the people, but that the poet's two pupils, Sehi and Sunî, declare that he wrote two mesnevis, 'one called Gul u Sabá or 'Rose and Zephyr' in a variety of the hezej metre, and one named Mihr u Mäh or 'Sun and Moon' in a variety of the rejez metre. The biographer goes on to give, still on the authority of Sehi and Sunî, two passages, which he says are extracts from these two poems. 1 The first of these passages, which is descriptive of the Zephyr, is that said to be from the Gul u Sabá, and is as follows: —

O radiant pursuivant, O morning breeze,
Thy path is ever over lands and seas.
Thou heal'st the cypress and the narcissus' sight; 2
Ah, but for thee how sad the narcissus' plight!
When thy blest advent cheers the garden-land,
This opes its eye that on its foot doth stand 3
Speed there and greet my dearest love from me;
The Seven Seas 4 wet not the skirt 5 of thee! 6

The second passage given by Latiffi which he says comes

1 Latiffi must here be referring to some verbal information supplied by Sehi, as we have seen that that biographer mentions in his Tezkire only one mesnevî, by which he means this Munâzare-i Gul u Khusrev.
2 We have seen that the narcissus is often compared to an eye.
3 The narcissus opens its eye, the cypress stands on its foot, — the cypress being, as we know, often conceived as a tall graceful figure.
4 See vol. i, p. 38. The phrase 'the Seven Seas' often means all the oceans of the world.
5 Here the poet would show how honourable, and therefore how worthy to be Love's messenger, the Zephyr is. A person of honour is said to be pâk-dâmen, that is, 'clean-skirted', while one who is the reverse is described as ter-dâmen, that is, 'wet-skirted', — the skirt in the latter case being conceived as soiled with wine, etc. Now so pure is the skirt of the Zephyr that not even all the Seven Seas would suffice to make it ter, i. e. 'wet,' 'soiled.'
from the Mihr u Māh is the same as that given by Sehī as being from the Munázare-i Gul u Khusrev. These same lines, it may be said, are included in Nejátī’s Dīwān, where they occur among a number of miscellaneous fragments; but the passage quoted by Latiffī as being from the Gul u Sabā does not appear in any manuscript that I have seen.

According to ʿAshiq, Nejátī wrote in mesnevis a Leylā and Mejnūn, of which, however, he says, no trace is left beyond a few lines that are included in the poet’s Dīwān and the first of which the biographer quotes. This is simply the first couplet of the passage about the bow, from which it is evident that the poem which ʿAshiq calls Leylā u Mejnūn is the same as that which Latiffī calls Mihr u Māh, and which Sehī calls Munázare-i Gul u Khusrev.

ʿAshiq further says that Nejátī translated, by command of Prince Mahmūd, the Kīmiyā-yi Saʿādēt or ‘Elixir of Felicity’¹ of the great philosopher Imām Ghazālī, and also the work entitled Jāmīʿ-ul-Hikāyāt or ‘The Collector of Stories.’² Copies of the second of these translations are, the biographer adds, extremely rare; while he has heard that Nejátī’s autograph of the first (apparently the only copy) is in the possession of Prince Mahmūd’s daughters.

Hasan says nothing as to the existence of any work other than the Dīwān; but ʿAlī tells us that Nejátī began, at the command of Mahmūd, to write a mesnevi which like Sehī

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¹ This famous work, itself a Persian abridgement of the Arabic Iḥyā-ul-ʿUlūm (“Quickening of the Sciences”) has been several times translated into Turkish.

² This enormous collection of tales originally compiled early in the thirteenth century of our era, by the Persian author Jemāl-ud-Dīn el-ʿAwfī, has been rendered into Turkish more than once, the earliest translation being that made by the well-known Ibn-ʿAreb-Shāh for Murād II. [The correct title of the work is Jawāmiʿ-ul-Hikāyāt wa Lawāmiʿ-ur-Riwayāt. One of the best MSS, which I have seen is in the collection of Sir William Jones’s MSS. preserved in the India Office and marked w. 79. ed.].
he calls Munázare-i Gul u Khusrev and which, he says, was never finished, since the Prince died before it was completed, and Nejátí had not the heart to go on with it. Āli then presents as an extract from this book the same passage that Schí quotes as from the work to which he gives the same letter, and Latífí as from the Mihr u Máh, and Āshiq as from the Leylá u Mejnún. After this he goes on to question Āshiq's statements as to the poem's having been called Leylá u Mejnún and having been completed, and, more seriously, his remarks concerning the alleged translations of the Kímiyá-yí Sa`ádet and the Jámí-ul-Hikáyát, the existence of which he doubts, the more so as Schí Bey, who was Nejátí's intimate friend, says nothing in his Tezkíre about any such translations.

From these statements of Schí, Latífí, Āshiq and Āli, it would seem probable that Nejátí began at any rate one mesneví poem, the title of which is uncertain, the authorities giving it differently. It may well be that this poem was never completed, and that no copy of it, other than the author's autograph, ever existed. The lines upon the bow which are given by Schí and Latífí, and reproduced with only a few verbal alterations by Āshiq and Āli, are, as we have said, to be found in the poet's Díwán, and appear to be all of the work that has survived. Latífí is our sole authority for the existence of the other mesneví, that which he calls the Gul u Sabá and from which also he gives what he declares to be an extract. The other biographers say nothing whatever concerning this second poem, the existence of which must be considered as even more uncertain than that of the first. In the same way, with regard to the two prose translations, we have Āshiq's authority, and none other, as to their ever having been made.¹

¹ Kátib Chelebi seems to have followed Āshiq; he attributes to Nejátí a
The literary work of Nejáti is therefore practically confined to his Diwán; and this volume has been sufficient to win for him a distinguished position in Ottoman literature. It is true that Nejáti is not inspired in the sense that Nesi'mí was; he is an extremely self-conscious writer, he never for a moment forgets himself in his subject. None the less he is, judged by the standards of his school, the greatest Turkish poet that has yet appeared. He is more artistic, more subtle, more original than any of his predecessors. Although he is a follower in the footsteps of Ahmed, his work is not, like that of the pioneer, a mere collection of translations or adaptations; and if his verses lack somewhat of the virility of Jem's, they are infinitely more studied and refined. The Prince's poetry owes such originality as it has to the fact that the author put into it something of his own personality; the originality of Nejáti's work, on the other hand, is due to the imaginative ingenuity of the poet. His verses abound in graceful metaphors, which, though always conceived in the Persian spirit and presented after the Persian fashion, are not simply transferred from some Persian diwán, but are the result of the observation and the applicative skill of the author himself.

All the critics unite in recognising in Nejáti the best poet that has yet arisen in Rúm. His friend Sehi, though he does not descend into details, is naturally enthusiastic in his praisés both of the poet and of the man. Latílfí who wrote before the genius of Báqí had fully disclosed itself and while Fuzúlí was hardly known even by name in Constantinople, regards Nejáti as absolutely the greatest Turkish poet, and says that so long as his verses remain no other need attempt mesnúv in Leylá and Mejnán, and translations of the Kímiyá-yi Sa'det and the Jámi-ul-Hikáyát, but gives no details with regard to any one of them. He mentions a poem with the title of Mihr u Máh which he attributes to 'Alí the historian. He does not mention any Munázare-i Gul u Khusrev.
to compile a diwán. The same writer grows eloquent over the degree of excellence which the poet maintains throughout, an evenness of workmanship which makes the verses of others appear very unequal in comparison. He also praises the originality of Nejáti, who, he says, has a style which is wholly his own and quite unlike that of any other poet; 'in his verses rich in metaphors the language first found its soul, and those who have come after him have but followed him on the path of speech.' They who are able to judge, continues Latífi, call him, because of his skill in metaphor, the Túsí (i. e. Firdawsí) of Rúm and the King of Poets; and in order to show the appreciation of later followers of the craft, the biographer quotes two couplets, one of which, by Isháq Chelebi, a very well-known poet, is the following: —

'So thou desire thy verse be read and praised among the folk,
'It must, like to Nejáti's verse, be fraught with metaphor.'

Latífi goes on to declare that by the beauty of his style Nejáti threw the works of all his predecessors into the category of 'abrogated books'; and he says that the reason why everyone esteems his poetry so highly is its wonderful sweetness combined with its faithful interpretation of the lover's heart, and the appositeness of the metaphors with which it abounds.

'Ashiq is hardly less enthusiastic; he says that Nejáti turned the land of Rúm into a garden of nightingales and a sugar-grove of parrots, and that he saved the poets of his country from being wounded by the stones of reproach which

1. شعروسک دنرسک اوقتنه مقبال خلفه اوله
 صافی نجمتی شعرا کی پسر مکل کرک
The other couplet quoted by Latífi is by Tálli, a writer of less note.

2. This phrase is borrowed from theology; it is applied to the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospel, which, though of Divine origin, were abrogated as guides for conduct on the revelation of the Koran.
the Persian poets were wont to cast at them. Comparing Nejáti with his precursor Ahmed Pasha, 'Ashiq declares that although the Pasha is unique in the art, and although when studying the relative positions of the poets the mind comes back to him, yet the difference between him and Nejáti is as that between sorcery and miracle or as that between the radiance of the sun and the light of a taper. Contrasting this poet’s work with that of his successor Zátí, the same critic asserts that while the poetry of the latter is a forced production, the result of sheer labour, that of Nejáti is a natural gift which finds expression without effort. 'Ashiq, like Latífí, praises Nejáti for the equal excellence his verse maintains throughout, for his pithy metaphors, and for the originality of so many of his conceptions. He considers him the ‘First Master’ of the poets of Rúm, and says that many of his lines are used as proverbs; it was, adds the biographer, a marvel that in that age so brilliant a poet should arise.

Hasan sings the praises of Nejáti in his usual florid style, eulogising especially his skill in the ghazel and in metaphor, in proof of his excellence in which he quotes this couplet by his (the biographer’s) own father Qínáli-záde ʻAlí: —

ʻShould every poet write ghazels e’en to earth’s latest year,
ʻNone skilled in metaphor like to Nejáti would appear.’

ʻAlí endorses the verdict of the earlier critics, except in one point, that of the even level of excellence in Nejáti’s work. This he denies, adding that had it been there, it would have been proper to describe this poet as the Háfiz of Rúm. The historian Idrís, who wrote in Persian the chronicles of the first eight Ottoman Sultans under the title of Hesht Bihisht or ‘The Eight Paradises,’ speaks highly of Nejáti,

حشرود گچر شاعر و تمام دیسه شعر و غزل
کلمه‌یه کمسه نجاتی کیمی معتبر فی المثل

1
whom he names the Khusrev of Rûm. The correctness of this title is disputed by 'Abî, who, while he admits that if it means no more than to imply that Nejâtî is a Chosroës or King in comparison to the Turkish poets who preceded him it is quite appropriate, declares that it is futile if the intention be to set up any analogy between Nejâtî and the Persian poet Khusraw of Delhi whose romances are as famous as his lyrics.

Latifi says that as many of Nejâtî's poems were written in Qastamuni where he grew up, there frequently occur in his verses words peculiar to that district as well as allusions to local customs. By way of illustration he quotes three couplets from the Diwân, of which the first, brought forward to show a dialectic peculiarity, is this: —

'Thou see'st that beauty's figure fair, O gardener of grace,
'Go thou and rear a waving cypress like unto that form.'

The second, which contains the name of a locality in Qastamuni, runs: —

'The mountains of my needs and hopes will well suffice for me;
'The Hill of Bi-Sitûn was to Ferhád the Wishing-Rock.'

Commenting on this verse, Latifi says that the word أُفَرُوُرُ here means 'rear', being the imperative of أَفَرُوُرُ, a verb used in the Qastamuni dialect in the sense of 'to rear (plants)'; thus they say there فَلَأْنَ دَمَسَ آيَوُ ذَلَّانَ أَفَرَوُرُ 'so and so is skilful in the rearing (or grafting) of plants.' Certainly the word in this sense does not occur in the dictionaries, and is unknown in ordinary Turkish.

Latifi says that here the 'Wishing-Rock' (Temennâ-Qayasi) refers to a high tower built on a black rock so called that stands in the town of Qastamuni; a place apparently to which people used to go and wish for some desired thing. The meaning of the couplet is that the needs and hopes of the poet, which
The third, which shows a word employed in a special sense, is: —

'If thou seek for one to pity, pity poor Nejá́ti, for
'Neither sweetheart's lip nor rival's sweetmeat hath his portion been.'

'Ashiq, who possibly thought to enhance the value of his own Tezkire by disparaging that of his predecessor, which he facetiously calls the Qastamuni-Ná́me or 'Qastamuni-Book,' disputes the assertion that words and allusions pointing to Qastamuni are to be found in Nejá́ti's Diwán. He says that Latíffí's statement that Nejá́ti was a Qastamuni man and his deduction of this from the word used for 'rear', from the mention of the 'Wishing-Rock', and from the peculiar use of the true 'portion', are well-known, and he then proceeds to show that the said deduction is unwarranted, seeing that there is a 'Wishing-Rock' at Amasiya also, while

Latíffí says that there is here an amphibology in the word used for 'portion' (nasíb); this name, he says, is given in Qastamuni to the sweet stuffs distributed to the poor after a death in order that they may pray for the soul of the deceased, a custom still observed in some towns of Asia Minor. 'Sweetheart's lip' (leb-i dilber) and 'rivals sweetmeat' (helwá-yi raqíb) were the names of confections; the poet Ahí mentions the latter in his romance of Beauty and Heart.

The meaning of the verse is that the poet is pre-eminently deserving of pity, since it has not been his lot either to kiss his sweetheart's lip or to eat the 'portion' at his rival's death, the implication being that the latter is unhappily still alive.

1 Ashiq in his notice on Latíffí says that this nick-name of Qastamuni-Ná́me was given to that biographer's Tezkire by the wits of the time, because the author, a Qastamuni man, zealous apparently for the fame of his native town, unwarrantably makes it the birth-place of many poets concerning whose birth-place there is a doubt. Hasan, who follows 'Ashiq in so many details, repeats these remarks concerning Latíffí and his 'Qastamuni-Ná́me.'
the word 'portion' is used in many towns of Anatolia for the sweet stuffs distributed after a death.

These remarks of 'Ashiq's are, as 'Ali afterwards pointed out, very unfair. In the first place, Latifi does not claim Nejáti as a Qastamuni man; he distinctly says that he came from Adrianople, though he grew up in the Asian town; again, he does not deduce a Qastamuni origin from the verses quoted, but brings these forward merely as illustrating the influence on the poet's work of his residence in that district.

Like most of the Díváns of early times that of Nejáti consists almost entirely of qasídas and ghazels, together with a few poems in the form called Terkib-Bend. 1 In his case, between the two great divisions which contain the qasídas and ghazels respectively are inserted several fragments and short miscellaneous poems, among which are the lines about the bow said by the biographers to be an extract from a mesnevi. 2

The following ghazel must be among Nejáti's earliest poems; it is one of the two which Hasan's grandfather Mirí says were brought by the Qastamuni caravan to Ahmed Pasha at Brusa.

Ghazel. [91]

Through this wrong, that cup should buss the lip of thee a-turn a-turn. 3
Roast my liver is at fire of jealousy a-turn a-turn. 4

How may this be meet, that though I make my body as hoop, 5
Yet the sash should clip thy waist in front of me a-turn a-turn? 6

1 See vol. i, p. 91.
2 The Díwan of Nejáti is unprinted. There is a MS. in the British Museum (Add. 7929), and there are two copies in my collection.
3 i. e. that while I may not kiss thy lip the wine-cup may do so as it circles at the feast.
4 See p. 37, n. 2.
5 The poet's body has been bent down through anguish of love so that it has assumed the shape of a hoop; and a hoop, by its shape, might encircle the beloved's waist.
6 The sash is twisted two or three times round the waist.
Thou art yonder Heaven-high Sovran 'fore whose threshold day and night
Sun and moon do kiss the dust for modesty a-turn a-turn. ¹

What although mine eyes should be like to the compass and alway
Yonder toward thy threshold look where'er they be, a-turn a-turn? ²

By his tears and sighs a water-wheel Nejáti is become,
So that flowery garth, thy dwelling, waters he a-turn a-turn. ³

Here are a few couplets from the ‘Winter Qasída’ which Hasan tells us that Nejáti presented to Sultan Mehemmed on coming to Constantinople.

From a Qasída [92]

For that the locust-snowflakes are descended through the air,
From the green fields of joy, O heart, hope for no harvest fair,
The clouds have, like to angry camels, flecked the earth with foam; ⁴
The litters of mirth’s caravan are bounden, hence to fare.
Ah where is yonder taper bright, the world-illuming sun? —
That one might light it, and the snowflake-moths make disappear. ⁵
The wind hath hurled the stream within a fort of steely ice,
Right hard 'twill be an so the solar ball no breach make there. ⁶
The folk at midday seek the sun with lighted lamps in hand:
They find it not, and every heart becomes a fire for care.

Sun of the Sign Benevolence! Shade of the Grace of God!

¹ When the sun and moon in their revolutions round the earth touch the horizon, they are often represented as kissing the dust before some King’s portals. Here of course the Sovran is the beloved.

² Wherever the (Muhammedan) compass be, it always points towards the holy shrine of Mekka: so wherever the poet is, his eyes always turn towards that sacred shrine, his beloved’s dwelling-place.

³ When the water-wheel, such as is used for the irrigation of gardens, is being turned it makes a creaking noise, to which the poet here compares his sighs, his tears representing the water which the wheel raises.

⁴ Camels sometimes get unruly when being saddled for a journey. The ‘foam’ of course here represents the snowflakes.

⁵ As moths are destroyed by a lamp or candle, flying into it and being burned, so the snowflakes would be melted by the sun.

⁶ Here the sun, because of its shape and heat, is considered as a cannon-ball.
Monarch of starry legions! Moon of Mercurial sphere!  
The Khan Mehemmed, to whose palace-gate, as Heaven sublime,  
Would Cyrus and Darius fain as humble slaves repair!  
Although the sun should sound with golden line till the Last Day,  
Or shore or bottom to his glory’s sea ’twould come to ne’er!  

The following is a translation of the whole of the ‘spring Qasida’ which Hasan says the poet offered to the same Sultan a little later on. It will be seen that the poem is really in honour of the nuptials of one of Mehemmed’s sons, the celebration of the return of the vernal season serving as introduction.

Qasída. [93]

The tide of early spring doth make the earth to smile again,  
E’en as the tristful lover’s soul who wins his dear to gain.  
The party of the flowers is quit the winter-magistrate;  
Their heads are bare, their dulcet-savoured cups in hand they’ve ta’en.  
’Tis now the beaker’s turn, the season of liesse, they say,  
‘An thou be wise, beware thou cast it not from thee in vain!’  
Each lovesome burgeon which hath donned its cap on rakish wise  
Meseems a winsome wanton beauty flushed with sweet disdain.

1 The word ‘sphere’ is not used technically here; the idea is merely that the position of the Sultan, who, surrounded by his hosts, is glorious as the full moon amid the stars, is lofty as the Sphere of Mercury. See vol. i. p. 43.
2 Here the sun is presented as endeavouring to sound the ocean of the Sultan’s glory with the golden line of his rays.
3 Winter, the rigour of which prevents the flowers from blooming, is here conceived as the police magistrate whose duty it is to preserve order by repressing drinking-parties and so on. See p. 77, n. 2.
4 In poetry ‘bare-headed’ is generally equivalent to ‘half-drunk’, for when a man becomes intoxicated he is apt to throw off his turban, or the turban itself may fall off his head as he reels about.
   In the present verse, by the flowers’ heads being bare, the poet means to indicate the opening of the buds, and secondly, of course, that spring is the season of revelry.
5 The ‘cups’ are of course the buds.
6 The ‘cap’ is simply the bud.
God hath prepared the greeny herbs like Khizrs all around
To rescue those who have been whelmed amid the seas of bane.¹
To draw the tender herbs from forth the prison dure of earth
The grace of God hath fashioned into cords the falling rain.²
Belike this verdant sward is e'en the Resurrection-field,
And so upon one foot there standeth many and many a plane.³
Say, are they tulips, those that show upon the meadow fair,
Or are they Tartar musk-pods lying there with gory stain;⁴
Or elsewhere rolls of musk the which the tulip-land hath wrapped
In crimson say, as offering to the garden-bride full fain?⁵
The tulips put theriaca their ruby pots within
What time they saw the river creeping snake-like o'er the plain.⁶
The streamlet goes to kiss the ground before some cypress dear,
And wandering round and round, it sings the while a sweet refrain.
Illumining mine eyes, the lawn hath shown to them the sun
And all the floret-stars the which the meadow-skies contain.⁷

¹ For Khizr, who is generally conceived as clad in green, and his work of
rescuing the faithful, see vol. i, p. 172, n. 1.
² The heavy showers seem as if formed of cords of rain, cords by which
the green herbs are drawn up, like Joseph out of the pit, from their under-
ground winter prison.
³ To stand on one foot, only the toe-tips of the other touching the ground,
is with the poets the conventional attitude of awe; thus it is often said to
be assumed by courtiers and others when in the presence of kings.
Here of course the trunk of the tree suggests the one foot or leg.
⁴ The 'musk-pod' is the cyst or gland of the musk-deer which contains the
fluid whence musk is obtained. See vol. i, p. 294, n. 4. Tartary or Cathay
(Khatā) and China are the native regions of the musk-deer.
Here the red tulips are conceived as these musk-pods freshly taken from
the animals, and consequently stained with blood.
⁵ See p. 68, n. 2.
⁶ Theriaca or Theriack (Tiryāq), a famous medicine against the bites or
stings of serpents and other venomous creatures. The most reputed was that
of ʿIrāq or Baghdad. It was equivalent to the 'Venetian treacle' of Europe.
Here the black centre of the tulip represents the theriack, the red petals
being the ruby pot containing it.
⁷ If one had very strong sight, one could see the stars while the sun is
shining. Here the poet says that the greenness of the lawn has so refreshed
and strengthened his eyes that he can not only look on the sun (the sun-
flower⁸), but at the same time see all the stars (flowers) in the sky (meadow).
Among the reasons for comparing the meadow to the sky is its colour, green
and blue being, as already said (vol. i, p. 151, n. 3), reckoned shades of one colour.
If that the dewdrop-teeth win not to loose the rosebud-knot,
May pass the winds and may the thorny-nail to loose 't refrain! 1
The rose hath stitched her kirtle with the needle of the thorn,
That at the royal feast she be the dancer fair and fain. 2
How fair a noble banquet, envy of the Bowers Etern!
How fair a gracious feast, wherefrom might Spring monition gain!
The Irem-garden 3 will no more before our vision rise,
Henceforward none for Paradise itself will sigh or plain.
Is it a cup of purest wine that circles therearound?
Or hath the Sphere let everyone his fondest hope attain? 4
The sphere hath laid on plate of China-ware sun, moon and stars, 5
To serve at this high feast as apple, quince, pomegranate-grain. 6
The rose is hither come, and hides her face behind her hand,
She blushes red with fire of shame to see her beauty vain. 7
The narcissi have wrapped their sequins round with paper white 8
To scatter at the bridal of the happy-fortuned fain. 9

1 This seems to mean that if the dewdrops (which are here called 'teeth' on account of their appearance and because the teeth are sometimes used to loosen knots) do not succeed in opening the close-knitted rosebud (which they would do without hurting it), the poet prays that the winds may pass and that the thorn (called here a 'nail' because of its hardness and sharpness and because the nails also are used to loosen knots) may not attempt the work (as it would hurt the bud).

2 With this couplet the poet begins to celebrate the festivities attending the marriage of the Prince.

The dancing-girls sometimes stitch flowers and spangles on their skirts before beginning their performance. Here the rose-bush, covered with blossom and waving in the breeze, is conceived as a dancer with her dress adorned with flowers.

3 For Irem see vol. 1, p. 326, n. 5.

4 It is the personified, not the astronomical, sphere that is here meant. See vol. 1, p. 44, n. 3.

5 The 'sphere' in this case means simply the vault of heaven; the plate of China-ware is the blue sky, the sun is the apple, the moon is the quince, and the stars are the pomegranate-grains.

6 There was a favourite dish made from pomegranate-pips, as witness the story of Nur-ud-Din 5Ali of Cairo and his son Bedr-ud-Din Hasan in the Arabian Nights, and that of the Eighth Vezir in the History of the Forty Vezirs.

7 This is practically the same conceit as that in the couplet quoted in vol. 1, p. 113, the 'hand' of the rose representing the leaf.

8 The yellow centre of the narcissus represents the gold sequin, the white petals the paper.

9 It was customary to scatter coins among the people on festival days.
The Prince who is the rose unique within the Empire-bower
Hath ta'en to his embrace the Pearl of Fortune in this reign.
Two Saplings grown within the royal garden-land full fair,
And tall and fresh, and jasmine-faced and rosy-cheeked the twain,
The Age’s King hath grafted with the band of Holy Law
For that a sweet and pleasant fruit and lieve may thence be ta’en.
O Lord, may all fair fortune speed this marriage upon earth;
And may it, like the course of sun and moon, steadfast remain;
And may it dure in sweet delight e’en as the heart would crave,
On such wise even as the Jemshid-mighty Khursrev’s reign.
Sultan Mehemed, Murad’s son, most noble of all Kings!
Darius who doth crowns to all the lords of earth ordain!
The King of starry retinue, the lunar-stirruped Sun!
Prince strong as Fate, and dread as Doom, and bounteous as main!
He ne’er shall swelter in the heats of tyranny’s July
Who refuge ’neath the shadow of the Monarch’s grace may gain.
His spear-point and his mace lift high the head and smite the ranks,
While bind the foe and pierce the heart his lasso and his flame.
His sword within his ocean-hand is even as that Fish
Who firm doth on his back the ordinance of earth sustain.
None in thy reign hath need to look for refuge to the sphere;
No fortress needeth he who doth in safety’s realm remain.
Belike the ocean sought to vie in bounty with thy hand,
And so to place its hand afore its face for shame ’tis fain.

1 Durr-i Bakht, ‘Pearl of Fortune,’ was probably the name of the young Prince’s bride. Such fanciful names are often given to girls in the Imperial harem.
2 i. e. the young Prince and his bride.
3 The Khursrev might be Jemshid (i. e. Sultan Mehemed). For Jemshid, the ancient King of Persia, see p. 71, n. 1.
4 The Sultan is here called a sun whose stirrup is the moon, the crescent moon being shaped something like a stirrup.
5 His uplifted spear raises its head proudly, while his mace smites the ranks of his foes. In this and the next couplet are instances of the figure Leff u Neshr. See vol. i, p. 115.
6 The lasso (kemend), one of the weapons of the Persian heroic age, often occurs as a poetic convention in descriptions of battles and warriors.
7 For the Fish that supports the earth on his back see vol. i, p. 39. The ocean is the type of bounty, so his ‘ocean-hand’ means his hand bounteous as ocean; it is, moreover, congruous to speak of the ocean when mentioning a fish.
8 In this couplet the poet begins to address the Sultan directly.
9 The ocean, as we have just seen, is the type of bounty. There is an
Each day the sun doth kiss the dust before thy glory great,
And thus 'tis honoured that its head doth highest heaven attain. ¹
O King, the genius jewel-radiant of Nejáti's soul
Hath ranged pearls untold upon the page withouten stain; ²
That he may go upon this festal day and cast them wide
So that they cover all the ground before his Sovereign.

Here are some passages from the 'Night Qasída', one of
those in which Nejáti felicitated Bāyezíd on his accession.
The couplets translated are those quoted by Hasan Chelebi.

From a Qasída. [94]

One even when the sun across her sheeny visage bright
Had drawn that veil of ambergris, the musky locks of night,
Away the falcon-sun had flown from off the Orient's hand
And lighted in the west, where round him winged the crows' thin flight. ³
To hunt the raven-night the fowler-sphere had heedful shaped
The crescent moon to form of eagle's talon apt to smite. ⁴

Or else from the blood of afterglow ⁵ ophthalmia's ill had smit
The eyen of the sphere, which eve with black-hued veil had light.

Sultan of Ráim, Khusrev of the horizons, Bāyezíd,
The Khágán ⁶ of the Age, the King, the Pivot of all right!
The tablet of his soul enregisters the world's affairs,
As page of book contains the words of him who doth it write.

untranslatable amphibologv in the second line here, the word used for 'hand'
(کف) means also 'foam', so the line is really: —

And so to place its hand afore its face for shame 'tis fain.

¹ See p. 110, n. 1. The poet here means to say that it is on account of the pride which the sun feels at daily kissing the dust before the Sultan's gate that it rears its head to the highest heaven at noon.
² The 'pearls' are the words or verses of the poet which he has ranged on the white page.
³ Here the black crows typify night.
⁴ The eagle (ٰقاب) was sometimes trained for the chase like the falcon.
⁵ See p. 89, n. 3.
⁶ Khágán is the special title of the Emperors of Tartary. It is often applied to the Ottoman Sultan, as are Khusrev (Chosroës), Qaysar (Caesar), and so on.
O King 'tis I who midst of the assembly of thy praise 
Do rebeck-like a thousand airs upon one string recite. 1
'Twere meet perfection from thy fostering favour reach my words, 
For fragrant growth rosewater through solar heat and light 2

This is the first of the seven stanzas which compose the Terkib-Bend that Nejáti wrote as an elegy on Prince 'Abdullah. 

From the Elegy on Prince 'Abdullah. [95]

O heart, strike off thy name from fellowship's gay muster-roll; 
Go, thou thou qalender. 3 so anchorites shall thee extol.
O heart, have ruth upon the soul, nor bind it unto earth;
O brother, prison Joseph not within the pit of dole. 4
Look not with greedy eye upon the world, for from his eyes 
Who looketh straight upon the sun's fierce face the tear-drops roll. 
The body is a worn-out wede, he not deceived thereby,
For in the Eternal Mart that gear will bring but loss to thole.
Reck not of this poor handful dust, 5 for better far than it,
A thousand-fold more during, the bare stone abideth whole.
To none sufficient of the draught of life to satisfy
His thirst hath e'er been granted by the sky's inverted bowl. 6
It is no sphere this thing the which thou seest ring on ring, 7
This seven-headed fiend is e'en a dragon; 8 heed thy soul!

1 As all the notes of the rebeck (rebáh) are produced from its one string, so all Nejáti's poems sing of one theme, the praise of the Sultan.
2 In one of the ways of making rose-oil the leaves are placed in shallow earthen pans, filled with rain-water. They are then exposed to the full action of the sun, which is sufficient to extract the oil. Rose-water resulting from this process is much superior to that obtained by distillation.
3 For the qalenders see vol. i, p. 357; n. 1. Here the term is used as equivalent to recluse.
4 An allusion to the Biblical and Koranic story of Joseph; here the soul is pictured as Joseph and the love of earth as the pit into which his brother, the heart, cast him.
5 i. e. the body.
6 The sky is often compared to an inverted bowl, the horizon representing the rim.
7 'Ring on ring', i. e. circle within circle, sphere within sphere, see vol. i, p. 43.
8 This 'fiend' is the personified sphere (vol. i, p. 44, n. 3); it is called seven-headed because of the seven planetary spheres.
He hath laid waste the realm, and he the Treasure hath devoured.

The next lines are from the Elegy on Prince Mahmúd, which also is a Terkib-Bend of seven stanzas: —

From the Elegy on Prince Mahmúd. [96]
The mansion of the world is travail, anguish, and dismay; That which they call the court of joy's the house of mourning aye. Well-being's his who yieldeth not himself unto the world; To love and to incline to earth is from the path to stray. At last the winding-sheet will wipe us out as with a towel; 'That was a beggar, this an emperor', it will not say. They call the face of earth firm ground, but we believe it not; Nay, every point thereon's a dragon fell a-gape for prey. Thus would the grave's mouth speak to thee, had it a tongue withal: — 'A monster this whose talons aye are snatching folk away!' For this it is I yield my thanks: Physician Death hath said, 'There's healing for this severance in dying of dismay!' Shed thou too tears of blood for this sad sorrow like to me, 'Twill be thy turn to-morrow, master, as 'tis mine to-day.

We shall now look at a few of Nejáti's ghazels.

Ghazel. [97]
In very truth this court of earth affords no halting-place; But then, the caravan of life rests ne'er a moment's space.

Though every leaf of every tree is verily a book,
Earth hath no leaf for him who lacketh understanding's grace.

1 'He', i. e. the seven-headed fiend. 2 The 'Treasure', i. e. the Prince. 3 Prince 'Abdullah had been governor of Qaraman. 4 Genj-i Rewán literally, 'the moving Treasure', is the name given to Korah's treasure which was swallowed up by the earth (Koran, xxviii, 76—82: Numbers xvi), even as was the Prince; it is so called because it is said to be still sinking deeper and ever deeper into the earth's heart. The name might mean also 'the treasure of life (or soul)', and this meaning likewise is here kept in view. 5 The earth is here considered as the court-yard of a caravanseray.
What though the loved one be remote from thee as east from west? — 'Baghdad to lovers is not far;' then strive, O heart, apace.

Is there one moment, O thou ebriate strife-seeking eye, When yonder glances flash not like to swords before our face?

Sorely Nejatí yearneth for thy Paradisal court; Though this desire may ne'er be his while he the earth doth pace.

Ghazel. [98]

There is no man on earth but dule doth dree;
There whoso drees not dule, no man is he.

Until the heart rain down a flood of tears,
Love's meadow never smileth lovelily.

If winsome beauties' hearts were not of stone,
Love's temple would not strong of structure be.

The rosebud-lipped, the slender-waisted fair,
From buss and clip nor hurt nor evil see.

Each Abraham in Grace's Ka'ba-shrine
May not God's Intimate 2 or Edhem 3 be.

I cypress-wise was planted, straight I grew,
Nor from thy gate a single step may flee. 4

1 'Baghdad is not far to the lover', is a proverb.
2 Khalil-ullâh, 'God's Intimate', is a title of the patriarch Abraham. He is said to have built the Ka'ba.
3 Ibrâhîm-i Edhem (or Ibrâhîm ibn-Edhem) i.e. Abraham the son of Edhem, was the son of a king of Balkh. He became a great saint; according to one account his conversion was brought about one day when he was out hunting by a voice from the Unseen crying in his ears, 'Is it for this thou wast created?' and, according to another, by a dream which constrained him to forsake his father's house and become a wandering dervish. Eventually he made his way to Mekka where he dwelt for a time as a devotee in the Ka'ba (hence the allusion in Nejâtí's ghazel). He died in Damascus in 261 (874—5).
4 Nature planted, i.e. created, me like a cypress, i.e. straight, upright, and thus I grew up loyal; and now so faithful and true am I that I no more can forsake thee than a cypress can stir from the place where it is rooted.
'I'll come and pass the even', said the Moon: 1 
My star it knows no even, woe is me! 2

Nejáti, fain they'd have thee break thy vow, —
The flowers will ne'er keep silence on the lea. 3

Ghazel. [90]

What have not the tulip-cheeks again wrought in the garden-way? —
They've nor let the cypress wave nor yet the rosebud say her say. 4

Saying, 'Lo an outland stranger come into the garden-court!'
They have baulked the tulip's winning to the rose's presence gay. 5

All ungentleness and rigour is the wont of beauties, still
Unto no one have they wroughten what they 've wroughten me, parfay!

Praise to God that our cupbearers with that life-bestowing wine
Leave not to be craved the Fount of Life or Heavenly Kevser's spray.

O Nejáti, go thy ways and walk with patience; what canst thou? —
Unto whom have beauties never learned unkindness and dismay?

1 The 'Moon' is the beloved: the moon is appropriately associated with the evening.
2 'My star' i. e. my fortune: the meaning is, my whole life is dark night (unhappy), it has no day (good luck), and therefore no evening.
3 The beautiful spring flowers seem to invite the poet to break his vows of sobriety etc.
4 The 'tulip-cheeks' are beauties, the 'garden-way' is the company of the fair. These radiant beauties have not allowed the cypress to wave (though to wave is the distinction of the cypress), i. e. they have thrown all other graceful figures into the shade (the cypress being the type of a graceful figure); and they have not allowed the rosebud (the type of a beautiful mouth) to speak (though to speak is the attribute of the rosebud-mouth), i. e. their own sweet speech has made that of all other fair ones appear common-place. Or we may take it that these tulip-cheeked beauties, through their dazzling loveliness, have cast a spell on all other fair ones so that those are rendered motionless and speechless by admiration.
5 This may possibly refer to some incident, the tulip and the rose standing for certain individuals. Tulips often grow wild in the fields, hence the flower may be spoken of as an outlander in respect to the garden.
Ghazel. [100]

Yonder glance, that showers the arrow-lashes on the soul's countrie,
Like that Tartar seems who maketh rain to rain through gramarye. 1

Now 'tis tears and now 'tis blood mine eyen weep when thou art gone;
Yea, they furnish pearls and coral to bestrew the path of thee. 2

E'en so much and long have wept mine eyes that all the blood is gone;
Whence, I wonder, will the rushing current now replenished be? 3

From my sighing's smoke 4 the folk of earth are of my weeping ware;
For they know that rain is present when the black wind bloweth free. 5

From the cup of that sweet lip of hers the skinker Jesus-breathed,
Crying, 'This the draught!' bescatters o'er the toper-company. 6

He who sees the hearts a-hanging from thy tress's tip would say,
"'Tis a dragon, from his mouths he showereth sparks of fire, ah me!' 7

1 The allusion here is to a well-known magic rite practised among the Tartars. This rite is performed with a magic stone called the yede tashi, through the virtue of which the magicians profess to cure diseases, ensure victory in battle, and control the elements. — notably to cause rain to fall at will.

Here the idea is that the beauty's glance can cause the lover's tears to flow at pleasure. By saying that the glance showers arrow-lashes on the soul the poet means to indicate that the beloved's glances pierce the soul just as though they shot her eyelashes like arrows into it.

2 The pearls being the tears: the coral. the blood. For the relation between tears and blood, see vol. i, p. 217, n. 1. The poets often speak of scattering precious stones before the great, i. e. kings and beauties.

3 Again see vol. i, p. 217, n. 1.

4 We have already seen that sighs are conceived as being the smoke from a burning heart.

5 The 'black wind' (qara yel) is the north-west wind; it is often accompanied by rain. Here it represents the sighs, which are always imagined as being black.

6 The breath of Jesus brought the dead to life, so the kiss of the cupbearer revives the dead hearts.

7 The hearts of her lovers are often conceived as hanging from a beauty's tresse:; these hearts are here taken to be on fire with love, and as by a common figure the beauty's hair is regarded as a dragon (vol. i, p. 330, n. 3: vol. ii, p. 35, n. 6 and p. 36, n. 1), the burning hearts are imagined as the sparks issuing from its mouths.
O Nejáti, is there any price for thy gem-strewing reed? —
Every drop from yonder April cloud becomes a pearl, perdie.

Ghazel. [101]

O the merry beauty! O the nature gay!
Thou’rt a fair like beauty’s self withouten stay.

I am thy neck-bounden slave, O Sovran mine;
Thine to keep or thine to sell or thine to slay.

But to buss thee, sweeting, is life enow for me;
Know’st not how Life’s Fountain maketh live for aye?

Name and fame desire not, chesner, look and see;
Save the King is any of checkmate the prey?

Toward my love my letter flies, a wistful dove,
White of hue, with folded wing it flies away.

Do a work that alway shall be told on earth;
O Nejáti, teera-teera-leera-lay!

We shall close our quotations from Nejáti with the following quaint verses, written in ruba‘i form, and addressed to a painted or embroidered handkerchief such as friends sometimes send as a present to one another. If the sender be a lover and the recipient his beloved, he may shed a few

1 i.e. does anyone appreciate the merit of thy poetry? or, can any price be set on thy priceless verse?
2 The allusion here is to the generation of the pearl, which was believed to be on this wise: During the month of April the oyster rises to the surface of the sea, where it opens its shells slightly in order to receive a drop of the rain or dew that is then falling; when this has been received, it closes its shells and sinks back into the depths of the ocean, where it remains; and then after a long time the drop of fresh rain or dew is transformed into a pearl.
3 Here the Fountain of Life (vol. i, pp. 282 et seq.) means the beauty’s mouth.
4 The poet here compares the love-letter he has sent his sweetheart to an amorous white carrier-pigeon, which, however, flies with its wings folded (the letter being folded), though birds as a rule fly with wings extended.
5 In the original: Ey Nejáti, fa’ilatun fa’ilat. The last two words are part of the meaningless formula for the metre in which the ghazel is written.
tears into it before parting with it, a usage referred to by Nejáti in the last verse.

Quatrains. [102]

O kerchief, lo I send thee to yon beauty, off, away!
About thee as a fringe do I my eyelashes array;
   I grind the pupil of mine eye\(^1\) to paint thee fair and bright;
Off, thus bedecked, and look thou in the face of yonder may.

O kerchief, take the dear one's hand, and buss her lips amene,
And buss her chin which mocks at apple and at orange sheen.\(^2\)
   Should aught of dust alight upon her blessed heart and lieve,\(^3\)
Fall down before her feet and buss her sandal-shoon bedene.

The kerchief has companioned with my tears of blood, I trow;
Through these a thousand kerchiefs in one hour would crimson glow.
   Thou'llt company with yonder love, while I am woe for dule;
I may no more on life aby, if fate continue so.

\(^1\) As a painter grinds his colours.
\(^2\) The chin of a beauty is often compared, because of its shape, to an apple; less often to an orange.
\(^3\) i. e. should anything vex her.
CHAPTER VI.

THE POETASSES MIHRÍ AND ZEYNEB.

Nejáti is by universal consent the greatest Ottoman lyric poet till the time of Báqí, that is, till about the middle of the sixteenth century. Thus for a period of over fifty years the poems of this writer formed the high-water mark of Ottoman lyric verse, and many of his countrymen were fain to model their work on his mellifluous and ingenious lines. His influence differs widely from that of Ahmed Pasha; for while the poets learned from the Vezir in what direction to look for inspiration, not one among them sought to imitate his work, whereas the poems of Nejáti were, as we have just said, accepted by all as models of felicity of expression and deftness of craftsmanship, and indeed were more or less directly imitated by not a few among contemporary and succeeding writers.

The most important and most interesting of those who, according to the Tezkires, modelled their work more directly upon that of the master is the poetess Mihri Khátún or Lady Mihri. ¹

¹ Khátún is the old Turkish term for Lady, and might be translated into English by the word Dame; the modern form is Qadin. But nowadays the title of Khanim is that given to ladies, whether married or unmarried: like most other titles it follows the name, thus, Leylá Khanim, which may stand equally for Lady Leylá, Mrs. Leylá, or Miss Leylá.
This talented woman was born in Amasiya, and, according to Latifi, was the daughter of a cadi whose pen-name was Belâ'i. The life of an Eastern woman is as a rule uneventful, so it is not surprising that the biographers give us but scant information concerning Mihri's career. Almost the whole of what they tell us bears upon the numerous though quite innocent love-passages that occurred between the poetess and some of the celebrities of her time. Three names are mentioned in this connection, those of Iskender Chelebi the son of Sinân Pasha, of her famous fellow-townsmen Mu'eyyed-zâde, and of Guwâhi, a minor poet whose Pend-Nâme or 'Book of Counsels', a collection of versified proverbs, attained a certain reputation. The most serious of Mihri's love-affairs seems to have been that with Iskender, which alone is mentioned by Latifi, who says that this youth inspired much of her poetry and is even mentioned by name in her Divân, as in the following ghazel which the lady composed after having seen him one early morning:

Ghazel. [103]

From my sleep I oped mine eyen, raised my head, when, lo, the sight!

There before me saw I standing fair a moon-faced beauty bright.

1 Evliya Efendi, the great Turkish traveller of the seventeenth century, mentions Mihri in his account of Amasiya. He says that she was descended from the famous Pir Ilyâs (probably Baba Ilyâs, the grandfather of the poet 'Ashiq Pasha, see vol. i, pp. 176—7), near whose sepulchre in Amasiya is her tomb. He adds that her personal name was Mihr-u-Mâh 'Sun-and-Moon', a not uncommon female name; but 'Ashiq says that Mihri was both her personal name and her pen-name.

A portion of the work in which Evliya describes his travels was translated into English by Von Hammer, and published by the Oriental Translation Fund in 1834. There is a MS. of the complete work in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2 Perhaps this Sinân Pasha is the statesman and man of letters mentioned on p. 25.

3 For an account of Mu'eyyed-zâde, see pp. 29—31.
Sooth, my star is now a Fortune, 1 or 1 to the Power 2 have won; For within my stead beheld 1 Jupiter arise this night.

Radiance from his lovely visage streaming though I saw full clear, 3
Though indeed his mien was Muslim, paynim were the robes he'd dight. 4

Even as I oped and closed my eyes he vanished from my view;
'This an angel is or fairy,' thus it was I weened forthright.

Ne'er shall Mihrí die, for she did win the Stream of Life unto
Thus when mid the mirk of night-tide she beheld Iskender wight 5

Mihrí used to attend the circle of Sultan Bayezid's son Prince Ahmed who during practically the whole of his father's reign was governor of Amasiya, and there, says Latifi, she was one day twitted with her behaviour in regard to this young man. But the poetess was equal to the occasion, for

1 The astrologers call Jupiter 'the Greater Fortune' or 'Greater Benefic' (Sa'd-i Ekber), Venus the 'Lesser Fortune' or 'Lesser Benefic' (Sa'd-i Asghar), Saturn 'the Greater Infortune' or 'Greater Malefic' (Nahs-i Ekber), and Mars the 'Lesser Infortune' or 'Lesser Malefic' (Nahs-i Asghar), the other planets being reckoned auspicious or the reverse according to circumstances. Jupiter is thus the most auspicious, Saturn the most malignant of the seven.

Mihrí here says that as the auspicious Jupiter (i. e. her lover) has this night appeared within her stead, her natal star (whatever it was before) must now have become a 'Fortune.' This of course is a mere poet's fancy, as astrologically no change is possible in the natal star or 'lord of the ascendant', that is, the planet which happens to be in the 'house of the ascendant', as they call that portion of the zodiac (5 degrees above the horizon and 25 degrees below) which is rising above the eastern horizon at the moment of birth. The ascendant itself, which is the degree just rising, and the lord thereof are held to exercise a special influence upon the life of the 'native.'

2 For the blessed but vague Night of Power see vol. 1, p. 293, n. 4. Mihrí means to say that such is her good fortune that she must have unexpectedly encountered the eagerly watched-for but elusive Night of Power.

3 Radiance being a property of holy things and therefore to be expected in Muslims only.

4 When the poetess speaks of Iskender as clad in paynim garments, she probably means either that he was dressed in rakish style, or that the beauty of his attire helped to captivate his poor lover.

5 Iskender, as we know, is the Oriental form of Alexander. For the story of Alexander and the Stream of Life in the Darkness see vol. 1, pp. 281—3.
she then and there silenced her would-be censurer by improvising this couplet: —

"How many Iskenders hath the dew of my rubies
Led up to the Fount and sent thirsting away!"¹

It is from Ḍū Ḍū ḍū Ḽiq that we learn of Mihri’s relations with Mu’eyyed-záde and Guwáhi. This biographer says that when Mu’eyyed-záde was still a young man at Amasiya, he and Mihri fell in love with one another; and that in after years, when the youth had become a great man and a Qázi-ʿAsker, the poetess used occasionally to attend his circle. Ḍū Ḍū ḍū Ḽiq quotes this couplet which he says she addressed to her old lover: —

"Falsely, Khátemí,² thou madest unto Mihri show of love;
Yet fore God she loves thee dearer far than any youthful wight."³

With Guwáhi she used to interchange verses, and Ḍū Ḍū ḍū Ḽiq quotes the following lines as having been sent by her to that poet by way of pleasantry: —

Guwáhi, of some winsome beauty free
May God, I pray, make thee the victim be;
Thy neck round may she bind her tresses’ cord,
And cast thee in her chin’s pit too may she.⁴

Another allusion to Alexander and the Fountain of Life. The ‘dew’ (lit. ‘sweet water’) of her ‘rubies’, means the freshness of her red lips; the ‘Fount’ in the next line means her mouth. Her beauty has made many desire to kiss her, but none has ever attained his wish.

² Khátemí was Mu’eyyed-záde’s makhlas.

If Ḍū Ḍū ḍū Ḽiq’s story is true, it would seem that either Mihri must have visited Constantinople (of which there is no record), or Mu’eyyed-záde must have visited Amasiya after being made Qázi-ʿAsker, that is, after 907 (1501) (of which again there is no record).

³ The dimple in the chin of a beauty is often conceived as a pit into which her lovers fall.
May some decanter-neck 1 at the carouse
Make thee for her lip’s wine-cup dolour dree!
And at the last may some high Sovereign
Of Beauty’s Empire from her locks hang thee!
If thou should ask the meaning of this verse
And say, ‘Alack, what is the fault of me?’
Why dost not thou remember now and then,
If only with a verse or two, Mihri? 2

'The real enthusiasm of the poetess, however, was for Nejáti
the master of her craft. Many of her poems are ‘parallels’ to
ghazels of her illustrious contemporary, to whom, we are told,
she used to send copies of all her verses. But this admiration,
or at least the way in which it found expression, seems to have
been carried a little too far for Nejáti, who did not like to see
his verses thus imitated, and consequently, if Latifi speaks
truly, wrote these lines with an eye on his fair disciple: —

O thou who dost parallels write to my verse,
From the highway of courtesy heed lest thou stray.
‘In rhyme and in metre my poems are one
‘With those of Nejáti’, beware lest thou say.
Though each hath five letters, are Honor and Shame
The same in reality, think’st thou, I pray? 3 4

1 A ‘decanter’ neck is a long straight neck, which was reckoned a beauty.
2 *Jibr picked the flowers of a rose.*
3 ‘I’ll answer you.**
4 *Latifi has a story to the effect that one day Mihri asked a wit, apparently
Latifi and Hasan speak of Mihri as having been beautiful; and they, as also the other biographers, emphasize the fact that notwithstanding her amorous temperament she lived a blameless life. She was never married. ‘Maiden came she to the world and maiden went she,’ says 'Ashiq. ‘For all her love of youth’, continues he, ‘none ever had his wish of her any more than of that woman the world, neither did any greedy hand ever reach to her hidden treasure, or any arm save the necklace clasp her neck through force of gold.’ Latifi, Hasan and 'Ali all say the same, varying only the metaphors.

a friend of Nejati’s, which of her characteristics the great poet most admired, upon which the wit replIed ‘Thy amphibology,’ using that word itself amphibologically. In order apparently to indicate the point of this answer, the biographer says that Mihri, who was somewhat vain of her accomplishments, used to speak of herself as ‘the mine of fancy,’ which led to someone’s composing these lines about her:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{میترا} & \text{ وجوه} \text{ اولدنی عزمنده} \text{ کان معنی} \\
\text{شاعرلری} & \text{ زمانی} \text{ شمازدنی سئی اوکرثر} \\
\text{ارباب} & \text{ نظام ایچئنده} \text{ ال جوش} \text{ اولدنی} \text{ تکنهد} \\
\text{معنی} & \text{ بی} \text{ چیسندرسک} \text{ ایبیه آمکی} \text{ دوکسندر} \\
\end{align*} \]

‘Mihri, thyself is e’en the mine of fancy in the world;
‘And now the poets of the age are ever praising thee.
‘A scurril lot are many though among the poet-throng;
‘Make thou them fancies steal, they’ll thump thine amphibology’!

which is seemingly supposed to make the matter clear! There is a further amphibology in the word used for ‘steal’, which also means to ‘strike’ or to ‘play’ (an instrument).

1 The world, because of its inconstancy and love of show, is often compared to a woman.

2 According to 'Ashiq, Mihri was sought in marriage by the then Principal (Muderris) of Eyyüb, who was popularly known as Pasha Chelebi, which fact induced the poet Záti (whose life and works will be considered in the next volume) to compose the following somewhat vulgar lines:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{اشتندك اعتمتمش} & \text{ میریا} \text{ یپاشا} \text{ اکا} \text{ اول کندی} \text{ زم ایل مونی} \\
\text{نیتچه} & \text{ بیلدلر} \text{ اویچن} \text{ توئن} \text{ او مسکین} \\
\end{align*} \]
The Tezkires afford no further particulars as to Mihri's career. It will be noticed that not a single date is mentioned. If there was, as Ashiq says, a boy and girl love between Mu'eyyed-zade and her, she must have been born about the same time as he, and we know that 860 (1456) was his birth-year. Prince Ahmed, at whose court at Amasiya the poetess was twitted about Iskender Chelebi, became governor of that town in 886 (1481) and remained there till 918 (1512).

It is therefore probable that the greater part of Mihri's literary work was produced during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and the opening years of the sixteenth.

It was a wonderful thing that a woman should write Ottoman literary poetry, an accomplishment for which, as we have learned, a special technical education and a considerable acquaintance with the works of the Persian masters were necessary. These lay outside the narrow circle of the ordinary Turkish girl's studies. For the East holds (at any rate it then held) firm by the ancient belief that woman is essentially inferior in intellect to man, and therefore cannot profitably interfere with the higher branches of learning. Therefore also do the biographers think it necessary to offer something like an apology for Mihri's sex when they praise her work. Thus Ashiq and Hasan quote the Arabic couplet:

"From femininity no shame to the sun's name is there,
Nor aught of honour to the moon from masculinity."

— the gist of which is that Mihri having remained unmarried for so many years would not be likely to accept such an ass as her present suitor. This so-called Pasha Chelebi, whose name was Ghiyās-ud-Dīn and who was a nephew of the famous Sheykh Aq Shems-ud-Dīn, died in 927 (1520). He had twice held office in Amasiya, once before and once after his Eyyūb principaship; it was probably on the first occasion that he aspired to the hand of Mihri.

In Arabic grammar the word for 'sun' is feminine, that for 'moon' is masculine.
Even the poetess herself is half-apologetic, half-defiant on the subject of her sex; she writes: —

Since they cry that woman lacketh wit alway,¹
Needs must they excuse whatever word she say.
Better far one female, if she worthy be,
Than a thousand males, if all unworthy they.²

Speaking of the quality of Mihri's poetry, Latifi says that although the manner of the writer's expression is feminine, in the passion of her words she is both masculine and lover-like, in proof of which he quotes these passages from her Diwan: —

Yonder dearest one began to speak and question me of love;
Then I gave my heart for answer, and no more spoke he of love.³

I said, 'At the first sight I missed to see the face of thee.'
He thereupon upraised his veil and answered, 'Look and see!'
The eye it saw, the heart it knew, that I was slain of love;
Yet for that sight and for that knowledge none did pity me.⁴

[1 do not know who the author of this well-known verse may be, but it is cited, together with the couplet which precedes it, by Jāmi in his Nafahat-ul-Uns, at the beginning of the biographies of female saints. Ed.]

¹ Naqisat-ul-'Aql, 'Lack-Wit' (lit. 'deficient in reason') is an Arabic term sometimes applied to woman.

² قِلْتُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ أَنَا لَن أَهْلَكُ التَّأَمَّرُ A

³ عَشِفُ بَيْنَ الْعُرُقِ، أَنَّيْلَدُ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا أَلَدُّ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ أَنَّيْلَدُ A

⁴ مَعْذُورُ سُوْقُنْدَارٍ رَوْىَ بِمُؤَثْنَتِ يِكْلَدَرَ نَادِلْ أَنْعَلِ اَوْلَ نَبِكَ مَثْلَ كَرْدَنَ كَأَوْلُ نَاَثْلِ اَوْلَ A

Based on the given text, the extracted content appears to be a natural representation of the document as if you were reading it naturally. There are no hallucinations in the extracted text.
'Ashiq too has a high opinion of her work. 'Although she was a woman', says he, 'yet did she overthrow many a man in the lists, as when she thus rebuketh Nejáti. For Nejáti saith in one of his ghazels: —

Lest heaven or earth should e'er have cause to taunt me with their boons,  
A rush-mat will Nejáti aye for quilt and bed suffice. 1

to which Mihrí answereth in one of hers: —

Though thou, Nejáti, may'st desire a rush-mat bed and quilt:  
For Mihrí will the bare earth 'fore the dear one's stead suffice'. 2

And farther on, 'while male poets were yearning for maiden fancies, she, for all her womanhood, found them with ease.' Then the critic goes on to say that though unbecoming things may be found in her poems, they are very few; that 'her language is maidenly (تَمْر نَقْشَنَ) , while her style is rakish', by which he seems to mean that though her words in themselves are unexceptionable, her meaning is not always so, alluding possibly to the mention of her lover Iskender Chelebi in her Diwán, which would be regarded in the East as a breach of decorum.

I have never seen Mihrí's Diwán, but, judging from such examples of her work as I have been able to find, I should say that her poetry is simpler and more natural than that of Nejáti. There is much less straining after effect, far fewer rhetorical embellishments, and generally a greater appearance of sincere as opposed to merely artistic work. She is no doubt much less original; her metaphors and similes rarely

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1. تَمْر نَقْشَنَ
2. تَمْر نَقْشَنَ
go beyond the common-places of this poetry, and her point of view does not perceptibly differ from that of scores of her fellow-poets. But these deficiencies, such as they are, are amply atoned for by the evident spontaneity of her lines. We feel that this poetess sings, not because she is eager to parade her skill and erudition, but because there is within her something that demands expression. And when we reflect on the repressive circumstances in which she found herself from the mere accident of her sex, whereby the acquisition of culture was rendered tenfold more difficult for her than it would have been for her father or her brother, we cannot but admire the spirit and the energy which broke through so many obstacles, and the brilliant talent which enabled the writer, in conditions so adverse, to produce a volume of poetry which can bear comparison with the works of all but the very greatest of her contemporaries.¹

The first of the following ghazels is taken from Hasan Chelebi's Tezkire, all the others are from Prof. Smirnov's Chrestomathy: —

**Ghazel. [104]**

Fain I hoped that thou would prove thee leal and loving fere to me;
Who had thought in thee a tyrant so ungentle for to see?

Thou that art the tender rosebud of the Paradisal garth, —
How may this be meet that every breere and brake thy love should be!

I shall breathe no malediction; but of God I make this prayer,
That thou may he smit with yearning for a ruthless one like thee.

¹ Mihri's Diwan has not been printed, and MS. copies are very rare. Prof. Smirnov of St. Petersburgh succeeded, however, in finding one in Constantinople, and he has published a number of extracts from it in his Turkish Chrestomathy which bears the name of Mejmu'a-i Muntakhabát-i Asár-i 'Osmâniyya. The Professor's extracts consist of 28 ghazels and a murebba' in praise of Ladiq, a small town near Amasiya. Unfortunately the text of the poems, as printed in the Chrestomathy, is full of errors; but doubtless these occur in the original MS., and the editor judiciously refrained from making any alterations.
Now my plight is grown so piteous that whoe'er would curse his foe
Sayeth, 'Black may be thy fortune e'en as that of sad Mihri!'

Ghazel. [105]

Lover be'st thou, — hold not then by name or fame upon Love's way;
Strive upon that road, thy life give, else the dear will flee away.

Dost thou, slothful and half-hearted, truly seek to win thy love?
Be not heedless, nay, be watchful, else another's is thy may.

Though thy weeping flood the whole earth, none will wipe away thy tears,
Not though thou weep blood henceforward every hour of every day.

Sing thy lay while still thou dwellest in yon rosebud's rosy bower;
For the rose departs to-morrow, and, bulbul, thou lone dost stay.

So thou'rt man, 'tis now the hour for deeds, drive hence the rival, ho!
Strive thou that the thorn remain not in the rosebud's kirtle gay.

Once was Mihri fain to soar midmost the heavens, now, behold,
Therefore she is dust, and trodden under foot, ah, wel-a-way!

Ghazel. [106]

When toward the breeze the dear one turns his face each morning-tide
Fragrance from his tresses' perfume fills the whole world far and wide.

Sudden I beheld a King of fair ones mid the beauty-throng:
'Here at last is he who wins the Empire of the Heart!' I cried.

Ne'er an one the dearling leaves unbounden by his spelful eyne;
Thus 'twould seem yon twain of warlocks' trance the world on every side.

Groan I for thine absence, quaketh all the heaven and all the earth,
Weep I for thy presence, 2whelmed the world is 'neath the rushing tide.

1 i. e. his two eyes that cast spells upon all.
2 i. e. when I weep yearning for thy presence.
O my dear one, have thou ruth to-day on Mihri, for thou know'st
How the hairs will on the morrow all thy beauty's mirror hide. ¹

Ghazel. ² [107]

For me, while thou existest, other fere there needeth none:
Let me thy rigour dree, and other dear there needeth none.

For me there's in thy rigour troth, and in thy wounding balm;
For this my ailing heart, of other cheer there needeth none.

O soul, though upon earth were Idols³ kind and leal and true
A-throng in every corner far and near, there needeth none.

Let me but be within thy ward, although that bare I go:
In Paradise for me resplendent gear there needeth none.⁴

Thine eye hath slain me, wherefore seekest thou then 'nay' to say? —
While witnesseth thy glance, denial here there needeth none.

Go, flushed with wine of love, Mihri, and roam the world around:
For topers of the tavern shame or fear there needeth none.

Ghazel. [108]

Ne'er without its dear will rest my hapless heart, Oh! what can I?
Ne'er this shameless one ⁵ will silence keep, however hard I try.

I have made the dear one's name the burden ⁶ of my heart, but yet
Never he my name recalleth, ne'er is he sans rivals nigh.

¹ The beard will soon grow and spoil the boyish beauty.
² This ghazel is a parallel to that of Nejátí beginning: —

آی رنگ خرچنگی بر یو درم

³ i. e. beauties.
⁴ Alluding to the splendid apparel which it is said the blessed shall wear in Paradise: and, as we have seen (p. 66, n. 2), 'The loved one's ward is Paradise.' But, as the true saint desires only God in Paradise, so the true lover desires only the beloved in her ward.
⁵ i. e. my heart.
⁶ i. e. the refrain.
Union promised he, and drave me into yearnings fond and fain:
Then that faithless paynim turned and all his promise did deny.

Aid me! aid! for thou hast smit me, O physician of the soul!
Quoth he, 'Tis my wont to leave the lover all unhelped to die.'

Never have I seen a beauty by whose side was watchet none;
Never rose hath bloomed on earth's parterre but still the thorn was by.

We shall die, but never, Mihri, shall we leave to love the fair:
Let him speak who will, without a loved one ne'er shall we aby.

Mihri, though the most distinguished, was not the only
Ottoman poetess of those old times. The biographers speak
of another lady, Zeyneb by name, whom also they credit
with the production of a Diwán, and who, according to Sehi,
was moreover skilled in music. But this Zeyneb is an even
more shadowy figure than Mihri. Latifi claims her for his
own city of Qastamuni, and says that she was the daughter
of a learned man of that place, who, perceiving her innate
talent, had her carefully educated in the different branches
of knowledge, and caused her to study the Persian díváns
and the Arabic qasídás, the result being that she herself
composed a Diwán of Turkish and Persian poems which she
dedicated to Sultan Mehemmêd II.

Ashiq on the other hand says that she was a native of
Amasiya where her father was a cadi, and that she was
contemporary with Mihri, like whom she used to wait on
Prince Ahmed when he was governor of that city. But while
Mihri came and went a maiden, Zeyneb married, unfortu-
nately, as it proved, for when she passed under her husband's
control, he made her not only abstain from holding any
communication with other men, but cease from writing poetry.

That is virtually all we are told concerning Zeyneb. Hasan has nothing fresh to add beyond saying that she and Mihri were companions and used to interchange verses and pleasantry. He mentions the different accounts given by Latifi and 'Ashiq without presuming to judge between them; there is therefore nothing left for us but to follow his example and to say with him 'and the knowledge of the truth of it is with the Omniscient King.'

The only specimens of Zeyneb's poetry which the biographers give are these lines which are cited by Sehí, and the following Turkish ghazel which is quoted, in whole or in part, with high commendation by Latifi, ^1 'Ashiq, and Hasan.

**Fragment of Ghazel. [109]**

O liege, that lovely form a gift to thee from God the Most High is;
The Chapter Joseph but one verse from thy fair beauty, deem I, is. ²

Thy beauty bright, my lovelorn plight, thy rigour harsh, my patience long,
From hour to hour increase, thereto no end, be't far or be't nigh, is.

**Ghazel. [110]**

Throw off thy veil, and heaven and earth illume with dazzling ray!
Turn thou this elemental world to Paradise straightway!

Move thou thy lips and make the ripples play on Kevser-pool! ³
Let loose thy locks of ambergris and scent the world, I pray!

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¹ Latifi has further one couplet in Persian.
² The twelfth chapter of the Koran is called the Chapter of Joseph; Joseph, as we shall see in the next chapter, is taken as the ideal of youthful beauty.
³ Kevser, the Paradisal river (vol. i, p. 36), here stands for the mouth of the beloved, the 'ripples' being the smiles or perhaps the words.
Thy down hath writ a warranty, and charged the zephyr: 'Speed!
Forth thou and conquer all the realms of China and Cathay!' ¹

If so the Stream of Life be not thy destined lot, O heart,
Tread, an thou wilt, a thousand years, with Khizr, Iskender's way. ²

Leave, Zeyneb, lust of show unto the world, the woman-like; ³
Walk manful, single-hearted be, abandon gewgaws gay.

¹ The word khatt or khat means both a line of writing and the down on a youthful cheek. These meanings are very often (as in the present instance) purposely confounded for the sake of getting an ihám or amphibility. The idea in the present verse is that the perfumed down on the beloved's cheek (hair being always conceived as sweet-scented) traces (as the face is moved) a royal edict in the air, so sweet that it enables and so powerful that it commands the breeze to go and conquer China and Cathay, the very home of fragrance (see p. 112, n. 4).

² i. e. if the Water of Life be not thy allotted portion, thou shalt never find it, even if thou follow Alexander's road for a thousand years and even if Khizr be thy guide.

³ See p. 128, n. 1.
A prominent figure in the days of Mehemed the Conqueror was the Sheykh Aq-Shems-ud-Dîn or Shems-ud-Dîn the Fair. 1 This learned and holy man, who traced his descent from the saintly Shihâb-ud-Dîn-i Suhreverdi, 2 was born in Damascus, but came into Rûm at a very early age. He soon acquired considerable celebrity through his profound and varied learning, more especially his skill in medicine, and was appointed Principal (Muderris) of the college at 'Osmanjiq, a little town not very far from Amasiya. But mysticism began to cast its glamour over him, and he looked around for one to guide him on the Path. He was urged to join the disciples of the famous Hájji Beyrâm at Angora, the greatest mystic teacher of the day; 3 but the professional pride of the 'ulemá was still strong in Shems-ud-Dîn, and he revolted against the idea of placing himself under a dervish who begged for money in the streets albeit with the object of assisting debtors and prisoners. So the haughty Principal decided to accept

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1 This famous Sheykh Shems-ud-Dîn is always distinguished by the word Aq ('White') being placed before his name. This sobriquet, which is paralleled by that of Qara ('Black') prefixed to the names of several historical personages, seems to point to the bearer's having been fair-haired or pale-complexioned. For an anecdote about this Sheykh, see vol. i, p. 312.

2 Shihâb-ud-Dîn-i Suhreverdi, a famous mystic and jurist, was born in Suhreverd in Persia in 539 (1144—5) and died in Baghdad in 632 (1234—5).

3 See vol. i, p. 299, n. 1.
as master rather Sheykh Zeyn-ud-Dīn-i Háfi who was then teaching the mystic doctrine at Aleppo. Thither accordingly he went; but hardly had he reached that city ere he beheld a vision in which he saw himself with a chain about his neck being led along by Hájjī Beyrām. This persuaded him that the Hájjī, and no other, was his destined teacher. He therefore set out for Angora, on arriving at the outskirts of which he found Hájjī Beyrām and his disciples busy reaping corn in a field. He went forward, took up a sickle, and began to reap among the disciples. But the saint took no heed of him. Not even when the disciples laid down their reaping-hooks, and the master divided the mid-day meal among them and among the dogs that were present with them, did he turn to look upon his would-be follower. So Shems-ud-Dīn, feeling this to be in punishment of his former pride, went aside and sat among the dogs and ate with them. This humility touched Hájjī Beyrām, who then called Shems-ud-Dīn to him and accepted him as disciple. Under the Hájjī's guidance Aq-Shems-ud-Dīn soon attained a high level in the Sūfī lore, and this, added to his skill as a physician, brought him a great reputation, so that when he repaired to Adrianople, he was received with much honour by Sultan Mehemed. He accompanied that monarch to the capture of Constantinople. It was during the siege of the Imperial city that the site of the tomb of Ebū'-Eyyūb the Ansārī, the Companion of the Prophet who fell during the first Muslim assault on the Byzantine capital, was revealed in a vision to Aq-Shems-ud-Dīn. On that site Mehemed built a mosque, the holiest on European ground, in which ever afterwards the Sultans of Turkey have on their accession been girt with the sabre of the founder of their house. Mehemed wished

₁ Sheykh Zeyn-ud-Dīn-i Háfi was born in Kharāsān in 757 (1356), and died in 838 (1435). His biography is in the Crimson Peony.
to retain Shems-ud-Din by him, and even to become his disciple; but the Sheykh declined, and insisted on retiring to Guynuk, to a town near Boli, where he had made his home, and where in 864 (1459—60) he died and was buried.

Sheykh Aq-Shems-ud-Din had twelve sons, of whom the youngest, Hamd-ullah Chelebi, is the writer of a beautiful poem on the ancient theme of Joseph and Zelîkhá, which was for centuries among the most popular romantic mesnevis in the Turkish language. Hamdi — such is the poet’s pen-name — was born at Guynuk, twelve years, it is said, before his father’s death. He would seem not to have got on well with his elder brothers, as at the beginning of his great poem he speaks of their jealousy and ill-will, and represents his father as anticipating evil for him from their hostility. He studied for the learned profession, but never attained any high position in the ranks of the ‘ulema. The career may not have been to his liking, or perhaps he was disappointed in the matter of promotion; at any rate he gave up the profession after having been, it is said, Principal of a foundation in Brusa, and retired from public life to study mysticism and write poetry.

According to ṬAli, his earliest works were two mystic treatises, the one called Mejâlis-ut-Tefâsîr or ‘The Reunions of the Commentaries’, and the other a discourse on the famous hadîs which says that God has prepared for them that love Him ‘What eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither is entered into the heart of man.’ Hamdi was

1 The town of Guynuk is often called Torbalî.
2 The family was a distinguished one. In the Crimson Peony we get biographies of Shems-ud-Din himself and of four of his sons, namely, Sa’d-ullah the eldest, Fazl-ullah, Emr-ullah, and Hamd-ullah the poet.
3 This Hadîs is a literal translation of 1 Corinthians, ii, 9, which in its turn is taken from Isaiah lxiv, 4.
contemporary with Jámi, and, if ÊAshiq is correct, he carried
on a correspondence with that illustrious Persian, to whom,
as we shall see, he was greatly beholden.

No particulars concerning Hamdî's life are given by the
biographers, probably there was nothing remarkable to record.
He seems to have lived in retirement spending his time over
his literary work. He was, it would appear, in poor circum-
stances and but little esteemed during his lifetime; certainly
he complains bitterly enough in more than one of his poems
of the neglect which he says was in his day the lot of the
learned and deserving. Hasan reports on the authority of
his grandfather Mirî that in order to gain his living Hamdî
used to transcribe with his own hand copies of his Joseph
and Zelîkhá, which, being the author's autograph, were eagerly
bought at good prices. 1

Hamdî died in the same month of the same year as Nejâtî,
that is, in Zi-l-Qa'de, 914 (March, 1509), 2 and was buried
at Guynuk by his father's side. He left a son, Zeyn-ud-Dîn,
who acquired some reputation as a calligraphist.

It would seem as though the weavers of legends had sought
to compensate in some measure for the lack of picturesque
details concerning this poet. Thus we have Riyázî gravely
declaring that while Hamdî was yet in his mother's womb
his father prophesied concerning him, 'He who is to be born
is my poet-son.' Then Evliyá Efendi, when speaking of the
wonders of St. Sophia in his description of the Constantinople

1 In the Hadiqat-ul-Jewâmi', or 'Garden of Mosques': a work descriptive of
the mosques, etc. in Constantinople, we are told that Hamdî used to write
these copies of his poem in what is called 'the Station of Khizir' (Maqâm-i
Khizir) in the mosque of St. Sophia. The Hadiqat-ul-Jewâmi' was printed in
1281 (1864—5).

2 So at least say Latîfî and the editor of the Crimson Peony. Kâtîb Chelebi
places Hamdî's death in 909 (1503—4), and Riyázî in 900 1494—5): but
the latter at any rate must be wrong, as one of the poet's works, the Leylâ
and Mejmûn, was finished in 905 (1499—1500).
mosques, says that if anyone afflicted with a bad memory will make the morning-prayer seven times under the Golden Ball 1 which is suspended from the centre of the dome, and will repeat seven times the invocation ‘My God! O Unveiler of Difficulties! O Knower of the Secret and the Mysteries!’ eating seven black grapes on each occasion, whatever he desires to remember will thence-forward remain graven on his memory ‘like an inscription on a rock.’ In proof of which Evliyá cites the case of Hamdi the son of Aq-Shems-ud-Dín, whose memory was so bad that he had to bear with him a paper inscribed with the words ‘And on you be peace!’ as without looking at this he was unable to remember what to reply to the daily greeting ‘Peace be on you!’ and who yet, when by his father’s advice he acted in accordance with the foregoing instructions, was straightway cured of his failing, and at once began to write his famous poem of Joseph and Zelíkhá.

Although Hamdi wrote many other works, his fame rests entirely on this same poem of Yúsuf u Zelíkhá or ‘Joseph and Zelíkhá,’ a poem which was for centuries among the most popular and most widely known of Ottoman romantic mesnevis.

Hamdi’s work is avowedly based upon the Persian poems on the same subject by Firdawsí 2 and Jámí. The author himself tells us that the ill-usage he had received at the hands of his elder brothers had aroused in him a strong feeling of sympathy for Joseph, who had suffered in the same

1 The writer is referring to the huge gilt ball which in old times used to hang from the centre of the dome of St. Sophia. Towards the end of the reign of Ahmed III (1115—43 = 1703—30) this ball was replaced by the great corona which is still there.

2 The famous poet of the Shah-Náme. The date of his Joseph and Zulaykhá is not recorded, but the poem is the work of the author’s old age. He died in 411 (1020—1), or, according to others, in 416 (1025—6).
way, so that he had determined to tell the latter's story in verse, when he unexpectedly became acquainted with Jami's poem. Judging from the book itself, it would appear as though this determination had been carried out, in part at any rate, before the author saw the work of his great contemporary. For Hamdi's poem is, speaking broadly, a paraphrase of Firdawsi's with a translation of Jami's substituted for the elder poet's account of the hero's dealings with the heroine. Firdawsi's work is entitled 'Joseph and Zelikha,' but in reality it is a versified history of Joseph in which his adventures with the lady whom the East names Zelikhā, 1 but whom the West knows only as 'Potiphar's wife,' forms but one, albeit a very prominent, episode. Jami's poem on the other hand is truly a 'Joseph and Zelikhā,' as it confines itself almost entirely to the relations between the hero and heroine, the adventures of Joseph with his brothers being, when not entirely ignored, skimmed over in the most cursory fashion. There is, moreover, an enormous difference in the style of these two Persian poems, Firdawsi's being a simple, straightforward narrative, while Jami's is, as we have seen elsewhere, 2 one of the most brilliant triumphs of the rhetorical and allegorising school at the head of which the poet stood.

Hamdi's work appears to have been modelled originally upon that of Firdawsi. He follows the narrative of that poet pretty closely up to the point where Joseph is exposed for sale in the Egyptian slave-market, resuming it where the hero is made ruler of Egypt and continuing it down to the death of Jacob. If he had got as far as this when Jami's poem came 'unexpectedly' into his hands, he had doubtless written also the intervening portion of the story, that concerning Zelikhā, upon the same lines; if so, he then struck

1 In Persian this name is pronounced Zulaykhā; but in Turkish Zelikhā.
2 See p. 9.
this out, as through the whole of that portion he ceases to look to Firdawsi, and follows Jámi alone. Although Hamdí’s work is thus, like Firdawsi’s, in reality a versified history of Joseph, it may fairly be called a Joseph and Zelíkha, as the part dealing with the love-story of these two, the part transferred from Jámi, far exceeds that taken from Firdawsi, and, indeed, forms quite two thirds of the entire poem.

The difference in method and style between the two parts is pronounced. Where Hamdí follows Firdawsi he does not translate, he paraphrases, he tells the same story, repeats generally the same incidents in the same order, but he does so in his own words and in his own way, and that in a style not very much more pretentious than that of his model. But when Jámi becomes his leader all is changed; his work is no longer a paraphrase, it is an almost literal translation; here he follows his guide step by step, canto by canto, often line by line, reproducing nearly all the similes, beautiful, ingenious, and grotesque, which coruscate in the pages of his brilliant exemplar. Great therefore is the contrast between these glittering cantos and the sobre verses inspired by the old poet. The writer himself frankly acknowledges his indebtedness; he very accurately describes his poem as ‘in part a parallel, in part a translation.’

Hamdí selected a new metre in which to write his Joseph and Zelíkha, namely, the Khafif, a measure not hitherto used for Turkish mesnevi. In so doing he struck out a line for himself, as neither of his models had made use of this variety, Firdawsi’s work being in the mutaqáríb, the same as the author used for the Sháh-Name, and Jámi’s being in the hexametric hezej. Hamdí follows the example set by Sheykhi in sprinkling through his mesnevi a number of ghazels which have no counterpart in either of the poems

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1 See vol. i, p. 109.
that he took as models. Besides these lyric interludes, which are scattered with equal freedom through both parts of his work, he introduces into the body of the poem certain incidental stories in mesnevi, over each of which he writes 'Apposite Tale' (Hikayet-i Munasib); these, however, are confined almost entirely to that part of the poem which is based upon Firdawsi's.

Hamdi shows much skill in the way in which he weaves together the two parts of the history. In that taken from Firdawsi we have the detailed history of the childhood and youth of Joseph, and of his dealings with his envious brethren, culminating in his exposure in the Egyptian slave-market, where Zelikha is shown to us as the most eager of the bidders. This opens the way in a manner both natural and artistic for the introduction of the part transferred from Jâmi, which begins by relating the heroine's career up to that time, and thus her present anxiety is explained. In Jâmi's poem, on the other hand, the story of Zelikha is introduced very abruptly immediately after the brief account of Joseph's birth and childhood, without any connecting link whatever, and is broken with equal abruptness after her marriage with the Grandee of Egypt in order that the history of Joseph may be resumed. And this is not the only point in which the Turk shows himself the truer artist. Jâmi, after finishing his story, moralises through a number of cantos, and in this way weakens the effect produced by his narrative, whereas Hamdi appropriately brings his book to an end with the death of Zelikha, which follows hard on that of Joseph.

As we have seen, Hamdi follows Firdawsi in the detail with which he recounts his hero's early life and in the order in which he narrates the incidents thereof; but wherever Jâmi has touched upon these incidents, Hamdi follows him in the manner of his presentation. It may thus be said that
the whole of the narrative part of Jámi's work, that is, the whole poem except the introductory and dedicatory cantos at the beginning and the didactic cantos at the end, is embodied in the Turkish book.

Hamdi's poem was finished nine years later than Jámi's, 897 (1491—2) being the date of completion of the former, 888 (1483—4) that of the latter, and there can be little doubt that its appearance helped to promote the great reputation which the works of Jámi, and especially the Yúsuf u Zulaykhá, enjoyed throughout Turkey during the Second Period. For this poem of Hamdi's was not long in acquiring popularity. Several circumstances helped towards this. For one thing, the subject, a sacred story, commended it to the religious; while the scrupulousness with which, as we are told, the author (or rather his models) adhered to the most approved commentators secured for it the powerful support of the 'ulemá. Again it was, taken all in all, the most brilliant and finished piece of work that had hitherto been accomplished in Ottoman verse.

The history of Joseph and Zelíkhá has always been one of the most popular of Oriental stories. It owes the favour in which it has been held in great measure to its sacred origin; for its source, so far as Islam is concerned, is the Koran itself. The twelfth chapter of the holy volume is almost entirely occupied with the story of the patriarch Joseph, whose adventure with his Egyptian master's wife (nameless there as in Genesis) is recorded along with the other incidents of the narrative. It is this incident which was seized upon by the poets, who, with the assistance of the commentators, worked it up into the elaborate romance before us. The story lent itself too well to the purposes of the Súfi allegorist to be neglected; Joseph, who is always presented by the poets as the ideal of human beauty, is
taken as the type of the Celestial Beauty, that is, the Divinity, while Zelikhá, who is depicted as the personification of over-mastering and all-compelling love, can well represent the soul of the mystic enthusiast.

This poem of Hamdí's is beyond question the most brilliant Ottoman mesnevi that had up till then been produced. Its only possible rival is the Khusrev and Shírin of Sheykhí, and that, as may be remembered, is not only unfinished, but is written in the Germiyan, not the Ottoman, dialect of Turkish. The style of Hamdí, even when most florid, is simpler than that of Sheykhí, and this not because the later writer is less fond of the jewels of rhetoric, but because the language has progressed during these fifty years, and has become more pliant in the hands of the craftsman. The poet seems to move with greater ease and with a surer step, the result being a certain increase of decision and straightforwardness in style which renders the reading of the work correspondingly simpler.

The high merit of this poem was, as we have said, soon recognised. Sehi, when praising it, says that men of taste are agreed that not one among those poets who have treated the same theme has been able to surpass it. Latífi speaks of it as a poem without an equal, one which has no rival or peer in Turkish mesnevi, a judgment which is true when we remember at what time the critic wrote: though when he goes on to say that no one can lay finger on a single flaw or blemish, we must allow something for personal enthusiasm. In the eyes of the biographer one of the great merits of this brilliant poem, the beauty of the language and imagery of which is miracle and enchantment, lies in a point we have already mentioned, namely, the closeness with which the author adheres to the best-authenticated commentaries on the sacred story which forms his subject. This
fidelity to the orthodox version of the history secures for Hamdî the praise likewise of Tash-Köprizâde in the Crimson Peony. Hasan Chelebi considers the poem the best of the author’s works, and speaks of it as being, like the beauty, of Joseph and the love of Zelikhá, in need of no description by any writer and in want of no praise by any critic.

'Ashiq alone does not eulogize the work. He says it is the best of Hamdî’s poems, but describes it (correctly enough) as being for the most part an imitation of Jámi. He neither praises nor blames it; he contents himself with repeating, without comment, this story concerning Kemál-Pasha-zâde, an illustrious poet and man of letters who flourished shortly after Hamdî and wrote a rival mesnevî on the same theme. If anyone, says ‘Ashiq, praised the Joseph and Zelikhá of Hamdî in presence of Kemál-Pasha-zâde, the latter used to reply, ‘The fluency and grace in that poem are by virtue of the metre in which it is composed, for the book itself is devoid of beauty and barren of charm,’ — a judgment the injustice of which, as Hasan, who repeats the story, remarks, is obvious to ‘all persons of culture.’

The Joseph and Zelikhá of Hamdî remained the highest achievement of Turkish romantic mesnevî for over fifty years, when it was surpassed by the Leylá and Mejnûn of Fuzûlî. It still remains the finest Turkish poem on the theme. Many subsequent writers chose the same subject, but not one among them ever succeeded in supplanting the son of Aq-Shems-ud-Dîn. Yet some of those later writers were poets of great merit and great renown, notably Kemál-Pasha-zâde whose ungenerous and doubtless prejudiced criticism of his predecessor’s work we have just seen.  

1 An account of Kemál-Pasha-zâde will be found in a later chapter.

2 The most important of these later poems on the story of Joseph and Zelikhá are, apart from Kemál-Pasha-zâde’s, those by Vahya Bey, a distin-
Hamdi's Joseph and Zelikha bear no dedication, an unusual circumstance which is thus accounted for by Latifi. The poet Zâti, who has been mentioned already more than once, told the biographer that Hamdi originally dedicated the book to Sultan Bâyezid, whose praises he sang, according to the general custom, in a special canto. He did not, however, receive such recognition as he thought his due, and in consequence withdrew the dedication and cancelled the laudatory canto; and thus the poem remains uninscribed with the name of any patron. If this story, which is repeated by Hasan, be correct, it bears strong witness to the courageous and independent spirit of the poet.

The book \(^1\) opens of course with the obligatory cantos in guished Albanian poet whose works will be considered in the next volume; and Zihni, a poet of Baghdad, whom also we shall meet in due course. Besides these Kâtib Chelebi mentions poems on the same favourite theme by Bihishti (Sinân bin-Suleyman). Kâtib Chelebi mentions Bihishti and Sinân bin-Suleyman separately as though they were distinct individuals; as a matter of fact, Bihishti was the pen-name, Sinân the personal name, of the same poet. This is probably the Bihishti who, Latifi tells us, had on account of some misdemeanour to fly to Persia during the reign of Bâyezid II, but who was forgiven on returning with letters of intercession from Jâmi and Newâî, and who wrote a 'response' to the Khamsa (Nizâmi's), the first, according to his own statement, in the Turkish language, one of the poems composing which was a Yûsuf u Zelikha, a couplet from which is quoted by Latifi: 979 (1571—2) is the date given in Fluegel's edition of Kâtib Chelebi as that of Bihishti's death, (a marginal note to my MS. of 'Ashiq's Tezkire places it in 977): by Kâmi (Sheykh Jemâl-zâde) who died in 952 (1545—6); by Khalîfa who completed his work in 970 (1562—3); this is possibly the same poet whom Kâtib Chelebi credits with a Khusrev u Shîrin (see vol. i, p. 311, n. 2): by Shikârî who died in 992 (1584—5) leaving his poem unfinished: by Ni'metî (Ni'met-ullah of Khonaz near Aydîn) who was a contemporary of 'Ashiq's: and by Cadi Sinân who is mentioned also by Hasan Chelebi. Kâtib Chelebi speaks further of a translation of Jâmi's poem which was made for Sultan 'Osmân II in 1030 (1621) by a certain Sheykh 'Omer of Maghvisa who was a member of the Khalveti dervish-order; and of a poem, named Mû'nis-ul-Ushshâq or 'The Lovers' Familiar,' by a poet called 'Abd-ul-Mejlidî Qirîmi, which, he adds, is one of the most elegant that have been composed on the story. The subject has been dealt with also by Chakerî, a minor poet of Bâyezid II's time, and by Sherîf. 

\(^1\) Hamdi's Yûsuf u Zelikha does not appear to have been printed; but its
praise of God and the Prophet, whose Ascension is duly celebrated, and whose first four successors, Ebu-Bekr, ṢOmer, ṢOsmán, and ṢAli¹ are severally eulogized. This is followed by ‘The Reason of the Writing.’ Here the poet calls on his soul to awake, remembering that time when it shall go forth naked from the body and when it will find what it has wrought. He then speaks of his father Sheykh Aq-Shems-ud-Din, whom he remembers as a frail old man, and who, he says, used to look on him, his little child, with pity, and used to say that, were it not for this son of his, he would gladly go from the sorrows of the world, but that he feared lest the cruelty of his brethren should make this poor orphan weep even as did Joseph. These fears were realized, for when his father was dead, Hamdi continues, his brethren did as had been foretold; the old man departed, but he himself remained in sorrow, a helpless orphan whose heart was pierced by many wrongs. Joseph indeed found an end to his woes, but he has never found any end to his; Joseph’s brethren acted with cruelty and jealousy, his own have behaved yet worse. Still in thinking upon Joseph he found comfort; and as he has suffered from the same wrongs as Joseph, his suffering has taught him the truth of Joseph’s story. He then looked about him and saw that this story had never yet been told in Turkish.² And yet the story of Joseph is, like the beauty of Joseph, the fairest in existence,

¹ These four theocratic rulers are called ‘the Just Khalifas’ (Khulefā-yi Rāshidin) and are regarded as semi-sacred personages; their reigns constitute what has been well described as ‘the Apostolic Age’ of Islam.

² It may be remembered that one of the earliest Turkish books in existence deals with the story of Joseph and Zelikha (see vol. i, p. 72); but of course Hamdi would know nothing of this ancient Central Asian poem.