

THE PHILOSOPHY OF OMAR KHAYYAM AND ITS RELATION TO THAT OF SCHOPENHAUER.

PERHAPS the most important element in the elusive spell that the astronomer-poet of Persia weaves around his readers is that garment of mystery that enwraps his real character, a character which a first perusal of the *Rubaiyat* seems to make perfectly clear, but in which every subsequent reading shows us some unsuspected subtlety, some dark depth whose obscurity made us forget its profundity, or some steep height whose elevation made us think its peaks but a part of the surrounding clouds. At one moment Omar seems to be a sensualist of the kind that a certain type of theologian is in the habit of holding up to the horrified gaze of his listeners as the fearful result of disbelief in his own particular cosmological dogmas; at another he seems to be one of those great spirits like the writer of *Ecclesiastes*, who rise once in every few centuries to record their detestation of that remorseless "Wheel of Things" on which all the children of time whirl endlessly to their own destruction.

Some forty years have now passed since Fitzgerald's magnificent translation first made the *Rubaiyat* accessible to the Western world; and yet we are still uncertain whether its writer was an optimist or a pessimist, a man who believed that sensual pleasure is the only good, or an amiable cynic of irreproachable character, who enjoyed posing Byronically as a "sad dog."

One is often tempted to wish that Schopenhauer had read these quatrains, expressing, as they do, a philosophy so like his own in many fundamental principles, and yet so utterly different in the practical deductions that it draws from them. We can imagine with what eagerness he would have assimilated what he believed to be true, with what vehemence—not to say violence and intemperance—he would have rejected what he considered false, and with what lucidity he would have pointed out where that error crept in that, on his theories, vitiates the ethical deductions of Omar.

But this was not to be; and it falls to one who possesses neither the insight, the reasoning powers, nor the attractive style of Schopenhauer, to attempt the comparison of the two philosophies.

Few of men's works bear the impress of their makers' indi-

viduality more indelibly impressed on them than systems of philosophy. We may or may not confess it with shame, but confess it we must, that we are led to adopt a given system of philosophy as much by sentiment as by reason. Having chosen our system, we are compelled to support its claims to validity to other people by reason and by that alone, because reason is the only intellectual coin that possesses the same standard of value to all intelligent men, whilst our own sentiments can only appeal to that narrow class of individuals possessing temperaments substantially similar to our own. Hence long habit finally induces us to believe that it was reason alone that led us to adopt our own particular system of philosophy, and we are rather inclined indignantly to reject the suggestion that individual sentiment had anything at all to do with the matter.

If this be the case with the followers of philosophies, it must *a fortiori* be so with their founders. We may, therefore, learn a good deal about a philosophy from the character of its founder, and *vice versa*. In doing this there is of course always a danger of introducing *argumentum ad hominem*. The most unbiassed of men cannot approach any system of philosophy with a perfectly open mind, and there is always a risk, in trying to piece together a philosopher's character from his works, of arguing that, because his doctrines seem to us to inculcate views that are subversive to our own moral code, his character must inevitably have been stained with evil. To see how great this danger is, we have only to consider what kind of character posterity would have accorded to Nietzsche or even to Carlyle, if it had known those men solely by their writings, without having a knowledge of their actual lives to guide it.

It is just here that we meet with difficulty about Omar. If we knew his private life we could interpret his philosophy; if we knew how far his written philosophy expressed his real views we could build up his character. Information is wanting to us on both points, so we have to grope in the dark as best we may, taking care neither, on the one hand, to fall into the error of deducing too much from his philosophy as expressed in the *Rubaiyat*, nor, on the other hand, by over-timidly to allow the salient points of his character and teaching to escape us.

Obviously the first necessity is to arrive as well as we can at some conclusion as to whether the *Rubaiyat* is intended to be taken literally or metaphorically. In fact the crux of this question is: When Omar speaks of wine does he mean wine or God? Over this question much paper and ink have been expended, and the conclusion arrived at by those most competent to judge seems to be in favour of taking Omar literally. Leaving arguments based on individual lines and verses out of the question, it seems difficult to come to any other conclusion. We may take it as a general rule

that, whenever any doubt can exist as to whether a piece of writing is to be taken literally or figuratively, it is safer to take it literally until some very strong argument against doing so has been put forward. Now the arguments against taking Omar literally all reduce to this: If Omar meant what he said, and meant it to be taken literally as he said it, he must, if judged by the code of morals theoretically prevalent in the Western world in the twentieth century, have been an immoral man, and it is not likely that so great a scholar and poet would be an immoral man. Now a mere casual glance at this argument is enough to show that it is not a sufficient reason for reading into Omar a meaning other than that which his words literally express. The argument assumes (1) that Omar's writings actually express his real opinions in some form or another; and (2) that Omar was a moral man judged from our standpoint. Now the first assumption is probably correct, as we hope to show later, but for the second we have no grounds whatever. Considering the age in which Omar lived and the people that surrounded him, the probabilities are that those qualities which seem to his apologists to have necessitated his being a moral man actually would tend to make him an immoral one. His superior learning, while we well know from experience that it would not necessarily of itself keep him from the coarsest of excess, would, in the age in which he lived, remove from his mind those checks that acted strongly on intellects far less powerful than his. His intellect was strong enough to make him despise the superstitious reasons that caused the orthodox Mohammedans around him to abstain from wine; whilst the lamentable example of some of our most distinguished scholars has shown us that mental superiority alone is not sufficient to keep those gifted with it from excess of which the most ignorant would be ashamed.

We must not forget that anything in Omar's writings that savours of orthodox Mohammedanism springs, not from conviction, but from policy. In every Jekyll there lurks somewhere a Hyde whose lower character often overmasters the higher one no less fatally in real life than in Stevenson's fable. Bearing these two facts in mind it will seem not only possible, but even probable, that Omar was not a moral man judged from our point of view. The fact of the matter is that all this spiritualisation of Omar springs from a desire to rehabilitate his character on the part of those who admire the poetry whilst they are shocked at the sentiments of the *Rubaiyat*. However well-meant this desire may be, it only tends to keep us from the truth about Omar and his philosophy, and we must therefore carefully avoid it.

We may conclude then that, within the bounds of probability, Omar was not a moral man, and that, therefore, if he meant anything serious at all by what he wrote, he meant it to be taken literally.

But the crucial question is, whether he did mean anything at all.

Is he not perhaps speaking all the time with his tongue in his cheek? Is it not possible that all our pity for him is simply sympathy wasted on a man who is all the time laughing at us and unconsciously enjoying the sight of the folly that makes us believe his pessimistic outpourings to be really the complaints of a mind embittered by the hardness of fate? May he not be giving some hint of this to those few of his readers who can read between the lines when he says :

“ But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be,
And, in some Corner of the Hubbub couched,
Make game of that which makes as much of Thee ? ”

These are not easy questions to answer. Omar may be deceiving us consciously, as we have just suggested, or unconsciously. If he did so unconsciously he must have been a Byron, if consciously a Mephistopheles. On the whole it seems improbable that Omar wrote down views that he consciously knew himself not to hold merely for the pleasure of seeing his fellow-men make fools of themselves by believing those views to be his genuine self-expression. It is noticeable that, in no lines of the *Rubaiyat*, with the exception of the last two of the quatrain just quoted, does there appear any trace of what we may call shallow cynicism. Bitterly disgusted indeed is Omar with the whole “ sorry scheme of things,” but his whole work breathes the deepest and tenderest sympathy with those individuals who, like himself, are bound to play their part in that scheme and suffer for its innate imperfections. We have a better opinion of human nature than to be able to believe that the author of such a verse as this :

“ I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled,
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head ”—

and the man who wrote the *Fable of the Wine-Pots* could all the time have been bitterly mocking those whose hard fate he pretended to pity. If he could do this he must have been, not a man, but a fiend of the pit. It is more charitable and probably more correct to suppose that that one cynical verse was forced from his pen in a moment of petulance, quite excusable in a mind so tortured as Omar's must have been if his writings be the real expression of his character.

But if we can acquit Omar of all conscious deception, we shall find it less easy to acquit him of all unconscious posing or Byronism. There is a kind of character that makes a most sincere man, and one whose life may have been not only respectable but highly

virtuous, pose as an amoralist or even an immoralist, without himself suspecting for one moment that this is a pose and nothing more. Even when there is ample common knowledge of the private life of such a writer his moral character and his message are often sorely misjudged by his contemporaries, as were those of Byron. And there is obviously a far greater danger of misjudgment in the case of a man like Omar whose life, nationality, and environment are alike strange to his critics. In such a case the safest course is to go by analogy with writers whose private lives are known to us as well as their writings. Any one who asserted that all Byron's verses on the satiety of sin were the real expression of his character, and of the whole of that character, would greatly err; but his error would not be nearly as great as that of a critic who considered those poems to consist of nothing more than a worthless web of insincere theatricalities, not only not expressing the real character and feelings of the poet, but actually hiding them. Now, if we compare the poems of Byron with Omar's writings, we see that, allowing for the immense difference in quantity in the two, there is still almost infinitely more that has an insincere ring in it in Byron than there is in Omar. The only quatrains of the *Rubaiyat* that seem to us to ring untrue are xl. and xli. and lxix. to lxxi. In xl. and xli. especially there is a strong touch of the early Byron who wrote *Lines by a Minor*. The same posing as a fine gentleman who feels it his duty to apologise to his fellow-rakes for dropping into such unfashionable company as that of scholars and literary men that pervades Byron's earlier work is seen in these two verses. Thus xli. :

"For 'Is' and 'Is not,' though with Rule and Line
And 'Up-and-Down' without I could define
I yet, in all I only cared to know
Was never deep in anything but Wine."

Here Omar undoubtedly refers to those mathematical studies in which he was so proficient. Now, however little he may have believed that a profound knowledge of the exact sciences could throw light on metaphysical questions, it is hardly likely that Omar would have attained the mathematical knowledge that he possessed without considerable study: and it is quite certain that that study could not have taken place if he were "never deep in anything but wine." This verse and the one before it may be taken then as a piece of unconscious Byronic posing.

Verses lxix. to lxxi. show Omar in the *Childe Harold* stage of Byronism.

Thus lxix. :

"Indeed, the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in men's eyes much wrong,

Have drowned my Honour in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song."

Omar may not have been a moral man, but, as far as we can judge, he took particular care not to offend the orthodox by his outward actions. "His credit in men's eyes" remained remarkably fair until men began to read his *Rubaiyat*.

But, beyond these not very serious lapses, there are few signs of unconscious insincerity in Omar, and many and many a sign of conscious and unconscious sincerity. We do not reject the poetry of Byron on account of his very numerous insincerities, we should not therefore reject that of Omar because of his very occasional lapses into petulant pessimism or overdrawn amorality.

Having endeavoured to clear away these preliminary difficulties, and having come to the conclusion that practically the whole of the *Rubaiyat* contains a philosophy which is both consciously and unconsciously the sincere belief of its writer, we can safely begin our task of analysing that philosophy and comparing it with that of the greatest of pessimists—Schopenhauer.

That there exist the closest of analogies and the sharpest of contrasts between the two philosophies will be evident at a glance to the most casual reader who is acquainted with Schopenhauer's views.

The most characteristic features of Schopenhauer's philosophy are its transcendental idealism combined with a strong trace of empirical "materialism," its metaphysical doctrine of a purposeless, self-striving force as Thing-in-Itself, whose self-expression under the forms of space and time constitutes ourselves and the Universe as it exists for us: its deduction of empirical determinism and of the real existence of evil preponderating over good from this metaphysical doctrine, and finally its deduction of æstheticism as the temporary, and asceticism as the final escape from the evil of existence. It will be observed that we only mention the most striking conclusions without entering in the slightest detail into the arguments by which those conclusions were reached. The conclusions alone and not the arguments are at present our theme.

Let us now consider the analogies and contrasts that exist in the *Rubaiyat* with these most characteristic points in Schopenhauer's system. In the first place, there can be no doubt that Omar was a determinist, if, as we believe, the *Rubaiyat* is the sincere expression of his views. No less than eleven quatrains are given up to the expression of absolutely necessitarian doctrines. Omar's is necessitarianism carried to its logical conclusion. For him the expression "It was written" is the only key to the workings of the Cosmos. All around him he sees Nature from its lowest to its highest representatives struggling and suffering: bound to carry on the course of action set for it by something outside itself, although that course appears to be pursued

amidst the blood and tears of creation and to be directed toward no intelligible τέλος. Whatever it be that rules the Universe seems to Omar to have called it into being for his own diversion, and to have set the machine going with no more thought for its sentient component parts than an engineer has for the wheels and cranks of his machine—less indeed, for self-interest makes the engineer of the moving parts that they may not grate on each other, while this being sits and gazes with the apathy of eternal self-satiety at the wreck and jar of a Universe which, to him, is but a toy that a single idle word has raised from nothingness, like which a single word could create thousands more. From this chain of cause and effect nothing is exempt: prayer is useless, complaint futile, hope of relief during life meaningless.

“The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,
Moves on, nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.”

Omar's idea of necessity reminds one of the Greek Ἀνάγκη in *Alceſtis*.

Ἐγὼ καὶ διὰ μούσας
καὶ μετάρσιος ἤξα, καὶ
πλείστων ἀφάμενος λόγων
κρείσσον οὐδεν Ἀνάγκας
ἤϊρον
.
καὶ γὰρ Σεὺς ὁ τι νεύσῃ,
σὺν σοὶ τοῦτο τελευτᾷ·
καὶ τὸν ἐν χαλύβους δαμάζεις σὺ βίᾳ σίδαιρον,
οὐδέ τις ἀποτόμον λήματός ἐστιν αἰδέεα.

So far the most orthodox follower of Schopenhauer could find little with which to disagree. True, he would object to the half expressed and wholly implied notion of something outside of the machine having made and started it, but, after passing over this difficulty, he could find little to quarrel with in Omar's pure and rigorous determinism. But from the ethical deductions of Omar he would utterly dissent. The *Fable of the Wine-Pots* expresses in a singularly fine allegory the fact admitted and maintained by Schopenhauer that our real character is stamped on us at our birth, and that it never changes throughout our whole life, though its appearance in space and time, which is often erroneously termed our character, can and does alter with our circumstances.

“. . . . They sneer at me for leaning all awry.
What! Did the hand then of the Potter shake?”

But what is Omar's deduction from this? Verses lxiv. and lrv. tell us.

The former verse asks whether we shall be punished for the sins that our very character compels us to commit, and comes to the conclusion that we shall not. "He's a good fellow, and 't will all be well," is the cheerful summing up of the matter. Schopenhauer can give us no such comfort.

Every sin is punished with eternal justice, for the very excellent reason that every injury done to another is really done to ourselves, since reality is unity. The next verse gives us the conclusion of the whole matter according to Omar :

" My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry ;
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-bye."

Sensual pleasure, says Omar as plainly as possible, is the only way to make this wretched life at all bearable. What says Schopenhauer ? Sensual pleasure, indeed all but æsthetic pleasure, can but increase our misery : æsthetic pleasure brings relief but for a moment : nothing but asceticism can relieve us fully and finally from the pain of being.

As with Omar's determinism, so with his pessimism. Its likeness to that of Schopenhauer up to a certain point is only equalled by the sharpness of its contrast with it after that point. To Omar, as to Schopenhauer, the Universe with all its strivings is one vast mistake. So utterly and hopelessly useless are all the ends that men strive after in the Universe that the sight of their daily battling for what turns to dust and ashes in their hands would be the most ludicrous of all comedies, did not our close relation to the players make it the most bitter of all tragedies.

Compare the verse :

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

with the words with which Schopenhauer closes "Die Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben"—"Vor uns bleibt immer das Nichts." The same man might have penned the two sentences. But now consider Omar's practical deduction from his conviction of the uselessness of all that men strive after, and Schopenhauer's deduction from his no less firm conviction.

" How long, how long, in definite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute ?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadder after none or better Fruit "

sings Omar. Omar thinks that because the highest aims that men

struggle for bring them no happiness, they should immediately cease to struggle for anything but mere animal comfort. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, recognises that the lower we make our aims, the further we are from emancipation. Kiss the rod, he teaches; for by it alone will you learn that you cannot be happy, and then, and not till then, will your unhappiness cease. Every one who does you what he believes to be an injury is really doing you a service, for he is driving this great truth into your mind; and the more cruel the injury, the greater is the service that he is doing you.

The pessimism of Omar is something much shallower than that of Schopenhauer. Much of Omar's pessimism springs from his thanatism. Schopenhauer, too, is a thanatist, but if he could have believed in the thanatism of Omar, who is so certain that the death of the individual is the end of his sufferings, he would have been an optimist, and no pessimist. Why trouble to persuade oneself that one is happy by living in besotted drunkenness, when, on Omar's own theory, a far more dignified and certain cure for unhappiness would be self-slaughter? There can be no doubt about Omar's views on this question of thanatism, when he says:

" But come with old Khayyan, and leave the Wise
To wrangle. This is certain that Life flies,
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies,
The Rose that once has blown for ever dies."

Schopenhauer's followers have no such flattering unction as this to lay to their souls. The rose, indeed, dies; but the tree, unfortunately, lives to produce flowers like it.

We have seen how closely analogous many important views of Omar are to those of Schopenhauer, and noticed how sharp is the contrast between the practical deductions that the two men draw from apparently the same speculative premises. It is now our task to seek some cause for this phenomenon. Why should Omar be a pessimist, a thanatist, and a determinist, and deduce as the practical ideal of life a state of continued animal enjoyment; while Schopenhauer, who was all these things, deduces as his ideal æsthetic contemplation, complete renunciation of the world, asceticism, and self-mortification? It is not that their different modes of life and material surroundings led the two men to such widely divergent conclusions. The last person in the world to be able to renounce personally any creature comfort was Arthur Schopenhauer, a philosopher living on a comfortable private income in those most unheroic of surroundings, a German town in the latter part of the eighteenth and earlier part of the nineteenth centuries. It is quite likely that circumstances compelled Omar the Hedonist to live much more simply than Schopenhauer the Ascetic. Whence comes the

difference then? We believe it can be summed up in one phrase : Omar was a realist, Schopenhauer a transcendental idealist.

The average man—in England, at any rate—loves to flatter his feeble mind with the belief that practical conduct is guided solely by what he calls “common sense,” and that the mystical and obscure differences of philosophy can have no bearing upon practical matters. Perhaps the error of this point of view was never better shown than in the present case. We are firmly convinced that, had Schopenhauer known nothing of Kant or Plato, his ethical views would have been much the same as those of Omar ; whilst Omar, if he had had the knowledge of those two philosophers that Schopenhauer possessed, would have put forward a system hardly distinguishable from that expressed in “*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.*” In fact, to use an expression that Schopenhauer himself would have used, we believe that both Omar and Schopenhauer were gifted with practically the same “metaphysical character,” and that the difference of their “empirical characters” is due simply to the different external circumstances that acted on this “metaphysical character,” and gave it its expression in space and time. In fact, we believe that an intelligent Buddhist, acquainted with the facts of the case, would express what we have just stated by the more picturesque assertion that Schopenhauer was a reincarnation of Omar.

To Omar and to Schopenhauer alike the Universe was a place of useless and unending torment ; but what a different Universe was Omar’s to that on which Schopenhauer looked out ! To Omar all that he saw existed *per se* as he saw it : space was real, time real, causation existed independently of the mind that perceived it. Outside of nature, and apart from it, yet existing in space and time, stood an unintelligible Being, that for some purpose unknown, but still for some purpose, had made nature out of nothing, had made it in itself as it appeared to man, one of its component parts, and had separated Himself from it. The machine was made and left to itself, but it had been made in such a way as necessarily to cause pain to the sentient component parts of it. Omar believes in an intelligent God, but as to His other attributes he is agnostic. To his mind the wonderful revelations of the mystic, and the profound speculations of the philosopher, can alike bring no relief. The Universe is a place of torment ; therefore, since Omar is sure that there exists outside it Something that consciously created it for some definite purpose, that Something must be either evil or incompetent. If the Creator is all-good, He cannot be all-powerful ; if all-powerful, He cannot be all-good.

Such is the Universe and such its Creator to Omar. He sees evil all about him in the individual phenomena with which he is surrounded, nothingness in the aims for which the best of men strive.

But, since all these separate phenomena are realities to him, and separate disconnected realities, he can deduce no reason in the nature of things why this evil should exist; nor does there appear to him any reason why the nothingness which he had noticed in the ends for which he and men like him had striven should be a necessary and inevitable ingredient in every action of everything in the Universe. His position is like that of certain mathematicians who have discovered empirically formulæ in the theory of numbers which hold for every number for which they have yet tried them, but of whose validity for any number not yet tried there can be no certainty until the formulæ has been proved to be true *à priori* by pure mathematical reasoning. Omar, as a realist, had no means of co-ordinating the separate cases of evil that he saw, and reducing them to one general law of *à priori* necessity, which should embrace the whole universe, because he was a realist, and, therefore, every separate phenomenon was a thing in itself, and unconnected with any other phenomenon.

Bearing these facts in mind it is not difficult to see how Omar deduced his hedonistic philosophy. He himself was a scholar, an artist, and a man of sensibility, and his friends had been men of similar stamp. They had striven for the highest ends for which men can strive, had found them to be but Dead-Sea Apples, and had died ultimately with ideals shattered and faith destroyed. There is something very pathetic in the quatrain :

" Myself, when young, did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
 About it and about—but evermore
 Came out by the same Door as in I went."

But, as we have seen, the fact that the things for which he and those like him had struggled had ended in nothing, was not enough to show Omar conclusively, as a realist, that all ends that are struggled for in the Universe must necessarily end in that way. He no doubt suspected this to be the case, but, as a realist, he had no *à priori* grounds for such a conviction, and so he started to seek empirically some end, no matter how high or how low, whose attainment should not be fraught with pain, sorrow, and disappointment, such as had accompanied all the ends for which he and those around him had striven. And how was his search rewarded? He saw the stupid, swinish multitude, the Boeotians, the drunkards, and the free-livers far happier in the attainment of their low ends than the artists, scholars, and men of genius whom he had known had been in the accomplishment of their high ones. There is nothing strange in this. The more highly developed a man's mind the more sensitive it is, and therefore the more easily affected by the *Weltschmerz*. To the selfish sensualist the sufferings of others are

of no account. The only sufferings that he has to bear are his own ; while the man of sensibility, in proportion as he is a man of sensibility, bears on his shoulders the sufferings of the whole universe. Looking at the question then from the realistic standpoint of Omar, the absolutely logical conclusion of the whole matter is summed up in the old words: " Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." With Omar's character, Omar's experience, and Omar's realism, we believe that, as an honest man, he could have come to no other conclusion ; and that that conclusion would have been Schopenhauer's had not that philosopher been born in an age permeated by the transcendental idealism of the critique of Pure Reason.

How the transcendental idealism of Schopenhauer leads to his deduction of asceticism as the final practical aim of life is well known to all those who have read the last book of the first volume of his chief work. However, as we have attempted to show how Omar's character combined with his realistic philosophy led to his practical Hedonism, we shall conclude this paper by showing as shortly as may be how such a character, combined with the transcendental idealism of Kant, naturally leads to the asceticism of Schopenhauer.

We have seen what kind of a Universe it was on which Omar the Realist looked out, and how different it was from that which Schopenhauer the Transcendental Idealist saw. To the latter there was but one reality—the Thing-in-itself: space and time were but the forms under which it presents itself to the human mind, apart from the human mind they are meaningless, non-existent. But causation is unthinkable without space and time, so that the Thing-in-itself, whatever it may be, must, *an Sich*, be self-determined, lawless, and irrational. Here Schopenhauer finds the key to the whole mystery of evil. The Universe is but the *Ding-an-Sich* striving ever to render its nature clearer to itself. Reality is indeed *Wirklichkeit*, a continued " worksomeness " or striving. But, since the *Ding-an-Sich* is by nature irrational, its representation of itself under the forms of space and time must necessarily be self-destructive, for self-destruction is the only way in which absolute irrationality can be pictured by our essentially rational minds. Hence all courses of action, from the lowest to the highest, that seek for any end in the world, are of necessity doomed to disappointment from the very nature of the reality of which the world is a representation.

Here then is the crux of the difference between Omar and Schopenhauer. Omar only knew by experience that everything that he had tried had ended in sore disappointment ; Schopenhauer, though he may himself have endured far less unhappiness than the Poet-Astronomer, saw that evil was bound up in the very nature of

things, and that the final end of all strivings must inevitably be nothingness. Here Schopenhauer's pessimism is something far deeper than Omar's. To the latter there may be happiness in the Universe—in fact he believes that he has found it in sensual pleasure—but to the former, with the same character but a wider intellectual outlook, there can be no happiness from the very nature of the Universe in itself.

But here the Transcendental Idealist can give a hope which the Realist is quite unable to offer us. We cannot indeed be happy, but we can at least escape from unhappiness; and the method of escape is through our unhappiness itself. When philosophy, or experience, have taught us the futility of all our desires all motives will have ceased to act on us; when no motives act on us we have ceased to have any meaning as phenomena, since we are no longer in relation to anything else. Our warfare is accomplished, and our labour is passed, and we obtain our eternal Nirvana by absorption into the primal unself-consciousness, which is unending nothingness.

We must live our life to the full, and expose ourselves to all the "buffets of outrageous fortune," until we learn the uselessness of all our desires, and, through the fulness of Being, arrive at the infinite peace of Not-Being.

Such is the ethical doctrine that we believe the character of Omar would have deduced, if it had been enlightened by the teachings of Kant. Whether it be true or false, who shall decide? The further we penetrate into the mysteries of life, the more are we compelled to re-echo the words of the great Philosopher-Poet whose philosophy we have been discussing:

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

C. D. BROAD.