

is active, creative, effective. We make room for the agency of man. He is not passive clay, but a personal force. He is not moulded merely by influences from without, but can take the shape he wishes by the exercise of will and moral effort. It is true that we sometimes meet the Eastern quality of life among ourselves in the amiable despair of the *dilettante*, in the self disgust of the *blasè*, and in the far nobler form of the patient submission of the christian sufferer. But in its normal healthy state our western life is buoyant with hope and courage and energy. It is a life of activity not passivity ; of self-assertion rather than self-suppression. We carry with us the consciousness of freedom of the creative power of the spirit, of the capacity to be and do what our Ideal demands of us, of our ability to progress by individual choice and personal effort. But to the oriental mind life is passive, contemplative, receptive. The agency of God is everything ; man is plastic clay in the hands of the Potter. Hence the fatalism of Eastern people, their religion of calm submission to the decrees of the Fates, their philosophy of self-suppression and pessimism, their practical denial of human personality and freedom, their largest hope of eternal death. Among such people how fitting an illustration of human life is the potter's wheel ! God is the only moulder of man's destiny ; man is the helpless passive instrument of his purpose. If we thus take the figure at its worst, God the arbitrary, it may be even the whimsical potter and man the helpless clay to be shaped as suits the fancy of the maker ; we have sheer fatalism, dark, dreary, despairing fatalism.

But we may accept the Potter's wheel as a perfect figure of human life, yet reach a conclusion just as false to human experience, because too full of superficial hope. If we think of the Potter as the All-merciful God, we are landed in a free-and-easy universalism. The Potter is all-Power and all-Love ; he may do what he wills with the passive clay and he wills the best. Therefore, all vessels will come to take on in the end the same perfect form, with the same light-hearted mockery with which he touched every problem that seems serious to us, Omar Khayyam dealt with this figure of the potter and the clay, and he gave us a very good picture of the modern Universalist in the lines :