

**SOLOMON AND
SOLOMONIC
LITERATURE**

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Solomon and Solomonic Literature by Moncure Daniel Conway

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MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

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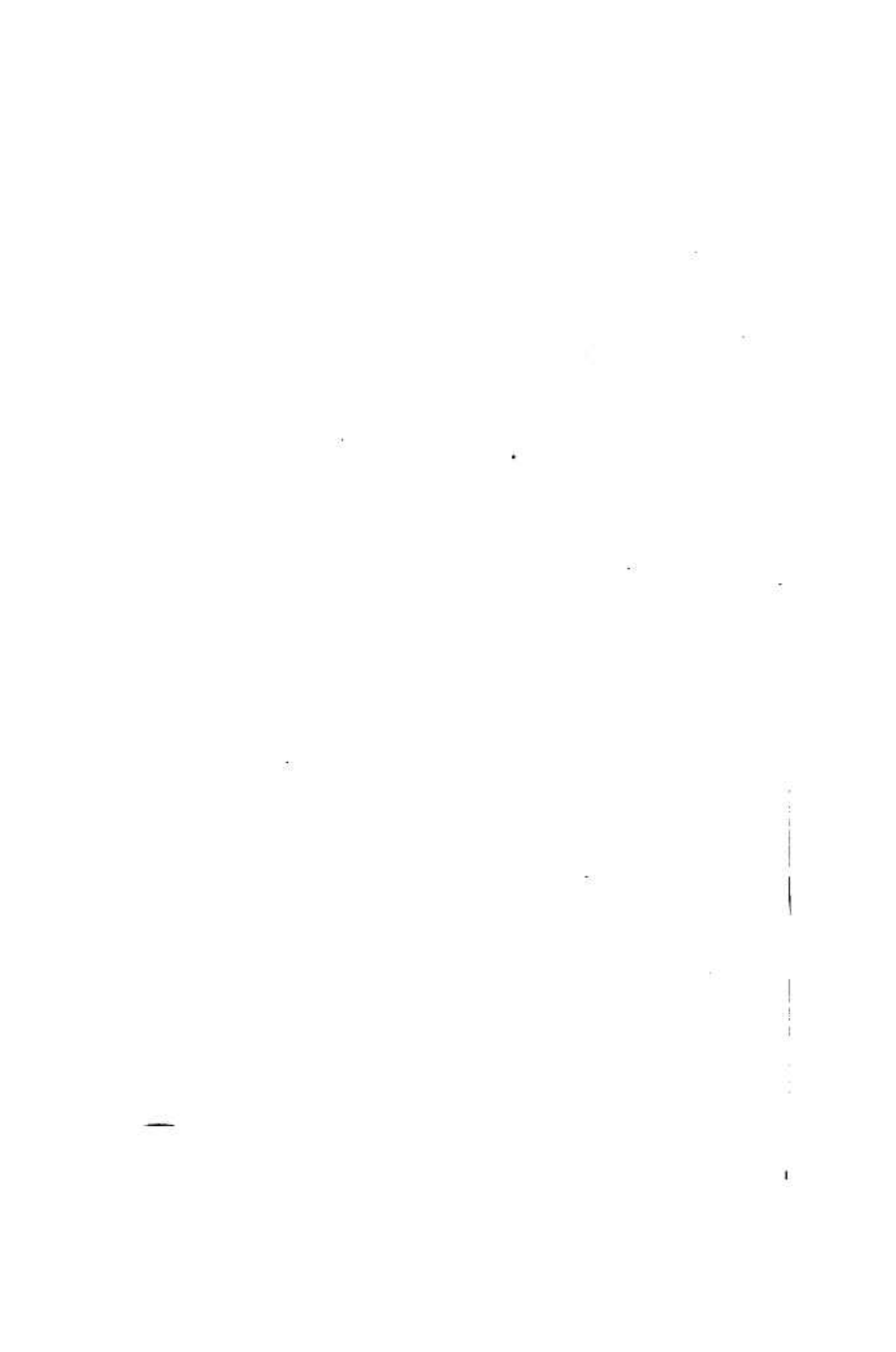
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INSCRIBED
TO MY BROTHER OMARIANS
OF THE
OMAR KHAYYÁM CLUB
LONDON

"Seek the circle of the wise: flee a thousand leagues from men without wit. If a wise man give thee poison, drink it without fear; if a fool proffer an antidote, spill it on the ground."



Folk-lore
Danielson
3-11-30
21250

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PREFACE.

An English lady of my acquaintance, sojourning at Baalbek, was conversing with an humble stonecutter, and pointing to the grand ruins inquired, "Why do you not occupy yourself with magnificent work like that?" "Ah," he said, "those edifices were built by no mortal, but by genii."

These genii now represent the demons which in ancient legends were enslaved by the potency of Solomon's ring. Some of these folk-tales suggest the ingenuity of a fabulist. According to one, Solomon outwitted the devils even after his death, which occurred while he was leaning on his staff and superintending the reluctant labors of the demons on some sacred edifice. In that posture his form remained for a year after his death, and it was not until a worm gnawed the end of his staff, causing his body to fall, that the demons discovered their freedom.

If this be a fable, a modern moral may be found by reversing the delusion. The general world has for ages been working on under the spell of Solomon while believing him to be dead. Solomon is very much alive. Many witnesses of his talismanic might can be summoned from the homes and schools wherein the rod is not spared, however much it spoils the child, and where youth's "flower of age" bleaches in a puritan cell because the "wisest of men" is supposed to have testified that all earth's pleasures are vanity. And how many