

A Persian Song of Hafiz

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight;
And, bid these arms thy neck infold;
That rosy cheek, that lily hand,
Would give thy poet more delight
Than all Bocara's vaunted gold,
Than all the gems of Samarcand.

Boy! let yon liquid ruby flow,
And bid thy pensive heart be glad,
Whate'er the frowning zealots say:—
Tell them their Eden cannot show
A stream so clear as Rocnabad,
A bower so sweet as Mosellay.

O! when these fair, perfidious maids,
Whose eyes our secret haunts infest,
Their dear destructive charms display;—
Each glance my tender breast invades,
And robs my wounded soul of rest;
As Tartars seize their destin'd prey.

In vain with love our bosoms glow:
Can all our tears, can all our sighs,
New lustre to those charms impart?
Can cheeks, where living roses blow,
Where nature spreads her richest dyes,
Require the borrow'd gloss of art?

Speak not of fate;—ah! change the theme,
And talk of odours, talk of wine,
Talk of the flow'rs that round us bloom:—
'Tis all a cloud, 'tis all a dream:
To love and joy thy thoughts confine,
Nor hope to pierce the sacred gloom.

Beauty has such resistless power,
That even the chaste Egyptian dame
Sigh'd for the blooming Hebrew boy;
For her how fatal was the hour,
When to the banks of Nilus came
A youth so lovely and so coy!

But ah, sweet maid! my counsel hear,—
(Youth should attend when those advise
Whom long experience renders sage,)
While music charms the ravish'd ear;

While sparkling cups delight our eyes,
Be gay; and scorn the frowns of age.

What cruel answer have I heard!
And yet, by heaven! I love thee still:
Can aught be cruel from thy lip?
Yet say, how fell that bitter word
From lips which streams of sweetness fill,
Which nought but drops of honey sip?

Go boldly forth, my simple lay,
Whose accents flow with artless ease,
Like orient pearls at random strung:
Thy notes are sweet, the damsels say;
But O! far sweeter, if they please
The nymph for whom these notes are sung.

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