the very countries where a syllable uttered extempore in disparagement of royalty, or in favour of the rights of man, would expose the speaker to a cruel death, books are in every body's hands, which teach in the plainest terms, that the end of government is the welfare of the governed, and that kings are responsible to God for their treatment of their subjects. It is not to be supposed, however, that this political paradox results from the forbearance of the rulers. It exists, not in consequence, but in defiance of their choice. Writings which have survived a thousand revolutions, and through all the changes and reverses of the state, enjoyed for centuries a universal circulation, are beyond the reach of arbitrary power. The peasantry cling to them with invincible tenacity, as panaceas for their multiplied oppressions. Their possessions may be seized, and their persons tortured, but their liberty of speech increases with the violence they suffer. As the Arabic proverb well expresses it, *when man grows desperate, his tongue grows long*.\* The miserable Persian, as he writhes beneath the bastinado, when bribes and entreaties have proved vain, relieves himself by pouring forth a volley of epigrammatical curses on the wickedness of tyrants, and threats of retributive justice, in the words of Sadi. This is, indeed, a miserable solace for inflictions so unmercifully rigorous; but it puts the oppressor on his guard, and compels him to remember, that though the many-headed monster is subdued, its moanings and the flashes of its eye are ominous. The Shah, all absolute as he is, cannot forget that every child in his dominions has been taught to repeat, among a thousand of the same sort, the memorable apothegm of Sadi, *kings were created to protect the people, not the people to serve kings*.†

One other public benefit resulting from these works, remains to be adverted to. They preserve some degree of intellectual activity, amidst external circumstances, which naturally tend to paralyze the faculties. Works more elaborate might benefit the learned, but could never reach the vulgar. For the latter, something pointed but intelligible, pleasing but instructive, gaudy but substantial, is required. Such are the works of which we speak, and being such, they deserve the praise of having, notwithstanding their deficiency when measured by our standards, preserved the public mind from complete stagnation, if not the public taste from radical corruption.

The foregoing observations, though applicable more or less to a whole class of compositions, are particularly true of the *Gulistan*, which, as we have again and again said, is surpassed by none of the same genus, either in celebrity or intrinsic excel-

\* *Idha-yayis-elinsan-tal-lisanuhu.*

† *Muluk-ez-behri-pas-riaya-and, neh-riaya-ez-behri-taact-i-muluk.*

lence. To satisfy at once the curiosity of the reader, we shall state here, in plain terms, that the *Gulistan*, or Bed of Roses, is a series of anecdotes, most of them very short, varying greatly in their character. The beauty of one consists in a smart pun, of another in a witty repartee, of a third in the interest or pathos of the story, and of a fourth in the rhythm of the sentences.

This last, which the Orientals reckon a great beauty, and on which their secondary writers most depend for reputation, must be quite beyond the comprehension of mere English readers. To enlighten their minds, we would inform them, that the Arabic and Persian rhetoricians regard it as essential to the harmony of style, that the limbs or clauses should terminate with sounds either exactly similar, or so nearly alike as to produce a kind of jingle when recited. If to this an antithesis in the sense be superadded, the merit of the composition is increased proportionally. Nor is it difficult to find a cause for this strange perversity of taste. The Koran, their universal oracle and standard, is composed from end to end upon this principle.\* Nay, it is on this very circumstance that Moslems found its claims to admiration as a master-piece of eloquence, adducing as an evidence of super-human origin, the very thing which in our eyes most strongly marks it an absurd imposture.

But to return to Sadi. The anecdotes which, as we have remarked, form the ground work of the *Gulistan*, are, with four or five exceptions, written in prose,—sometimes jingling and ridiculous, sometimes beautiful and simple. To each of the anecdotes is added one or more rhymed couplets, purporting to convey the moral of the fable; though in nine cases out of ten, it requires some study to discover the fine nexus which unites them. In point of fact, the author merely makes use of these metrical appendages to vent all the allusions and conceits supplied by his memory or fancy, in relation to the topic touched upon, without taking pains to make it any clearer than the story left it.

We must confess, that we prefer Sadi's prose altogether to his verse. Speaking agreeably to our ideas on the subject, the for-

\* The Koran may be said to be composed in rhyme. We open the volume at a venture, at the twenty-first *surah*, and find it to consist of one hundred and three verses, all of which terminate in *oon*, or *een*, or *eem*. The following will give some idea of the jingle. "Falyatina biayatin cama ursila '*lawwaloon*—*wa ma arsalna kablaca illa rijalan noohee ilaihim fasaaloo ahla dhicri contum la taalmoon*—*wa la jaalnahum jasadana la yaaculoona* 'Haama wa ma canoo *khaki-deen*—*thumma sadaknahumu* 'Iwaada fuanjainahum wa man yashau wa shlacna '*Imurifeen*—*lacad anzalna ilaicum citaban feehee dhikrucum afala taakiloon*—*wa cam casamna min karyatin canat zalimatan wa anshaana baadaha kawman akhe-reen*—*falamma ahassu baasana idha hum minha yarkudzoon*." The whole is recited in the mosques with a sort of modulated whine, but the words which close the cadences, and which we have marked in italics, are uttered with a particularly long and Alexandrine drawl.



mer not only has more meaning in it, but is actually more poetical. With the exception of some fine descriptive, and some finer moral passages, the metrical portions of this book, though they abound in antitheses and points, and are often both witty and ingenious, are extremely flat. They are often, indeed, mere epigrams, and as such very good, and it is to their epigrammatic character that they owe their hold upon the memory of the populace.

Oriental writers, upon moral and religious subjects, seem to entertain some notions, as to their own privileges, quite repugnant to the views of men a little further west. When they advance a doctrine, which appears to need support or illustration, instead of taking such authentic facts as bear upon the matter, or limiting themselves to abstract argument, they never scruple to invent an incident precisely in point, by way of confirmation. To this there could be no objections, were these *false facts* introduced as mere fictitious illustrations. But this is seldom done. The imaginary action or discourse is commonly referred to some illustrious saint, patriarch, or prophet, and stated with as much formal gravity as if it was a most momentous truth. The commentators on the Koran seem to have set the fashion in this questionable practice; for whenever the Book is particularly foolish, contradictory, or unintelligible, they very coolly tell a long story in the margin, about the circumstances which occasioned the hard text, and this comment being made to fit, never fails to solve the difficulty.\* Such being the practice of the writers who have undertaken to explain their sacred volume, it is not surprising that the same license has been arrogated by those handling subjects of less moment. This strange abuse has undoubtedly a tendency to cast a shade of doubt on all their historical allusions and incidental statements. It was this consideration which suggested to us some doubt as to the reliance to be placed upon Sadi's auto-biographical memoranda. In the book before us, there are many instances in which an air of historical truth is given, in this way, to mere creations of the author's fancy. At present, we can only turn to two, a quotation from the Gospel, (page 189,) and a story of Moses and a drunken dervish, (page 91,) both of which are forgeries.

The Gulistan is divided into eight books or chapters, literally *gates*. The subject of the first is the *Character of Kings*. To this part of the work we had reference, in speaking of its political effects. It is chiefly filled with stories of oppressive kings, who suffered dreadful retribution, or at least severe reproof,

\* The credit of inventing this mode of exposition is, in fairness, due to the Rabbinical commentators on the Old Testament, from whom it was borrowed by Beidhawi, et id genus omne.

sparingly interspersed with anecdotes of monarchs distinguished for generosity and justice. The latter, for the most part, relate to Nushirvan, whose name is synonymous, in Persian books, with a just king. In the other stories there is commonly no mention of an individual, a lamentable proof of the paucity of good kings, and the abundance of tyrants in the East.

The second book treats of *Dervishes*,\* and seems to be designed to set off the character of the true dervish in a favourable light, and expose that of false pretenders to merited contempt. It is amusing to observe how diligently Sadi seizes every opportunity to raise his own profession over every other, by recounting the severe rebukes and witty repartees, with which his real or imaginary dervishes silenced the hapless kings, merchants, warriors, and infidels, who happened to dispute with them.

The subject of the third book is the advantages of temperance and contentment;—that of the fourth, the benefits of silence. The fifth contains love-stories, and is about the lowest of the eight in moral, intellectual, and literary merit. It also contains specimens of the worthy Sheikh's politeness to his friends, memoranda of the compliments addressed to them on different occasions, and practical illustrations of the truth that a soft answer turneth away wrath. The subject of the sixth book is old age. It consists of a few trifling anecdotes about the deeds and sayings of old men. The seventh is intended to exhibit the advantages of education, and closes with a long and humorous account of a controversy between Sadi and another dervish, on the comparative merits of the rich and poor. The dervish poured forth invectives against rich men, and eulogiums upon poverty, while Sadi withstood him upon both grounds, with such zeal, that from words they came to blows, and were only reconciled at last by the decision of a Cazi. The last book is a collection of about a hundred proverbs, bons-mots, epigrams, and proverbs, accompanied with tail-pieces in verse, and apparently intended to exhibit the essence of the former seven books in a concentrated form.

Neither our limits nor the patience of our readers will permit any more minute analysis of the several chapters. We shall not even venture on a statement of the qualities by which the work

\* To those who feel any curiosity to know the definition of a dervish, the following short picture may possess some interest. "The duties of a dervish are, the reading of the Koran, praise, adoration, obedience, ———, abstinence, a belief in the unity of God, trust in God, and resignation. Whoever is characterized by these qualities, is in truth a dervish, though he wear a robe; whereas the loquacious, prayerless, frivolous sensualist, who turns night into day by his debaucheries, and day into night by wasting it in sleep, who eats whatever he can lay his hands on, and says whatever rises on his tongue, is a reprobate, though clad in a religious dress." *Gulistan*, p. 82.

is most remarkably characterized. The attention of a European reader would be most attracted by that predominance of the imagination, and that lively figurative diction, which distinguish all Oriental writers on all subjects. The metaphors are often unnatural and strained, often far-fetched and obscure, often puerile and mean. But after all, there is something interesting and occasionally beautiful, in the fanciful garb with which the most familiar thoughts are clothed, and in the facility with which the writer draws illustrations of his subject from external objects. There is something truly poetical in the following expression of the sentiment, that the most exquisite enjoyments often spring up amidst the darkest prospects—"The water of the fountain of life flows from the midst of darkness." The same may be observed of the dervish's reply to the king, who inquired how his palace had been set on fire,—“It was kindled by the *smoke* of your subjects' hearts;” and also of a beautiful passage, on page 46, beginning thus, “Fortune, like the wind of the desert, passes by,” &c. There is a simple phrase, which occurs more than once,—“Ferda-der-kiyamet—to-morrow in the resurrection,” which strikes us very forcibly. But we must pause. We are hastening to a close, and merely set these down as the first examples that occur to us.

Another peculiarity is the abundance of homely apothegms, approaching very nearly, in their character, to those so profusely lavished on the Knight of the Rueful Countenance by his devoted Squire. Those who have read Don Quixote, in its native dress, will perceive at once a strong resemblance, between some of Sancho's proverbs and such instances as these taken at random from the *prose* part of the book :

“ Rui-bekhâk, va-dil-ber-helâk.  
 Khaneh-dustan-berûb, va-der-dushman-mekhûb.  
 Tehi-destanra-dest-delir-besteh, va-pun-jeh-shîr-shekestch.”\*

To these add a more extended specimen in verse:—

“ Talmizi-bi-iradet, aashik-bi-zer ;  
 Ravandeh-bi-maarifet, merg-bi-per ;  
 Alim-bi-amal, direkht-bi-ber ;  
 Zahid-bi-ilm, khaneh-bi-der.”†

We are unwilling to dismiss this work without giving some brief samples, for the benefit of those who have never met with a translation, (which indeed is our own predicament,) or have

- “With the face in the dust, and the heart in distress.  
 Rob the house of your friend, but keep clear of your enemy's door.  
 To the poor man, the hand of the rich is shut, and the paw of the lion open.”
- † “A disciple without desire [for knowledge], is a lover without gold ;  
 A traveller without information, is a bird without wings ;  
 A learned man without good works, is a tree without fruit ;  
 A religious man without learning, is a house without a door.” p. 184.

never heard of Sadi in their lives; and yet we feel a difficulty in selecting. We shall content ourselves with specimens of Sadi's composition in two styles wholly dissimilar, and even opposite,—the humorous and the pathetic. They will suffice, we think, to convey some faint idea of his manner, though under the disadvantage of a very rude translation.

The following short story will evince, that the author was not destitute of talent for acute and sarcastic observation.

"I knew a merchant who had a hundred and fifty loaded camels, and forty slaves, attending on him. One night, in the island of Kish, he took me into his chamber, and discoursed to me all night, in this loose way.—'I have such a correspondent in Turkistan, and I have such and such merchandise in Hindostan, and this written obligation is from such a country, and such and such a person is the surety.' Then he would say, 'I am very fond of Alexandria, the climate is so pleasant;' and immediately afterwards, 'No I am not; the Mediterranean is too boisterous.—Oh Sadi, I have one more journey before me: when that is done, I shall sit down in a corner for the remainder of my life, and abandon trade.' And pray, what journey is that? said I. 'Why, I must take some Persian silk to China. I hear that it bears a high price there. Then I must bring back China-ware to Turkey, and take some Turkish brocade to Hinddóstan; carry Indian steel to Aleppo, and glass from Aleppo into Yemen. From Yemen I shall bring striped cloth to Persia, and then give up travelling, and sit down quietly in my shop.' When he had prated in this melancholy\* style, until he could actually talk no longer, he said to me, 'Sadi, tell me now some of the things which you have seen and heard.' I replied:—

'Heard you ever of the merchant who, when thrown upon his head,

By his camel, in the desert, to himself, on rising, said,

'Alas, alas! the thirst of gold will never cease to crave,

'Till appeased by one of these two things, contentment or the grave?'"†

The following tale strikes us as a very good one, and one which, *mutatis mutandis*, will admit of an extensive application.

"A young man who worshipped in the mosque at Sanjariah, used to say his prayers with such a loud and discordant voice, that no one could bear to hear him. The Emir of the mosque was an honest, good-natured man, and did not wish to hurt his feelings. So he said to him: 'Young man, we have two old muezzins belonging to this mosque, each of whom receives only five dinars for his services. Now I will give you ten, if you will go somewhere else and pray.' The youth consented, and went off, but after some time again presented himself before the Emir, saying, 'Sir, you must have cheated me, when you bought me off for ten dinars; for at the place I went to, they offer me twenty to go somewhere else. But I will not take it.' 'See that you do not,' said the Emir, laughing, 'for they will do doubt gladly give you fifty.'"

The following, upon the same subject, is much shorter, but more piquant.

"As a man with a harsh voice was reading the Koran very loud, a wise man who was passing asked him how much he earned a month. 'Nothing,' said he. 'Nothing! and what do you work so hard for then?' 'Oh, I read for the love of God.' 'For the love of God, then, hold your peace.'"

\* *Malikhokia*, one of the few words which the Persians have derived, through the Arabs, from the Greek.

† We have aimed, in translating this tetrastich, not so much to give an exact version, as to show the style and stamp of these metrical appendages.

One brief example will evince how much the merit of the stories sometimes lies in a mere pun.

“A poet once came before the captain of a band of robbers, and saluted him. The captain ordered them to take away his coat, and drive him off. As he went, the dogs pursued him; and when he attempted to throw stones in self-defence, he could not find one that was not frozen in the ground. In despair he cried out, ‘what an execrable place, where the dogs are all loose, and the stones all fast.’”

The jeu-de-mots is here upon *seg*, a dog, and *seng*, a stone.

The following extract is not only free from false ornament and affectation, but runs to the opposite extreme of infantile simplicity.

“A certain king being very ill, a consultation of Greek physicians was held upon his case, who declared that the only remedy for his disease, was the bile of a human being possessing certain qualities which they described. The king commanded that inquiry should be made for such a person, and accordingly a peasant’s son was found, who answered to the terms of the description. The father and mother being called, were prevailed upon, by great gifts, and a decision of the Cazi was procured, that it was lawful to shed the subject’s blood, to preserve the sovereign’s life. When the executioner was just about to kill him, the child looked up to heaven and laughed. The king, astonished, asked, ‘what occasion can there be for laughter now?’ The boy replied, ‘a child looks for affection to its parents, for justice to the judge, and for favour to the king; but my parents have sold my life for money; the judge has decreed that I should die; and the king hopes for safety from my death. Where then shall I take refuge but in God?’ The king’s heart was touched, and the tears started in his eyes. ‘It is better for me,’ said he, ‘to perish, than to shed innocent blood.’ So saying, he embraced the child, and kissed him, then loaded him with gifts and sent him home. It is said that in that same week the king was healed.”

To this Sadi adds, by way of epilogue, the speech addressed to him by an elephant-driver on the banks of the Nile. “Thou regardest not the condition of the worm beneath thy foot; yet such is thy condition beneath the foot of the elephant.”

There is something in the following brief anecdote, which marks it as completely Oriental.

“An amiable young man died. When his father was asked what inscription should be placed upon the tomb, he replied, ‘the words of the glorious Book are too excellent and holy to be recorded in a place where they must be constantly polluted by the trampling of men and of unclean dogs. But if something must be written, let it be this:—

When the grass used to spring up in the garden, ah how joyful was my heart!  
Wait, oh my friend! for the spring, and thou shalt see grass growing on my grave.’”

There is something flat in these attempts at pathos, of course greatly aggravated in our hasty version, but somewhat perceptible in the original. Still, they deserve the credit of simplicity, a rare commodity in the Eastern market, and appear to advan-

• Weh' !-keh-hergah-keh-subzeh-der-bostan  
Bedemidi-cheh-khosh-shudi-dil-i-men !  
Beguzar-ay-düst-ta-wekt-i-behar,  
Subzeh-bini-demideh-ez-gil-i-men. p. 154.

tage in comparison with such a sentence as the following, translated literally from the narrative of Sadi's controversy before mentioned. "While I spoke, the reins of his patience escaped from the hand of his forbearance; he drew the sword of his tongue, and spurred the horses of his garrulity into the hippodrome of impudence!"

We are sensible that we have done the Persian moralist injustice, in attempting to exemplify his merits by such scanty extracts, in so coarse a dress. The truth is, that no extracts can convey a just idea of a work of this description, especially when those important adjuncts, rhyme and rhythmus, must be altogether lost, even in the best translation. We had thought of giving a few scraps of the original as samples, and of showing how the periods are generally turned, and the paragraphs constructed. But we have trespassed far already on the reader's patience, and must draw to a conclusion, after a brief notice of this new edition, upon which our observations have been founded, and by which these protracted strictures were suggested.

The first impression of the text of the *Gulistan*, we believe, was that of Gentuis, which appeared at Amsterdam in 1651. We know of no subsequent edition, until that of Calcutta, —, comprising the text, and a translation into English, by the learned Francis Gladwin. The editor of the volume now before us, speaks of an edition printed at Tauris; and we read in recent foreign journals of another, issued under the auspices of the Pacha of Egypt. But of these we know nothing more than the mere fact of their existence. Suffice it to say, that in 1826, the work had become rare in Europe, and M. Semelet, a pupil, we believe, of Baron de Sacy, determined to prepare a new edition, in which the many errors of the previous editions should be rectified, and a more legible character employed. While his own work was in progress, he received intelligence that a new edition had appeared in London. He informs us, in his preface, that this news at first induced him to suppose himself anticipated. But an actual inspection satisfied him that the London work was a mere reprint of Mr. Gladwin's text, in which the errors of the latter were religiously transcribed, and that consequently there was quite as much demand as ever for his meditated publication. His labours, therefore, were continued, and resulted in this volume, which is a quarto, of not two hundred pages, upon handsome paper. It appears from the preface, that the editor has spared no pains to free his text from errors; and, on this score, he boldly challenges comparison with all the former editors, warning the reader, at the same time, not to censure as mistakes mere variations in the readings, the manuscripts of this work differing exceedingly from one another. This latter statement, we have no doubt, is correct; for we have had the privi-

lege of reading M. Semelet's edition, with a manuscript before us, and have been surprised at the extraordinary number of the variations. We do not recollect a single case, so far as our collation has extended, where the sense has been essentially affected.\* The various readings do not seem to have arisen from the casual mistakes of copyists. They are not mere differences of a single syllable or letter in a word. They are differences, for the most part, of whole phrases. In many instances, expressions wholly different in form, but equivalent in sense, are substituted for each other, so as to give to the whole book the aspect of a work dictated by a single person, but written out by different amanuenses. These circumstances seem to justify the curious conclusion, that Oriental copyists consider themselves authorized to change their author's phraseology *ad libitum*, provided they leave the sense untouched. This strange supposition derives some plausibility from the familiar fact, that copyists in the East are almost always educated men, and may therefore be forgiven for supposing themselves qualified to alter the best writers for the better. If this be indeed the case, no small degree of doubt must rest upon the text of all Oriental authors.

But this work of M. Semelet, independently of its mere literary merits, is also interesting as a specimen of lithographic printing. It is well known, that the Orientals have a strong dislike to printed books, because the combinations of their letters, and their calligraphic flourishes, are quite inimitable with our types. In view of this fact, it has been frequently suggested, that the diffusion of knowledge might be greatly facilitated in the East, by the ingenious process of lithography. M. Semelet, however, claims the praise of having first carried the idea into execution. With invincible patience and hard labour, undeterred by repeated failures and discouraging appearances, he has persisted in his efforts with a laudable fidelity to his obligations as an Orientalist. He asserts, in his preface, that the practicability of rendering lithography subservient to the interests of learning in the Eastern world, is, to his mind, no longer problematical. The present publication he admits to be a mere experiment, and acknowledges a great disparity of merit between the earlier and later sheets of this thin quarto. The reader will understand, of course, that this whole book is really in the handwriting of the editor; for the lithographic process has done nothing more than furnish many transcripts from his autograph. The character which he has chosen is a mean between the Arabic Neskhi and the Persian Taalik, and though not by any means

\* We have observed, however, some entire omissions. The MS. often gives a couplet which is wholly wanting in the printed copy, while the latter contains one or two whole articles omitted in the MS.

so graceful as it might be, (being very much like the early copies of a novice in Oriental studies,) deserves the praise of being perfectly distinct. M. Semelet, as might have been expected, found his hand improving as his task diminished, and did not satisfy himself in the formation of the character, until his work was done. The same gradual improvement took place in the lithographic process, and the editor refers us to the latter sheets as decidedly the best. On the whole, the work is highly meritorious, and we are pleased to find that M. Semelet proposes to display the improvement of his skill in an impression of some other Persian work. We wish him all success.\*

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ART. II.—*Memoires de M. de Bourrienne, Ministre d'Etat, sur Napoléon, le Directoire, le Consulat, l'Empire, et la Restauration.* Ten Volumes. Paris: 1829.—*Memoirs of Mr. de Bourrienne, Minister of State, respecting Napoleon, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire, and the Restoration.*

TEN volumes of the annals of fifteen years, in which the events of as many ages were crowded, perplex a reviewer by superabundance of materials. We shall not attempt to digest this mass of matter in one article, which would indeed be impracticable; but selecting what most characterizes the epoch and the emperor of it, offer no apology for omitting the rest, leaving it for various other commentaries.

Bourrienne, Rovigo, Beausset, Fouché, Thibaudeau, Foy, Rapp, Suchet, Fain, Segur, Gohier, Brissot, Gallois, Mignet, Lacretelle, Norvins, Las Cases, Montholon, Gourgau, and we know not how many more contributors to the work of the historian, who is to give us a philosophical account of the French revolution and its results, are all pleasant in perusal, if not instructive, from the importance of the transactions and the eminence of the personages they discuss. In America we hold the place of posterity to Europe, and may sit in posthumous Egyptian judgment on their kings and demagogues. The prejudicial adhesion to persons and aversion to things, which prevail there, are unfelt here, where neither fear nor favour can affect our verdict. The vitality of history, truth, may shine forth from this side of the Atlantic, with a clearness and intensity as

\* M. Semelet speaks, in his preface, of a French translation, leaving us in doubt, however, whether it is in *futuro*, or already executed. At any rate we have not seen it.