Sheykhi, it is added, was greatly pleased with the speaker's wit, and used always to laugh when he recalled the incident.

I have said that Sheykhi was famed for his skill in medicine; this is mentioned by all the biographers. Latifi even says that in his lifetime he was popularly known as Hekim Sinan or Doctor Sinan. Possibly the following anecdote, which first appears in Ashiq, may be to some extent the offspring of this side of the poet's reputation. Sultan Mehemed the Debonair was lying grievously ill, and search was made far and near for a skilful physician. Sheykhi was found and brought before the royal patient, and when he had felt the Sultan's pulse and looked at his eyes, he said, 'The denser humours have become mingled; the cure for this ill is an exceeding joy.' Just then a courier arrived bringing news of the capture of a great and well-nigh impregnable fortress, news which so delighted Mehemed that he straightway began to regain his spirits, and day by day his health continued to improve till ere long it was quite restored. By way of rewarding the physician for his skill, the Sultan granted him as a fief a village called Doquzlar, apparently

1 The 'four humours' (akhlat-i erha'ia) of the early physicians were choler, i.e. bile (safra), phlegm (balgham), blood (deni) and melancholy (sevda). The last of these, which was sometimes called 'atrabile' or 'black bile,' was an imaginary thick black fluid, supposed when in excess to be the cause of the feeling of depression which is still named from it 'melancholy.' Food was supposed to be converted into these four humours by a process of 'cooking' that went on in the liver. What answered to the froth on a pot of soup boiling on the fire, was changed into choler or bile; what corresponded to the half-cooked rice or vegetables floating on the surface, became phlegm; what represented the good wholesome soup itself, became blood; while what took the place of the sediment at the bottom of the pot, was turned into melancholy. Health was regarded as the result of the proper relationship of those humours to one another: and when this relationship was disturbed, disease ensued. By their relative proportions, moreover, a person's physical and mental qualities were held to be determined. This system, which is as old as Hippocrates, was maintained, even in the West, until the beginning of the eighteenth century. By the 'denser humours' the blood and the melancholy are meant.

2 Some of the biographers call this village Doquzlu.
oblivious of the fact that this village was already the property of another. Be this as it may, as Sheykhi was travelling to his new possession, the original lord of Doquzlar fell upon him, plundered his baggage, slew his attendants, and left him lying wounded and half-dead upon the road. By and by, when he had recovered from his wounds, the poet embodied this adventure in a versified narrative which he named the Khar-Náme or ‘Book of the Ass,’ and in which he vigorously satirized his enemy. By means of this book the Sultan was made aware of what had occurred, whereupon he punished the author of the outrage and compelled him to indemnify Sheykhi for the loss he had sustained.

Such is the story told by ʿAshiq and repeated by Hasan and ʿAlí, a story not altogether easy to reconcile with Tash-köpri-záde’s statement that Sheykhi never left the place near Kutahiya whither he retired on finishing his studies at Angora. Possibly a desire to account for the composition of the Khar-Náme may have had some influence in moulding the details of the narrative.

Concerning that poem ʿAlí tells us that as no one could be found willing to bring under the notice of the Sultan a work with so unseemly a title as ‘The Book of the Ass,’ an extra letter dál (d) was slipped in after the ri (r) which changed the name into Khired-Náme or ‘The Book of Wisdom.’ It is noteworthy that while there is no entry in Kátib Chelebi’s lexicon under the title of Khar-Náme, among those under Khirad-Náme we find ‘a Turkish poem by Mevláná Sheykhi of Germiyan who wrote it for Sultan Mehemmed the son of the Thunderbolt.’

Of this Khar-Náme or Khired-Náme I can give no account, as I have never seen a copy or come across any adequate description of its nature or contents. All I have been able to learn is from an anonymous note in the printed edition
of Latifi, where moreover a different account is given of the occasion of its composition. It is there said that when Sheykhi presented his poem of ‘Khusrev and Shirin’ to Sultan Murad, certain persons, jealous of the poet’s skill, declared his work to be nothing more than a translation from Nizami and therefore unworthy of praise or reward, whereupon Sheykhi wrote this Khar-Name in which he satirizes those malevolent critics. This story would fit better with Tash-köpri-zade’s statement that Sheykhi never quitted Kutahiya; but the difficulty in accepting it is that Sheykhi died before he had completed the Khusrev and Shirin, and it is not likely that he would present to the Sultan a work that was still in progress. In the same note are quoted fourteen couplets, the only extract from the work that I have seen. These describe a poor hungry ass, whose master, taking compassion on him, turns him out to graze in a rich pasture, where he sees many fat oxen regaling themselves. In the absence of the context it is impossible to say what this picture refers to; possibly Sheykhi is the poor lean ass whose master the Sultan would provide for him, while the fat oxen may represent his enemies.

Far more important than this satire is Sheykhi’s long and beautiful romantic poem on the loves of Khusrev and Shirin. This work, by which alone the author is now remembered, was begun some time after the accession of Murad which took place in 824 (1421). The author unhappily died before he had quite finished the poem. The year of his death is unrecorded, but it cannot have been later than 855 (1451), that of the death of Sultan Murad, as that prince is eulogized as the reigning monarch in the brief epilogue wherein another writer tells us that Sheykhi is dead, having left his work unfinished. This other writer is said by ʿAshiq, Hasan and ʿAli (the earlier biographers Latifi and Tash-köpri-zade are
silent on the subject) to have been Sheykhi's sister's son Jemâli; but in the epilogue he calls himself Bâyezîd and says nothing whatever as to any relationship or connection between himself and the dead poet.¹

The biographers are at one in declaring Sheykhi to have been a man of great learning. According to Latifi he was deeply versed alike in exoteric and esoteric lore, and most notably in the mystic philosophy; for although he never gave himself out as a teacher of Sûfiism, he attained that lofty 'Station' on the mystic Journey where the saint, in ecstatic union with God, contemplates the Divine Essence free from any attribute conceived by thought. And should any doubt this assertion, Latifi refers him to the opening and closing cantos of the Khusrev and Shîrîn where the poet discourses on the Degrees in the Perception of the Unity ² and on the Classes of the Epiphanies. Of the medical knowledge with which, as we have seen, the biographers credit Sheykhi, there is no evidence in his poem. Unlike Ahmedî, once he is fairly launched upon his story, he confines himself pretty closely to it. Apart from the opening cantos, which professedly deal with mystic matters, in one place only does the author make any display of his knowledge of science. This is in the very last pages that he lived to

¹ In a MS. of Sheykhi's Khusrev u Shîrîn transcribed in 919 (1513-4), in my collection, the rubric to the epilogue runs: توصیه یادaren رفت کردن مبنی ذکر شیخی علیه الرحمه و تمام کردن کتابهای زبان زبانی بین محمد احمد از مصطفی ً‘Touching the Dying of the Author of the Book, Sheykhi (upon whom be mercy!), and the Completing of the Book by Bâyezîd the son of Musîfa the son of Sheykh Ahmed the Interpreter of Aq-Shehr.’

Katîb Chelebi says that the Khusrev and Shîrîn was finished by Jemâli, Sheykhi's brother. It is possible that Bâyezîd may have been the personal name and Jemâli the pen-name of the same individual.

² 'Ilm-i Tevhid, see p. 166, n. 6.
write; here the sage Buzurg-Umid is made, in answer to the inquiries of the King, to give an account of the creation through the medium of the Primal Intelligence, and to describe the work of the successive Emanations in ruling the planetary spheres, the elements and so on. In fact, this portion of the poem is practically a treatise on the theoretic philosophy of those days, a philosophy which, as we have seen, was accepted by most of the learned of the time, and held concurrently with Sufism or with orthodox Islam, or, most usually, with a combination of both.

The recorded literary works of Sheykhi consist of the already-mentioned Khar-Nâme (or Khired-Nâme), a Diwan of lyric poems, and the famous mesnevi of Khusrev and Shirin. Concerning the first of these, I can add to what I have already said only the fact that it is written neither in the familiar metre of the Iskender-Nâme nor in that used by the author in his Khusrev and Shirin, but in an altogether new variety, that known as khafig.¹ Likewise with the Diwan; I have never seen a copy, and from the few stray fragments quoted by the biographers, it is impossible to form any independent opinion as to its value. The authorities, however, are unanimous in declaring that the poet was much less successful with the ghazel than with the mesnevi.

It is, as has been said, solely through the Khusrev and Shirin that Sheykhi occupies his prominent position in Turkish literature.² It is in this poem that grace of style and beauty of language are for the first time deliberately sought after in mesnevi verse. Hitherto, whatever grace and beauty had been achieved had found expression in the lyric forms alone;

¹ See p. 109.
² The Khusrev u Shirin has not yet been published, but a few extracts from it will be found in the third volume of the Kharâbat. The British Museum possesses three complete MSS. (Add. 7906; Or. 2708: Or. 3294.), and one imperfect (Add. 19, 451). There is a perfect copy in my collection.
while in such mesnevis as had been written, directness and simplicity, not elegance or curiosity, had been the qualities aimed at. That this beauty and refinement should have been sought for almost exclusively through the medium of the art of Bedi or Euphuism is perhaps regrettable, but was of course inevitable. What is important to note, is that the step here taken by Sheykhi — the introduction into mesnevi of the Persian euphuism which had already seized upon the lyric poetry — determined what was to be during two centuries the note of the Ottoman metrical romance.

The Khusrev and Shírin of Sheykhi is a fairly close translation of Nizámi’s poem of the same name. The fact that it was such a translation did not militate against its success or popularity. For although the style was so far removed from the everyday speech that a just appreciation must have been impossible to those without some knowledge of Persian, it was a novelty to all to see the famous old romance in a Turkish dress.

The early Ottoman critics are at one in doing honour to the old poet who first of his countrymen essayed to present a story in literary guise. Latifi gratefully says that it is from him the poets of Rûm learned grace of style in mesnevi, and that these have done no more therein than follow in his footsteps; while he adds that though many have endeavoured to ‘parallel’ the Khusrev and Shírin, none has succeeded in surpassing it. ‘Ashiq, while admitting that in matter it is little else than a translation, praises it for its strength and force and for the high level it maintains throughout. Comparing it with later famous Turkish romantic mesnevis, that writer declares that though Ahi’s poem of the same name is full of grace and pith, and Hamdi’s Joseph and Zelihká is clear and lucid, and Kemâl-Pasha-zâde’s Joseph and Zelihká is artistic and ingenious, and Jafer Chelebi’s
Heves-Name is distinguished by eloquence, and the poems of Lami’s are brilliant and fluent. \(^1\) Sheykhi’s Khusrev and Shurin yet holds its own and is famous far and wide throughout the land. Hasan endorses the verdict of ‘Ashiq. ‘Ali speaks of many of the lines from Sheykhi’s poem as being household words, and quotes a passage describing an interview between the hero and heroine as an example of vivid representation. Sheykhi, it may be remarked, is with the exception of Suleyman Chelebi, the only poet of the First Period whom Ziya Pasha mentions in the preface to his Anthology. The modern author, it is true, can see nothing in the old romancist except uncouthness of language; but the compiler of the Kharābat, though a remarkable and in some respects a highly gifted man, did not possess the critical faculty.

Looked at from our point of view, Sheykhi appears as an extremely skilful adapter. He saw that to completely and effectually graft the Persian system into the nascent literature of his people it was needful to bring the mesnevi — so far the most important poetical form — into line with the qasida and ghazel. He thereupon took a story which he found ready to his hand, carefully studied the manner in which it had been dealt with by the Persian master, and set to work to reproduce this manner with all its peculiarities as closely as possible, using every effort to make his innovations blend harmoniously, always on the long-established lines, with the native material in which he was working.

The effect was revolutionary. All uncertainty as to which prosodial system should prevail disappears for ever. A studied grace of language and a laborious search for curiosity in idea and in expression, almost equal to what already was the rule in the lyric forms, replaces the more homely if ruder

\(^1\) These poets all belong to the Second Period, and will claim our attention in due course.
vocabulary and the more direct though less ingenious phraseology of the earlier mesnevis. That the time was ripe for the change is clearly shown alike by the popularity which the work attained and by the fact that all subsequent mesnevis were modelled on the lines therein laid down. Whether the change thus accomplished by Sheykhî was to the real advantage of Turkish poetry is, however, open to serious question. It is true that thereby the cultivation of what we may call wit — of grace, refinement and ingenuity — was greatly fostered; but this was at the price of not only spontaneity and straightforwardness, but too often, it is to be feared, of sincerity. Naturalness was superseded by affectation.

But it would be unfair to blame the author for this; Sheykhî was before all things an artist, and no other path of art was open to him than that along which the force of circumstances was impelling his countrymen. In reality this poet deserves much praise; for it is he who first showed the Turks how to tell a story artistically. Ahmedi had not attempted this; his narrative, set forth in the baldest language and constantly interrupted by irrelevant digressions, has no pretensions to being a work of art; whereas Sheykhî was constrained by the same instinct that led him to shun the continual interruptions which destroy the unity of the Iskender-Nâme, to make of his own book a thing of beauty by the employment of the choicest and most perfect forms of expression he could devise.

Sheykhî is consequently ahead of all previous writers of mesnevi in matters of technique. He has no hesitation as to prosody, and with him halting lines are few and far between. One of his most noteworthy innovations is his adoption of a new metre. Hitherto all West-Turkish poems in mesnevi form — the Rebâb-Nâme of Veled, the Gharîb-Nâme of 'Ashiq, the Mevlid of Suleymân, the Iskender-Nâme of Ahmedi —
have been written in one and the same metre, the hexametric remel, that which had been chosen by Jelal-ud-Din for his great work. Sheykhi for the first time breaks new ground, and writes his Khusrev and Shirin in a fresh measure, a hexametric variation of the hezej,¹ that of Nizami's poem on the same theme. In so doing Sheykhi not only opened a wider field to the Turkish poets, he dealt a fatal blow to the supremacy of the old remel. Henceforward mesnevis are composed now in one metre now in another, as the fancy of the poet may determine; there is none that can claim universal favour, least of all that which in early times reigned undisputed.

Another of Sheykhi's innovations destined to take lasting root is the introduction of lyrics into the body of the mesnevi.² These lyrics, which are almost always ghazels (there are four qasidas and one terjî-bend in the Khusrev and Shirin), are generally presented as being sung by one or other of the actors in the romance in moments of excitement or exaltation. The idea of introducing such lyrics, which may be in any metre the poet pleases, is certainly a happy one, as they break to some extent the monotony of the mesnevi in which line follows line through several thousand couplets without so much as the alteration of a single accent. That Sheykhi did not derive this idea from Nizami whom as a rule he closely follows, is certain, for there are no such lyric interludes in the work of the great poet of Genje; but whether he adopted it from some other Persian writer or himself devised it, I cannot say. If he did devise it (which is the less likely alternative), he must have possessed a quite

¹ See p. 107.
² We have seen that in the episode of Gul-Shah in the Iskender-Nâme a number of ghazels are introduced into the mesnevi; and this is one of the considerations which have inclined us to regard that episode as an interpolation.
unusual originality of which he has given no other evidence. ¹

It is important to note that with Sheykhi's Khusrev and Shirín the language of poetry definitively breaks away from the language of everyday life. All previous writers of mes-nevi (and all the important poetry had hitherto been in this form) had made use of a plain simple language such as everyone might understand and use. Sheykhi put an end to this. By devoting his exceptional talent to the work of introducing into the more serious form of poetry the artificial dialect of the lyric writers, who had so far been rather players and triflers with the art than its earnest cultivators, he did more than perhaps any other to the fixing of that great gulf between the language of literature and the speech of the people, which yawned ever wider with the centuries, and which has been partially bridged over only in our own day.

Sheykhi chose well when he selected the tale of Khusrev and Shirín as his theme; for the story of Shirín the Sweet is the prettiest and most interesting of the dozen or so legends that go to make up the repertory of the Eastern romantic poet. It may be called an historical romance, the hero, Khusrev-i Pervîz, being the Sasanian King whom the Byzantines named Chosroes II. Nizâmî, who first put the story into verse, drew most of his materials from the early historian Taberî, ² to whom Sheykhi also had recourse when he wished to check or supplement the statements of his model. For the Turkish poet was no blind copyist; he did not hesitate to improve upon his predecessor when he

¹ The circumstance that the Jâmesb-Nâme, a contemporary romantic mes-nevi, contains, as we shall see in a later chapter, a number of ghazels similarly introduced, tells against the likelihood of Sheykhi's being the originator of this development.

² Taberî, who wrote in Arabic a very famous universal history, was born in the old Persian province of Taberistan in 224 (838-9), and died in Baghdad in 310 (922-3).
thought such an operation desirable. In two instances in particular did he depart from Nizami's lead; the first of these is in the account of the rebellion of Behram-i Chiibin, to which he devotes an entire dastan, whereas the Persian poet dismisses it in a chapter or two; the second is in the prominence which he gives to Buzurg-Umid's discourse concerning the creation of the universe and other recondite matters, a discourse which, though left unfinished, runs through several chapters and would probably have occupied a whole dastan, and which Nizami rounds off in a few lines. Whether Sheykhi was well advised in the introduction of this additional matter admits of question. With regard to the Behram incident, it may be pleaded that this gives more completeness to the story; but it is in no wise essential to the development of the plot; while the lecture of the sage is only too much after the fashion of Ahmedi. Both additions are in themselves interesting; but by distracting the attention of the reader, they are hurtful to the unity of the poem, and in introducing them, Sheykhi, departing from his wont, allowed the scholar to prevail over the artist.

The story of Khusrev and Shirin was dealt with by several subsequent Turkish poets, among the best known being Jelili and Ahi, both of whom flourished somewhere about a century later. But none of these more recent poems ever achieved anything like the popularity won and retained by this earliest of all, the quaint old Germiyan Turkish of which, with its long-obsolete words and forms, seems to harmonize

1 Sheykhi distinctly says that Nizami who tells the story (of Khusrev and Shirin) does not inform us of the events which led up to this revolt, but that he, having found them in history books, will give them in detail.

2 Kâti'î Chelebi cites further two poets whom he calls respectively Khalifa and Mu'âdi-zâde as having composed mesnevis on this subject. I am unable to identify the first; the second is probably the Mu'âdi mentioned by Latifi as a contemporary of his own and as having written a 'Response' to Nizami's Quintet.
well with the old-world story of the gallant King and the brave and lovely Princess.

Had it been completed, the book would no doubt have consisted of the customary three divisions: Prologue, Subject and Epilogue. As it is, we have only the first of these and a part (though a large part) of the second. This was never finished; the brief epilogue added by another hand merely announces the death of the poet and winds up with some common-place lines eulogizing the reigning Sultan. No date of composition is anywhere mentioned; but as the panegyrics both in the prologue and the epilogue speak of Murád II as the occupant of the throne, the poem was most likely written during his reign which, as already said, extended from 824 (1421) to 855 (1451).

The prologue consists, as is usual, of a number of cantos dealing with religious subjects, including the expositions of certain Súfíistic technicalities praised so highly by Latífi. In the midst of these is a qasída concerning a couplet in which the biographer Riyáizi tells this story. One day the famous Sheykh Aq Shems-ud-Din, a contemporary of Mehemmed the Conqueror, and the father of the well-known poet Hamdí, was seated amid his pupils; but instead of discoursing to them as usual, he appeared to be absorbed in contemplation and oblivious to all around, only uttering from time to time the words ‘O Germiyan! O Germiyan!’ Those present were bewildered at his conduct till at length he said to them, ‘I behold in my vision the Heavenly Host, and they dervish-dancing, and the words of their litany are these lines of Sheykhí of Germiyan: —

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1 Both ‘Ashiq and ‘Ali say that Sheykhí began his Khusrev and Shirín during Murád’s reign; Hasan says it was undertaken at that monarch’s command.
2 Von Hammer says that this story is told also by Schí.
Never may Reason yield us tidings of Thy Godhead's caravan;
Only soft unto the Soul's ear is there borne a chime of bells.

The religious and mystic cantos are followed by that 'Touching the Reason of the Writing of the Book.' In this Sheykhi says that one day when sorrow was bearing him company, his Hatif-i Jan or 'Inward Monitor' addressed him, asking why he is thus sick at heart, and bidding him be up and doing, for it may be truly said of him whose name lives on in the world that he never dies; and he himself may win such immortality, for the gift of poetry has been bestowed on him. He is then exhorted to write a mesnevi; for, he is told, that though he may be strong in the ghazel, yet it is the mesnevi which is the touchstone of the coin of eloquence. The poet seeks to excuse himself, partly on the score of his lack of ability, but chiefly because the people of his day have no taste or discernment in things literary, and that to write for them were labour in vain. But the Inward Monitor rejects these excuses, telling him that it matters not though he see none about him to appreciate his work, for his verses will take wing and fly to those who know their value; and bidding him in the meantime hope for grace from God and for help from the enlightened patronage of the Sultan, on whose name he is commanded to build his work. This is followed by two cantos and a qasida in honour of Sultan Murad, which bring the prologue to a close.

The poet then enters on his proper subject, the story of

The beasts in a caravan wear bells, and thus the caravan may sometimes be heard passing even when it is out of sight.

The idea in the verse is that reason is powerless to tell aught concerning the Godhead, and that even the soul is aware of Its existence only through the phenomena of which it is conscious.
Khusrev and Shirín. Of this we have nine complete Books, called as usual Dáštáns or ‘Legends,’ and one unfinished. These carry the narrative down to the nuptials of the hero and heroine, and, as little except the final catastrophe remains to tell, it is unlikely that even had the life of the author been prolonged, the poem would have contained more than eleven or twelve of such Books.

The epilogue, which consists of just over a hundred couplets, is divided into two cantos, the first announcing the death of Sheykhí, the second devoted to the praises of Sultan Murád. It is, as we have seen, the work of a writer who calls himself Báyezíd, but whom the biographers call Jemáli.

Here is an outline of the story of Khusrev and Shirín as told by Sheykhí: —

Khusrev-i Perviz, the son of King Hurmuz of Persia, is educated by the sage Buzurg-Umid (Great Hope), and grows up an accomplished and valiant prince. The King, full of gratitude to Heaven for his gallant son, determines to rule with yet greater justice than before, and issues a proclamation that whosoever wrongs his neighbour shall be visited with condign punishment. One day, when Hurmuz is seated giving judgment, some villagers come into his presence and complain that last evening, when returning from one of his frequent hunting expeditions, the Prince had entered their village and caroused all night in one of their houses to the music of his minstrel; furthermore, that his horse had broken loose and trampled down a poor man’s corn, while one of his slaves had entered a garden and stolen some unripe grapes. Hurmuz is enraged at his son’s

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1 Khusrev-i Perviz (Chosroes II) was the son of Hurmuz IV (Hormisdas IV) and grandson of the great Níshírewán (Chosroes I). Having in A.D. 591 defeated the rebel Behrám-i Chiibín (Varanes VI) who had usurped the throne on the death of Hurmuz in 590, he reigned over the Persian Empire till A.D. 628, when he was murdered by his son Shiruya (Siroes).
he orders the horse to be given to the owner of the corn, the slave to the proprietor of the garden, and the Prince's trappings and accoutrements to the man in whose house he passed the night. He is further about to condemn his son, but on the intercession of the nobles pardons him on his confessing his misdemeanour. Shortly after this, Khusrev sees in a vision his grandsire Niishirewan who tells him that since at his father's bidding he has cheerfully given up his minstrel and his horse, his slave and his accoutrements, he shall get for the first a singer sweeter yet, whose name shall be Barbud, for the second a steed called Shebdiz, 1 fleeter than the thought of man, for the third an all-lovely mistress whose name shall be Shirin, 2 and for the last the glorious throne Taqdis.

One day not long after this a friend of Khusrev's, Shâwur 3 by name, a cunning artist and a great traveller, tells the Prince, in course of a conversation, that in his wanderings he has passed through a charming country called Armenia, which is governed by a great queen, Mehm 4 Banû, who is famous among the monarchs of Christendom. The heir of this princess is her niece the lovely Shirin, a peerless beauty, of whose heavenly charms Shâwur treats Perviz to a glowing description. This enchanting lady is given to roaming the country at the head of three hundred fair maidens, engaged in long picnic parties and hunting expeditions. Mehm Banû has further a matchless steed, night-black in hue, and Shebdiz by name. Khusrev is struck by the identity of the names in Shâwur's story with those in his dream; and having fallen in love with Shirin from his friend's account of her, he sends

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1 Shebdiz, i.e. 'Night-hued,' Khusrev's coal-black charger is the Horse Bayard of Eastern romance.
2 The name Shirin, which means 'Sweet,' might be translated as 'Dulcinea.'
3 Sheykhi always writes Shawur, but Shapur (Sapor) is the more usual form.
4 This name is so pointed in the MS. but it ought perhaps to be Mihun.
that friend off to Armenia to try to arrange matters there. Sháwúr arrives at a monastery in Armenia where he learns that Shirín and her maids are expected immediately to bivouac in a meadow hard by. The Persian accordingly paints a portrait of Khusrev which he hangs on a tree in a place where Shirín will see it, and then hides himself. Shirín and her maids arrive, she finds the picture, is greatly impressed by the beauty it portrays, weeping over it and kissing it. Her maids seeing how deeply the picture affects her, manage to get hold of it, and secretly tear it up; they tell her that the demon who displayed it has hidden it, and persuade her to leave the place as it is haunted. Sháwúr, who has seen and heard all, is before them, and hangs up another similar picture in the place whither they are going. The same thing happens over again; and Sháwúr hangs up a third picture in the third place. This time Shirín keeps the picture, and sends her maids to look whether anyone is hiding near. Sháwúr, thinking it time to disclose himself, comes forward disguised as a priest; and after getting Shirín to make her attendants retire, he tells her that the pictures were painted by himself and represent Prince Khusrev-i Perviz, whose praises he extols, and who, he goes on to say, is deeply in love with her, and sends her as token a ring, which Sháwúr hands to her. Shirín replies confessing her love for Khusrev, and praying to be directed to Medá’in the Persian capital. Sháwúr, having directed her, departs; and she and her maids return to Mehin Bánú, and that very night she prevails upon her aunt to lend her Shebdiz to go a-hunting on the morrow. So next morning she arms herself, mounts the night-black steed, and sets out with her maids. Pretending to chase a deer, she easily makes her escape from the maids, none of whose horses can come near Shebdiz. So after vainly seeking for their mistress, the girls return to Mehin, who is
sadly grieved at Shin'n’s disappearance. That lady, after riding for seven days, feels tired and dismounts to rest. She commends herself to God and then falls asleep, but is soon awakened by Shebdiz neighing, when she sees a lion approaching, which she kills with an arrow. Going on, she reaches a meadow in the midst of which is a fair pond in which she determines to bathe, being tired and dust-stained from her journey. She accordingly ties up her arms on Shebdiz, makes him fast to a tree, and having stripped, binds a blue cloth about her waist, and descends into the stream.

In the meantime, certain persons at Meda'in, jealous of Khusrev, have accused him before the King of intriguing to usurp the throne. Hurmuz, who is of a suspicious nature, having given ear to them, the Prince, by the advice of his old tutor Buzurg-Umid, leaves the capital for a season. Before starting, Khusrev, who is half-expecting Shîrin in consequence of Shawur’s mission, tells the slave-girls at his splendid palace of Mushkû ¹ that possibly a fair lady may arrive as his guest, and charges them, in case she does, to receive her with all honour and respect. He then sets out for Armenia, attended by a few followers, purposing to employ the time of his exile in prosecuting his love-suit. They halt by the way, when Khusrev, wandering about by himself, suddenly comes upon a black horse tied to a tree, and hard by, a beautiful girl bathing in a pond. She does not see him at first, and he gazes at her bewildered by her loveliness; but when she turns round and he perceives her confusion at being discovered thus, he modestly retires, whereupon Shîrin (for it is she though Khusrev knows it not) springs out of the pond, seizes her clothes, leaps upon Shebdiz, and is off.

¹ Mushkû or Mushkiy, the private palace of Khusrev, perhaps represents that of Dastagherd, though the poets place the former within the city of Meda'in, while the latter was some seventy miles north of Ctesiphon.
None the less the beauty is troubled in mind by the vision of the fair young Prince, and continues her journey with a heart ill at ease, vaguely surmising that he may have been Khusrev. At length she reaches Medā’in, goes to the palace of Mushkū as Shāwūr had instructed her, where she is honourably entertained on presenting Khusrev’s ring. When she learns that the Prince is gone, she does not care to remain in Mushkū; and as Perviz had left orders that all her wishes were to be carried out, a castle ¹ is built for her at her request among the hills.

Meanwhile, Khusrev, no less agitated in mind than Shīrīn, and like her haunted with an idea that he has seen the fair object of his quest, proceeds to Armenia and becomes the guest of Mehīn Bānū, who tells him of her niece’s disappearance, and invites him to winter there. Ere long Shāwūr arrives and tells the Prince all he has done. Khusrev informs Mehīn of his friend’s arrival with news of Shīrīn, and they resolve to send him off to Medā’in to fetch the beauty back, the Queen mounting him on Gulgūn, ² another wonderful steed in her possession, which is reckoned well-nigh the equal of Shebdīz. When Shāwūr reaches the Persian capital he is informed that Shīrīn has retired to her Castle; he goes there, tells the lady all that has happened, and persuades her to return to Armenia where Khusrev is. She accordingly mounts Gulgūn, having left Shebdīz at Medā’in, and sets off accompanied by Shāwūr.

¹ This castle, Qasr-i Shīrīn or ‘Castle-Shīrīn,’ gives its name to a little town which in all probability occupies the traditional site of the famous beauty’s residence; it is within the limits of modern Persia, about twenty miles across the Turkish frontier on the way to Kermānshāh.

Gulgūn, or ‘Rose-hued’ (i.e. Bay), is almost as famous as Shebdīz himself. The legend runs that both these horses were the offspring of a mare by the enchanted figure of a stallion sculptured out of a black rock in a certain cave in a mountain in Armenia.
In the meantime a messenger from Meda'in comes to Armenia and tells Khusrev that a revolution has broken out in the Persian capital, and that his father, who had been seized and blinded by the rebels, has resigned the crown in his favour. Sheykin now proceeds to tell how this has come about. Hurmuz, though just, was severe, and many of the nobles and the people had revolted against him. The Cesar, the Arabs, and the Khaqan of Tartary had made common cause with the rebels, but Hurmuz had bought off the Cesar and the Arabs, and had sent his famous general Behram-i Chubin 1 to fight Saya Khan the Tartar Khaqan. Behram had defeated and slain that monarch who was the maternal uncle of Hurmuz, the latter's mother having been Saya's sister. The Persian sovereign was thereupon seized with an unreasoning fit of anger against his general, and incited by certain evil-disposed persons about the court, he had sent that officer an insulting letter and a woman's dress. On this Behram had renounced his allegiance to Hurmuz and given out that it was his intention to place Khusrev on the throne. The nobles of Meda'in having heard of this, and being weary of the severity of Hurmuz, had seized and blinded him, and sent off to Khusrev bidding him come and sit in his place. When he hears all this, Khusrev returns at once to his capital, where he is crowned king. He is told of Shirin's departure with Shawur, and is presented with Shebdiz. It soon becomes evident that Behram's real purpose is to secure the throne for himself, and as he is stronger than Khusrev, the latter, acting on Buzurg-Umid's advice, retires from the country for a year, till his star shall be in the ascendant.

Shawur has now taken Shirin back to Armenia, only to

1 Behram-i Chubin, i.e. 'Behram the Stick-like,' so called because of his leanness and his withered up appearance, is the Varanes VI of the Byzantines.
find Khusrev gone. Not long after, however, when out hunting with her maidens, Shirín meets Khusrev who is on his way to Armenia. They recognise one another, and in great delight go together to Mehín Bánú who receives them with all kindness. Mehín takes an opportunity of earnestly entreating her niece to be circumspect and in every case jealously to guard her honour, which Shirín solemnly swears to do. Khusrev and she then go out into the country with their respective suites, and after a month spent in hunting and polo and other amusements, the King invites the beauty to an entertainment in his camp. They have a fair banquet and concert where Bárbud, Khusrev’s musician, sings some ghazels interpreting the emotions of his master’s heart, to which Nigísá, Shirín’s minstrel-maid, replies on behalf of her fair mistress. This, it may be noted in passing, is a feature of the story; Bárbud and Nigísá are continually acting as the mouthpieces of Khusrev and Shirín respectively. The party proceeds to the banks of the River Aras (Araxes) where they have another feast and another concert, and where Khusrev kills a lion with a blow of his fist; and here the King and the Princess do a little love-making. And so they pass a long time in all delight, hunting and feasting, till one night Khusrev forgets himself and tries to tempt Shirín; but she, mindful of her promise to her aunt, resists him, and by her bold words makes him resolve to win back his ancestral throne.

He accordingly departs next morning, but has not gone far ere he bitterly regrets having left his fair friend. Still he determines to go on, and makes his way into the land of Rûm, where he comes upon a great monastery to which he goes up alone. He is refused admission, but the voice of Nestor, a wise and learned monk, tells him who he is and what he seeks, and prophesies that in eighteen months he will attain all his desires. Khusrev then goes on to the Cæsar
(Maurice), who receives him well, makes him marry his
daughter Meryem (Maria), and supplies him with troops by
whose aid he fights and overcomes Behram who flies to the
King of China. Khusrev accordingly reascends the throne
of his fathers, and rules with justice; but despite his success,
he is sad, mourning the absence of Shirin. She, on her part,
is disconcerted when she discovers that Khusrev has really
left the camp, and returns to her aunt who does her best
to comfort her. Not long after this the good Mehin Bānū
dies, and Shirin reigns in her stead; but she still grieves
for Khusrev, and is sadly vexed when she hears that he is
married to Meryem. However, accompanied by a large retinue
in which is the faithful Shawir, who has never left her, she
starts for Persia, and reaches her Castle among the moun-
tains. She sends Shawir thence to Meda'in, considerately
telling him not to mention her to Khusrev lest it should
annoy him now that he is married. But Shawir does not
heed this; he finds the King, who has just heard of the death
of Behram, and rejoices him with the news of Shirin's pre-
sence, and then returns to the Castle.

We are now introduced to one of the most famous char-
acters in Eastern romance. Shirin in her Castle is unable
to get any milk, as the pasture-lands and the herds are
far away on the other side of the mountain, and on her com-
plaining of this one day in the presence of Shawir, the
latter tells her of a talented fellow-student of his, named
Ferhad, who will, he thinks, be able to arrange some means
to gratify her wish. He accordingly goes and fetches Ferhad,
who no sooner looks upon Shirin than he is smitten to the
heart for love of her. She tells him her wishes, but he is
too dazed to understand her, and his friends have to explain
to him what she has said. He then sets to work with a will,
and within a month digs a canal through the mountain from
the pasture-land to the Castle; into this canal the shepherds
milk their animals, and thus Shirín is provided with a con-
stant supply of fresh milk. When the beauty sees this she
is filled with admiration and praises the work as more than
human; she offers Ferhád gold and jewels; but he, distraught
by love of her, takes nothing, and flies into the desert where
he wanders about like a maniac. Khusrev, hearing of this,
sends messengers to fetch Ferhád; one of these finds him
and brings him before the King, who tries him with offers
of riches and threats of punishment; but seeing all such to be
in vain, he promises to give him Shirín if he will cut a road
through the great mountain Bi-Sitún. 1 Ferhád at once agrees;
but before beginning to cut through the mountain, he carves
in the rock figures of Shirín and of Khusrev and Shebdíz, 2
to the first of which he often speaks and makes his moan
during the progress of his labours. On learning this, Shirín
is much affected and determines to go to Bi-Sitún and try
to comfort him. The sculptor is dumbfoundered when he
sees her, but a draught which she gives him restores him
to his senses, and he declares to her his sad case. Shirín
bids him farewell; but as she is going down the hill, her

1 Kúh-i Bi-Sitún, i.e. 'Mount Pierless,' is a huge rock about twenty miles
north of Kermánsáh; in one place it is cut to a smooth perpendicular sur-
face and projects over the road like a canopy, whence the name Bi-Sitún,
literally, 'Without Columns.' This is said to be the remains of Ferhád's work,
and it has been famed for him the sobriquet of Kúb-ken, or 'Mountain-hewer,'
by which the poets often allude to him.
2 The Táq-i Bustán or 'Garden Arch,' represents this work of Ferhád's.
It is an archway or grotto cut out in a rock near Kermánsáh, on the brink
of a clear pool. In the spandrels are beautifully executed figures of flying
angels holding the Sasanian diadem. Within the recess, the two sides and
the farther end are decorated with bas-reliefs; those at the sides represent
Khusrev hunting, while those at the end, in two lines, one above the other,
show, above, Khusrev between two figures, one male (Ferhád) and one female
(Shirín), and below, the King in full armour mounted on Shebdíz; this last
figure, as well as one of the angels, has been much damaged.
horse stumbles, which Ferhād sees, and rushing forward, he saves her from falling and escorts her back to her Castle. Khusrev, having got word of these doings and also of Ferhād’s having well-nigh accomplished his almost superhuman task, is filled with anger, and consults with his vezirs how to escape from his promise. By the advice of those ministers, he sends an old woman to Ferhād with the false information that Shirin is dead. When the devoted lover hears that his dear one has passed away, he feels that life is no longer possible for him, and throwing himself down from a high rock, meets the death he seeks. When Shirin is told of this she grieves deeply and orders a dome to be built over Ferhād’s grave on the spot where he died, to be a shrine for lovers for ever more.

This episode of Ferhād causes a misunderstanding between Khusrev and Shirin, which it takes a considerable time and all the ingenuity of Shawūr to remove. Meanwhile Meryem, Khusrev’s wife, dies, but Shirin refuses his advances, being annoyed alike at his marriage and at his conduct with regard to Ferhād. Khusrev accordingly solaces himself for a time with a fair lady named Sheker or ‘Sugar,’ of whose society, however, he soon tires and yearns as before for the peerless Shirin. That lady, on her part, begins to regret her harshness, and consents to receive Khusrev who has come from Medā’in to her Castle, nominally on a hunting expedition. After upbraiding him for his faithlessness, she dismisses him, and he returns sadly to his camp where Shawūr tries to console him. Shirin again regrets her conduct, slips out of the Castle disguised as one of the King’s attendants, and makes for the camp. There she is met by Shawūr who recognises her, and at her request hides her in a pavilion, in which he induces Khusrev to hold a banquet. Nigisā, whom Shirin had presented to Khusrev on the Aras, is let into the secret,
and at the feast she sings to the King as from Shírín; Bárbud replies in an affecting strain, whereupon Shírín betrays her presence by a deep sigh. Sháwúr then pulls back the curtain, and Khusrev and Shírín are in each other’s presence. They soon arrange their marriage, which is shortly afterwards celebrated at Medá’in with great pomp. Nígísá is at the same time married to Bárbud, and Humáyún, Shírín’s favourite damselt, to Sháwúr, who is made King of Armenia. Khusrev now leads a happy life with his beloved Shírín, until one day he sees a grey hair in his beard, which makes him think how all this must have an end. He speaks about this to Buzurg-Umíd who proceeds to tell him of the creation of the universe and of the nature of things.

And here, in the middle of the sage’s discourse, Sheykhi’s narrative breaks off.

The conclusion of the story can be supplied from Nízámí, and is soon told. Khusrev is comforted and edified by the words of Buzurg-Umíd, but he suffers much anxiety from the undutiful and seditious spirit of Shírúya, his son by Meryem the Greek princess. This youth, having become enamoured of Shírín, resolves to murder his father, and so secure at once the throne and his mistress. One night, when Shírín, having lulled Khusrev to sleep, has fallen asleep herself, worn out by vague forebodings that have been preying on her mind, an assassin, the emissary of Shírúya, steals into the room, creeps up to the couch, plunges a dagger into Khusrev’s breast, and flies. The King, waking, finds himself covered with blood and wounded to the death. Intensely thirsty, his first thought is to rouse Shírín and get her to bring him some water, but then remembering that she has not slept for some nights, and knowing she will need all her strength for the morrow, he nobly resolves to let her sleep on, and so dies in his anguish. By and by Shírín
awakes, and when she realises what has happened, she weeps as though her heart would break; but knowing that she has yet somewhat to do, she calms herself as best she may. She then washes and anoints the body of the King; and she has scarce finished this task when Shiruya sends her a secret message declaring his love. To gain her ends she feigns acquiescence, and gets him to destroy the private residence and personal property of Khusrev, she being unable to endure the thought that those things so associated with their mutual happiness should pass into the murderer's hands. She then causes a magnificent bier to be made; and the body of Khusrev is borne in great state to the mausoleum, Buzurg-Umid and Barbud and all the grandees of the empire marching in the procession. Shirin herself, magnificently arrayed and wearing her splendid jewels, walks in the midst of a troop of youths and maidens, with so glad a mien that Shiruya believes her to be rejoicing in his love. On reaching the mausoleum, the procession draws up outside, the bier is carried in, and Shirin follows to watch by it. When the door is closed, Shirin goes up to the bier, uncovers the King's breast, kisses the wound, and thrusts a dagger into the same spot in her own body. She then throws her arms about the dead King, lays her cheek to his, and uttering one loud cry which is heard by those outside, she dies.

The following passage is from the Introduction to the Khusrev and Shirin; in it the poet speaks of the Tevhid, that knowledge or perception of the underlying Unity of all things which is so dear to the Eastern mystic. As we have no single word in English to express this idea, I have in the translation represented it by the phrase 'Ken of Unity.' This is one of the passages to which Latifi refers as showing Sheykhi's intimacy with the Sufi mysteries.
From the Khusrev u Shirín. [49]

Concerning the Degrees in the Ken of Unity.

Come, heart, if thou the loftiest aim desire,
Know, soul, if thou the Utmost Goal 1 enquire,
That Ken of Unity the loftiest is,
The utmost limit of all saintship this.
Each sect hath told, far as its wit hath seen,
As far as hath its sight had power to win,
Of this full many a hint half-understood,
By some as Taste, 2 by some as Knowledge, 3 viewed.
Yet to the Truth of Ken of Unity
The Path leads not the traveller-company; 4
For that an Ocean is that hath no bound,
And none may that encompass or surround.
What they whose lore and reason perfect be
Have reached is but the shore of yonder Sea!
Of Irem-garth 5 how should the leaflet know?

1 Maqsad-i Aqsa, 'the Utmost (or Farthest) Goal,' is a favourite Sufi phrase
2 When the perception of the Unity is attained, not through reason, but through intuition. Zevq, 'Taste,' is the term applied by the Sufis to the intuitive faculty which enables the mystic to discern between true and false without his having recourse to books or other external sources of information.
3 When the perception of the Unity is attained, not through intuition, but through reason.
4 Even the Sufi Path cannot lead the mystic to that last degree in the perception of the Unity, which is called the Truth; for this is accessible to the One alone.
5 It is related that Sheddaḍ, an ancient Arab King of the tribe of ʿAd, laid out in the desert of ʿAden a terrestrial paradise in rivalry of the celestial. Of this magnificent garden of palaces, which is called Irem, many stories are told, such as that it contained 300,000 pavilions each adorned with 1,000 pillars of jasper bound with gold. But Sheddaḍ never enjoyed his splendid work; for as he was about to enter the glorious garden-city, he and all his host were struck dead by a cry from Heaven. The terrestrial paradise disappeared from sight; but it still stands invisible in the desert of ʿAden where from time to time God permits a traveller to see it. Sir Richard Burton says that he once met an Arab who declared that he had seen this city on the borders of a waste of deep sands called Al-Ahkaf to the west of Hadramaut. Sir R. Burton believes that what the man really saw was the mirage. Irem
Or how the more the sun's vast body show;
On high His Glory over all their speech!
A loft His Essence over all they teach!

The wonder this, the more it is revealed
The more the nature of The Truth 's concealed.
Its radiance is a veil, and so its light,
The more it waxeth, hides it more from sight. 1
But they of the Unveilment 2 thence have brought
From time to time a hint to such as sought,
A hint the soul-perceived taste whereof
To ecstasy upraiseth them of Love.
As theirs who relativity deny: —
'To drop relation 's Ken of Unity.' 3
Or his who far upon this Path hath gone: —
'Phenomenal makest Eternal known.' 4
Saith who divides 'tween true and vain withal: —
'Outside is God of aught phenomenal.
'What 's proved as upshot of the whole is this: —
'Outside phenomena their Maker is.' 6

is mentioned in the Koran, Ixxxix. 6, where it is called 'Irem the Many-Columned,' whence probably the tale of the jasper pillars. It is often alluded to by the poets as the type sometimes of a magnificent garden, sometimes of a splendid palace.

1 The nearer it approaches to the Godhead, the more is the eye of the understanding dazzled, and so the less it can see. The effulgence of the Godhead may thus be described as a veil concealing it from sight. See p. 66.

2 'They of the Unveilment (Keshf),' i.e. the prophets and saints from before whose souls the veil woven by the senses is from time to time withdrawn. See pp. 58-9.

3 The mystics who deny the real existence of relativity say that the perception of the Unity is accomplished through rejecting all conceptions of relationship, such as creator and created, cause and effect, possessor and possessed, etc. When one has discovered all relationship to be illusion, one perceives the Unity.

4 Things are known through their opposites (see p. 17): thus it is through the phenomenal we gain the conception of the eternal.

5 i.e. the ordinary non-mystic, non-philosophic person who draws a hard and fast line between the spiritual and the material, the creator and the created, the eternal and the phenomenal, and so on.

6 Such an one says: After all your arguments, the only rational conclusion is that the Creator is outside and separate from the phenomena which He creates.
His Beauty's one, though manifold their speech;  
To yonder Beauty 'tis that pointeth each.  
Division in the Ken of Unity  
Is not, yet thus they of philosophy: —  
In Ken of Unity are three degrees;  
And Knowledge, Eye, and Truth, the names of these.  
On reason founded doth the Knowledge lie;  
And 'tis through intuition comes the Eye.  
The Truth is proper to the One for e'er;  
Nor reason wins, nor intuition, there.  

The remaining translations are all from the story itself. The reader will observe how much more figurative Sheykhi's style is than that of any of his predecessors in mesnevi; in particular how lavish he is in the use of metaphor.

From the Khusrev u Shírín. [50]

Khusrev-i Perviz discovereth Shírín bathing in the Pond.

The spot whereat the Prince Perviz did light  
Was where yon Moon was bathing in delight;  
E'en then whenas the sugar-dulce Shírín,  
Like Moon in Watery Sign, did lave amene.

1 This division of the perception of the Unity into three degrees ('Ilm-i Tevhid, 'Ayn-i Tevhid, Haqq-i Tevhid) is copied from the well-known three-fold division of Certainty or Certain Knowledge, i.e. (1) 'the Knowledge of Certainty' ('Ilm-i Yaqin); (2) 'the Eye of Certainty' ('Ayn-i Yaqín); (3) 'the Truth of Certainty' (Haqq-i Yaqín). These three degrees of certain knowledge are thus illustrated: — the knowledge which each man has concerning death is the Knowledge of Certainty; when the man sees the Angel of Death approach, this knowledge becomes the Eye of Certainty; and when he actually tastes of death, it becomes the Truth of Certainty.

2 'Yon Moon' i.e. Shírín. 'Moon' is a constant term for a beauty in Eastern poetry.

3 The astrologers divided the Signs of the Zodiac into four 'Triplicities' (Musellesat): (1) Aries, Leo and Sagittary were fiery, hot, dry, male and day signs; (2) Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn were earthy, cold, dry, female and night signs; (3) Gemini, Libra and Aquarius were airy, hot, moist, male
And pacing on, he gains that meadow-land,
And casts his glance around on every hand.
He sees a flowery plain like Eden-close,
A stream which e'en as Keser-river flows.
Among the trees is bound a black destrier,
(V-brent with envy were that steed the Sphere!)
A charger such, the Monarch bright of Ilee
Had ne'er bestridden steed so fair as he.
Advancing softly, sudden did he sight
That Moon within the water shining bright.
And what a Moon! the world-illumining sun
Would gain in glore if 'neath her shade he won.
From mid the fount effulgence thasbeth forth:
The fount laves her. she laves in light the earth.

and day signs: (4) Cancer. Scorpio and Pisces were watery, cold, moist, female and night signs.

Each of the Zodiacal Signs was said to be the ‘house’ (beyt) of one or other of the Seven Planets—see p. 43. Each planet, except the Sun and Moon which had only one apiece, had two of such ‘houses.’ The sign opposite a planet’s ‘house’ was called its ‘fall’ (vebal). Each planet had further what was known as its ‘exaltation’ or ‘honour’ (sheref) in another sign; and its ‘dejection’ (hubiit) in that opposite. When in its own ‘house,’ a planet was supposed to possess more than usual influence; when in its ‘exaltation,’ it was in the position of its greatest power. The following table shows the ‘houses,’ ‘falls,’ ‘exaltation,’ and ‘dejection’ of each planet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign of the Zodiac:</th>
<th>House of:</th>
<th>Fall of:</th>
<th>Exaltation of:</th>
<th>Dejection of:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

The idea in Sheykhi’s verse is that the effect produced on the beholder by the sight of the Moon-like (i.e. beautiful) Shirin in the water was baleful as the influence of the Moon when in its ‘dejection,’ the Watery Sign, Scorpio.
The violets spread in clusters o'er the rose,
The comb-teeth did the hyacinths dispose, 1
Her body made the pond a treasure-scryne, 2
O'er which she'd loosed her locks to twist and twine. 3
Her hand had pushed those writhing snakes away,
As saying: 'Hence! A charm here holdeth sway!' 4
For raving wildly when it saw her ear
She'd bound the water with her curling hair;
As frenzied 'twas and furious of spright,
She'd bound it, nay, had chained it, fettered tight. 5
When o'er her crystal 6 frame was sprent the spray:
'The moonlight through a pearl-gemmed veil,' thou'dst say. 7
When shone that Moon before the Prince's gaze,
The Prince became the sun — with fire ablaze.
The tears like rain pour down from both his eyne;
For lo, behold the Moon in Watery Sign!
Astound, he might not leave nor yet might stay,

1 The violets and the hyacinths are the lady's tresses, the rose is her face. She was sitting in the water combing her hair,—like the mermaid in old prints.
2 Her body being the jewel or treasure, and the pond the casket which contained it.
3 Like snakes. The widely spread myth of a snake or dragon guarding a treasure is as familiar to the East as to the West, and has given the poets occasion for countless conceits and fancies, the most favourite of which is perhaps the comparison thereto of a beauty's curls hanging about her fair face.
4 She pushes aside the long locks floating about her,—which suggests to the poet that her body is like a structure guarded against snakes by some talisman similar to that which Alexander set up in his capital to keep it free from such creatures (p. 278).
5 The comparison of the curling locks of a beauty to chains (generally to bind her lover's heart) is very common.
6 In this couplet the lady is supposed to be throwing handfuls of water over her body, when her white and shining skin, seen between the drops of water thus thrown, is conceived as the bright moonlight seen through the interstices of one of those Eastern curtains formed of rows of reeds with beads (here pearls) at the joints, the pearls being of course the drops of water.
He might not come more nigh nor turn away.
For chase or pastime all his force was o'er.
He bit upon his finger, wildered sore.

Unwitting of that gaze the Jasmine-breast.

For o'er her narciss did her jacinth rest.
When passed the musky cloud from her sun-face,
That beauty looked and saw there full of grace
A Huma set an eagle-wing upon.
A Cypress become flagstaff for the sun.
That Fount of radiance for her shame and fright
Did tremble like the moon on water bright.
Nor other help could find that Moon most fair.

1 'Biting upon the finger,' i.e. raising the finger to the lips, is a conventional expression with the Eastern writers to indicate that the person whom they describe as so doing is filled with bewilderment or admiration.

2 'Jasmine-breast' i.e. white sweet-scented breast, another term for a beauty.

3 i.e. her hair had fallen over her eyes.

4 The 'musky cloud' is her dark sweet-scented hair.

5 The Huma is the bird of paradise. In old times it was held to be of the happiest augury, any one whose head it overshadowed in its flight being certain of good fortune. It was said never to alight on the ground, and to live entirely on bones, hurting no living creature.

6 i.e. Shirin saw the Prince auspicious as the Huma mounted on his steed fleet as an eagle.

7 The 'cypress,' the stock image for a tall, slight, graceful figure, here stands for the figure of the Prince, while the 'sun' is his face. The imagery in this line is curious and unusual. The only similar instance that I can recall occurs in the Arabian Nights, where in the Twenty-second Night and again in the Conclusion we read: —

'ْوَ شَمْسٌ فِي قُصْبِ ٌ فِي نَشْبٍ ' تَبَلَّتْ فِي قُمَيْسٍ جَلَّامٍ

which is thus rendered in Sir Richard Burton's translation: —

'A sun on wand in knoll of sand she showed
Clad in her cramony-hued chemisette.'

On page 250 of the ninth volume the translator thus explains the first line:
'A sun (face) on wand (neck) in knoll of sand (hips) she showed.' But the 'flagstaff,' which replaces the 'wand' in the Turkish verse, stands for the 'cypress,' and so represents not the neck, but the figure, of the Prince.

8 The 'Fount of radiance' is Shirin who is pictured as trembling in the pond, as the reflection of the beautiful moon trembles on rippling water.
Than round her she should cast her flowing hair.
She wrapped her in her loosened hair straightway,
She veiled with the darksome night the day.¹

From the Khusrev u Shírín. [51]

Khusrev-i Pervíz and Shírín visit the River Aras.

One day the Monarch fair and happy-starred,
To wit, Khusrev, the Heaven-resplendent lord,
Went forth the regions round about to sight,
And with him rode that Queen of beauties bright.
(Whoe'er hath by his side his lovesome Queen, —
In every spot hath he a winsome scene.)

They pass from stage to stage o'er hill and plain,
And joy in field and meadow free and fain.
They reach the stream that men call Aras, where
The soil is musky, balmy is the air.
They see a limpid river clear and pure,
Know the sorrows of the heart to cure.
'Twas filled with lotus-blooms and lilies bright;
Its banks with meads and gardens fair were dight;
The narcissse cast upon the rose its eye:
And hand in hand the flowers in ranks stood by;
Its ruby lip the tulip offered prone,
The dew its pearly teeth had struck thereon.²
The royal pair were fain of this fair site,
And gave the word that there the tents be pight.
They reared the throne, and Pervíz sat thereon;
And all the gear of mirth³ was ready soon;
And by his side the Venus-visaged fair, —
(The Sun and shining Moon thou'dst deemed them there.)
As unto happy fortune won had they,
They raised one throne in place of two that day.

¹ The 'night' is her hair; the 'day,' her face or her body.
² The dew is conceived as amorously biting the lip of the tulip.
³ 'The gear of mirth,' i. e. all things needful for a carouse, wine, musical
  instruments, etc.
And youths and houris stood on either hand,
As 'twere Rizwan in Paradisal land,
As-singing to his lute Būrubd sat there:
Nigisi, music-thrilled, made answer e'er.

For Shirin's lip that stream as Kevser shone,
As sugar-canes the reeds that grew thereon. ¹
The Queen's fair face, reflected there did seem
A ruby of Badakhshān ² in the stream:
The while that ruby's taste it pictured still
Its mouth did water and with sugar fill; ³
It swallows 'fore that julep-lip its spawl,
As thirsting hearts before the sea, withal. ⁴

To voice such plight as this that held the King
Began the lutist this ghazel to sing: —

Ghazel.

For yonder coral-lip my soul 's athirst,
As parchéd frame for life to ensoul 's athirst.

My vitals, for this yearning, black are burnt,
Like scorched grass for rain that tholes athirst.

Have pity, life it yields, O Khizr of coolth;
Iskender for Life's Fountain's roll 's athirst.

Although the world with water sweet were filled,
Oh deem not slaked his drought whose soul 's athirst.

¹ i.e. the sweet presence of Shirin made all things sweet.
² Badakhshān in Central Asia was supposed to yield the finest rubies; hence 'Badakhshān rubies' became a stock phrase with the poets, something like our 'Orient pearls.'
³ This is an example of the rhetorical figure Husn-i Ta'lil or Ḥetiology (see p. 113). The stream is of course full of running water, but the poet conceives that this is its mouth watering at the thought of how sweet must be the taste (i.e. the kiss) of Shirin's lip.
⁴ This couplet contains another example of the same figure.
From the Khusrev u Shírn. [52]

The Death of Ferhád.

That hag bleared-eyed as vulture foul of show,
That hag ill-voiced as blackest corbie-crow,
When she received the word, set out forthright,
And gained Mount Bi-Sitún in doleful plight.
She came and sat her down hard by Ferhád,
And beat her breast a while and moaned full sad.

Then she, 'Unhappy one, for whom this toil?
For whom dost night and day thus strain and moil?'
And he, 'My heart 's athirst her lip to drain,
And so I rive the rocks and hills atwain.

'Who brings from thorn the bloom, from rock the stream,
Hath shown me mid this Mount His Beauty's beam.'

Then she of bitter deed full deeply sighed:

'Ah! Ferhád doth not know Shírn hath died!
Alas! where is that sweetest Cypress now!
Before the blast of Death laid stark and low!

'Ah! where that winsome one, that gracious fere!
What villainy hath wrought the tyrant Sphere!'

'They 've laved her frame with many a bitter tear,
'They 've plied the ambergris and the 'abir;
'They 've laid that radious Pearl within the clay;
'Tis souls, not robes, they 've rent: ah, wel-a-way!'

She ceased, and sighed and dreary moan did make;
Her tongue showered venom even as a snake.
How comes it, when this evil thing she swore,
She fell not, burnt to ashes then and there?

How when that mole, those dusky locks she named,
She was not stricken dumb, black-visaged, shamed?

When into Ferhád's ears those words had sunk,
Thou'dst deemed he had of mortal poison drunk.

1 Made manifest through Shírn who had visited him there.
2 See p. 44, n. 3.
3 'Abir is an unguent made of various perfumes. After a corpse is washed and shrouded, perfumes are burned beside it and sprinkled over it.
Away he dashed, as one whose bonds are broke,
And hurled him headlong from the topmost rock.
Adown the mount like a great rock he went,
A-wailing for his bitter dreariment.
He struck the ground and cried, 'Where? Shirin! Where?'
And yielded up his soul in anguish there.
His bird was weary of this narrow nest, 1
And fled in highest Heaven's fields to rest.
He learned the body is the spirit's veil:
The veil is rent, and cast aside the bale.

1 His 'bird' is his soul; the 'nest,' the body, or perhaps, the world.
Somewhere about the year 785 (1383), when the Ottoman throne was occupied by Sultan Murad I and when Ahmedí was writing his Iskender-Náme, there arose a new Prophet in the Eastern lands. This was Fazl-ullah the son of Abu-Muhammed of Tebríz, surnamed el-Hurúfi or 'the Literalist.' Almost all we know concerning the life of this teacher is contained in the following brief passage from the Arab historian Ibn-Hajar whose work we have already referred to when speaking of Cadi Burhán-ud-Din. ¹ 'Fazl-ullah,' says this biographer, 'was one of the ascetics among the innovators. He was of the heretics, and finally he originated the sect which is known as the Hurúfís (i. e. Literalists); and he gave out that the letters were metamorphoses of men, together with many other groundless fictions. And he called the Emir Timur the Lame to his heresy. And he (Timur) sought to slay him (Fazl-ullah). And this came to the knowledge of his (Timur's) son — for he (Fazl-ullah) had taken refuge with him (Timur's son) — and so he (Timur's son) smote off his (Fazl-ullah's) head with his own hand. And this came to the knowledge of Timur, whereupon he demanded his head

¹ See p. 205.
and his body, and he burned them both in this year, to wit, the year 804 (1390-2).

Our knowledge regarding the doctrines taught by Fazl-ullah is not very much greater than our information as to his life; for although several manuscripts of his own and his disciples' works have been for long preserved in some of the great public libraries of Europe, these works remained quite unnoticed till the year 1898, when Mr. E. G. Browne published an article on the Hurufi Sect in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. 1 Fazl-ullah himself was, so far as is known, the author of three works, namely, the Javidan-Name 2 or 'Eternal-Book,' the Mahab بت-Name or 'Book of Love,' and a poem called 'Arsh-Name or 'The Book of the Throne.' 3 The most important known Hurufi work — other than those due to Fazl-ullah — is the I st iwa-Name or 'Book of the Ascent,' which was composed subsequent to 828 (1424-5) by Emur Ghiyas-ud-Din Muhammed. 4 All these

1 To this article, which, apart from one or two Turkish poems, forms the only source of information concerning the Hurufi doctrines accessible to me, I am indebted for most of what is said in the present chapter regarding the tenets of the sect.

2 As Mr. Browne points out, in an interesting account of this work in his Catalogue of the Persian MSS., belonging to the University of Cambridge, its correct title is Javidan-Name-i-Kebir or 'The Great Eternal (Book);' but the Turkish Hurufi poets always refer to it simply as the Javidan-Name.

3 The title 'Arsh-Name or 'Book of the Throne' has reference to the last word of the Koranic text ُثْثُم أَسْمَىَ عَلَىٰ أَذْنَاسِ Thamme 'stea al-arsh.' Then He (God) ascended upon the Throne,' a text which is constantly quoted or alluded to by the Hurufis with whom the 'Throne' represents Man. It was, according to Kethib Chelebi, on account of this book that Fazl-ullah was put to death by 'the Sword of the Law.' It is not quite certain whether there is a copy of the Arsh-Name in Europe: Mr. Browne found a poem in the metre in which the Arsh-Name is known to be written, bound up with a copy of the Istiwa-Name in a MS. belonging to the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. He conceives this may be Fazl-ullah's poem; but is not yet fully satisfied as to the identity.

4 This book has been described by Mr. Browne in his article in the J. R. A. S.
books are in the Persian language, and all, except the 'Arsh-Nâme, are in prose. They are, however, very hard to understand, as they are full of contractions and enigmatic symbols, the precise meaning of which it is not always possible to determine, which indeed were made use of in order to conceal the conceptions they indicate from the eyes of the heretic-hunting orthodox. The task of discovering what were the special features of Fazl-ullah's teaching is rendered yet more difficult by the fact that the Hurufi books, like most of their class, are utterly unsystematic in their arrangement. Mr. Browne has, however, been able to extricate from this seemingly hopeless tangle the following four points which appear to be the most prominent of the peculiar doctrines of the Hurufi sect: — ¹

1. There exists a hidden science, to acquire which is at once the supreme duty and the supreme happiness of man, indicating and explaining the meaning and significance of all things in Heaven above and in earth beneath, and the mystical correspondences which unite them.

2. This hidden science is contained in the Koran; but the key which unlocks it was in the hands of Fazl-ullah, and, after him, passed to his Successor. By them it was disclosed to the believers.

3. Man, created in the Image of God, 'in the Best of Forms,' ² is the Microcosm, the Book of God, the Throne on which God ascended when He had finished the creation of all inferior and subordinate creatures, ³ an Object of

The title is taken from the second word in the Koranic text quoted in the preceding note. For the usual acceptation of the term 'Arsh, see p. 35.

¹ These are transferred (slightly condensed) from Mr. Browne's article.
² This expression is Koranic: in ch. xcv, v. 4, we read: 'We have indeed created man in the best of forms.'
³ Referring to the Koranic text quoted in n. 3, on the preceding page.
Worship to the Angels, save Iblis (Satan) who waxed proud and refused. ¹

4. While there is a deep meaning of infinite significance both in the Koran and in the religious observances (prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, etc.) which it ordains, the merely literal meaning of the former and the merely formal fulfilment of the latter are entirely devoid of importance.

Among the most striking of the peculiarities special to Hurufi writings are the fanciful analogies referred to as 'mystical correspondences' in the first of the foregoing articles of belief. Perhaps the most favourite of these is the parallel set up between Man 'the Book of God' and the Koran, which is also the Book of God. This is worked out in detail; thus the Head or Face of Man corresponds to the Fatiha or Opening Chapter of the Koran; and as the latter comprises Seven Signs or Verses, ² so in the Face of Man are there Seven Signs or Lines, namely, the hair, two eyebrows, and four rows of eyelashes,—which Seven Signs or Lines he brings with him when he issues from the womb of Eve, who is therefore styled the 'Mother of the Book,' ³ a title which she shares along with the Fatiha and with the Face of Man as corresponding to the Fatiha.

It is, however, to the mystic significations which he attributed to the letters of the alphabet and to combinations of

¹ This refers to the Koranic story mentioned in n. 5, p. 119.
² Whence the Fatiha is sometimes called Seb-ul-Mesani or 'The Seven of the Repetition.' This term, which is frequently used by Hurufi writers, is borrowed from the Koran itself, where in ch. xv. v. 87, we read 'And we have already brought thee the Seven of the Repetition,'—the reference being to the Fatiha.
³ Of this term, Umm-ul-Kitab, which also is Koranic, occurring in iii, 5, and elsewhere, various interpretations are given: some say it refers to the Fatiha (this is the usual opinion); some, to the fundamental parts of the Koran; others, to the Preserved Tablet on which is inscribed the original of the Koran (see p. 35); and so on.
these that Fazl-ulláh owes his distinctive title of Hurúfí, that is, ‘He of the Letters,’ ‘the Literalist,’ a title which was straightway adopted by or given to the sect he founded. As an example of the fantastic way in which the letters were dealt with, Mr. Browne cites the treatment of the first verse of the much-suffering Fátiha. The 18 letters contained in this verse are taken to represent the 18,000 worlds, of which, according to an ancient Eastern tradition already mentioned, the universe consists. ¹ Now the Sum of the Universe, as we have seen before, ² is sometimes expressed by ‘God plus What is beside God.’ If we take away the 4 letters which in Arabic form Alláh or ‘God’ from 18, we have 14, which number therefore represents the ‘What is beside God,’ i.e. the phenomenal or material universe, all contingent existence. This same number 14, to which the Hurúfís seem to have attached great importance, they get at in another way. The Arabic alphabet which, according to them, represents the Sum of the Universe, i.e. ‘God plus What is beside God,’ consists of 28 letters; if we deduct what they call the ‘fourteen letters of God,’ ³ we have again 14 letters left to represent the ‘What is beside.’ Scarcely less importance was attached to the number 32, which represents the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet plus the 4 letters added thereto by the Persians.

Mr. Browne, in the interesting and valuable paper of which I have made so free a use, gives many more particulars concerning this strange and little-known sect in which he

¹ See p. 54.
² See p. 181, n. 1.
³ Perhaps, the 14 letters contained in the formula "اللَّهُ لا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ the Fourteen Letters of the Koran,” i.e. the 14 different detached letters which stand at the beginning of certain chapters of the Koran.
traces a resemblance to the old Isma'îls on the one hand and to the modern Babis on the other. Enough, however, has been said for our purpose here. We need only add that Hurufism was in no sense a new religion, it was merely a Muhammedan, or more strictly, a Sufi sect; the Javidân-Name and other books of Fazîl-ullah make no pretension to abrogate or even to supersede the Koran, they simply expound it in a peculiar fashion of their own. Again the cabalistic science known as 'Ilm-i Huruf or the ‘Science of the Letters’ (i.e. Onomancy), whence the sect gets its name, is among the oldest branches of occult lore, while we have come across more than one reference to the virtues of the Letters conceived as elements of Words, themselves the expression of Thought. Here Fazîl-ullah did but work up afresh ancient materials which he found ready to his hand, and adapt them to the requirements of his special theories. Thus again is exemplified what we learned in the First Chapter to look upon as one of the most striking characteristics of Eastern thought, namely, the persistence of ideas once accepted, and the recurrent appearance of these, more or less modified or disguised to meet the exigencies of altered conditions.

The distinctive feature of Hurufism as presented by the Turkish poets is, however, neither the cabalistic notion of an occult virtue attaching to the letters, nor the fantastic analogies imagined between sacred texts and members of the human frame; it is the deification of man conceived as the Divine theophany. The roots of this conception, which underlies all the writings of Nesîmî and Râfi', may be discovered in the mystic's watch-word, ‘Whoso knoweth himself knoweth his Lord,’ in the philosopher's presentment of man as the microcosm containing in miniature within himself all that exists in the great cosmos without, and in that ideal, common to thinkers of both schools, of the
Perfect Man. But the Hurufis pushed these ideas farther and in a direction other than originally intended, for they extended to the body what was meant to apply only to the Soul. The apotheosis of the merely material part of man was perhaps a not unnatural outcome of the pantheism which had prevailed for ages upon every hand; and it may be that a consciousness on the part of the 'ulema of the imminence of such danger contributed in some measure to the ruthlessness wherewith the sect was hunted down. In any case, it is this presentation of humanity, or at least of the beautiful members of humanity, as the proper objects of worship and adoration, that distinguishes the Hurufi poets from all other Turkish writers, and that caused the adherents of this sect to be regarded by the orthodox as the most impious of blasphemers.
The best-known of the Turkish Hurūfī poets is the gifted and devoted Seyyid ʿImad-ud-Dīn, famous in the national literature under his makhlas of Nesimi. With the exception of ʿAshiq, who connects him with Amed or Diyār-bekr, the biographers are agreed that he was a native of a place called Nesim in the district of Baghdad, whence, they say, his pen-name of Nesimi. ʿAshiq and ʿAli are probably correct in making him of Turkman extraction, as the regions of ʿIraq are largely peopled by clans and families of that race. That there was an Arab somewhere, however, in his genealogical tree is indicated by his title of Seyyid, a title given to those alone who can trace descent from the Prophet.

Latifi, the biographer who is responsible for the statement that Nesimi and Sheykhi met one another at Brusa, says that the former poet came to Rūm in the time of Murād Khan Ghazi. The Sultan here meant must be Murād I who reigned from 761 (1359) to 792 (1390), and not Murād II, as ʿAli imagines, seeing that the latter monarch did not succeed till 824 (1421), four years after the execution of the poet.

The details of Nesimi's life are unrecorded; but it is clear, alike from his own poems and from the meagre scraps of information to be gleaned from biographers and historians, that his was one of those eager, subtle, enthusiastic natures that have at no time been uncommon among Eastern peoples, natures to which the quest of Truth is the one thing needful, which pursue the same with intensest fervour and most single-minded devotion, and which, when they have
found what they believe to be the sought-for Light, welcome it with a passionate love which in the delirium of its exaltation sets them beside themselves, frenzied, and reckless of all else in existence.

Before he fell in with Fazl-ullāh the Hurūfī, Nesīmī had, in pursuit of this need of his soul, frequented other mystic teachers of the day, and, if we may believe Latifi, had formed some connection with the sect or school founded by Sheykh Shibli, a famous Sufi saint of early times. It was in all probability from Fazl-ullāh's own lips that Nesīmī learned the Hurūfī doctrines. That the two men were personally acquainted seems almost certain; the language of the Ottoman biographers points to this, as also do the allusions and anecdotes in the Hurūfī books. There can at any rate be no doubt that the Turkish poet had accepted the doctrines of the Persian teacher some time before the latter perished at the hands of Timur's son. This is shown by an anecdote in the Istiwa-Name, in which the author Ghiyās-ud-Dīn tells of a discussion between himself and Fazl-ullāh on certain technical points in Nesīmī's poems which took place at a conference where these poems were being read. The poet must therefore have embraced the Hurūfī doctrines some time before the year 804 (1401-2).

Not content with being a disciple, Nesīmī became a missionary, and made at least one convert whose name is remembered to the present day. This is the poet Refī'ī, a manuscript of whose Beshāret-Name or 'Book of Glad Tidings' is preserved in the British Museum. In this book, which was written in 811 (1409), the author speaks of Nesīmī, his

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1 Sheykh Shibli was born at Sāmarā in ʿIrāq in 247 (861-2), and died in Baghdad in 334 (945-6).

2 Latifi's statement derives some colour from the fact that Nesimī mentions Shibli from time to time in his Diwān.

Add. 5,986.
spiritual guide, with the greatest reverence and affection; and as he alludes to the bonds and imprisonments uncomplainingly endured by his dear master, it is probable that even by this time the indiscreet zeal of Nesimi had aroused the hostility of the ulama.

Towards the end of his career Nesimi seems to have cast aside every shred of self-control. His Hurufism would appear to have fallen into the background, and Mansur-i Hallaj, the martyr-cestatic, to have become his paragon. It was not enough for him to extol this beloved exemplar, to flout and revile his blinded executioners, and to declare that a death such as his was the highest bliss the Lover could attain. Such conduct, though naturally reprehensible in the eyes of the orthodox, might have been overlooked; but Nesimi, possessed by a conviction that the Day of Grace was come, and that they to whom God had revealed the truth must no more keep silence, roamed the country crying aloud the very words for uttering which Mansur had perished, — those mysterious and awful words, *I am The Truth! I am God!* which, whatever their import on the lips of the mystic devotee, are rank blasphemy in the eye of the Canon Law of Islam.

In vain did Shah Khandan, Nesimi’s own brother and, like himself, a dervish mystic, seek to restrain this all too fervid ardour; in vain did he appeal to the poet to respect the sacred mysteries of their faith and cease proclaiming them in the face of the unworthy multitude.

*Look ye, unto none disclose that Secret Word;*
*Feed not from the Chosen’s board the common herd!*  
he wrote; but Nesimi vouchsafed no reply save these verses from one of his poems: —

1 See p. 21, n. 2.
Nesimí courted his doom. Never was saint or confessor of the early Church more eager to win the martyr’s crown than this dervish poet. It was in the city of Aleppo that his heart’s desire came to him. There, by the Arab ulemá — the city was then in the hands of the Egyptian Mameliks — was Nesimí found guilty of blasphemy on the evidence of his own poems, and condemned to be flayed alive.

Concerning his death ʻAlí tells the following story. Among those present to witness the execution was the Muftí of Aleppo by whose fetwa the poet was condemned. This legist waxed vehement in denunciation of his victim, and pointing towards him, cried, ‘Unclean is he! unclean is his death! did but one drop of his blood touch any limb, that limb must needs be cut off!’ Just then a drop of Nesimí’s blood, spiriting forward, fell upon the Muftí’s finger and stained it red. An ancient Súfi, who was standing near, observed this and said, ‘In accordance with your own fetwa, Muftí, it is now become needful that your finger be cut off.’ ‘Ah,’ replied the legist, ‘it fell on me while I was exemplifying; so legally naught is needful.’ 3 Nesimí saw what had passed,

1 The great ocean which according to the ancient tradition surrounds the earth. See p. 38.
2 This refers to a well-known phrase in exemplifying is no evil, which is used by teaching members of the ʻulemá when they show or explain to their pupils how canonically to perform certain actions. The Muftí here of course perverts the meaning of the phrase to make it suit his own purpose.
and from the hands of the tormentors rebuked the cowardly evasion by this extemporized couplet: —

'So thou'd cut the zealot’s finger, from the truth he turns and flees!
'To, this hapless Lover weeps not though they flay him head to foot!' 1

According to Katib Chelebi this tragedy took place in the year 820 (1417-8).

So perished he whom the Hurufi books entitle the Beati
fied Martyr; but it is very doubtful whether it really was
for Hurufiism that Nesimi laid down his life. Latifi distinctly
says that what led to his condemnation was the following
verse: —

Mansiir declared 'I am The Truth!' His words were truth, 'twas truth he spake;
Nor aught of dole was in his doom, by aliens on the gibbet hanged. 2

If this is so, it is clear that at any rate the avowed reason
of the poet’s execution was not his connection with the
Hurufi heretics, but his unlawful proclamation of a well-known
and widely spread Sufi tenet.

It is evident from the sympathetic tone which they adopt
towards Nesimi that this was the opinion of the old biogra-
phers. Those writers were all professedly orthodox Muslims
and would not have dared — even had they so desired — to express their admiration of the obstinate adherent of a
notorious heresiarch; but on the other hand they, or at least
most of them, and of their readers also, were more or less
imbued with Sufistic ideas, and in their hearts felt and
believed far more truly after the fashion of Nesimi the Man-
surian than after that of his orthodox executioners. The only

1 رآذقداً بیل پرینغئسکسلا دپنر حکدن دنجر
2 منسیر ایا لغچ سیبلدی حلف در سری حلف سیبلدی آنیلک جیلیسی غم دکل بیپکانندن بردار ایم ش
notable exception is ‘Ashiq Chelebi who dismisses Nesîmî in a few somewhat contemptuous lines which show sufficiently that his sympathies were with the ʿulemâ. But this writer appears to have had an unusual aversion to mystics of every class, an aversion which he is at little pains to conceal, and for which he is repeatedly and severely castigated by Esrâr Dede the special biographer of the Mevlevî poets.

As they give some idea of how far men ostensibly orthodox could forget their orthodoxy in the presence of Sûfî enthusiasm, it will be interesting and instructive to reproduce the remarks made by those biographers who are apologists for Nesîmî when dealing with the crucial subjects of his alleged crime and his execution.

Latîfî, ¹ who describes Nesîmî as ‘the Dauntless Champion of the Field of Love, the Glorious Sacrifice of the Kaʿba of Affection,’ says, ‘Whoso knoweth not from what Station he (Nesîmî) uttered that Word (I am The Truth!) and hath not found annihilation in the Essential Unity, can have no understanding of his case. Towards the close of his life, attraction from the World Unseen laid hold on him, and many a time was he beside himself, when, powerless of self-restraint and self-control, he would publish and proclaim Mysteries which it is needful to conceal.’ ‘In the terminology of the Sheykhs (i.e. Mystics) they call this Station Qurb-i Feraʾiz. ² It is the Station wherein the Lover passeth from

¹ I translate from a MS. of Latîfî’s Tezkire in my collection, which is here and in many other places fuller than the printed edition.

² The term Qurb-i Feraʾiz which means ‘The Proximity (to God) resulting from (the Observance of) the Things Commanded,’ is thus explained in the Dictionary of the Technical Terms used in the Sciences of the Musulmans, edited by Sprenger and Lees, 1862: ‘This is the entire annihilation of the worshipper from consciousness of all created existences, including even his own, in such a way that naught remaineth in his view save the existence of The Truth. And this is the meaning of ‘the annihilation of the worshipper in God.’ And it is the fruit of the (observance of the) things commanded.’
himself and cometh one with the Beloved. Its similitude in external things is the annihilation of individuality in the rain-drop that falleth into the sea. Whoso looketh merely at the outside thereof seeth blasphemy; but in the eyes of the initiate it is the Perfect Faith. And it is blasphemy in the eyes of them who see but the outside, for this that it is a strange whirlpool hard by the stead of blasphemy. And should anyone (which God forbid), ere he hath reached that Station and become united with The Truth, speak such words through blind imitation, that indeed were blasphemy.’

‘At length the Arab Imams in the city of Aleppo, saying, “Outwardly this word is contrary to the Sacred Law,” gave judgment that he be put to death; and hearkening not, neither listening to the interpretation of his saying, did they flay him. They looked but to the outside of the word, and went the way of the Law; for the point at which look the executors of the Law is the outside, and not what is hidden and what is meant.’

Hasan Chelebi writes, in the grandiloquent and ultra-Persian style that he affects: ‘The reins of self-restraint and free-will passed from the hand of his control, and as the delirium of Love overmastered the Sultan Reason, involuntarily was he instant in the divulgement of the Mysteries and in the discovery of the Secrets; and he proclaimed in every marketplace things which alike by reason and by the Law it is needful to conceal. Therefore in the city of Aleppo, by judgment of the Imams of the Law, was he slain on the field of Love and Passion, and laved in the cleansing water of Martyrdom. In very truth, when the Sultan of the throne of Love and Ardour, upraising the ensigns of victory and mastery complete, would hurl the vanquished of the field of amaze into the abyss of disaster and calamity, and would part the bewildered reelers in the waste of terror and amaze from
the companion Reason and the guide Understanding, their feeble hearts (which are the treasuries of the mysteries of truth) become powerless to conceal the secrets of the Godhead, and their frail bodies (which are the bearers of the burden of the Trust) chafe against carrying the load of the Law; so perforce do sighs and groans issue from their woeful souls, and that veiled converse is made public as the day, and the hidden secret becometh manifest to the world.

It is even as saith that Pilgrim of the Typal and the Real, that Leader of the Field of Love, that Know^er of the Secret, Khoja Hafiz of Shiráz: —

‘My heart from hand escapeth! O men of heart! By Heaven!
‘Woe ’s me! My Secret Hidden will now to all be given!’

Those extracts throw a flood of light on the real attitude towards religious subjects of the vast majority of cultured Turks before the days of the Western learning.

Latifi, perhaps anxious to screen the ‘Dauntless Champion of the Field of Love’ from the opprobrium of connection with an heretical sect of ill repute, mentions a report that Nesimi was not actually a Hurufi of the sect of Fazl-ullah, but was merely a proficient in the cabalistic science dealing

\[1\] The Trust, this is a reference to the Koranic text, xxxiii, 72: ‘Verily, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and shrank from it: but man bore it.’ The orthodox commentators generally explain this ‘trust’ from which the mightiest objects in nature shrank, but which man accepted, to be the Faith with the tremendous responsibilities this involves. The mystics however interpret it to be the esoteric doctrine, and say that in the ‘man’ who bears it we are to see the Lover, he who alone is ‘Man’ in the highest sense.

So in this passage Hasan means that they who bear this tremendous burden of awful knowledge, from which the very heavens and earth recoiled, have no strength left to patiently support the yet further load of the external and ceremonial Law.

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