

**FROM THE PERSIAN. THE
GULISTAN:
BEING THE ROSE-GARDEN
OF SHAIKH SA'DI**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649589760

From the Persian. The Gulistan: Being the Rose-Garden of Shaikh Sa'Di by Sir Edwin Arnold

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Cover @ 2017

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SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

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GULISTAN:
BEING THE ROSE-GARDEN
OF SHAIKH SA'DI**

FROM THE PERSIAN

THE GULISTAN

BRING THE
ROSE-GARDEN OF SHAIKH SA'DI

The first four *Mabs*, or "Gateways"

TRANSLATED IN PROSE AND VERSE BY

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HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1899

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Extract from article in LITERATURE, November 12, 1898

SA'DI

OF late, when I have wished—in my study and among my books—to take refuge from politics and bodily pain, and that ocean of careless and worthless written work upon which float the scattered islands that are fair and good in current literature, I have betaken myself to good old Sa'di, and especially to his *Gulistan*. The Shaikh was really the Horace and Marco Polo of the Far East combined into one rich and gracious nature. Ancient enough to carry with him a fine flavor of the Old World, he is

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

as modern and as much for all times as the Roman poet himself or American Emerson.

A brilliant romance might be made out of his life! Born at Shirâz in A.D. 1193, and educated at the famous college of Baghdad, he set himself in his manhood, with a keen and genial curiosity, to see and understand the world. Pious, albeit shrewd and philosophical, he made at one date or another no less than fourteen pilgrimages to Mecca; came to Europe; and wandered through Asia Minor, Barbary, Abyssinia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Arabia, all Persia, of course, and India. Naturally, in such wide peregrinations, he met with many adventures. What a picture might be painted, for example, of that particular one when, roaming about the western coast of Gujerat, he came to the Holy Shrine of Siva in Pattan-Sumanât, and nearly paid with his life for his restless inquisitiveness! Every morning at sunrise the image of the god in the great temple, with its eyes made of dia-

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

monds and its robes of jewelled gold, lifted its hands in blessing to all the votaries who flocked from far and near to witness the mighty miracle. Sa'di, though a believer in divine things, was a bit of a sceptic about Darweeshes and priestly humbug generally, and so, having hidden himself one day behind the image, he saw the attendant priest working its arms with a rope, and thereby "pulling-off" the portent. Unluckily, the priest also observed Sa'di, and having attempted to capture him, that gentle-hearted but intrepid traveller found no alternative except to throw the Brahman into the deep well of the temple and to fly for safety, having first, however, smashed the deceitful effigy.

At Delhi he picked up Hindustani as perfectly as he had acquired Arabic in Baghdad. He made journeys to Yemen and even to Ethiopia, and for some time lived as a renowned and inspired teacher in Damascus. At Baalbec—where those glorious Corinthian columns still rise in the green Lebanon valley, majes-