

**SELIM, THE NASÁKCHI,  
A PERSIAN TALE, IN  
VERSE**

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Selim, the Nasákchi, a Persian Tale, in Verse by Charles Hetherington

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**CHARLES HETHERINGTON**

**SELIM, THE NASÁKCHI,  
A PERSIAN TALE, IN  
VERSE**



# SELIM, THE NASÁKCHI,

A PERSIAN TALE,

*In Verse.*

BY

CHARLES HETHERINGTON.

AUTHOR OF "THE EVERGREEN OAK," ETC.



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TO  
R. D. HARRIS, ESQ.

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DEAR HARRIS,

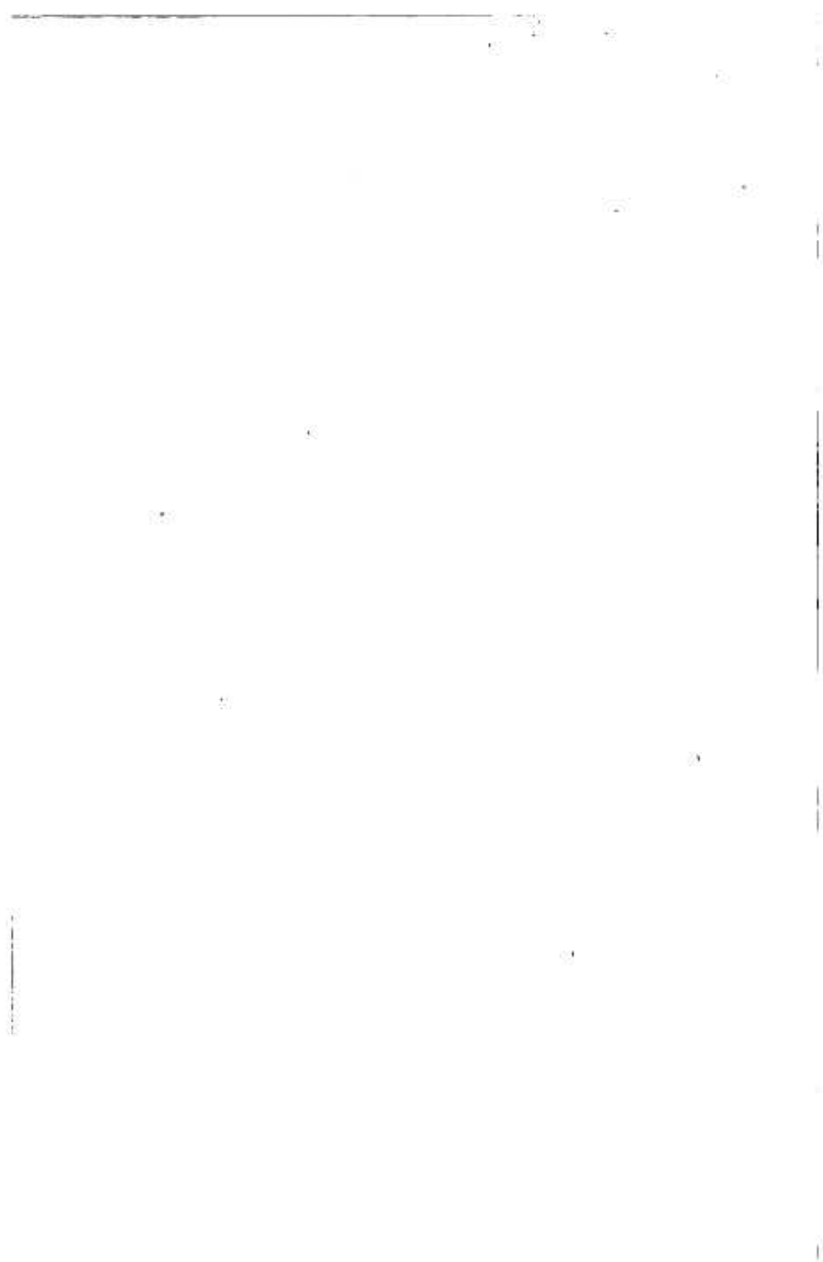
“The Evergreen Oak,” and my few other rhymes, having been not altogether unfavourably glanced at by critics,—and by one perhaps too favourably—I again offer to friends, “A tale in verse.” The idea of the story arose from an incident in a novel, which I read many years since.

I once heard you remark, that you disliked referring to notes whilst perusing a poem, as it interrupts the ardour of attention. I determined to prevent such annoyance, but, by so doing, I fear that I have avoided the hillocks of interruption, only to wander, too often, along the wearisome plains of prolixity.

Yours faithfully,

THE AUTHOR.

Hampton Court,  
14th January, 1887.



## SELIM, THE NASA'KCHI.

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### CANTO I.

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#### I.

O'ER Shiraz—city of the fairest vale,  
Where Persia's southern mountains check the gale—  
Hung the bright moon:—on silent mosques and towers,  
On fertile gardens and their lattic'd bowers,  
On many a gilded dome and minaret,  
The queen of night, her soft'ning smile, had set.  
Some hours had pass'd since, floated through the air,  
The deep-voiced muezzin's call to evening prayer.  
Ceas'd, had the busy tumult of the streets,  
The trader's traffic and the juggler's feats,  
The jester's story to a laughing throng,  
The crier's voice and vagrant minstrel's song ;



The sound of camels' bells, of vex'd guitars,  
 And ceas'd the buzz of crowded, rich bazaars :  
 The squares were silent, city portals clos'd,  
 And all, it seemed, save night-police, reposed.

## II.

Now, had the gentle god of sleep, around  
 Abdulla's house, his poppy fetters wound.  
 Doubtless the visions of th' old merchant show'd  
 Some caravan, long look'd for, on the road.  
 Its camels bearing Ispahan's brocades,  
 Bokhara's skins, and Georgia's captive maids.  
 If, of the last he thought, 'twas well for him  
 His spouse Zippora knew not of his dream.  
 To her, her slumbers, costly dresses, brought,  
 Of Cashan's silk in novel pattern wrought ;  
 Or splendid shawl, a present from Cashmere :  
 Or carpet from the Eeliaut mountaineer.

Such fair illusions, fancy seldom waves  
 O'er the brief, heavy sleep of wearied slaves.  
 Within the harem's most secluded room,  
 Dreamless as tenants of the darksome tomb,  
 Zippora's, tir'd, reposed ; and all, except  
 One lowly Kurdish girl, profoundly slept.

## III.

This wakeful one, young Leila, whispering, spoke,  
 "Sittara ! Maidee ! Amine !" — none awoke.

By the moon's light, which dimly shone between  
 The wood-carv'd flowerets of the window's screen,  
 She mark'd the three, as statues, motionless;—  
 Gently she rose, and tied her loosen'd dress.  
 Wrapt in a dark grey cloak, veil o'er her head,  
 With footfall noiseless as a phantom's tread,  
 She left the room—along the gallery crept—  
 Unbarr'd the outer door, and forth she stepp'd:  
 Softly she clos'd it,—listen'd,—look'd around;  
 Free was the court from startling sight, or sound;  
 Yet, of some casual eye above, afraid,  
 She mov'd within the lofty wall's safe shade:  
 She reach'd its gate—withdrew the bolt, and stood  
 In the large garden's lovely quietude.

## IV.

A fairer night had never gemm'd the heaven;  
 Nor, tranquil beauty to this garden, given.  
 And yet,—though every flower that loves the sun  
 Had clos'd its petals when his race was done,  
 And gorgeous butterfly and singing bee  
 No longer flutter'd round them joyously;  
 Though not a wind-sprite us'd its gentlest power  
 To ruffle ev'n th' acacia's pensile flower,  
 Or wave the cypresses, which, here and there,  
 Solemn and dark, watch'd o'er the gay parterre—  
 This garden slumber'd not: it rather seem'd,  
 So fresh and brilliantly the moonlight beam'd,

Awake, but list'ning to the warbled tale  
 Of the young rose-enamour'd nightingale ;  
 Now wildly gladsome, now in plaints of love,  
 In varied cadence, from a poplar grove.  
 Enchanting bird ! the rose, perhaps, may hear  
 A rival lay from many a garden near ;  
 But sorrow not—she ne'er will turn from thee,  
 Whilst thou cast charm her with such melody !

## V.

With *most* effulgence were the moonbeams shed  
 Full on an aged plane-tree's stately head :  
 And on a summer-house,—a fairy bower  
 Of gilded trellis twin'd with shrub and flower,  
 Built on a rocky mound ;—its pinnacle,  
 Glitt'ring with gold, on which the bright beams fell,  
 Mirror'd within a tank's clear water play'd,  
 Where lilies slept beneath the plane-tree's shade.

But Leila scarcely heard the warbler's lay,  
 Nor mark'd the beauty of the silvery ray.  
 Still fearful lest some sleepless one, whose bed,  
 For coolness, on a neighbouring roof was spread,  
 Perhaps might see her, on she glided fast—  
 Between the trees where shade was thickly cast ;  
 Nor paus'd until, from dangerous eyes, secure,  
 She freely breath'd within the rock-bas'd bower.