

LALLA  
ROOKH

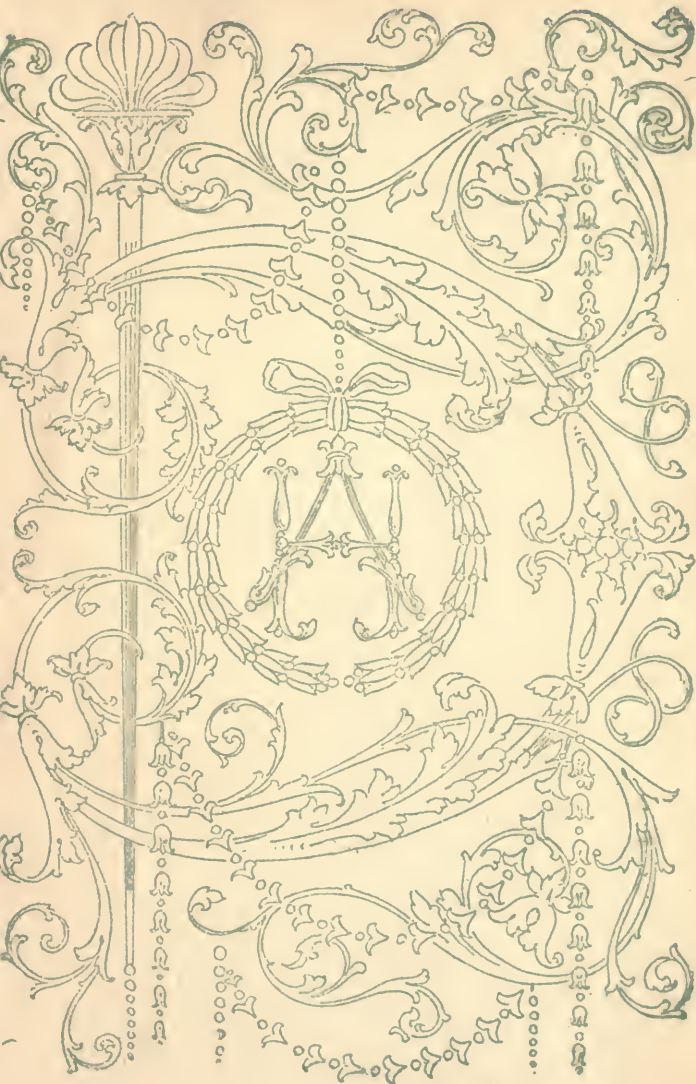
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## THOMAS MOORE.—1779-1852.

LALLA ROOKH appeared in 1817, and in it the world found a poem *sui generis*: and they were not slow in showing their appreciation of it. It was in every one's hands—upon every one's lips. Learned men and Oriental travellers bore testimony, not only to its historical correctness, but to the fidelity and beauty of its scenic descriptions. The original went through seven editions within a year, found its way through the world, and was soon translated into every language. "There are," said Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*, "passages, indeed, and these neither few nor brief, over which the very genius of poetry seems to have breathed his richest enchantment—where the melody of the verse and the beauty of the images conspire so harmoniously with the force and tenderness of the emotion, that the whole is blended into one deep and bright stream of sweetness and feeling, along which the spirit of the reader is borne passively away through long reaches of delight."

HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

LALLA ROOKH

MOORE

PHILADELPHIA









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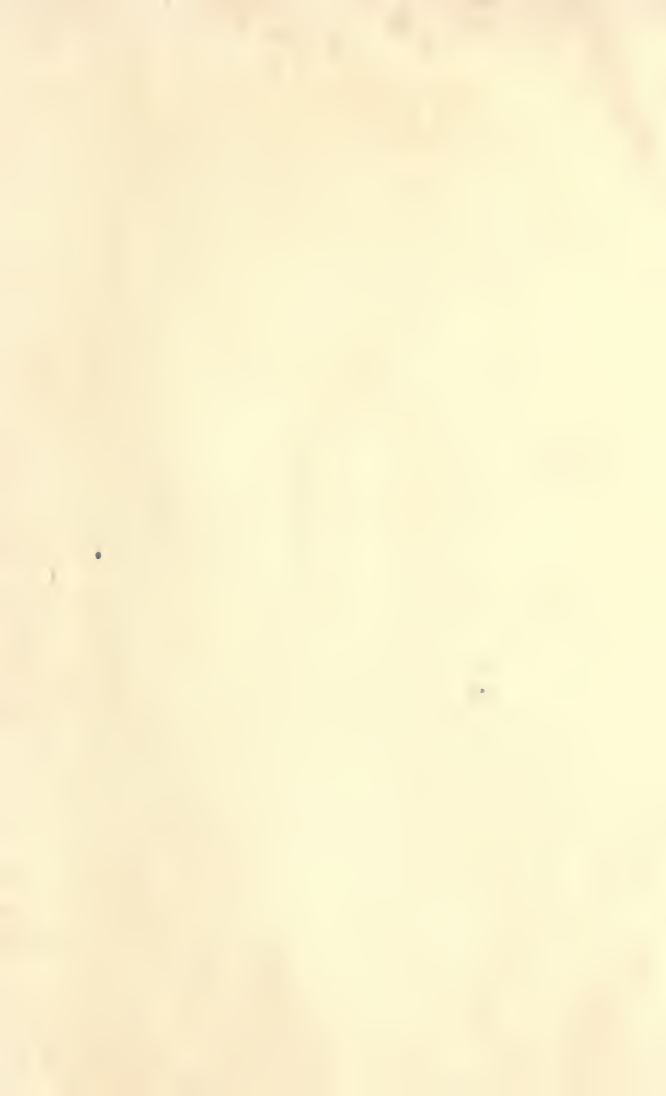
*Lalla Rookh*



THOMAS MOORE

LALLA ROOKH

PHILADELPHIA  
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

[*Written originally for "Lalla Rookh" in the collected edition of Moore's works.*]

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THE Poem, or Romance, of "Lalla Rookh" having now reached, I understand, its twentieth edition, a short account of the origin and progress of a work which has been hitherto so very unfortunate in its course may not be deemed, perhaps, superfluous or misplaced.

It was about the year 1812, that, far more through the encouraging suggestions of friends than from any confident promptings of my own ambition, I conceived the design of writing a Poem upon some Oriental subject, and of those quarto dimensions which Scott's successful publications in that form had then rendered the regular poetical standard. A negotiation on the subject was opened with the Messrs. Longman in the same year; but, from some causes which I cannot now recollect, led to no decisive result; nor was it until a year or two after, that any further steps were taken in the matter, — their house being the only one, it is right to add, with which, from first to last, I held any communication upon the subject.

On this last occasion, Mr. Perry kindly offered

himself as my representative in the treaty; and, what with the friendly zeal of my negotiator on the one side, and the prompt and liberal spirit with which he was met on the other, there has seldom, I think, occurred any transaction in which Trade and Poesy have shone out so advantageously in each other's eyes. The short discussion that then took place, between the two parties, may be comprised in a very few sentences. "I am of opinion," said Mr. Perry, — enforcing his view of the case by arguments which it is not for me to cite, — "that Mr. Moore ought to receive for his poem the largest price that has been given, in our day, for such a work." "That was," answered the Messrs. Longman, "three thousand guineas." "Exactly so," replied Mr. Perry, "and no less a sum ought he to receive."

It was then objected, and very reasonably, on the part of the firm, that they had never yet seen a single line of the Poem; and that a perusal of the work ought to be allowed to them, before they embarked so large a sum in the purchase. But, no; — the romantic view which my friend Perry took of the matter was, that this price should be given as a tribute to reputation already acquired, without any condition for a previous perusal of the new work. This high tone, I must confess, not a little startled and alarmed me; but to the honor and glory of Romance — as well on the publishers' side as the poet's, — this very generous view of the transaction



was, without any difficulty, acceded to, and the firm agreed, before we separated, that I was to receive three thousand guineas for my Poem.

At the time of this agreement, but little of the work, as it stands at present, had yet been written. But the ready confidence in my success shown by others made up for the deficiency of that requisite feeling within myself; while a strong desire not wholly to disappoint this "auguring hope" became almost a substitute for inspiration. In the year 1815, therefore, having made some progress in my task, I wrote to report the state of the work to the Messrs. Longman, adding, that I was now most willing and ready, should they desire it, to submit the manuscript for their consideration. Their answer to this offer was as follows: "We are certainly impatient for the perusal of the Poem; but solely for our gratification. Your sentiments are always honorable."

I continued to pursue my task for another year, being likewise occasionally occupied with the "Irish Melodies," two or three numbers of which made their appearance during the period employed in writing "Lalla Rookh." At length, in the year 1816, I found my work sufficiently advanced to be placed in the hands of the publishers. But the state of distress to which England was reduced, in that dismal year, by the exhausting effects of the series of wars she had just then concluded, and the general embarrassment of all classes both agricultural and

commercial, rendered it a juncture the least favorable that could well be conceived for the first launch into print of so light and costly a venture as "Lalla Rookh." Feeling conscious, therefore, that under such circumstances I should act but honestly in putting it in the power of the Messrs. Longman to reconsider the terms of their engagement with me, — leaving them free to postpone, modify, or even, should such be their wish, relinquish it altogether, — I wrote them a letter to that effect, and received the following answer: "We shall be most happy in the pleasure of seeing you in February. We agree with you, indeed, that the times are most inauspicious for 'poetry and thousands;' but we believe that your poetry would do more than that of any other living poet at the present moment."

The length of time I employed in writing the few stories strung together in "Lalla Rookh" will appear, to some persons, much more than was necessary for the production of such easy and "light o' love" fictions. But, besides that I have been, at all times, a far more slow and painstaking workman than would ever be guessed, I fear, from the result, I felt that in this instance I had taken upon myself a more than ordinary responsibility, from the immense stake risked by others on my chance of success. For a long time, therefore, after the agreement had been concluded, though generally at work with a view to this task, I made but very little real progress in it; and I have still by me the begin-

nings of several stories continued, some of them, to the length of three or four hundred lines, which, after in vain endeavoring to mould them into shape, I threw aside, like the tale of Cambuscan, "left half-told." One of these stories, entitled "The Peri's Daughter," was meant to relate the loves of a nymph of this ærial extraction with a youth of mortal race, the rightful Prince of Ormuz, who had been, from his infancy, brought up in seclusion on the banks of the river Amou, by an aged guardian named Mohassan. The story opens with the first meeting of these destined lovers, then in their childhood; the Peri having wafted her daughter to this holy retreat, in a bright, enchanted boat, whose first appearance is thus described:—

. . . . .

For, down the silvery tide afar,  
 There came a boat, as swift and bright,  
     As shines, in heaven, some pilgrim-star,  
 That leaves its own high home, at night,  
 To shoot to distant shrines of light.

'It comes, it comes,' young Orian cries,  
 And panting to Mohassan flies.  
 Then, down upon the flowery grass  
 Reclines to see the vision pass;  
 With partly joy and partly fear,  
 To find its wondrous light so near,

And hiding oft his dazzled eyes  
Among the flowers on which he lies.

. . . . .

Within the boat a baby slept,  
Like a young pearl within its shell ;  
    While one, who seem'd of riper years,  
    But not of earth, or earth-like spheres,  
Her watch beside the slumberer kept ;  
Gracefully waving, in her hand,  
    The feathers of some holy bird,  
    With which, from time to time, she stirr'd  
The fragrant air, and coolly fann'd  
The baby's brow, or brush'd away  
    The butterflies that, bright and blue  
As on the mountains of Malay,  
    Around the sleeping infant flew.

And now the fairy boat hath stopp'd  
Beside the bank, — the nymph has dropp'd  
Her golden anchor in the stream.

. . . . .

A song is sung by the Peri in approaching, of  
which the following forms a part : —

My child she is but half divine,  
Her father sleeps in the Caspian water ;  
    Sea-weeds twine  
    His funeral shrine,  
But he lives again in the Peri's daughter.

Fain would I fly from mortal sight  
 To my own sweet bowers of Peristan;  
 But there, the flowers are all too bright  
 For the eyes of a baby born of man.  
 On flowers of earth her feet must tread;  
 So hither my light-wing'd bark hath brought her;  
     Stranger, spread  
     Thy leafiest bed,  
 To rest the wandering Peri's daughter.

In another of these inchoate fragments, a proud female saint, named Banou, plays a principal part; and her progress through the streets of Cufa, on the night of a great illuminated festival, I find thus described:—

It was a scene of mirth that drew  
 A smile from even the Saint Banou,  
 As, through the hush'd admiring throng,  
 She went with stately steps along,  
 And counted o'er, that all might see,  
 The rubies of her rosary.  
 But none might see the worldly smile  
 That lurk'd beneath her veil the while:—  
 Alla, forbid! for, who would wait  
 Her blessing at the temple's gate,—  
 What holy man would ever run  
 To kiss the ground she knelt upon,  
 If once, by luckless chance, he knew  
 She look'd and smiled as others do?  
 Her hands were join'd, and from each wrist  
 By threads of pearl and golden twist

Hung relics of the saints of yore,  
And scraps of talismanic lore, —  
Charms for the old, the sick, the frail,  
Some made for use, and all for sale.  
On either side, the crowd withdrew,  
To let the Saint pass proudly through;  
While turban'd heads of every hue,  
Green, white, and crimson, bow'd around,  
And gay tiaras touched the ground, —  
As tulip-bells, when o'er their beds  
The musk-wind passes, bend their heads.  
Nay, some there were, among the crowd  
Of Moslem heads that round her bow'd,  
So fill'd with zeal by many a draught  
Of Shiraz wine profanely quaff'd,  
That, sinking low in reverence then,  
They never rose till morn again.

There are yet two more of these unfinished sketches, one of which extends to a much greater length than I was aware of; and, as far as I can judge from a hasty renewal of my acquaintance with it, is not incapable of being yet turned to account.

In only one of these unfinished sketches, the tale of "The Peri's Daughter," had I yet ventured to invoke that most home-felt of all my inspirations, which has lent to the story of "The Fire-Worshippers" its main attraction and interest. That it was my intention, in the concealed Prince of Ormuz, to shadow out some impersonation of this feeling, I take for granted from the prophetic words sup-

posed to be addressed to him by his aged guardian:—

Bright child of destiny! even now  
I read the promise on that brow,  
That tyrants shall no more defile  
The glories of the Green Sea Isle,  
But Ormuz shall again be free,  
And hail her native Lord in thee!

In none of the other fragments do I find any trace of this sort of feeling, either in the subject or the personages of the intended story; and this was the reason, doubtless, though hardly known, at the time, to myself, that, finding my subjects so slow in kindling my own sympathies, I began to despair of their ever touching the hearts of others; and felt often inclined to say:—

“Oh no, I have no voice or hand  
For such a song in such a land.”

Had this series of disheartening experiments been carried on much further, I must have thrown aside the work in despair. But at last, fortunately, as it proved, the thought occurred to me of founding a story on the fierce struggle so long maintained between the Ghebers<sup>1</sup> or ancient Fire-Worshippers of Persia, and their haughty Moslem masters. From

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, in his tragedy of “*Les Guèbres*,” written with a similar under-current of meaning, was accused of having transformed his Fire-Worshippers into Jansenists. “*Quelques figuristes*,” he says, “*prétendent que les Guèbres sont les Jansenistes*.”

that moment, a new and deep interest in my whole task took possession of me. The cause of tolerance was again my inspiring theme; and the spirit that had spoken in the melodies of Ireland soon found itself at home in the East.

Having thus laid open the secrets of the workshop to account for the time expended in *writing* this work, I must also, in justice to my own industry, notice the pains I took in long and laboriously *reading* for it. To form a storehouse, as it were, of illustration purely Oriental, and so familiarize myself with its various treasures, that, as quick as Fancy required the aid of fact, in her spiritings, the memory was ready, like another Ariel, at her "strong bidding," to furnish materials for the spell-work, — such was, for a long while, the sole object of my studies; and whatever time and trouble this preparatory process may have cost me, the effects resulting from it, as far as the humble merit of truthfulness is concerned, have been such as to repay me more than sufficiently for my pains. I have not forgotten how great was my pleasure, when told by the late Sir James Mackintosh that he was once asked by Colonel W —s, the historian of British India, "whether it was true that Moore had never been in the East?" "Never," answered Mackintosh. "Well, that shows me," replied Colonel W —s, "that reading over D'Herbelot is as good as riding on the back of a camel."

I need hardly subjoin to this lively speech, that,



although D'Herbelot's valuable work was, of course, one of my manuals, I took the whole range of all such Oriental reading as was accessible to me; and became, for the time, indeed, far more conversant with all relating to that distant region, than I have ever been with the scenery, productions, or modes of life of any of those countries lying most within my reach. We know that D'Anville, though never in his life out of Paris, was able to correct a number of errors in a plan of the Troad taken by De Choiseul, on the spot; and for my own very different, as well as far inferior, purposes, the knowledge I had thus acquired of distant localities, seen only by me in my day-dreams, was no less ready and useful.

An ample reward for all this painstaking has been found in such welcome tributes as I have just now cited; nor can I deny myself the gratification of citing a few more of the same description. From another distinguished authority on Eastern subjects, the late Sir John Malcolm, I had myself the pleasure of hearing a similar opinion publicly expressed; — that eminent person, in a speech spoken by him at a Literary Fund Dinner, having remarked, that, together with those qualities of a poet which he much too partially assigned to me, was combined also “the truth of the historian.”

Sir William Ouseley, another high authority, in giving his testimony to the same effect, thus notices an exception to the general accuracy for which he gives me credit: “Dazzled by the beauties of this

composition [“The Fire Worshippers”], few readers can perceive, and none surely can regret, that the poet, in his magnificent catastrophe, has forgotten, or boldly and most happily violated, the precept of Zoroaster, above noticed, which held it impious to consume any portion of a human body by fire, especially by that which glowed upon their altars.” Having long lost, I fear, most of my Eastern learning, I can only cite, in defence of my catastrophe, an old Oriental tradition, which relates that Nimrod, when Abraham refused, at his command, to worship the fire, ordered him to be thrown into the midst of the flames.<sup>1</sup> A precedent so ancient for this sort of use of the worshipped element would appear, for all the purposes at least of poetry, fully sufficient.

In addition to these agreeable testimonies, I have also heard, and need hardly add, with some pride and pleasure, that parts of this work have been rendered into Persian, and have found their way to Ispahan. To this fact, as I am willing to think it, allusion is made in some lively verses, written many years since, by my friend, Mr. Luttrell: —

“I’m told, dear Moore, your lays are sung,  
 (Can it be true, you lucky man?)  
 By moonlight, in the Persian tongue,  
 Along the streets of Ispahan.”

<sup>1</sup> “Tradunt autem Hebræi hanc fabulam, quod Abraham in ignem missus sit, quia ignem adorare noluit.” — ST. HIERON, *in Quæst in Genesim.*

That some knowledge of the work may have really reached that region appears not improbable from a passage in the "Travels" of Mr. Frazer, who says, that "being delayed for some time at a town on the shores of the Caspian, he was lucky enough to be able to amuse himself with a copy of 'Lalla Rookh,' which a Persian had lent him."

Of the description of Balbec, in "Paradise and the Peri," Mr. Carne, in his "Letters from the East," thus speaks: "The description in 'Lalla Rookh' of the plain and its ruins is exquisitely faithful. The minaret is on the declivity near at hand, and there wanted only the muezzin's cry to break the silence."

I shall now tax my reader's patience with but one more of these generous vouchers. Whatever of vanity there may be in citing such tributes, they show, at least, of what great value, even in poetry, is that prosaic quality, industry; since, as the reader of the foregoing pages is now fully apprised, it was in a slow and laborious collection of small facts, that the first foundations of this fanciful Romance were laid.

The friendly testimony I have just referred to appeared, some years since, in the form in which I now give it, and, if I recollect right, in the *Athenæum*:—

"I embrace this opportunity of bearing my individual testimony (if it be of any value) to the extraordinary accuracy of Mr. Moore, in his topographical, antiquarian, and characteristic details,

whether of costume, manners, or less changing monuments, both in his 'Lalla Rookh' and in 'The Epicurean.' It has been my fortune to read his Atlantic, Bermudean, and American Odes and Epistles, in the countries and among the people to which and to whom they related; I enjoyed also the exquisite delight of reading his 'Lalla Rookh' in Persia itself; and I have perused 'The Epicurean' while all my recollections of Egypt and its still existing wonders are as fresh as when I quitted the banks of the Nile for Arabia: — I owe it, therefore, as a debt of gratitude (though the payment is most inadequate), for the great pleasure I have derived from his productions, to bear my humble testimony to their local fidelity. — J. S. B."

Among the incidents connected with this work, I must not omit to notice the splendid *Divertissement*, founded upon it, which was acted at the Château Royal of Berlin, during the visit of the Grand Duke Nicholas to that capital, in the year 1822. The different stories composing the work were represented in *Tableaux Vivans* and songs; and among the crowd of royal and noble personages engaged in the performances, I shall mention those only who represented the principal characters, and whom I find thus enumerated in the published account of the *Divertissement*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Lalla Roûkh, Divertissement mêlé de Chants et de Danses." Berlin, 1822. The work contains a series of colored engravings, representing groups, processions, etc., in different Oriental costumes.

Fadladin, Grand-Nasir . . .	<i>Comte Haack (Maréchal de Cour).</i>
Aliris, Roi de Bucharie . . .	<i>S. A. I. le Grand-Duc.</i>
Lalla Roukh . . . . .	<i>S. A. I. la Grande-Duchesse.</i>
Aurungzeb, le Grand Mogol	{ <i>S. A. R. le Prince Guillaume, frère du Roi.</i>
Abdallah, Père d'Aliris . . .	
La Reine, son épouse . . . .	{ <i>S. A. R. le Duc de Cumberland. S. A. R. la Princesse Louise Rad- zivill.</i>

Besides these and other leading personages, there were also brought into action, under the various denominations of *Seigneurs et Dames de Bucharie, Dames de Cachemire, Seigneurs et Dames dansans à la Fête des Roses*, etc., nearly one hundred and fifty persons.

Of the manner and style in which the Tableaux of the different stories are described in the work from which I cite, the following account of the performance of "Paradise and the Peri" will afford some specimen:—

"La décoration représentoit les portes brillantes du Paradis, entourées de nuages. Dans le premier tableau on voyoit la Péri, triste et désolée, couchée sur le seuil des portes fermées, et l'Ange de lumière qui lui adresse des consolations et des conseils. Le second représente le moment où la Péri, dans l'espoir que ce don lui ouvrira l'entrée du Paradis, recueille la dernière goutte de sang que vient de verser le jeune guerrier indien. . . .

"La Péri et l'Ange de lumière répondoient pieinement à l'image et à l'idée qu'on est tenté de se faire de ces deux individus, et l'impression qu'a faite généralement la suite des tableaux de cet épisode déli-

cat et intéressant est loin de s'effacer de notre souvenir."

In this grand *fête*, it appears, originated the translation of "Lalla Rookh" into German<sup>1</sup> verse, by the Baron de la Motte Fouqué; and the circumstances which led him to undertake the task are described by himself in a Dedicatory Poem to the Empress of Russia, which he has prefixed to his translation. As soon as the performance, he tells us, had ended, Lalla Rookh (the Empress herself) exclaimed, with a sigh, "Is it, then, all over? Are we now at the close of all that has given us so much delight? and lives there no poet who will impart to others, and to future times, some notion of the happiness we have enjoyed this evening?" On hearing this appeal, a Knight of Cashmere (who is no other than the poetical Baron himself) comes forward and promises to attempt to present to the world "the Poem itself in the measure of the original:"—whereupon Lalla Rookh, it is added, approvingly smiled.

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, another translation of "Lalla Rookh" into German verse has been made by Theodor Oelckers (Leipzig, Tauchnitz).

## LALLÁ ROOKH.

---

IN the eleventh year of the reign of Aurungzebe, Abdalla, King of the Lesser Bucharía, a lineal descendant from the Great Zingis, having abdicated the throne in favor of his son, set out on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Prophet; and passing into India through the delightful valley of Cashmere, rested for a short time at Delhi on his way. He was entertained by Aurungzebe in a style of magnificent hospitality, worthy alike of the visitor and the host, and was afterwards escorted with the same splendor to Surat, where he embarked for Arabia. During the stay of the Royal Pilgrim at Delhi, a marriage was agreed upon between the Prince, his son, and the youngest daughter of the Emperor, Lalla Rookh;—a Princess described by the poets of her time as more beautiful than Leila, Shirine, Dewildé, or any of those heroines whose names and loves embellish the songs of Persia and Hindostan. It was intended that the nuptials should be celebrated at Cashmere; where the young King, as soon as the cares of empire would permit, was to meet, for the first time, his lovely



bride, and, after a few months' repose in that enchanting valley, conduct her over the snowy hills into Bucharia.

The day of Lalla Rookh's departure from Delhi was as splendid as sunshine and pageantry could make it. The bazaars and baths were all covered with the richest tapestry; hundreds of gilded barges upon the Jumna floated with their banners shining in the water; while through the streets groups of beautiful children went strewing the most delicious flowers around, as in that Persian festival called the Scattering of the Roses; till every part of the city was as fragrant as if a caravan of musk from Khoten had passed through it. The Princess, having taken leave of her kind father (who at parting hung a cornelian of Yemen round her neck, on which was inscribed a verse from the Koran) and having sent a considerable present to the Fakirs, who kept up the Perpetual Lamp in her sister's tomb, meekly ascended the palankeen prepared for her; and, while Aurungzebe stood to take a last look from his balcony, the procession moved slowly on the road to Lahore.

Seldom had the Eastern world seen a cavalcade so superb. From the gardens in the suburbs to the Imperial palace, it was one unbroken line of splendor. The gallant appearance of the Rajahs and Mogul Lords, distinguished by those insignia of the Emperor's favor, the feathers of the egret of Cashmere in their turbans, and the small silver-



rimmed kettledrums at the bows of their saddles; — the costly armor of their cavaliers, who vied, on this occasion, with the guards of the great Keder Khan, in the brightness of their silver battle-axes and the massiness of their maces of gold; — the glittering of the gilt pine-apples on the tops of the palankeens; — the embroidered trappings of the elephants, bearing on their backs small turrets in the shape of little antique temples, within which the Ladies of Lalla Rookh lay as it were enshrined; — the rose-colored veils of the Princess's own sumptuous litter, at the front of which a fair young female slave sat fanning her through the curtains, with feathers of the Argus pheasant's wing; — and the lovely troop of Tartarian and Cashmerian maids of honor, whom the young King had sent to accompany his bride, and who rode on each side of the litter, upon small Arabian horses; — all was brilliant, tasteful, and magnificent, and pleased even the critical and fastidious Fadladeen, Great Nazir or Chamberlain of the Haram, who was borne in his palankeen immediately after the Princess, and considered himself not the least important personage of the pageant.

Fadladeen was a judge of everything, — from the pencilling of a Circassian's eyelids to the deepest questions of science and literature; from the mixture of a conserve of rose-leaves to the composition of an epic poem; and such influence had his opinion upon the various tastes of the day, that all the

cooks and poets of Delhi stood in awe of him. His political conduct and opinions were founded upon that line of Sadi, — “ Should the Prince at noon-day say, It is night, declare that you behold the moon and stars.” — And his zeal for religion, of which Aurungzebe was a munificent protector, was about as disinterested as that of the goldsmith who fell in love with the diamond eyes of the Idol of Jaghnaut.

During the first days of their journey, Lalla Rookh, who had passed all her life within the shadow of the Royal Gardens at Delhi, found enough in the beauty of the scenery through which they passed to interest her mind and delight her imagination; and when at evening or in the heat of the day, they turned off from the high road to those retired and romantic places which had been selected for her encampments, sometimes on the banks of a small rivulet, as clear as the waters of the Lake of Pearl; sometimes under the sacred shade of a Banyan tree, from which the view opened upon a glade covered with antelopes; and often in those hidden, embowered spots, described by one from the Isles of the West, as “ places of melancholy, delight, and safety, where all the company around were wild peacocks and turtle-doves; ” — she felt a charm in these scenes, so lovely and so new to her, which, for a time, made her indifferent to every other amusement. But Lalla Rookh was young, and the young love variety; nor could the

conversation of her Ladies and the Great Chamberlain Fadladeen (the only persons, of course, admitted to her pavilion) sufficiently enliven those many vacant hours, which were devoted neither to the pillow nor the palankeen. There was a little Persian slave who sung sweetly to the Vina, and who, now and then, lulled the Princess to sleep with the ancient ditties of her country, about the loves of Wamak and Ezra, the fair-haired Zal and his mistress Rodahver; not forgetting the combat of Rustam with the terrible White Demon. At other times she was amused by those graceful dancing-girls of Delhi, who had been permitted by the Bramins of the Great Pagoda to attend her, much to the horror of the good Mussulman Fadladeen, who could see nothing graceful or agreeable in idolaters, and to whom the very tinkling of their golden anklets was an abomination.

But these and many other diversions were repeated till they lost all their charm, and the nights and noon-days were beginning to move heavily, when, at length, it was recollected that among the attendants sent by the bridegroom, was a young poet of Cashmere, much celebrated throughout the valley for his manner of reciting the stories of the East, on whom his Royal Master had conferred the privilege of being admitted to the pavilion of the Princess, that he might help to beguile the tediousness of the journey by some of his most agreeable recitals. At the mention of the poet, Fadladeen

elevated his critical eyebrows, and having refreshed his faculties with a dose of that delicious opium which is distilled from the black poppy of the Thebais, gave orders for the minstrel to be forthwith introduced into the presence.

The Princess, who had once in her life seen a poet from behind the screens of gauze in her Father's hall, and had conceived from that specimen no very favorable ideas of the Caste, expected but little in this new exhibition to interest her; — she felt inclined, however, to alter her opinion on the very first appearance of Feramorz. He was a youth about Lalla Rookh's own age, and graceful as that idol of women, Crishna, — such as he appears to their young imaginations, heroic, beautiful, breathing music from his very eyes, and exalting the religion of his worshippers into love. His dress was simple, yet not without some marks of costliness; and the ladies of the Princess were not long in discovering that the cloth which encircled his high Tartarian cap was of the most delicate kind that the shawl-goats of Tibet supply. Here and there, too, over his vest, which was confined by a flowered girdle of Kashan, hung strings of fine pearl, disposed with an air of studied negligence; — nor did the exquisite embroidery of his sandals escape the observation of these fair critics; who, however they might give way to Fadladeen upon the unimportant topics of religion and government, had the spirit of martyrs in everything re-

lating to such momentous matters as jewels and embroidery.

For the purpose of relieving the pauses of recitation by music, the young Cashmerian held in his hand a guitar—such as, in old times, the Arab maids of the West used to listen to by moonlight in the gardens of the Alhambra;—and having premised, with much humility, that the story he was about to relate was founded on the adventures of that Veiled Prophet of Khorassan who, in the year of the Hegira 163, created such alarm throughout the Eastern Empire, made an obeisance to the Princess, and thus began.



## THE VEILED PROPHET OF KHORASSAN.

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IN that delightful Province of the Sun,  
The first of Persian lands he shines upon,  
Where all the loveliest children of his beam,  
Flowerets and fruits, blush over every stream,  
And fairest of all streams, the Murga roves  
Among Merou's bright palaces and groves, —  
There on that throne, to which the blind Lelief  
Of millions raised him, sat the Prophet-Chief,  
The Great Mokanna. O'er his features hung  
The Veil, the Silver Veil, which he had flung  
In mercy there, to hide from mortal sight  
His dazzling brow, till man could bear its light.  
For, far less luminous, his votaries said,  
Were even the gleams, miraculously shed  
O'er Moussa's cheek, when down the Mount he trod,  
All glowing from the presence of his God!

On either side, with ready hearts and hands,  
His chosen guard of bold Believers stands;  
Young fire-eyed disputants, who deem their swords,  
On points of faith, more eloquent than words;  
And such their zeal, there's not a youth with brand

Uplifted there, but, at the Chief's command,  
 Would make his own devoted heart its sheath,  
 And bless the lips that doom'd so dear a death!  
 In hatred to the Caliph's hue of night,  
 Their vesture, helms and all, is snowy white;  
 Their weapons various — some equipp'd, for speed,  
 With javelins of the light Kathaian reed;  
 Or bows of buffalo-horn and shining quivers  
 Fill'd with the stems that bloom on Iran's rivers;  
 While some, for war's more terrible attacks,  
 Wield the huge mace and ponderous battle-axe;  
 And as they wave aloft in morning's beam  
 The milk-white plumage of their helms, they seem  
 Like a chenar-tree grove, when Winter throws  
 O'er all its tufted heads his feathering snows.

Between the porphyry pillars, that uphold  
 The rich moresque-work of the roof of gold,  
 Aloft the Haram's curtain'd galleries rise,  
 Where, through the silken network, glancing eyes,  
 From time to time, like sudden gleams that glow  
 Through autumn clouds, shine o'er the pomp below.  
 What impious tongue, ye blushing saints, would dare

To hint that aught but Heaven hath placed you  
 there?

Or that the loves of this light world could bind,  
 In their gross chain, your Prophet's soaring mind?  
 No — wrongful thought! — commission'd from above  
 To people Eden's bowers with shapes of love,



(Creatures so bright, that the same lips and eyes  
They wear on earth will serve in Paradise,)  
There to recline among Heaven's native maids,  
And crown the Elect with bliss that never fades —  
Well hath the Prophet-Chief his bidding done ;  
And every beauteous race beneath the sun,  
From those who kneel at Brahma's burning founts,  
To the fresh nymphs bounding o'er Yemen's  
    mounts ;  
From Persia's eyes of full and fawn-like ray  
- To the smali, half-shut glances of Kathay ;  
And Georgia's bloom, and Azab's darker smiles,  
And the gold ringlets of the Western Isles ;  
All, all are there ; — each Land its flower hath given,  
To form that fair young Nursery for heaven !

But why this pageant now ? this arm'd array ?  
What triumph crowds the rich Divan to-day  
With turban'd heads, of every hue and race,  
Bowing before that veil'd and awful face,  
Like tulip-beds, of different shape and dyes,  
Bending beneath the invisible West-wind's sighs ?  
What new-made mystery now, for Faith to sign,  
And blood to seal, as genuine and divine,  
What dazzling mimicry of God's own power  
Hath the bold Prophet plann'd to grace this hour ?

Not such the pageant now, though not less proud ;  
Yon warrior youth, advancing from the crowd,

With silver bow, with belt of broider'd crape,  
 And fur-bound bonnet of Bucharian shape,  
 So fiercely beautiful in form and eye,  
 Like war's wild planet in a summer sky, —  
 That youth to-day — a proselyte, worth hordes  
 Of cooler spirits and less practised swords —  
 Is come to join, all bravery and belief,  
 The creed and standard of the heaven-sent Chief.

Though few his years, the West already knows  
 Young Azim's fame ; — beyond the Olympian snows,  
 Ere manhood darken'd o'er his downy cheek,  
 O'erwhelm'd in fight and captive to the Greek,  
 He linger'd there, till peace dissolved his chains ; —  
 Oh, who could, even in bondage, tread the plains  
 Of glorious Greece, nor feel his spirit rise  
 Kindling within him? who, with heart and eyes,  
 Could walk where Liberty had been, nor see  
 The shining footprints of her Deity,  
 Nor feel those godlike breathings in the air,  
 Which mutely told her spirit had been there?  
 Not he, that youthful warrior, — no, too well  
 For his soul's quiet work'd the awakening spell ;  
 And now, returning to his own dear land,  
 Full of those dreams of good that, vainly grand,  
 Haunt the young heart, — proud views of human-  
 kind,  
 Of men to gods exalted and refined, —  
 False views, like that horizon's fair deceit,  
 Where earth and heaven but *seem*, alas, to meet! —

Soon as he heard an Arm Divine was raised  
To right the nations, and beheld, emblazed  
On the white flag Mokanna's host unfurl'd,  
Those words of sunshine, "Freedom to the World,"  
At once his faith, his sword, his soul obey'd  
The inspiring summons ; every chosen blade  
That fought beneath that banner's sacred text  
Seem'd doubly edged, for this world and the next ;  
And ne'er did Faith with her smooth bandage  
bind

Eyes more devoutly willing to be blind,  
In virtue's cause ; — never was soul inspired  
With livelier trust in what it most desired,  
Than his, the enthusiast there, who kneeling, pale  
With pious awe, before that Silver Veil,  
Believes the form, to which he bends his knee,  
Some pure, redeeming angel, sent to free  
This fetter'd world from every bond and stain,  
And bring its primal glories back again !

Low as young Azim knelt, that motley crowd  
Of all earth's nations sunk the knee and bow'd,  
With shouts of "Alla !" echoing long and loud ;  
While high in air, above the Prophet's head,  
Hundreds of banners, to the sunbeam spread,  
Waved, like the wings of the white birds that fan  
The flying throne of star-taught Soliman.  
Then thus he spoke : — " Stranger, though new the  
frame

Thy soul inhabits now, I've tracked its flame

For many an age, in every chance and change  
 Of that existence, through whose varied range, —  
 As through a torch-race where, from hand to hand,  
 The flying youths transmit their shining brand, —  
 From frame to frame the unextinguish'd soul  
 Rapidly passes, till it reach the goal!

“ Nor think 'tis only the gross Spirits, warm'd  
 With dusker fire and for earth's medium form'd,  
 That run this course ; — Beings the most divine  
 Thus deign through dark mortality to shine.  
 Such was the Essence that in Adam dwelt,  
 To which all Heaven, except the Proud One, knelt :  
 Such the refined Intelligence that glow'd  
 In Moussa's frame, — and, thence descending, flow'd  
 Through many a Prophet's breast ; — in Issa shone,  
 And in Mohammed burn'd ; till, hastening on,  
 (As a bright river that, from fall to fall  
 In many a maze descending, bright through all,  
 Finds some fair region where, each labyrinth past,  
 In one full lake of light it rests at last ! )  
 That Holy Spirit, settling calm and free  
 From lapse or shadow, centres all in me ! ”

Again, throughout the assembly, at these words,  
 Thousands of voices rung : the warriors' swords  
 Were pointed up to heaven ; a sudden wind  
 In the open banners play'd, and from behind  
 Those Persian hangings that but ill could screen  
 The Haram's loveliness, white hands were seen

Waving embroider'd scarves, whose motion gave  
A perfume forth ; — like those the Houris wave  
When beckoning to their bowers the immortal Brave.

“ But these,” pursued the Chief, “ are truths sub-  
lime,

That claim a holier mood and calmer time  
Than earth allows us now ; — this sword must first  
The darkling prison-house of Mankind burst,  
Ere Peace can visit them, or Truth let in  
Her wakening daylight on a world of sin.  
But then, celestial warriors, then, when all  
Earth's shrines and thrones before our banner fall ;  
When the glad Slave shall at these feet lay down  
His broken chain, the tyrant Lord his crown,  
The Priest his book, the Conqueror his wreath,  
And from the lips of Truth one mighty breath  
Shall, like a whirlwind, scatter in its breeze  
That whole dark pile of human mockeries ; —  
Then shall the reign of Mind commence on earth,  
And starting fresh, as from a second birth,  
Man, in the sunshine of the world's new spring,  
Shall walk transparent, like some holy thing !  
Then, too, your Prophet from his angel brow  
Shall cast the Veil that hides its splendors now,  
And gladden'd Earth shall, through her wide  
expanse;

Bask in the glories of this countenance !  
For thee, young warrior, welcome ! — thou hast yet  
Some tasks to learn, some frailties to forget,

Ere the white war-plume o'er thy brow can wave ;—  
But, once mine own, mine all till in the grave !”

The pomp is at an end — the crowds are gone —  
Each ear and heart still haunted by the tone  
Of that deep voice, which thrill'd like Alla's own !  
The Young all dazzled by the plumes and lances,  
The glittering throne, and Haram's half-caught  
glances :

The Old deep pondering on the promised reign  
Of peace and truth ; and all the female train  
Ready to risk their eyes, could they but gaze  
A moment on that brow's miraculous blaze !

But there was one, among the chosen maids,  
Who blush'd behind the gallery's silken shades,  
One, to whose soul the pageant of to-day  
Has been like death ; — you saw her pale dismay,  
Ye wandering sisterhood, and heard the burst  
Of exclamation from her lips, when first  
She saw that youth, too well, too dearly known,  
Silently kneeling at the Prophet's throne.

Ah, Zelica ! there *was* a time, when bliss  
Shone o'er thine heart from every look of his ;  
When but to see him, hear him, breathe the air  
In which he dwelt, was thy soul's fondest prayer ;  
When round him hung such a perpetual spell,  
Whate'er he did none ever did so well.

Too happy days ! when, if he touch'd a flower  
Or gem of thine, 'twas sacred from that hour ;  
When thou didst study him till every tone  
And gesture and dear look became thine own, —  
Thy voice like his, the changes of his face  
In thine reflected with still lovelier grace :  
Like echo, sending back sweet music, fraught  
With twice the aërial sweetness it had brought !  
Yet now he comes, — brighter than even he  
E'er beam'd before, — but ah ! not bright for  
thee ;

No — dread, unlook'd for, like a visitant  
From the other world, he comes as if to haunt  
Thy guilty soul with dreams of lost delight,  
Long lost to all but memory's aching sight ; —  
Sad dreams ! as when the Spirit of our Youth  
Returns in sleep, sparkling with all the truth  
And innocence once ours, and leads us back,  
In mournful mockery, o'er the shining track  
Of our young life, and points out every ray  
Of hope and peace we've lost upon the way !

Once happy pair ! — in proud Bokhara's groves,  
Who had not heard of their first youthful loves ?  
Born by that ancient flood, which from its spring  
In the Dark Mountains swiftly wandering,  
Enrich'd by every pilgrim brook that shines  
With relics from Bucharìa's ruby mines,  
And lending to the Caspian half its strength,  
In the cold Lake of Eagles sinks at length ; —

There, on the banks of that bright river born,  
The flowers that hung above its wave at morn  
Bless'd not the waters, as they murmur'd by,  
With holier scent and lustre, than the sigh  
And virgin-glance of first affection cast  
Upon their youth's smooth current, as it pass'd !  
But war disturb'd this vision,— far away  
From her fond eyes summon'd to join the array  
Of Persia's warriors on the hills of Thrace,  
The youth exchanged his sylvan dwelling-place  
For the rude tent and war-field's deathful clash ;  
His Zelica's sweet glances for the flash  
Of Grecian wild-fire, and Love's gentle chains  
For bleeding bondage on Byzantium's plains.

Month after month, in widowhood of soul  
Drooping, the maiden saw two summers roll  
Their suns away — but ah ! how cold and dim  
Even summer suns, when not beheld with him !  
From time to time ill-omen'd rumors came,  
Like spirit-tongues muttering the sick man's name,  
Just ere he dies :— at length those sounds of  
dread

Fell withering on her soul, “ Azin is dead ! ”  
O Grief, beyond all other griefs, when fate  
First leaves the young heart lone and desolate  
In the wide world, without that only tie  
For which it loved to live or fear'd to die ;—  
Lorn as the hung-up lute, that ne'er hath spoken  
Since the sad day its master-chord was broken !



Fond maid, the sorrow of her soul was such,  
Even reason sunk,—blighted beneath its touch:  
And though, ere long, her sanguine spirit rose  
Above the first dead pressure of its woes,  
Though health and bloom return'd, the delicate  
chain

Of thought, once tangled, never clear'd again.  
Warm, lively, soft as in youth's happiest day,  
The mind was still all there, but turn'd astray;—  
A wandering bark, upon whose pathway shone  
All stars of heaven, except the guiding one!  
Again she smiled, nay, much and brightly smiled,  
But 'twas a lustre, strange, unreal, wild;  
And when she sung to her lute's touching strain,  
'Twas like the notes, half ecstasy, half pain,  
The bulbul utters, ere her soul depart,  
When, vanquish'd by some minstrel's powerful art,  
She dies upon the lute whose sweetness broke her  
heart!

Such was the mood in which that mission found  
Young Zelica,—that mission, which around  
The Eastern world, in every region blest  
With woman's smile, sought out its loveliest,  
To grace that galaxy of lips and eyes  
Which the Veil'd Prophet destined for the skies:  
And such quick welcome as a spark receives  
Dropp'd on a bed of autumn's wither'd leaves,  
Did every tale of these enthusiasts find  
In the wild maiden's sorrow-blighted mind.

All fire at once the maddening zeal she caught ;  
 Elect of Paradise ! blest, rapturous thought !  
 Predestined bride, in heaven's eternal dome,  
 Of some brave youth — ha ! durst they say “ of  
     *some* ” ?

No — of the one, one only object traced  
 In her heart's core too deep to be effaced ;  
 The one whose memory, fresh as life, is twined  
 With every broken link of her lost mind ;  
 Whose image lives, though Reason's self be  
     wreck'd,  
 Safe 'mid the ruins of her intellect !

Alas, poor Zelica ! it needed all  
 The fantasy which held thy mind in thrall,  
 To see in that gay Haram's glowing maids  
 A sainted colony for Eden's shades ;  
 Or dreamed that he, of whose unholy flame  
 Thou wert too soon the victim, shining came  
 From Paradise, to people its pure sphere  
 With souls like thine, which he hath ruin'd here !  
 No — had not Reason's light totally set,  
 And left thee dark, thou hadst an amulet  
 In the loved image, graven on thy heart,  
 Which would have saved thee from the tempter's  
     art,  
 And kept alive, in all its bloom of breath,  
 That purity whose fading is love's death !—  
 But lost, inflamed,— a restless zeal took place  
 Of the mild virgin's still and feminine grace ;

First of the Prophet's favorites, — proudly first  
In zeal and charms, — too well the Impostor nursed  
Her soul's delirium, in whose active flame,  
Thus lighting up a young, luxuriant frame,  
He saw more potent sorceries to bind  
To his dark yoke the spirits of mankind,  
More subtile chains than hell itself e'er twined.  
No art was spared, no witchery: — all the skill  
His demons taught him was employ'd to fill  
Her mind with gloom and ecstasy by turns —  
That gloom, through which Frenzy but fiercer  
burns ;  
That ecstasy, which from the depth of sadness  
Glares like the maniac's moon, whose light is mad-  
ness.

'Twas from a brilliant banquet, where the sound  
Of poesy and music breathed around,  
Together picturing to her mind and ear  
The glories of that heaven, her destined sphere,  
Where all was pure, where every stain that lay  
Upon the spirit's light should pass away,  
And, realizing more than youthful love  
E'er wish'd, or dream'd, she should forever rove  
Through fields of fragrance by her Azim's side,  
His own bless'd, purified, eternal bride! —  
'Twas from a scene, a witching trance like this,  
He hurried her away, yet breathing bliss,  
To the dim charnel-house ; — through all its streams  
Of damp and death, led only by those gleams

Which foul Corruption lights, as with design  
 To show the gay and proud *she* too can shine! —  
 And, passing on through upright ranks of Dead,  
 Which to the maiden, doubly crazed by dread,  
 Seem'd, thro' the bluish death-light round them cast,  
 To move their lips in mutterings as she pass'd, —  
 There, in that awful place, when each had quaff'd  
 And pledged in silence such a fearful draught,  
 Such — oh, the look and taste of that red bowl  
 Will haunt her till she dies! — he bound her soul  
 By a dark oath, in hell's own language framed,  
 Never, while earth his mystic presence claim'd,  
 While the blue arch of day hung o'er them both,  
 Never, by that all-imprecating oath,  
 In joy or sorrow from his side to sever. —  
 She swore, and the wide charnel echoed, “ Never,  
 never ! ”

From that dread hour, entirely, wildly given  
 To him, and — she believed, lost maid! — to  
 Heaven,  
 Her brain, her heart, her passions all inflamed,  
 How proud she stood, when in full Haram named  
 The Priestess of the Faith! — how flash'd her eyes  
 With light, alas! that was not of the skies,  
 When round, in trances only less than hers,  
 She saw the Haram kneel, her prostrate wor-  
 shippers!  
 Well might Mokanna think that form alone  
 Had spells enough to make the world his own: —

Light, lovely limbs, to which the spirit's play  
Gave motion, airy as the dancing spray,  
When from its stem the small bird wings away ;  
Lips in whose rosy labyrinth, when she smiled,  
The soul was lost ; and blushes, swift and wild  
As are the momentary meteors sent  
Across the uncalm but beauteous firmament.  
And then her look — oh, where's the heart so wise  
Could unbewilder'd meet those matchless eyes?  
Quick, restless, strange, but exquisite withal,  
Like those of angels, just before their fall ;  
Now shadow'd with the shames of earth — now crost  
By glimpses of the heaven her heart had lost ;  
In every glance there broke, without control,  
The flashes of a bright but troubled soul,  
Where sensibility still wildly play'd,  
Like lightning, round the ruins it had made !

And such was now young Zelica — so changed  
From her who, some years since, delighted ranged  
The almond groves that shade Bokhara's tide,  
All life and bliss, with Azim by her side !  
So alter'd was she now, this festal day,  
When, 'mid the proud Divan's dazzling array,  
The vision of that Youth whom she had loved,  
Had wept as dead, before her breathed and moved •  
When, bright, she thought, as if from Eden's track  
But half-way trodden, he had wander'd back  
Again to earth, glistening with Eden's light,  
Her beauteous Azim shone before her sight.

O Reason! who shall say what spells renew,  
When least we look for it, thy broken clew!  
Through what small vistas o'er the darken'd brain  
Thy intellectual day-beam bursts again;  
And how, like forts, to which beleaguers win  
Unhoped-for entrance through some friend within,  
One clear idea, waken'd in the breast  
By memory's magic, lets in all the rest!  
Would it were thus, unhappy girl, with thee!  
But though light came, it came but partially;  
Enough to show the maze in which thy sense  
Wander'd about, — but not to guide it thence;  
Enough to glimmer o'er the yawning wave,  
But not to point the harbor which might save.  
Hours of delight and peace, long left behind,  
With that dear form came rushing o'er her mind;  
But oh, to think how deep her soul had gone  
In shame and falsehood since those moments shone!  
And then, her oath — *there* madness lay again,  
And, shuddering, back she sunk into her chain  
Of mental darkness, as if blest to flee  
From light, whose every glimpse was agony!  
Yet, *one* relief this glance of former years  
Brought, mingled with its pain, — tears, floods of  
tears,  
Long frozen at her heart, but now like rills  
Let loose in spring-time from the snowy hills,  
And gushing warm, after a sleep of frost,  
Through valleys where their flow had long been  
lost.

Sad and subdued, for the first time her frame  
Trembled with horror, when the summons came  
(A summons proud and rare, which all but she,  
And she till now, had heard with ecstasy)  
To meet Mokanna at his place of prayer,  
A garden oratory, cool and fair,  
By the stream's side, where still at close of day  
The Prophet of the Veil retired to pray ;  
Sometimes alone — but, oftener far, with one,  
One chosen nymph to share his orison.

Of late none found such favor in his sight  
As the young Priestess ; and though, since that night  
When the death-caverns echoed every tone  
Of the dire oath that made her all his own,  
The Impostor, sure of his infatuate prize,  
Had more than once thrown off his soul's disguise,  
And utter'd such unheavenly, monstrous things,  
As even across the desperate wanderings  
Of a weak intellect, whose lamp was out,  
Threw startling shadows of dismay and doubt,  
Yet zeal, ambition, her tremendous vow,  
The thought, still haunting her, of that bright brow,  
Whose blaze, as yet from mortal eye conceal'd,  
Would soon, proud triumph ! be to her reveal'd,  
To her alone ; — and then the hope, most dear,  
Most wild of all, that her transgression here  
Was but a passage through Earth's grosser fire,  
From which the spirit would at last aspire,

Even purer than before : as perfumes rise  
 Thro' flame and smoke, most welcome to the skies ;  
 And that when Azim's fond, divine embrace  
 Should circle her in heaven, no darkening trace  
 Would on that bosom he once loved remain,  
 But all be bright, be pure, be *his* again ! —  
 These were the wildering dreams, whose curst  
       deceit

Had chain'd her soul beneath the tempter's feet,  
 And made her think even damning falsehood sweet.  
 But now that Shape, which had appall'd her view,  
 That Semblance — oh, how terrible, if true ! —  
 Which came across her frenzy's full career  
 With shock of consciousness, cold, deep, severe,  
 As when, in northern seas, at midnight dark,  
 An isle of ice encounters some swift bark,  
 And, startling all its wretches from their sleep,  
 By one cold impulse hurls them to the deep ;  
 So came that shock not frenzy's self could bear,  
 And waking up each long-lull'd image there,  
 But check'd her headlong soul, to sink it in despair !

Wan and dejected, through the evening dusk,  
 She now went slowly to that small kiosk,  
 Where, pondering alone his impious schemes,  
 Mokanna waited her : too rapt in dreams  
 Of the fair-ripening future's rich success,  
 To heed the sorrow, pale and spiritless,  
 That sat upon his victim's downcast brow,  
 Or mark how slow her step, how alter'd now



From the quick, ardent Priestess, whose light bound  
Came like a spirit's o'er the unechoing ground, —  
From that wild Zelica, whose every glance  
Was thrilling fire, whose every thought a trance!

Upon his couch the Veil'd Mokanna lay,  
While lamps around — not such as lend their ray,  
Glimmering and cold, to those who nightly pray  
In holy Koom, or Mecca's dim arcades,  
But brilliant, soft, such lights as lovely maids  
Look loveliest in, — shed their luxurious glow  
Upon his mystic Veil's white glittering flow.  
Beside him, 'stead of beads and books of prayer,  
Which the world fondly thought he mused on there,  
Stood vases, fill'd with Kishmee's golden wine,  
And the red weepings of the Shiraz vine;  
Of which his curtain'd lips full many a draught  
Took zealously, as if each drop they quaff'd,  
Like Zemzem's Spring of Holiness, had power  
To freshen the soul's virtues into flower!  
And still he drank and ponder'd, nor could see  
The approaching maid, so deep his reverie;  
At length, with fiendish laugh, like that which  
broke

From Eblis at the Fall-of Man, he spoke:  
“ Yes, ye vile race, for hell's amusement given,  
Too mean for earth, yet claiming kin with heaven:  
God's images, forsooth! such Gods as he  
Whom India serves, the monkey deity;

Ye creatures of a breath, proud things of clay,  
 To whom if Lucifer, as grandams say,  
 Refused, though at the forfeit of heaven's light,  
 To bend in worship, Lucifer was right!  
 Soon shall I plant this foot upon the neck  
 Of your foul race, and without fear or check,  
 Luxuriating in hate, avenge my shame,  
 My deep-felt, long-nurst loathing of man's name;  
 Soon at the head of myriads, blind and fierce  
 As hooded falcons, through the universe  
 I'll sweep my darkening, desolating way,  
 Weak man my instrument, curst man my prey!

“Ye wise, ye learn'd, who grope your dull way  
 on  
 By the dim twinkling gleams of ages gone,  
 Like superstitious thieves, who think the light  
 From dead men's marrow guides them best at  
 night,  
 Ye shall have honors, wealth, — yes, Sages, yes!  
 I know, grave fools, your wisdom's nothingness;  
 Undazzled it can track yon starry sphere,  
 But a gilt stick, a bauble, blinds it here.  
 How I shall laugh, when trumpeted along  
 In lying speech and still more lying song,  
 By these learn'd slaves, the meanest of the throng,  
 Their wits bought up, their wisdom shrunk so  
 small,  
 A sceptre's puny point can wield it all!

“Ye, too, believers of incredible creeds,  
Whose faith enshrines the monsters which it  
    breeds;  
Who, bolder even than Nemrod, think to rise,  
By nonsense heap'd on nonsense, to the skies;  
Ye shall have miracles, ay, sound ones too,  
Seen, heard, attested, — everything but true.  
Your preaching zealots, too inspired to seek  
One grace of meaning for the things they speak;  
Your martyrs, ready to shed out their blood  
For truths too heavenly to be understood;  
And your State Priests, sole vendors of the lore  
That works salvation, — as, on Ava's shore,  
Where none but priests are privileged to trade  
In that best marble of which gods are made;  
They shall have mysteries — ay, precious stuff  
For knaves to thrive by — mysteries enough;  
Dark, tangled doctrines, dark as fraud can weave,  
Which simple votaries shall on trust receive,  
While craftier feign belief, till they believe.  
A Heaven, too, ye must have, ye lords of dust,  
A splendid Paradise, pure souls, ye must:  
That Prophet ill sustains his holy call  
Who finds not heavens to suit the tastes of all;  
Houris for boys, omniscience for sages,  
And wings and glories for all ranks and ages.  
Vain things! as lust or vanity inspires,  
The Heaven of each is but what each desires;  
And, soul or sense, whate'er the object be,  
Man would be man to all eternity!

So let him — Eblis ! grant this crowning curse,  
But keep him what he is, no Hell were worse.”

“ O my lost soul ! ” exclaim’d the shuddering maid,  
Whose ears had drunk like poison all he said ;  
Mokanna started — not abash’d, afraid, —  
He knew no more of fear than one who dwells  
Beneath the tropics knows of icicles !  
But, in those dismal words that reach’d his ear,  
“ O my lost soul ! ” there was a sound so drear,  
So like that voice, among the sinful dead,  
In which the legend o’er Hell’s Gate is read,  
That, new as ’twas from her whom nought could dim  
Or sink till now, it startled even him.

“ Ha, my fair Priestess ! ” — thus, with ready wile,  
The impostor turn’d to greet her — “ thou whose  
smile  
Hath inspiration in its rosy beam  
Beyond the Enthusiast’s hope or Prophet’s dream !  
Light of the faith ! who twin’st religion’s zeal  
So close with love’s, men know not which they feel ;  
Nor which to sigh for, in their trance of heart,  
The heaven thou preachest or the heaven thou art !  
What should I be without thee ? without thee  
How dull were power, how joyless victory !  
Though borne by angels, if that smile of thine  
Bless’d not my banner, ’twere but half divine.  
But why so mournful, child ? those eyes, that shone  
All life last night — what ! — is their glory gone ?

Come, come — this morn's fatigue hath made them  
pale,

They want rekindling : suns themselves would fail,  
Did not their comets bring, as I to thee,

From light's own fount supplies of brilliancy.

Thou seest this cup — no juice of earth is here,

But the pure waters of that upper sphere

Whose rills over ruby beds and topaz flow,

Catching the gem's bright color as they go.

Nightly my Genii come and fill these urns —

Nay, drink — in every drop life's essence burns ;

'Twill make that soul all fire, those eyes all light —

Come, come, I want thy loveliest smiles to-night : —

There is a youth — why start? thou saw'st him  
then ;

Look'd he not nobly? such the godlike men

Thou'lt have to woo thee in the bowers above ;

Though *he*, I fear, hath thoughts too stern for love,

Too ruled by that cold enemy of bliss

The world calls virtue — we must conquer this ;

Nay, shrink not, pretty sage ! 'tis not for thee

To scan the mazes of heaven's mystery :

The steel must pass through fire, ere it can yield

Fit instruments for mighty hands to wield.

This very night I mean to try the art

Of powerful beauty on that warrior's heart.

All that my Haram boasts of bloom and wit,

Of skill and charms most rare and exquisite,

Shall tempt the boy ; — young Mirzala's blue eyes,

Whose sleepy lid like snow on violets lies ;

Arouya's cheeks, warm as a spring-day sun,  
And lips that, like the seal of Solomon,  
Have magic in their pressure ; Zeba's lute,  
And Lilla's dancing feet, that gleam and shoot  
Rapid and white as sea-birds o'er the deep —  
All shall combine their witching powers to steep  
My convert's spirit in that softening trance,  
From which to heaven is but the next advance ;  
That glowing, yielding fusion of the breast,  
On which Religion stamps her image best.  
But hear me, Priestess ! Tho' each nymph of these  
Hath some peculiar, practised power to please,  
Some glance or step which, at the mirror tried,  
First charms herself, then all the world beside ;  
There still wants *one*, to make the victory sure,  
One who in every look joins every lure ;  
Thro' whom all beauty's beams concentrated pass,  
Dazzling and warm, as thro' love's burning-glass ;  
Whose gentle lips persuade without a word,  
Whose words, even when unmeaning, are adored,  
Like inarticulate breathings from a shrine,  
Which our faith takes for granted are divine !  
Such is the nymph we want, all warmth and light,  
To crown the rich temptations of to-night :  
Such the refined enchantress that must be  
This hero's vanquisher, — and thou art she !”

With her hands clasp'd, her lips apart and pale,  
The maid had stood, gazing upon the Veil

From which these words, like south winds through  
a fence  
Of Kerzrah's flowers, came filled with pestilence ;  
So boldly utter'd, too ! as if all dread  
Of frowns from her, of virtuous frowns, were fled,  
And the wretch felt assured that, once plunged in,  
Her woman's soul would know no pause in sin !

At first, though mute she listen'd, like a dream  
Seem'd all he said : nor could her mind, whose beam  
As yet was weak, penetrate half his scheme.  
But when, at length, he utter'd, " Thou art she !"  
All flash'd at once, and shrieking piteously,  
" Oh, not for worlds !" she cried. " Great God ! to  
whom

I once knelt innocent, is this my doom ?  
Are all my dreams, my hopes of heavenly bliss,  
My purity, my pride, then come to this, —  
To live, the wanton of a fiend ! to be  
The pander of his guilt — oh, infamy !  
And sunk, myself, as low as hell can steep  
In its hot flood, drag others down as deep !  
Others — ha ! yes — that youth who came to-day —  
Not him I loved — not him — oh ! do but say,  
But swear to me this moment 'tis not he,  
And I will serve, dark fiend, will worship even  
thee !"

" Beware, young raving thing ! — in time beware,  
Nor utter what I cannot, must not bear,

Even from *thy* lips. Go — try thy lute, thy voice,  
 The boy must feel their magic ; — I rejoice  
 To see those fires, no matter whence they rise,  
 Once more illuming my fair Priestess' eyes ;  
 And should the youth, whom soon those eyes shall  
     warm,  
*Indeed* resemble thy dead lover's form,  
 So much the happier wilt thou find thy doom,  
 As one warm lover, full of life and bloom,  
 Excels ten thousand cold ones in the tomb.  
 Nay, nay, no frowning, sweet! — those eyes were  
     made  
 For love, not anger — I must be obey'd.”

“ Obey'd ! — 'tis well — yes, I deserve it all ;  
 On me, on me Heaven's vengeance cannot fall  
 Too heavily ; but Azim, brave and true  
 And beautiful — must *he* be ruin'd too ?  
 Must *he* too, glorious as he is, be driven  
 A renegade like me from Love and Heaven ?  
 Like me ? — weak wretch, I wrong him ; not like  
     me ;  
 No — he's all truth and strength and purity !  
 Fill up your maddening hell-cup to the brim,  
 Its witchery, fiends, will have no charm for him.  
 Let loose your glowing wantons from their bowers,  
 He loves, he loves, and can defy their powers !  
 Wretch as I am, in *his* heart still I reign  
 Pure as when first we met, without a stain !



Though ruin'd — lost — my memory, like a charm  
 Left by the dead, still keeps his soul from harm.  
 Oh, never let him know how deep the brow  
 He kiss'd at parting is dishonor'd now ; —  
 Ne'er tell him how debased, how sunk is she,  
 Whom once he loved — once ! — *still* loves dotingly.  
 Thou laugh'st, tormentor ; what ! thou'lt brand my  
 name ?

Do, do — in vain — he'll not believe my shame —  
 He thinks me true ; that nought beneath God's  
 sky

Could tempt or change me, and — so once thought I.  
 But this is past — though worse than death my lot,  
 Than hell — 'tis nothing while *he* knows it not.

Far off to some benighted land I'll fly,  
 Where sunbeam ne'er shall enter till I die ;  
 Where none will ask the lost one whence she came,  
 But I may fade and fall without a name.

And thou — curst man or fiend, whate'er thou art,  
 Who found'st this burning plague-spot in my heart,  
 And spread'st it — oh, so quick ! — through soul and  
 frame,

With more than demon's art, till I became  
 A loathsome thing, all pestilence, all flame ! —  
 If when I'm gone " —

“ Hold, fearless maniac, hold,  
 Nor tempt my rage — by Heaven, not half so bold  
 The puny bird, that dares with teasing hum  
 Within the crocodile's stretch'd jaws to come !

And so thou'lt fly, forsooth? What! — give up all  
 Thy chaste dominion in the Haram Hall,  
 Where now to Love and now to Alla given,  
 Half mistress and half saint, thou hang'st as even  
 As doth Medina's tomb, 'twixt hell and heaven!  
 Thou'lt fly! — as easily may reptiles run,  
 The gaunt snake once hath fix'd his eyes upon;  
 As easily, when caught, the prey may be  
 Pluck'd from his loving folds, as thou from me.  
 No, no, 'tis fix'd — let good or ill betide,  
 Thou'rt mine till death, till death Mokanna's bride!  
 Hast thou forgot thy oath?" —

At this dread word,  
 The maid, whose spirit his rude taunts had stirr'd  
 Through all its depth, and roused an anger there  
 That burst and lighten'd even through her despair,  
 Shrunk back, as if a blight were in the breath  
 That spoke that word, and stagger'd, pale as death.

“ Yes, my sworn bride, let others seek in bowers  
 Their bridal place — the charnel vault was ours!  
 Instead of scents and balms, for thee and me  
 Rose the rich streams of sweet mortality;  
 Gay, flickering death-lights shone while we were wed,  
 And, for our guests, a row of goodly Dead  
 (Immortal spirits in their time, no doubt,)  
 From reeking shrouds upon the rite look'd out!  
 That oath thou heard'st more lips than thine repeat;  
 That cup — thou shudderest, Lady, — was it sweet?

That cup we pledged, the charnel's choicest wine,  
 Hath bound thee — ay, body and soul are mine ;  
 Bound thee by chains that, whether blest or curst  
 No matter now, not hell itself shall burst !  
 Hence, woman, to the Haram, and look gay,  
 Look wild, look — anything but sad ; yet stay —  
 One moment more — from what this night hath  
 pass'd,

I see thou know'st me, know'st me *well* at last.  
 Ha ! ha ! and so, fond thing, thou thought'st all true,  
 And that I love mankind ! — I do, I do —  
 As victims, love them ; as the sea-dog doats  
 Upon the small, sweet fry that round him floats ;  
 Or as the Nile-bird loves the slime that gives  
 That rank and venomous food on which she lives ! —

“ And, now thou see'st my *soul's* angelic hue,  
 'Tis time these *features* were uncurtain'd, too ;  
 This brow, whose light — oh, rare celestial light ! —  
 Hath been reserved to bless thy favor'd sight ;  
 These dazzling eyes, before whose shrouded might  
 Thou'st seen immortal Man kneel down and quake —  
 Would that they *were* heaven's lightnings for his  
 sake !

But turn and look — then wonder, if thou wilt,  
 That I should hate, should take revenge, by guilt,  
 Upon the hand whose mischief or whose mirth  
 Sent me thus maim'd and monstrous upon earth ;  
 And on that race who, though more vile they be  
 Than mowing apes, are demi-gods to me !

Here — judge if hell, with all its power to damn,  
Can add one curse to the foul thing I am !”

He raised his veil — the maid turn'd slowly round,  
Look'd at him — shriek'd — and sunk upon the  
ground !

ON their arrival, next night, at the place of encampment, they were surprised and delighted to find the groves all around illuminated ; some artists of Yamtcheou having been sent on previously for the purpose. On each side of the green alley, which led to the Royal Pavilion, artificial sceneries of bamboo-work were erected, representing arches, minarets, and towers, from which hung thousands of silken lanterns, painted by the most delicate pencils of Canton. Nothing could be more beautiful than the leaves of the mango-trees and acacias, shining in the light of the bamboo-scenery, which shed a lustre round as soft as that of the nights of Peristan.

Lalla Rookh, however, who was too much occupied by the sad story of Zelica and her lover, to give a thought to anything else, except, perhaps, to him who related it, hurried on through this scene of splendor to her pavilion, — greatly to the mortification of the poor artists of Yamtcheou, — and was followed with equal rapidity by the Great Chamberlain, cursing, as he went, that ancient Mandarin whose parental anxiety in lighting up the

shores of the lake, where his beloved daughter had wandered and been lost, was the origin of these fantastic Chinese illuminations.

Without a moment's delay, young Feramorz was introduced ; and Fadladeen, who could never make up his mind as to the merits of a poet till he knew the religious sect to which he belonged, was about to ask him whether he was a Shia or a Sooni, when Lalla Rookh impatiently clapped her hands for silence, and the youth, being seated upon the musnud near her, proceeded :—

PREPARE thy soul, young Azim !— thou hast braved  
The bands of Greece, still mighty though enslaved ;  
Hast faced her phalanx, arm'd with all its fame,  
Her Macedonian pikes and globes of flame ;  
All this hast fronted, with firm heart and brow,  
But a more perilous trial waits thee now, —  
Woman's bright eyes, a dazzling host of eyes  
From every land where woman smiles or sighs :  
Of every hue, as Love may chance to raise  
His black or azure banner in their blaze ;  
And each sweet mode of warfare, from the flash  
That lightens boldly through the shadowy lash,  
To the sly, stealing splendors, almost hid,  
Like swords half-sheathed, beneath the downcast  
lid :

Such, Azim, is the lovely luminous host  
Now led against thee ; and, let conquerors boast  
Their fields of fame, he who in virtue arms  
A young, warm spirit against beauty's charms,

Who feels her brightness, yet defies her thrall,  
Is the best, bravest conqueror of them all.

Now, thro' the Haram chambers, moving lights  
And busy shapes proclaim the toilet's rites ;—  
From room to room the ready handmaids hie,  
Some skill'd to wreath the turban tastefully,  
Or hang the veil, in negligence of shade,  
O'er the warm blushes of the youthful maid,  
Who, if between the folds but *one* eye shone,  
Like Seba's Queen could vanquish with that one ;  
While some bring leaves of Henna, to imbue  
The fingers' ends with a bright roseate hue,  
So bright, that in the mirror's depth they seem  
Like tips of coral branches in the stream ;  
And others mix the Kohol's jetty dye,  
To give that long, dark languish to the eye,  
Which makes the maids, whom kings are proud to  
    cull  
From fair Circassia's vales, so beautiful.  
All is in motion ; rings and plumes and pearls  
Are shining everywhere :— some younger girls  
Are gone by moonlight to the garden beds,  
To gather fresh, cool chaplets for their heads ;  
Gay creatures ! sweet, tho' mournful, 'tis to see  
How each prefers a garland from that tree  
Which brings to mind her childhood's innocent  
    day,  
And the dear fields and friendships far away.

The maid of India, blest again to hold  
In her full lap the Champac's leaves of gold,  
Thinks of the time when, by the Ganges' flood,  
Her little playmates scatter'd many a bud  
Upon her long black hair, with glossy gleam  
Just dripping from the consecrated stream ;  
While the young Arab, haunted by the smell  
Of her own mountain flowers, as by a spell, —  
The sweet Elcaya, and that courteous tree  
Which bows to all who seek its canopy, —  
Sees, call'd up round her by these magic scents,  
The well, the camels, and her father's tents ;  
Sighs for the home she left with little pain,  
And wishes even its sorrows back again !

Meanwhile, through vast illuminated halls,  
Silent and bright, where nothing but the falls  
Of fragrant waters, gushing with cool sound  
From many a jasper fount, is heard around,  
Young Azim roams bewilder'd, — nor can guess  
What means this maze of light and loneliness.  
Here the way leads, o'er tessellated floors  
Or mats of Cairo, through long corridors,  
Where, ranged in cassolets and silver urns,  
Sweet wood of aloe or of sandal burns ;  
And spicy rods, such as illumine at night  
The bowers of Tibet, send forth odorous light,  
Like Peris' wands, when pointing out the road  
For some pure Spirit to its blest abode : —

And here, at once, the glittering saloon  
Bursts on his sight, boundless and bright as noon ;  
Where, in the midst, reflecting back the rays  
In broken rainbows, a fresh fountain plays  
High as the enamell'd cupola, which towers  
All rich with Arabesques of gold and flowers :  
And the mosaic floor beneath shines through  
The sprinkling of that fountain's silvery dew,  
Like the wet, glistening shells, of every dye,  
That on the margin of the Red Sea lie.

Here too he traces the kind visitings  
Of woman's love, in those fair living things  
Of land and wave, whose fate — in bondage thrown  
For their weak loveliness — is like her own !  
On one side, gleaming with a sudden grace  
Through water brilliant as the crystal vase  
In which it undulates, small fishes shine,  
Like golden ingots from a fairy mine ; —  
While, on the other, latticed lightly in  
With odoriferous woods of Comorin,  
Each brilliant bird that wings the air is seen :  
Gay, sparkling loories, such as gleam between  
The crimson blossoms of the coral tree  
In the warm Isles of India's sunny sea :  
Mecca's blue sacred pigeon, and the thrush  
Of Hindostan, whose holy warblings gush,  
At evening, from the tall pagoda's top ; —  
Those golden birds that, in the spice-time, drop



About the gardens, drunk with that sweet food  
Whose scent hath lured them o'er the summer  
flood;

And those that under Araby's soft sun  
Build their high nests of budding cinnamon;—  
In short, all rare and beauteous things, that fly  
Through the pure element, here calmly lie  
Sleeping in light, like the green birds that dwell  
In Eden's radiant fields of asphodel.

So on, through scenes past all imagining, —  
More like the luxuries of that impious King  
Whom Death's dark angel, with his lightning torch,  
Struck down and blasted even in Pleasure's porch,  
Than the pure dwelling of a Prophet sent,  
Arm'd with Heaven's sword, for man's enfranchise-  
ment, —

Young Azim wander'd, looking sternly round;  
His simple garb and war-boots' clanking sound  
But 'ill according with the pomp and grace  
And silent lull of that voluptuous place.

“Is this, then,” thought the youth, “is this the way  
To free man's spirit from the deadening sway  
Of worldly sloth, — to teach him, while he lives,  
To know no bliss but that which virtue gives,  
And, when he dies, to leave his lofty name  
A light, a landmark on the cliffs of fame?  
It was not so, Land of the generous thought  
And daring deed, thy godlike sages taught;

It was not thus, in bowers of wanton ease,  
 Thy freedom nursed her sacred energies ;  
 Oh, not beneath the enfeebling, withering glow  
 Of such dull luxury did those myrtles grow,  
 With which she wreathed her sword, when she  
                   would dare

Immortal deeds ; but in the bracing air  
 Of toil, of temperance, — of that high, rare,  
 Ethereal virtue, which alone can breathe  
 Life, health, and lustre into Freedom's wreath.  
 Who that surveys this span of earth we press, —  
 This speck of life in Time's great wilderness,  
 This narrow isthmus 'twixt two boundless seas,  
 The past, the future, two eternities ! —  
 Would sully the bright spot, or leave it bare,  
 When he might build him a proud temple there,  
 A name that long shall hallow all its space,  
 And be each purer soul's high resting-place?  
 But no — it cannot be, that one whom God  
 Hath sent to break the wizard Falsehood's rod,  
 A Prophet of the Truth, whose mission draws  
 Its rights from Heaven, should thus profane its cause  
 With the world's vulgar pomp ; — no, no, — I see —  
 He thinks me weak — this glare of luxury  
 Is but to tempt, to try the eaglet gaze  
 Of my young soul : shine on, 'twill stand the blaze ! ”

So thought the youth ; — but, even while he defied  
 This witching scene, he felt its witchery glide

Thro' every sense. The perfume breathing round,  
Like a pervading spirit ; — the still sound  
Of falling waters, lulling as the song  
Of Indian bees at sunset, when they throng  
Around the fragrant Nilica, and deep  
In its blue blossoms hum themselves to sleep ;  
And music, too — dear music ! that can touch  
Beyond all else the soul that loves it much —  
Now heard far off, so far as but to seem  
Like the faint, exquisite music of a dream, —  
All was too much for him, too full of bliss,  
The heart could nothing feel, that felt not this :  
Soften'd he sunk upon a couch, and gave  
His soul up to sweet thoughts, like wave on wave  
Succeeding in smooth seas, when storms are laid :  
He thought of Zelica, his own dear maid,  
And of the time when, full of blissful sighs,  
They sat and look'd into each other's eyes,  
Silent and happy — as if God had given  
Nought else worth looking at on this side heaven.

“ O my loved mistress, — thou whose spirit still  
Is with me, round me, wander where I will, —  
It is for thee, for thee alone I seek  
The paths of glory ; to light up thy cheek  
With warm approval — in that gentle look  
To read my praise, as in an angel's book,  
And think all toils rewarded, when from thee  
I gain a smile worth immortality !

How shall I bear the moment when restored  
To that young heart where I alone am lord,  
Though of such bliss unworthy — since the best  
Alone deserve to be the happiest, —  
When from those lips, unbreathed upon for years,  
I shall again kiss off the soul-felt tears,  
And find those tears warm as when last they started,  
Those sacred kisses pure as when we parted?  
O my own life! — why should a single day,  
A moment, keep me from those arms away? ”

While thus he thinks, still nearer on the breeze  
Come those delicious, dream-like harmonies,  
Each note of which but adds new downy links  
To the soft chain in which his spirit sinks.  
He turns him toward the sound, and far away  
Through a long vista sparkling with the play  
Of countless lamps, — like the rich track which Day  
Leaves on the waters, when he sinks from us,  
So long the path, its light so tremulous, —  
He sees a group of female forms advance,  
Some chain'd together in the mazy dance  
By fetters, forged in the green sunny bowers,  
As they were captives to the King of Flowers;  
And some disporting round, unlink'd and free,  
Who seem'd to mock their sisters' slavery;  
And round and round them still, in wheeling flight,  
Went, like gay moths about a lamp at night;  
While others walk'd, as gracefully along  
Their feet kept time, the very soul of song,

From psaltery, pipe, and lutes of heavenly thrill,  
Or their own youthful voices, heavenlier still.  
And now they come, now pass before his eye.  
Forms such as Nature moulds, when she would vie  
With Fancy's pencil, and give birth to things  
Lovely beyond its fairest picturings.  
Awhile they dance before him, then divide,  
Breaking, like rosy clouds at even-tide  
Around the rich pavilion of the sun, —  
Till silently dispersing, one by one  
Through many a path that from the chamber leads  
To gardens, terraces, and moonlight meads,  
Their distant laughter comes upon the wind,  
And but one trembling nymph remains behind, —  
Beckoning them back in vain, for they are gone,  
And she is left in all that light alone ;  
No veil to curtain o'er her beauteous brow,  
In its young bashfulness more beauteous now ;  
But a light golden chain-work round her hair,  
Such as the maids of Yezd and Shiraz wear,  
From which, on either side, gracefully hung  
A golden amulet, in the Arab tongue  
Engraven o'er with some immortal line  
From Holy Writ, or bard scarce less divine ;  
While her left hand, as shrinkingly she stood,  
Held a small lute of gold and sandal-wood,  
Which once or twice she touch'd with hurried strain,  
Then took her trembling fingers off again.  
But when at length a timid glance she stole  
At Azim, the sweet gravity of soul

She saw through all his features calm'd her fear,  
And like a half-tamed antelope, more near,  
Though shrinking still, she came; then sat her  
    down  
Upon a musnud's edge, and, bolder grown,  
In the pathetic mode of Isfahan  
Touch'd a preluding strain, and thus began :

There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,  
    And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;  
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream  
    To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.

That bower and its music I never forget;  
    But oft when alone, in the bloom of the year,  
I think — is the nightingale singing there yet?  
    Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemeer?

No, the roses soon wither'd that hung o'er the wave,  
    But some blossoms were gather'd while freshly  
    they shone,  
And a dew was distill'd from their flowers that gave  
    All the fragrance of summer, when summer was  
    gone.

Thus memory draws from delight, ere it dies,  
    An essence that breathes of it many a year;  
Thus bright to my soul, as 'twas then to mine eyes,  
    Is that bower on the banks of the calm Bendemeer.

“ Poor maiden ! ” thought the youth, “ if thou  
wert sent,  
With thy soft lute and beauty’s blandishment,  
To wake unholy wishes in this heart,  
Or tempt its truth, thou little know’st the art ;  
For though thy lip should sweetly counsel wrong,  
Those vestal eyes would disavow its song.  
But thou hast breathed such purity, thy lay  
Returns so fondly to youth’s virtuous day,  
And leads thy soul — if e’er it wander’d thence —  
So gently back to its first innocence,  
That I would sooner stop the unchain’d dove,  
When swift returning to its home of love,  
And round its snowy wing new fetters twine,  
Than turn from virtue one pure wish of thine ! ”

Scarce had this feeling pass’d, when, sparkling  
through  
The gently open’d curtains of light blue  
That veil’d the breezy casement, countless eyes,  
Peeping like stars through the blue evening skies,  
Look’d laughing in, as if to mock the pair  
That sat so still and melancholy there : —  
And now the curtains fly apart, and in  
From the cool air, ’mid showers of jessamine  
Which those without fling after them in play,  
Two lightsome maidens spring — lightsome as they  
Who live in the air on odors, — and around  
The bright saloon, scarce conscious of the ground,

Chase one another, in a varying dance  
Of mirth and languor, coyness and advance,  
Too eloquently like love's warm pursuit : —  
While she, who sung so gently to the lute  
Her dream of home, steals timidly away,  
Shrinking as violets do in summer's ray, —  
But takes with her from Azim's heart that sigh  
We sometimes give to forms that pass us by  
In the world's crowd, too lovely to remain,  
Creatures of light we never see again!

Around the white necks of the nymphs who  
danced

Hung carcanets of orient gems, that glanced  
More brilliant than the sea-glass glittering o'er  
The hills of crystal on their Caspian shore ;  
While from their long dark tresses, in a fall  
Of curls descending, bells as musical  
As those that, on the golden-shafted trees  
Of Eden, shake in the eternal breeze,  
Rung round their steps, at every bound more sweet,  
As 'twere the ecstatic language of their feet.  
At length the chase was o'er, and they stood  
wreathed

Within each other's arms ; while soft there breathed  
Through the cool casement, mingled with the sighs  
Of moonlight flowers, music that seem'd to rise  
From some still lake, so liquidly it rose ;  
And, as it swell'd again at each faint close,



The ear could track, through all that maze of chords  
And young sweet voices, these impassion'd words :

A Spirit there is, whose fragrant sigh  
Is burning now through earth and air :  
Where cheeks are blushing, the Spirit is nigh ;  
Where lips are meeting, the Spirit is there !

His breath is the soul of flowers like these,  
And his floating eyes — oh, *they* resemble  
Blue water-lilies, when the breeze  
Is making the stream around them tremble.

Hail to thee, hail to thee, kindling power !  
Spirit of Love, Spirit of Bliss !  
Thy holiest time is the moonlight hour,  
And there never was moonlight so sweet as this,

By the fair and brave  
Who blushing unite,  
Like the sun and wave,  
When they meet at night ;

By the tear that shows  
When passion is nigh,  
As the rain-drop flows  
From the heat of the sky ;

By the first love-beat  
Of the youthful heart,  
By the bliss to meet,  
And the pain to part ;

By all that thou hast  
To mortals given,  
Which — oh, could it last,  
This earth were heaven,—

We call thee hither, entrancing Power!  
Spirit of Love! Spirit of Bliss!  
Thy holiest time is the moonlight hour,  
And there never was moonlight so sweet as this.

Impatient of a scene whose luxuries stole,  
Spite of himself, too deep into his soul,  
And where, midst all that the young heart loves  
most —  
Flowers, music, smiles — to yield was to be lost,  
The youth had started up and turn'd away  
From the light nymphs, and their luxurious lay,  
To muse upon the pictures that hung round,—  
Bright images, that spoke without a sound,  
And views like vistas into fairy ground.  
But here again new spells came o'er his sense:  
All that the pencil's mute omnipotence  
Could call up into life, of soft and fair,  
Of fond and passionate, was glowing there;  
Nor yet too warm, but touch'd with that fine art  
Which paints of pleasure but the purer part;  
Which knows even Beauty when half-veil'd is best,—  
Like her own radiant planet of the west,  
Whose orb when half retired looks loveliest.

There hung the history of the Genii King,  
 Traced through each gay voluptuous wandering  
 With her from Saba's bowers, in whose bright eyes  
 He read that to be blest is to be wise ;  
 Here fond Zuleika woos with open arms  
 The Hebrew boy, who flies from her young charms,  
 Yet, flying, turns to gaze, and, half undone,  
 Wishes that Heaven and she could *both* be won ;  
 And here Mohammed, born for love and guile,  
 Forgets the Koran in his Mary's smile,—  
 Then beckons some kind angel from above  
 With a new text to consecrate their love.

With rapid step, yet pleased and lingering eye,  
 Did the youth pass these pictured stories by,  
 And hasten'd to a casement, where the light  
 Of the calm moon came in, and freshly bright  
 The fields without were seen, sleeping as still  
 As if no life remain'd in breeze or rill.  
 Here paused he, while the music, now less near,  
 Breathed with a holier language on his ear,  
 As though the distance, and that heavenly ray  
 Through which the sounds came floating, took away  
 All that had been too earthly in the lay.

Oh, could he listen to such sounds unmoved,  
 And by that light, nor dream of her he loved?  
 Dream on, unconscious boy ! while yet thou mayst ;  
 'Tis the last bliss thy soul shall ever taste.

Clasp yet awhile her image to thy heart,  
Ere all the light that made it dear depart.  
Think of her smiles as when thou saw'st them last,  
Clear, beautiful, by nought of earth o'ercast ;  
Recall her tears, to thee at parting given,  
Pure as they weep, if angels weep, in Heaven.  
Think, in her own still bower she waits thee now,  
With the same glow of heart and bloom of brow,  
Yet shrined in solitude — thine all, thine only,  
Like the one star above thee, bright and lonely.  
Oh, that a dream so sweet, so long enjoy'd,  
Should be so sadly, cruelly destroy'd !

The song is hush'd, the laughing nymphs are  
flown,  
And he is left, musing of bliss, alone ; —  
Alone? — no, not alone ; that heavy sigh,  
That sob of grief, which broke from some one  
nigh —  
Whose could it be? — alas ! is misery found  
Here, even here, on this enchanted ground ?  
He turns, and sees a female form, close veil'd,  
Leaning, as if both heart and strength had fail'd,  
Against a pillar near : — not glittering o'er  
With gems and wreaths, such as the others wore,  
But in that deep-blue melancholy dress  
Bokhara's maidens wear in mindfulness  
Of friends or kindred, dead or far away ;  
And such as Zelica had on that day

He left her — when, with heart too full to speak,  
He took away her last warm tears upon his cheek.

A strange emotion stirs within him,— more  
Than mere compassion ever waked before ;  
Unconsciously he opes his arms, while she  
Springs forward, as with life's last energy,  
But, swooning in that one convulsive bound,  
Sinks, ere she reach his arms, upon the ground ;  
Her veil falls off: her faint hands clasp his knees :  
'Tis she herself ! — 'tis Zelica he sees !  
But, ah, so pale, so changed — none but a lover  
Could in that wreck of beauty's shrine discover  
The once adored divinity,— even he  
Stood for some moments mute, and doubtingly  
Put back the ringlets from her brow, and gazed  
Upon those lids, where once such lustre blazed,  
Ere he could think she was indeed his own,  
Own darling maid whom he so long had known  
In joy and sorrow, beautiful in both ;  
Who, even when grief was heaviest — when loth  
He left her for the wars — in that worst hour  
Sat in her sorrow like the sweet night-flower,  
When darkness brings its weeping glories out,  
And spreads its sighs like frankincense about.

“ Look up, my Zelica ! — one moment show  
Those gentle eyes to me, that I may know  
Thy life, thy loveliness is not all gone,  
But there, at least, shines as it ever shone.

Come, look upon thine Azim, — one dear glance,  
Like those of old, were heaven ! whatever chance  
Hath brought thee here, oh, 'twas a blessed one !  
There — my loved lips — they move ; that kiss hath  
run

Like the first shoot of life through every vein,  
And now I clasp her, mine, 'all mine again.  
Oh, the delight ! — now, in this very hour,  
When had the whole rich world been in my power  
I should have singled out thee, only thee,  
From the whole world's collected treasury —  
To have thee here — to hang thus fondly o'er  
My own, best, purest Zelica once more !”

It was indeed the touch of those fond lips  
Upon her eyes that chased their short eclipse ;  
And, gradual as the snow, at Heaven's breath,  
Melts off and shows the azure flowers beneath,  
Her lids unclosed, and the bright eyes were seen  
Gazing on his — not, as they late had been,  
Quick, restless, wild, but mournfully serene ;  
As if to lie, even for that trancèd minute,  
So near his heart, had consolation in it ;  
And thus to wake in his beloved caress  
Took from her soul one half its wretchedness.  
But when she heard him call her good and pure,  
Oh, 'twas too much — too dreadful to endure !  
Shuddering, she broke away from his embrace,  
And, hiding with both hands her guilty face,

Said, in a tone whose anguish would have riven  
A heart of very marble, "Pure! — O Heaven!"

That tone — those looks so changed — the  
withering blight

That sin and sorrow leave where'er they light;  
The dead despondency of those sunk eyes,  
Where once had he thus met her by surprise,  
He would have seen himself, too happy boy,  
Reflected in a thousand lights of joy;  
And then the place, — that bright unholy place,  
Where vice lay hid beneath each winning grace  
And charm of luxury, as the viper weaves  
Its wily covering of sweet balsam leaves, —  
All struck upon his heart sudden and cold  
As death itself; it needs not to be told —  
No, no — he sees it all, plain as the brand  
Of burning shame can mark; whate'er the hand  
That could from Heaven and him such brightness  
sever,

'Tis done — to Heaven and him she's lost forever!  
It was a dreadful moment; not the tears,  
The lingering, lasting misery of years,  
Could match that minute's anguish; all the worst  
Of sorrow's elements in that dark burst  
Broke o'er his soul, and, with one crash of fate,  
Laid the whole hopes of his life desolate.

"Oh, curse me not," she cried, as wild he toss'd  
His desperate hand toward Heaven; "tho' I am  
lost,

Think not that guilt, that falsehood made me fall :  
 No, no — 'twas grief, 'twas madness did it all !  
 Nay, doubt me not ; though all thy love hath  
 ceased —

I know it hath — yet, yet believe, at least,  
 That every spark of reason's light must be  
 Quench'd in this brain, ere I could stray from thee !  
 They told me thou wert dead — why, Azim, why  
 Did we not, both of us, that instant die  
 When we were parted ? Oh, couldst thou but know  
 With what a deep devotedness of woe  
 I wept thine absence — o'er and o'er again  
 Thinking of thee, still thee, till thought grew pain,  
 And memory, like a drop that night and day  
 Falls cold and ceaseless, wore my heart away.  
 Didst thou but know how pale I sat at home,  
 Mine eyes still turn'd the way thou wert to come,  
 And, all the long, long nights of hope and fear,  
 Thy voice and step still sounding in mine ear —  
 O God ! thou wouldst not wonder that, at last,  
 When every hope was all at once o'er cast,  
 When I heard frightful voices round me say,  
*Azim is dead !* — this wretched brain gave way,  
 And I became a wreck, at random driven,  
 Without one glimpse of reason or of Heaven —  
 All wild — and even this quenchless love within  
 Turn'd to foul fires to light me into sin !  
 Thou pitiest me — I knew thou wouldst — that  
 sky  
 Hath nought beneath it half so lorn as I.



The fiend who lured me hither — hist! come near,  
 Or thou too, *thou* art lost, if he should hear —  
 Told me such things — oh, with such devilish art  
 As would have ruin'd even a holier heart —  
 Of thee, and of that ever-radiant sphere,  
 Where blest at length, if I but served *him* here,  
 I should forever live in thy dear sight,  
 And drink from those pure eyes eternal light.  
 Think, think how lost, how madden'd I must be,  
 To hope that guilt could lead to God or thee!  
 Thou weep'st for me — do weep! oh, that I durst  
 Kiss off that tear! but, no — these lips are curst,  
 They must not touch thee; — one divine caress,  
 One blessed moment of forgetfulness  
 I've had within those arms, and *that* shall lie,  
 Shrined in my soul's deep memory till I die;  
 The last of joy's last relics here below,  
 The one sweet drop, in all this waste of woe,  
 My heart has treasured from affection's spring,  
 To sooth and cool its deadly withering!  
 But thou — yes, thou must go — forever go;  
 This place is not for thee — for thee! oh, no!  
 Did I but tell the half, thy tortured brain  
 Would burn like mine, and mine grow wild again!  
 Enough, that Guilt reigns here — that hearts, once  
     good,  
 Now tainted, chill'd, and broken, are his food;  
 Enough, that we are parted — that their rolls  
 A flood of headlong fate between our souls,  
 Whose darkness severs me as wide from thee  
 As Hell from Heaven, to all eternity!"

“Zelica, Zelica!” the youth exclaim’d,  
 In all the tortures of a mind inflamed  
 Almost to madness — “by that sacred Heaven,  
 Where yet, if prayers can move, thou’lt be forgiven  
 As thou art here — here, in this writhing heart,  
 All sinful, wild, and ruin’d as thou art!  
 By the remembrance of our once pure love,  
 Which, like a churchyard light, still burns above  
 The grave of our lost souls — which guilt in thee  
 Cannot extinguish, nor despair in me, —  
 I do conjure, implore thee to fly hence!  
 If thou hast yet one spark of innocence  
 Fly with me from this place” —

“With thee? oh, bliss!  
 ’Tis worth whole years of torment to hear this!  
 What! take the lost one with thee? — let her rove  
 By thy dear side, as in those days of love  
 When we were both so happy, both so pure? —  
 Too heavenly dream! if there’s on earth a cure  
 For the sunk heart, ’tis this — day after day  
 To be the blest companion of thy way;  
 To hear thine angel eloquence — to see  
 Those virtuous eyes forever turn’d on me;  
 And, in their light re-chasten’d silently,  
 Like the stain’d web that whitens in the sun,  
 Grow pure by being purely shone upon!  
 And thou wilt pray for me — I know thou wilt —  
 At the dim vesper hour, when thoughts of guilt



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Lalla Rookh 1



Come heaviest o'er the heart, thou'lt lift thine eyes  
Full of sweet tears, unto the darkening skies,  
And plead for me with Heaven, till I can dare  
To fix my own weak sinful glances there ;  
Till the good angels, when they see me cling  
Forever near thee, pale and sorrowing,  
Shall for thy sake pronounce my soul forgiven,  
And bid thee take thy weeping slave to Heaven!  
Oh, yes, I 'll fly with thee " —

Scarce had she said  
These breathless words, when a voice deep and  
dread

As that of Monker, waking up the dead  
From their first sleep — so startling 'twas to both —  
Rung through the casement near: "Thine oath!  
thine oath!"

O Heaven, the ghastliness of that maid's look!  
" 'Tis he!" faintly she cried, while terror shook  
Her inmost core, nor durst she lift her eyes,  
Tho' thro' the casement now nought but the skies  
And moonlit fields were seen, calm as before, —  
" 'Tis he and I am his — all, all is o'er!  
Go — fly this instant, or thou'rt ruin'd too —  
Mine oath, mine oath! O God! 'tis all too true!  
True as the worm in this cold heart it is —  
I am Mokanna's bride — his, Azim, his!  
The Dead stood round us, while I spoke that vow;  
Their blue lips echoed it — I hear them now!

Their eyes glared on me while I pledged that bowl :  
 'Twas burning blood — I feel it in my soul !  
 And the Veil'd Bridegroom — hist ! I've seen to-  
     night  
 What angels know not of — so foul a sight,  
 So horrible — oh, never may'st thou see  
 What *there* lies hid from all but hell and me !  
 But I must hence — off, off ! I am not thine,  
 Nor Heaven's, nor Love's, nor aught that is divine !  
 Hold me not — ha ! think'st thou the fiends that  
     sever  
 Hearts, cannot sunder hands ? — thus, then — for-  
     ever ! ”

With all that strength which madness lends the  
     weak,  
 She flung away his arm ; and with a shriek  
 Whose sound, though he should linger out more  
     years  
 Than wretch e'er told, can never leave his ears —  
 Flew up through that long avenue of light,  
 Fleetly as some dark ominous bird of night  
 Across the sun, and soon was out of sight !

LALLA ROOKH could think of nothing all day  
 but the misery of these two young lovers. Her  
 gayety was gone, and she looked pensively even  
 upon Fadladeen. She felt, too, without knowing  
 why, a sort of uneasy pleasure in imagining that  
 Azim must have been just such a youth as Fera-

morz; just as worthy to enjoy all the blessings, without any of the pangs, of that illusive passion which too often, like the sunny apples of Istkahar, is all sweetness on one side, and all bitterness on the other.

As they passed along a sequestered river after sunset, they saw a young Hindoo girl upon the bank, whose employment seemed to them so strange that they stopped their palankeens to observe her. She had lighted a small lamp, filled with oil of cocoa, and, placing it in an earthen dish, adorned with a wreath of flowers, had committed it with a trembling hand to the stream; and was now anxiously watching its progress down the current, heedless of the gay cavalcade which had drawn up beside her. Lalla Rookh was all curiosity; — when one of her attendants, who had lived upon the banks of the Ganges (where this ceremony is so frequent, that often, in the dusk of the evening, the river is seen glittering all over with lights, like the Oton-tala, or Sea of Stars), informed the Princess that it was the usual way in which the friends of those who had gone on dangerous voyages offered up vows for their safe return. If the lamp sunk immediately, the omen was disastrous; but if it went shining down the stream, and continued to burn until entirely out of sight, the return of the beloved object was considered as certain.

Lalla Rookh, as they moved on, more than once looked back to observe how the young Hindoo's

lamp proceeded ; and, while she saw with pleasure that it was still unextinguished, she could not help fearing that all the hopes of this life were no better than that feeble light upon the river. The remainder of the journey was passed in silence. She now, for the first time, felt that shade of melancholy which comes over the youthful maiden's heart, as sweet and transient as her own breath upon a mirror ; nor was it till she heard the lute of Feramorz, touched lightly at the door of her pavilion, that she waked from the reverie in which she had been wandering. Instantly her eyes were lighted up with pleasure ; and after a few unheard remarks from Fadladeen, upon the indecorum of a poet seating himself in presence of a Princess, everything was arranged as on the preceding evening, and all listened with eagerness, while the story was thus continued : —

WHOSE are the gilded tents that crowd the way,  
Where all was waste and silent yesterday?  
This City of War, which, in a few short hours,  
Hath sprung up here, as if the magic powers  
Of Him who, in the twinkling of a star,  
Built the high pillar'd halls of Chilminar,  
Had conjured up, far as the eye can see,  
This world of tents, and domes, and sun-bright  
armory:  
Princely pavilions, screen'd by many a fold  
Of crimson cloth, and topp'd with balls of gold ;



Steeds, with their housings of rich silver spun,  
Their chains and poitreles, glittering in the sun ;  
And camels, tufted o'er with Yemen's shells,  
Shaking in every breeze their light-toned bells !

But yester-eve, so motionless aroun  
So mute was this wide plain, that not a sound  
But the far torrent, or the locust bird  
Hunting among the thickets, could be heard ; —  
Yet hark ! what discords now, of every kind !  
Shouts, laughs, and screams, are revelling in the  
wind ;

The neigh of cavalry ; the tinkling throngs  
Of laden camels and their drivers' songs ;  
Ringing of arms, and flapping in the breeze  
Of streamers from ten thousand canopies ;  
War music, bursting out from time to time,  
With gong and tymbalon's tremendous chime ;  
Or, in the pause, when harsher sounds are mute,  
The mellow breathings of some horn or flute,  
That far off, broken by the eagle note  
Of the Abyssinian trumpet, swell and float.

Who leads this mighty army ? — ask ye who ?  
And mark ye not those banners of dark hue,  
The Night and Shadow, over yonder tent ?  
It is the Caliph's glorious armament.  
Roused in his Palace by the dread alarms,  
That hourly came, of the false Prophet's arms,

And of his host of infidels, who hurl'd  
Defiance fierce at Islam and the world, —  
Though worn with Grecian warfare, and behind  
The veils of his bright Palace calm reclined,  
Yet brook'd he not such blasphemy should stain,  
Thus unrevenged, the evening of his reign ;  
But, having sworn upon the Holy Grave  
To conquer or to perish, once more gave  
His shadowy banners proudly to the breeze,  
And with an army nursed in victories,  
Here stands to crush the rebels that o'errun  
His blest and beauteous Province of the Sun.

Ne'er did the march of Mahadi display  
Such pomp before ; — not even when on his way  
To Mecca's Temple, when both land and sea  
Were spoil'd to feed the Pilgrim's luxury ;  
When round him, 'mid the burning sands, he saw  
Fruits of the North in icy freshness thaw,  
And cool'd his thirsty lip, beneath the glow  
Of Mecca's sun, with urns of Persian snow ;  
Nor e'er did armament more grand than that  
Pour from the kingdoms of the Caliphat.  
First, in the van, the People of the Rock,  
On their light mountain steeds, of royal stock ;  
Then, chieftains of Damascus, proud to see  
The flashing of their swords' rich marquetry ;  
Men from the regions near the Volga's mouth  
Mix'd with the rude black archers of the South ;

And Indian lancers, in white-turban'd ranks,  
From the far Sinde, or Attock's sacred banks,  
With dusky legions from the land of Myrrh,  
And many a mace-arm'd Moor and Mid-sea islander.

Nor less in number, though more new and rude  
In warfare's school, was the vast multitude  
That, fired by zeal, or by oppression wrong'd,  
Round the white standard of the Impostor throng'd;  
Beside his thousands of Believers — blind,  
Burning and headlong as the Samiel wind —  
Many who felt and more who fear'd to feel  
The bloody Islamite's converting steel,  
Flock'd to his banner: Chiefs of the Uzbek race,  
Waving their heron crests with martial grace;  
Turkomans, countless as their flocks, led forth  
From the aromatic pastures of the North;  
Wild warriors of the turquoise hills, — and those  
Who dwell beyond the everlasting snows  
Of Hindoo Kosh, in stormy freedom bred,  
Their fort the rock, their camp the torrent's bed.  
But none, of all who own'd the Chief's command,  
Rush'd to that battle-field with bolder hand,  
Or sterner hate, than Iran's outlaw'd men,  
Her Worshipers of Fire, — all panting then  
For vengeance on the accursed Saracen, —  
Vengeance at last for their dear country spurn'd,  
Her throne usurp'd, and her bright shrines o'er-  
turn'd.

From Yezd's eternal Mansion of the Fire,  
Where aged saints in dreams of Heaven expire ;  
From Badku, and those fountains of blue flame  
That burn in the Caspian, fierce they came,  
Careless for what or whom the blow was sped,  
So vengeance triumph'd, and their tyrants bled.

Such was the wild and miscellaneous host  
That high in air their motley banners tost  
Around the Prophet-Chief— all eyes still bent  
Upon that glittering Veil, where'er it went,  
That beacon through the battle's stormy flood,  
That rainbow of the field, whose showers were blood.

Twice hath the sun upon their conflict set,  
And risen again, and found them grappling yet ;  
While streams of carnage, in the noontide blaze,  
Smoke up to Heaven— hot as that crimson haze  
By which the prostrate Caravan is awed,  
In the red Desert, when the wind's abroad.  
“ On, Swords of God ! ” the panting Caliph calls, —  
“ Thrones for the living — Heaven for him who  
falls ! ”  
“ On, brave avengers, on ! ” Mokanna cries,  
“ And Eblis blast the recreant slave that flies ! ”  
Now comes the brunt, the crisis of the day :  
They clash, they strive, the Caliph's troops give  
way !  
Mokanna's self plucks the black Banner down,  
And now the Orient World's Imperial Crown

Is just within its grasp — when, hark ! that shout !  
Some hand hath check'd the flying Moslem's rout ;  
And now they turn, they rally — at their head  
A warrior (like those angel youths who led,  
In glorious panoply of heaven's own mail,  
The Champions of the Faith through Beder's vale),  
Bold as if gifted with ten thousand lives,  
Turns on the fierce pursuers' blades, and drives  
At once the multitudinous torrent back,  
While hope and courage kindle in his track ;  
And, at each step, his bloody falchion makes  
Terrible vistas through which victory breaks !  
In vain Mokanna, 'midst the general flight,  
Stands, like the red moon on some stormy night,  
Among the fugitive clouds that, hurrying by,  
Leave only her unshaken in the sky ;  
In vain he yells his desperate curses out,  
Deals death promiscuously to all about —  
To foes that charge and coward friends that fly,  
And seems of all the Great Arch-enemy.  
The panic spreads. “ A miracle ! ” throughout  
The Moslem ranks, “ a miracle ! ” they shout,  
All gazing on that youth, whose coming seems  
A light, a glory, such as breaks in dreams ;  
And every sword, true as o'er billows dim  
The needle tracks the lodestar, following him !

Right towards Mokanna now he cleaves his path,  
Impatient cleaves, as though the bolt of wrath  
He bears from Heaven withheld its awful burst

From weaker heads, and souls but half-way curst,  
 To break o'er Him, the mightiest and the worst !  
 But vain his speed — though, in that hour of blood,  
 Had all God's seraphs round Mokanna stood,  
 With swords of fire, ready like fate to fall,  
 Mokanna's soul would have defied them all ;  
 Yet now the rush of fugitives, too strong  
 For human force, hurries even him along ;  
 In vain he struggles 'mid the wedged array  
 Of flying thousands — he is borne away ;  
 And the sole joy his baffled spirit knows,  
 In this forced flight, is — murdering as he goes !  
 As a grim tiger, whom the torrent's might  
 Surprises in some parch'd ravine at night,  
 Turns, even in drowning, on the wretched flocks,  
 Swept with him in that snow-flood from the rocks,  
 And, to the last, devouring on his way,  
 Bloodies the stream he hath not power to stay.

“ Alla illa Alla ! ” — the glad shout renew —  
 “ Alla Akbar ! ” — the Caliph's in Merou.  
 Hang out your gilded tapestry in the streets,  
 And light your shrines and chant your ziraleets.  
 The swords of God have triumph'd — on his throne  
 Your Caliph sits, and the Veil'd Chief hath flown.  
 Who does not envy that young warrior now  
 To whom the Lord of Islam bends his brow,  
 In all the graceful gratitude of power,  
 For his throne's safety in that perilous hour ?

Who doth not wonder, when, amidst the acclaim  
Of thousands, heralding to Heaven his name,  
'Mid all those holier harmonies of fame  
Which sounds along the path of virtuous souls,  
Like music round a planet as it rolls, —  
He turns away — coldly, as if some gloom  
Hung o'er his heart no triumphs can illumine, —  
Some sightless grief, upon whose blasted gaze  
Though Glory's light may play, in vain it plays?  
Yes, wretched Azim! thine is such a grief,  
Beyond all hope, all terror, all relief;  
A dark, cold calm, which nothing now can break,  
Or warm or brighten — like the Syrian Lake,  
Upon whose surface morn and summer shed  
Their smiles in vain, for all beneath is dead! —  
Hearts there have been, o'er which this weight of  
          woe

Came by long use of suffering, tame and slow;  
But thine, lost youth! was sudden — over thee  
It broke at once, when all seem'd ecstasy;  
When Hope look'd up, and saw the gloomy Past  
Melt into splendor, and Bliss dawn at last —  
'Twas then, even then, o'er joys so freshly blown,  
This mortal blight of misery came down;  
Even then, the full, warm gushings of thy heart  
Were check'd — like fount-drops, frozen as they  
          start;

And there, like them, cold, sunless relics hang,  
Each fix'd and chill'd into a lasting pang.

One sole desire, one passion now remains  
 To keep life's fever still within his veins, —  
 Vengeance! — dire vengeance on the wretch who  
 cast

O'er him and all he loved that ruinous blast.  
 For this, when rumors reach'd him in his flight  
 Far, far away, after that fatal night,  
 Rumors of armies thronging to the attack  
 Of the Veil'd Chief — for this he wing'd him back,  
 Fleet as the vulture speeds to flags unfurl'd,  
 And, when all hope seem'd desperate, wildly hurl'd  
 Himself into the scale, and saved a world.  
 For this he still lives on, careless of all  
 The wreaths that Glory on his path lets fall;  
 For this alone exists — like lightning-fire,  
 To speed one bolt of vengeance, and expire!

But safe as yet that Spirit of Evil lives;  
 With a small band of desperate fugitives,  
 The last sole stubborn fragment, left unriven,  
 Of the proud host that late stood fronting Heaven,  
 He gain'd Merou — breathed a short curse of  
 blood

O'er his lost throne — then pass'd the Jihon's  
 flood,

And gathering all whose madness of belief  
 Still saw a Saviour in their down-fallen Chief,  
 Raised the white banner within Neksheb's gates,  
 And there, untamed, the approaching conqueror  
 waits.



Of all his Haram, all that busy hive,  
 With music and with sweets sparkling alive,  
 He took but one, the partner of his flight,  
 One — not for love, not for her beauty's light;  
 No, Zelica stood withering 'midst the gay,  
 Wan as the blossom that fell yesterday  
 From the Alma tree and dies, while overhead  
 To-day's young flower is springing in its stead.  
 Oh, not for love — the deepest Damn'd must be  
 Touch'd with Heaven's glory, ere such fiends as he  
 Can feel one glimpse of Love's divinity!  
 But no, she is his victim; *there* lie all  
 Her charms for him — charms that can never pall,  
 As long as Hell within his heart can stir,  
 Or one faint trace of Heaven is left in her.  
 To work an angel's ruin, to behold  
 As white a page as Virtue e'er unroll'd  
 Blacken, beneath his touch, into a scroll  
 Of damning sins, seal'd with a burning soul: —  
 This is his triumph; this the joy accurst,  
 That ranks him among demons all but first:  
 This gives the victim that before him lies,  
 Blighted and lost, a glory in his eyes,  
 A light like that with which hell-fire illumines  
 The ghastly writhing wretch whom it consumes!

But other tasks now wait him — tasks that need  
 All the deep daringness of thought and deed  
 With which the Dives have gifted him, — for mark,  
 Over yon plains, which night had else made dark,

Those lanterns, countless as the wingèd lights  
 That spangle India's fields on showery nights ;  
 Far as their formidable gleams they shed,  
 The mighty tents of the beleaguerer spread,  
 Glimmering along the horizon's dusky line,  
 And thence in nearer circles till they shine  
 Among the founts and groves o'er which the town  
 In all its arm'd magnificence looks down.  
 Yet, fearless, from his lofty battlements  
 Mokanna views that multitude of tents, —  
 Nay, smiles to think that, though entoil'd, beset,  
 Not less than myriads dare to front him yet ;  
 That friendless, throneless, he thus stands at bay,  
 Even thus a match for myriads such as they.  
 " Oh, for a sweep of that dark Angel's wing  
 Who brush'd the thousands of the Assyrian King  
 To darkness in a moment, that I might  
 People Hell's chambers with yon host to-night !  
 But come what may, let who will grasp the throne,  
 Caliph or Prophet, Man alike shall groan ;  
 Let who will torture him — Priest, Caliph, King —  
 Alike this loathsome world of his shall ring  
 With victims' shrieks and howlings of the  
     slave, —  
 Sounds that shall glad me even within my grave !"  
 Thus to himself ; but to the scanty train  
 Still left around him, a far different strain : —  
 " Glorious Defenders of the sacred Crown  
 I bear from Heaven, whose light nor blood shall  
     drown,

Nor shadow of earth eclipse, — before whose gems  
 The paly pomp of this world's diadems,  
 The crown of Gerashid, the pillar'd throne  
 Of Parviz, and the heron crest that shone  
 Magnificent o'er Ali's beauteous eyes,  
 Fade like the stars when morn is in the skies, —  
 Warriors, rejoice — the port to which we've pass'd,  
 O'er Destiny's dark wave, beams out at last!  
 Victory's our own — 'tis written in that Book  
 Upon whose leaves none but the angels look,  
 - That Islam's sceptre shall beneath the power  
 Of her great foe fall broken in that hour,  
 When the moon's mighty orb, before all eyes,  
 From Neksheb's Holy Well portentously shall rise!  
 Now turn and see!" —

They turn'd, and, as he spoke,  
 A sudden splendor all around them broke,  
 And they beheld an orb, ample and bright,  
 Rise from the Holy Well and cast its light  
 Round the rich city and the plain for miles,  
 Flinging such radiance o'er the gilded tiles  
 Of many a dome and fair-roof'd minaret  
 As autumn suns shed round them when they set.  
 Instant, from all who saw the illusive sign,  
 A murmur broke — "Miraculous! divine!"  
 The Gheber bow'd, thinking his idol star  
 Had waked and burst impatient through the bar  
 Of midnight, to inflame him to the war;  
 While he of Moussa's creed saw, in that ray,  
 The glorious Light which, in his freedom's day,

Had rested on the Ark, and now again  
Shone out to bless the breaking of his chain.

“ To victory ! ” is at once the cry of all —  
Nor stands Mokanna loitering at that call ;  
But instant the huge gates are flung aside,  
And forth, like a diminutive mountain-tide  
Into the boundless sea, they speed their course  
Right on into the Moslem’s mighty force.  
The watchmen of the camp, who, in their rounds,  
Had paused, and even forgot the punctual sounds  
Of the small drum with which they count the night,  
To gaze upon that supernatural light,  
Now sink beneath an unexpected arm,  
And in a death-groan give their last alarm.  
“ On for the lamps that light yon lofty screen,  
Nor blunt your blades with massacre so mean ;  
There rests the Caliph : speed : one lucky lance  
May now achieve mankind’s deliverance.”  
Desperate the die — such as they only cast  
Who venture for a world, and stake their last.  
But Fate’s no longer with him, — blade for blade  
Springs up to meet them thro’ the glimmering shade,  
And, as the clash is heard, new legions soon  
Pour to the spot, like bees of Kauzeroon  
To the shrill timbril’s summon’s, — till at length  
The mighty camp swarms out in all its strength,  
And back to Neksheb’s gates, covering the plain  
With random slaughter, drives the adventurous  
train :





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Lalla Rookh 2

Among the last of whom the Silver Veil  
Is seen glittering at times, like the white sail  
Of some toss'd vessel on a stormy night,  
Catching the tempest's momentary light !

And hath not this brought the proud spirit low ?  
Nor dash'd his brow, nor check'd his daring ? No.  
Though half the wretches whom at night he led  
To thrones and victory lie disgraced and dead,  
Yet morning hears him, with unshrinking crest,  
Still vaunt of thrones and victory to the rest.  
And they believe him ! — oh, the lover may  
Distrust that look which steals his soul away ;  
The babe may cease to think that it can play  
With Heaven's rainbow ; alchemists may doubt  
The shining gold their crucible gives out ;  
But Faith, fanatic Faith, once wedded fast  
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last.

And well the Impostor knew all lures and arts  
That Lucifer e'er taught to tangle hearts ;  
Nor, 'mid these last bold workings of his plot  
Against men's souls, is Zelica forgot.  
Ill-fated Zelica ! had reason been  
Awake through half the horrors thou hast seen,  
Thou never couldst have borne it : Death had come  
At once, and taken thy wrung spirit home.  
But 'twas not so, — a torpor, a suspense  
Of thought, almost of life, came o'er the intense

And passionate struggles of that fearful night,  
When her last hope of peace and heaven took flight :  
And though, at times, a gleam of frenzy broke, —  
As through some dull volcano's veil of smoke  
Ominous flashings now and then will start,  
Which show the fire's still busy at its heart, —  
Yet was she mostly wrapp'd in solemn gloom ;  
Not such as Azim's, brooding o'er its doom,  
And calm without as is the brow of death,  
While busy worms are gnawing underneath,  
But in a blank and pulseless torpor, free  
From thought or pain, a seal'd-up apathy,  
Which left her oft, with scarce one living thrill,  
The cold pale victim of her torturer's will.

Again, as in Merou, he had her deck'd  
Gorgeously out, the Priestess of the sect ;  
And led her glittering forth before the eyes  
Of his rude train, as to a sacrifice, —  
Pallid as she, the young devoted Bride  
Of the fierce Nile, when, deck'd in all the pride  
Of nuptial pomp, she sinks into his tide.  
And while the wretched maid hung down her head  
And stood, as one just risen from the dead,  
Amid that gazing crowd, the fiend would tell  
His credulous slaves it was some charm or spell  
Possess'd her now, — and from that darken'd trance  
Should dawn ere long their Faith's deliverance ;  
Or if, at times, goaded by guilty shame,  
Her soul was roused, and words of wildness came,



Instant the bold blasphemer would translate  
Her ravings into oracles of fate, —  
Would hail Heaven's signals in her flashing eyes,  
And call her shrieks the language of the skies !

But vain at length his arts : — despair is seen  
Gathering around, and famine comes to glean  
All that the sword had left unreap'd : — in vain  
At morn and eve across the northern plain  
He looks impatient for the promised spears  
Of the wild Hordes and Tartar mountaineers :  
They come not — while his fierce beleaguers pour  
Engines of havoc in, unknown before,  
And horrible as new : javelins, that fly  
Enwreathed with smoky flames thro' the dark sky,  
And red-hot globes, that, opening as they mount,  
Discharge, as from a kindled Naptha fount,  
Showers of consuming fire o'er all below, —  
Looking, as through the illumined night they go,  
Like those wild birds that by the Magians oft,  
At festivals of fire, were sent aloft  
Into the air, with blazing fagots tied  
To their huge wings, scattering combustion wide.  
All night the groans of wretches who expire  
In agony, beneath these darts of fire,  
Ring through the city ; while, descending o'er  
Its shrines and domes and streets of sycamore, —  
Its lone bazaars, with their bright cloths of gold,  
Since the last peaceful pageant left unroll'd, —

Its beauteous marble baths, whose idle jets  
 Now gush with blood, — and its tall minarets,  
 That late have stood up in the evening glare  
 Of the red sun, unhallow'd by a prayer ; —  
 O'er each, in turn, the dreadful flame-bolts fall,  
 And death and conflagration throughout all  
 The desolate city hold high festival !

Mokanna sees the world is his no more : —  
 One sting at parting, and his grasp is o'er.  
 “ What ! drooping now ? ” thus, with unblushing  
 cheek,  
 He hails the few who yet can hear him speak,  
 Of all those famish'd slaves around him lying,  
 And by the light of blazing temples dying ;  
 “ What ! drooping now ? now, when at length we  
 press  
 Home o'er the very threshold of success !  
 When Alla from our ranks hath thinn'd away  
 Those grosser branches that kept out his ray  
 Of favor from us, and we stand at length  
 Heirs of his light and children of his strength,  
 The chosen few, who shall survive the fall  
 Of Kings and Thrones, triumphant over all !  
 Have you then lost, weak murmurers as you are,  
 All faith in him who was your Light, your Star ?  
 Have you forgot the eye of glory, hid  
 Beneath this Veil, the flashing of whose lid  
 Could, like a sun-stroke of the desert, wither  
 Millions of such as yonder Chief brings hither ?

Long have its lightnings slept, too long, but now  
All earth shall feel the unveiling of this brow !  
To-night, — yes, sainted men ! this very night,  
I bid you all to a fair festal rite,  
Where, having deep refresh'd each weary limb  
With viands, such as feast Heaven's cherubim,  
And kindled up your souls, now sunk and dim,  
With that pure wine the Dark-eyed Maids above  
Keep, seal'd with precious musk, for those they  
love,  
I will myself uncurtain in your sight  
The wonders of this brow's ineffable light ;  
Then lead you forth, and with a wink disperse  
Yon myriads, howling through the universe !

Eager they listen, while each accent darts  
New life into their chill'd and hope-sick hearts, —  
Such treacherous life as the cool draught supplies  
To him upon the stake, who drinks and dies !  
Wildly they point their lances to the light  
Of the fast-sinking sun, and shout, " To-night ! " —  
" To-night ! " their Chief re-echoes in a voice  
Of fiend-like mockery that bids Hell rejoice.  
Deluded victims ! — never hath this earth  
Seen mourning half so mournful as their mirth.  
Here, to the few whose iron frames had stood  
This racking waste of famine and of blood,  
Faint, dying wretches clung, from whom the shout  
Of triumph like a maniac's laugh broke out ; —

There, others, lighted by the smouldering fire,  
Danced like wan ghosts about a funeral pyre,  
Among the dead and dying, strew'd around ; —  
While some pale wretch look'd on, and from his  
wound  
Plucking the fiery dart by which he bled  
In ghastly transport waved it o'er his head !

'Twas more than midnight now ; a fearful pause  
Had follow'd the long shouts, the wild applause,  
That lately from those Royal Gardens burst,  
Where the Veil'd demon held his feast accurst,  
When Zelic — alas, poor ruin'd heart,  
In every horror doom'd to bear its part ! —  
Was bidden to the banquet by a slave,  
Who, while his quivering lip the summons gave,  
Grew black, as though the shadows of the grave  
Compass'd him round, and ere he could repeat  
His message through, fell lifeless at her feet !  
Shuddering, she went : — a soul-felt pang of fear.  
A presage that her own dark doom was near,  
Roused every feeling, and brought Reason back  
Once more, to writhe her last upon the rack.  
All round seem'd tranquil — even the foe had ceased,  
As if aware of that demoniac feast,  
His fiery bolts ; and though the heavens look'd red,  
'Twas but some distant conflagration's spread.  
But hark ! she stops, she listens — dreadful tone !  
'Tis her Tormentor's laugh ! — and now a groan,

A long death-groan comes with it: can this be  
The place of mirth, the bower of revelry?  
She enters — Holy Alla, what a sight  
Was there before her! By the glimmering light  
Of the pale dawn, mix'd with the flare of brands  
That round lay burning, dropp'd from lifeless hands,  
She saw the board, in splendid mockery spread,  
Rich censers breathing, garlands overhead,  
The urns, the cups, from which they late had  
    quaff'd,  
All gold and gems, but — what had been the  
    draught?  
Oh, who need ask, that saw those livid guests,  
With their swollen heads sunk blackening on their  
    breasts,  
Or looking pale to Heaven with glassy glare,  
As if they sought, but saw no mercy there; —  
As if they felt, though poison rack'd them through,  
Remorse the deadlier torment of the two!  
While some, the bravest, hardiest of the train  
Of their false Chief, who on the battle-plain  
Would have met death with transport by his side,  
Here mute and helpless gasp'd; — but, as they  
    died,  
Look'd horrible vengeance with their eyes' last  
    strain,  
And clench'd the slackening hand at him in vain.

Dreadful it was to see the ghastly stare,  
The stony look of horror and despair,

Which some of these expiring victims cast  
 Upon their souls' tormentor to the last, —  
 Upon that mocking Fiend, whose Veil, now raised,  
 Show'd them, as in death's agony they gazed —  
 Not the long-promised light, the brow whose  
     beaming

Was to come forth, all conquering, all redeeming,  
 But features horribler than Hell e'er traced  
 On its own brood: no Demon of the Waste,  
 No churchyard Ghole caught lingering in the light  
 Of the blest sun, e'er blasted human sight  
 With lineaments so foul, so fierce as those  
 The Impostor now in grinning mockery shows: —  
 "There, ye wise Saints, behold your Light, your  
     Star!

Ye *would* be dupes and victims, and ye *are*!  
 Is it enough? or must I, while a thrill  
 Lives in your sapient bosoms, cheat you still?  
 Swear that the burning death ye feel within  
 Is but the trance with which Heaven's joys begin;  
 That this foul visage, foul as e'er disgraced  
 Even monstrous man, is — after God's own taste;  
 And that — but see! ere I have half-way said  
 My greetings through, the uncourteous souls are fled.  
 Farewell, sweet spirits; not in vain ye die,  
 If Eblis loves you half so well as I. —  
 Ha, my young bride! 'tis well, take thou thy seat;  
 Nay, come, no shuddering, didst thou never meet  
 The dead before? — they graced our wedding,  
     sweet;

And these, my guests to-night, have brimm'd so  
true

Their parting cups, that thou shalt pledge one too.  
But — how is this? all empty? all drunk up?  
Hot lips have been before thee in the cup,  
Young bride, — yet stay, one precious drop remains,  
Enough to warm a gentle Priestess' veins:  
Here, drink, and should thy lover's conquering arms  
Speed hither, ere thy lip lose all its charms,  
Give him but half this venom in thy kiss,  
And I'll forgive my haughty rival's bliss!

“For me — I too must die, but not like these  
Vile rankling things, to fester in the breeze,  
To have this brow in ruffian triumph shown,  
With all Death's grimness added to its own,  
And rot to dust beneath the taunting eyes  
Of slaves, exclaiming, ‘There his Godship lies!’  
No, cursed race! since first my soul drew breath,  
They've been my dupes, and shall be e'en in death.  
Thou seest yon cistern in the shade, — 'tis fill'd  
With burning drugs, for this last hour distill'd:  
There will I plunge me, in that liquid flame —  
Fit bath to lave a dying Prophet's frame! —  
There perish, all, ere pulse of thine shall fail,  
Nor leave one limb to tell mankind the tale.  
So shall my votaries, wheresoe'er they rave,  
Proclaim that Heaven took back the Saint it gave;  
That I've but vanish'd from this earth awhile,  
To come again, with bright, unshrouded smile!

So shall they build me altars in their zeal,  
Where knaves shall minister, and fools shall kneel;  
Where Faith may mutter o'er her mystic spell,  
Written in blood, and Bigotry may swell  
The sail he spreads for Heaven with blasts from  
Hell!

So shall my banner, through long ages, be  
The rallying sign of fraud and anarchy; —  
Kings yet unborn shall rue Mokanna's name,  
And though I die, my spirit, still the same,  
Shall walk abroad in all the stormy strife  
And guilt and blood that were its bliss in life.  
But hark! their battering engine shakes the wall —  
Why, let it shake! thus I can brave them all:  
No trace of me shall greet them when they come:  
And I can trust thy faith, for — thou'lt be dumb.  
Now mark how readily a wretch like me  
In one bold plunge commences Deity!"

He sprung and sunk, as the last words were said:  
Quick closed the burning waters o'er his head:  
And Zelica was left, within the ring  
Of those wide walls the only living thing;  
The only wretched one, still cursed with breath,  
In all that frightful wilderness of death!  
More like some bloodless ghost, such as they tell  
In the lone Cities of the Silent dwell,  
And there, unseen of all but Alla, sit  
Each by its own pale carcass, watching it.



But morn is up, and a fresh warfare stirs  
Throughout the camp of the beleaguers.  
Their globes of fire — the dread artillery lent  
By Greece to conquering Mahadi — are spent ;  
And now the scorpion's shaft, the quarry sent  
From high ballistas, and the shielded throng  
Of soldiers swinging the huge ram along,  
All speak the impatient Islamite's intent  
To try, at length, if tower and battlement  
And bastion'd wall be not less hard to win,  
Less tough to break down than the hearts within.  
First in impatience and in toil is he,  
The burning Azim — oh, could he but see  
The Impostor once alive with his grasp,  
Not the gaunt lion's hug, nor boa's clasp,  
Could match that gripe of vengeance, or keep pace  
With the fell heartiness of Hate's embrace !

Loud rings the ponderous ram against the walls ;  
Now shake the ramparts, now a buttress falls,  
But still no berach — “ Once more, one mighty  
swing  
Of all your beams, together thundering ! ”  
There — the wall shakes — the shouting troops exult,  
“ Quick, quick discharge your weightiest catapult  
Right on that spot, and Neksheb is our own ! ”  
'Tis done — the battlements come crashing down,  
And the huge wall, by that stroke riven in two,  
Yawning, like some old crater rent anew,  
Shows the dim desolate city smoking through.

But strange! no signs of life — nought living  
seen

Above, below — what can this stillness mean?  
A minute's pause suspends all hearts and eyes, —  
“In through the breach!” impetuous Azim cries;  
But the cool Caliph, fearful of some wile  
In this blank stillness, checks the troops awhile.—  
Just then, a figure, with slow step advanced  
Forth from the ruin'd walls, and as there glanced  
A sunbeam over it, all eyes could see  
The well-known Silver Veil! — “’Tis He, ’tis He,  
Mokanna, and alone!” they shout around;  
Young Azim from his steed springs to the ground —  
“Mine, Holy Caliph! mine,” he cries, “the task  
To crush yon daring wretch — ’tis all I ask!”  
Eager he darts to meet the demon foe,  
Who still across wide heaps of ruin slow  
And falteringly comes, till they are near;  
Then, with a bound, rushes on Azim's spear,  
And casting off the Veil in falling, shows —  
Oh! — ’tis his Zelica's life-blood that flows!

“I meant not, Azim,” soothingly she said,  
As on his trembling arm she lean'd her head,  
And looking in his face, saw anguish there  
Beyond all wounds the quivering flesh can bear,  
“I meant not *thou* shouldst have the pain of this:  
Though death, with thee thus tasted, is a bliss  
Thou wouldst not rob me of, didst thou but know

How oft I've pray'd to God I might die so!  
 But the Fiend's venom was too scant and slow:  
 To linger on were maddening, and I thought  
 If once that Veil — nay, look not on it! — caught  
 The eyes of your fierce soldiery, I should be  
 Struck by a thousand death-darts instantly.  
 But this is sweeter — oh, believe me, yes —  
 I would not change this sad but dear caress,  
 This death within thine arms I would not give  
 For the most smiling life the happiest live!  
 All that stood dark and drear before the eye  
 Of my stray'd soul, is passing swiftly by;  
 A light comes o'er me from those looks of love,  
 Like the first dawn of mercy from above;  
 And if thy lips but tell me I'm forgiven,  
 Angels will echo the blest words in Heaven!  
 But live, mine Azim; — oh, to call thee mine  
 Thus once again! *mine* Azim, — dream divine!  
 Live, if thou ever lovedst me, if to meet  
 Thy Zelica hereafter would be sweet,  
 Oh, live to pray for her — to bend the knee  
 Morning and night before that Deity,  
 To whom pure lips and hearts without a stain,  
 As thine are, Azim, never breathed in vain;  
 And pray that he may pardon her, may take  
 Compassion on her soul for thy dear sake,  
 And nought remembering but her love to thee,  
 Make her all thine, all His, eternally!  
 Go to those happy fields where first we twined  
 Our youthful hearts together, — every wind

That meets thee there, fresh from the well-known  
 flowers,  
 Will bring the sweetness of those innocent hours  
 Back to thy soul, — and mayst thou feel again  
 For thy poor Zelica as thou didst then.  
 So shall thine orisons, like dew that flies  
 To Heaven upon the morning's sunshine, rise  
 With all love's earliest ardor to the skies!  
 And should they — but, alas, my senses fail!  
 Oh, for one minute! — should thy prayers pre-  
 vail —  
 If pardon'd souls may, from that World of Bliss,  
 Reveal their joy to those they love in this —  
 I'll come to thee — in some sweet dream — and  
 tell —  
 Oh, Heaven! — I die — dear love! farewell, fare-  
 well!"

---

Time fledted, — years on years had pass'd away,  
 And few of those who on that mournful day  
 Had stood, with pity in their eyes, to see  
 The maiden's death and the youth's agony,  
 Were living still, — when, by a rustic grave,  
 Beside the swift Amoo's transparent wave,  
 An aged man, who had grown aged there  
 By that lone grave, morning and night in prayer,

For the last time knelt down; and, tho' the shade  
Of death hung darkening over him, there play'd  
A gleam of rapture on his eye and cheek,  
That brighten'd even Death — like the last streak  
Of intense glory on the horizon's brim,  
When night o'er all the rest hangs chill and dim. {  
His soul had seen a Vision, while he slept: —  
She for whose spirit he had pray'd and wept  
So many years, had come to him, all drest  
In angel smiles, and told him she was blest!  
For this the old man breathed his thanks, — and  
died.

And there, upon the banks of that loved tide,  
He and his Zelica sleep side by side.

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THE story of the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan being ended, they were now doomed to hear Fad-ladeen's criticisms upon it. A series of disappointments and accidents had occurred to this learned Chamberlain during the journey. In the first place, those couriers stationed, as in the reign of Shah Jehan, between Delhi and the Western coast of India, to secure a constant supply of mangoes for the Royal Table, had, by some cruel irregularity, failed in their duty; and to eat any mangoes but those of Mazagong was, of course, impossible. I

the next place, the elephant, laden with his fine antique porcelain, had, in an unusual fit of liveliness, shattered the whole set to pieces:—an irreparable loss, as many of the vessels were so exquisitely old, as to have been used under the Emperors Yan and Chun, who reigned many ages before the dynasty of Tang. His Koran, too, supposed to be the identical copy between the leaves of which Mahomet's favorite pigeon used to nestle, had been mislaid by his Koran-bearer three whole days; not without much spiritual alarm to Fadladeen, who, though professing to hold, with other loyal and orthodox Mussulmans, that salvation could only be found in the Koran, was strongly suspected of believing, in his heart, that it could only be found in his own particular copy of it. When to all these grievances is added the obstinacy of the cooks, in putting the pepper of Canara into his dishes instead of the cinnamon of Serendib, we may easily suppose that he came to the task of criticism with, at least, a sufficient degree of irritability for the purpose.

“In order,” said he, importantly swinging about his chaplet of pearls, “to convey with clearness my opinion of the story this young man has related, it is necessary to take a review of all the stories that have ever”—“My good Fadladeen!” exclaimed the Princess, interrupting him, “we really do not deserve that you should give yourself so much trouble. Your opinion of the poem we have just heard will, I have no doubt, be abundantly edi-

fyng, without any further waste of your valuable erudition." — "If that be all," replied the critic, evidently mortified at not being allowed to show how much he knew about everything but the subject immediately before him, "if that be all that is required, the matter is easily despatched." He then proceeded to analyze the poem, in that strain (so well known to the unfortunate bards of Delhi) whose censures were an infliction from which few recovered, and whose very praises were like the honey extracted from the bitter flowers of the aloe. The chief personages of the story were, if he rightly understood them, an ill-favored gentleman, with a veil over his face; a young lady, whose reason went and came, according as it suited the poet's convenience to be sensible or otherwise; and a youth in one of those hideous Bucharian bonnets, who took the aforesaid gentleman in a veil for a Divinity. "From such materials," said he, "what can be expected? After rivalling each other in long speeches and absurdities, through some thousands of lines as indigestible as the filberts of Berdaa, our friend in the veil jumps into a tub of aquafortis; the young lady dies in a set speech, whose only recommendation is that it is her last; and the lover lives on to a good old age for the laudable purpose of seeing her ghost, which he at last happily accomplishes, and expires. This, you will allow, is a fair summary of the story; and if Nasser, the Arabian merchant, told no better, our

Holy Prophet (to whom be all honor and glory!) had no need to be jealous of his abilities for story-telling."

With respect to the style, it was worthy of the matter; — it had not even those politic contrivances of structure which make up for the commonness of the thoughts by the peculiarity of the manner, nor that stately poetical phraseology by which sentiments mean in themselves, like the blacksmith's apron converted into a banner, are so easily gilt and embroidered into consequence. Then, as to the versification, it was, to say no worse of it, execrable: it had neither the copious flow of Ferdosi, the sweetness of Hafez, nor the sententious march of Sadi, but appeared to him, in the uneasy heaviness of its movements, to have been modelled upon the gait of a very tired dromedary. The licenses, too, in which it indulged were unpardonable, — for instance, this line, and the poem abounded with such: —

“Like the faint exquisite music of a dream.”

“What critic that can count,” said Fadladeen, “and has his full complement of fingers to count withal, would tolerate for an instant such syllabic superfluities?” — He here looked round, and discovered that most of his audience were asleep, while the glimmering lamps seemed inclined to follow their example. It became necessary, therefore,



however painful to himself, to put an end to his valuable animadversions for the present, and he accordingly concluded, with an air of dignified candor, thus: "Notwithstanding the observations which I have thought it my duty to make, it is by no means my wish to discourage the young man:—so far from it, indeed, that if he will but totally alter his style of writing and thinking, I have very little doubt that I shall be vastly pleased with him."

Some days elapsed, after this harangue of the Great Chamberlain, before Lalla Rookh could venture to ask for another story. The youth was still a welcome guest in the pavilion—to *one* heart, perhaps, too dangerously welcome:—but all mention of poetry was, as if by common consent, avoided. Though none of the party had much respect for Fadladeen, yet his censures, thus magisterially delivered, evidently made an impression on them all. The Poet himself, to whom criticism was quite a new operation (being wholly unknown in that Paradise of the Indies, Cashmere), felt the shock as it is generally felt at first, till use has made it more tolerable to the patient; the Ladies began to suspect that they ought not to be pleased, and seemed to conclude that there must have been much good sense in what Fadladeen said, from its having sent them all so soundly to sleep; while the self-complacent Chamberlain was left to triumph in the idea of having, for the hundred and fiftieth time in his life, extinguished a Poet. Lalla Rookh

alone — and Love knew why — persisted in being delighted with all she had heard, and in resolving to hear more as speedily as possible. Her manner, however, of first returning to the subject was unlucky. It was while they rested during the heat of noon near a fountain, on which some hand had rudely traced those well-known words from the Garden of Sadi, — “ Many, like me, have viewed this fountain, but they are gone, and their eyes are closed forever ! ” — that she took occasion, from the melancholy beauty of this passage, to dwell upon the charms of poetry in general. “ It is true,” she said, “ few poets can imitate that sublime bird, which flies always in the air, and never touches the earth : — it is only once in many ages a Genius appears, whose words, like those on the Written Mountain, last forever ; but still there are some, as delightful, perhaps, though not so wonderful, who, if not stars over our head, are at least flowers along our path, and whose sweetness of the moment we ought gratefully to inhale, without calling upon them for a brightness and a durability beyond their nature. In short,” continued she, blushing as if conscious of being caught in an oration, “ it is quite cruel that a poet cannot wander through his regions of enchantment, without having a critic forever, like the Old Man of the Sea, upon his back ! ” — Fadladeen, it was plain, took this last luckless allusion to himself, and would treasure it up in his mind as a whetstone for his next criticism.

A sudden silence ensued; and the Princess, glancing a look at Feramorz, saw plainly she must wait for a more courageous moment.

But the glories of Nature and her wild fragrant airs, playing freshly over the current of youthful spirits, will soon heal even deeper wounds than the dull Fadladeens of this world can inflict. In an evening or two after, they came to the small Valley of Gardens, which had been planted, by order of the Emperor, for his favorite sister, Rochinara, during their progress to Cashmere some years before; and never was there a more sparkling assemblage of sweets, since the Gulzar-e-Irem, or Rose-bower of Irem. Every precious flower was there to be found that poetry, or love, or religion, has ever consecrated,—from the dark hyacinth, to which Hafez compares his mistress's hair, to the *Cāmālatā*, by whose rosy blossoms the heaven of Indra is scented. As they sat in the cool fragrance of this delicious spot, and Lalla Rookh remarked that she could fancy it the abode of that Flower-loving Nymph whom they worship in the temples of Kathay, or of one of those Peris, those beautiful creatures of the air, who live upon perfumes, and to whom a place like this might make some amends for the Paradise they have lost,—the young Poet, in whose eyes she appeared, while she spoke, to be one of the bright spiritual creatures she was describing, said hesitatingly that he remembered a Story of a Peri, which, if the Princess had no ob-

jection, he would venture to relate. "It is," said he, with an appealing look to Fadladeen, "in a lighter and humbler strain than the other;" then, striking a few careless but melancholy chords on his guitar, he thus began:—

## PARADISE AND THE PERI.

---

ONE morn a Peri at the gate  
Of Eden stood, disconsolate ;  
And as she listen'd to the Springs  
Of Life within, like music flowing,  
And caught the light upon her wings  
Through the half-open portal glowing,  
She wept to think her recreant race  
Should e'er have lost that glorious place !

“ How happy,” exclaim'd this child of air,  
“ Are the holy Spirits who wander there,  
'Mid flowers that never shall fade or fall ;  
Though mine are the gardens of earth and sea,  
And the stars themselves have flowers for me,  
One blossom of Heaven outblossoms them all !

“ Though sunny the Lake of cool Cashmere,  
With its plane-tree Isle reflected clear,  
And sweetly the founts of that Valley fall ;  
Though bright are the waters of Sing-su-hay,  
And the golden floods that thitherward stray,  
Yet — oh, 'tis only the Blest can say  
How the waters of Heaven outshine them all !

“Go, wing thy flight from star to star,  
 From world to luminous world, as far  
     As the universe spreads its flaming wall:  
 Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,  
 And multiply each through endless years, —  
     One minute of Heaven is worth them all!”

The glorious Angel who was keeping  
 The Gates of Light beheld her weeping;  
 And as he nearer drew and listen'd  
 To her sad song, a tear-drop glisten'd  
 Within his eyelids, like the spray  
     From Eden's fountain, when it lies  
 On the blue flower, which, Bramins say,  
     Blooms nowhere but in Paradise.

“Nymph of a fair but erring line,”  
 Gently he said, “one hope is thine:  
 'Tis written in the Book of Fate,  
     The Peri yet may be forgiven  
 Who brings to this Eternal Gate  
     The Gift that is most dear to Heaven!  
 Go, seek it, and redeem thy sin —  
 'Tis sweet to let the Pardon'd in.”

Rapidly as comets run  
 To the embraces of the Sun,  
 Fleeter than the starry brands  
 Flung at night from angel hands,  
 At those dark and daring sprites  
 Who would climb the empyreal heights,

Down the blue vault the Peri flies,  
 And, lighted earthward by a glance  
 That just then broke from morning's eyes,  
 Hung hovering o'er our world's expanse.

But whither shall the Spirit go  
 To find this gift for Heaven? — "I know  
 The wealth," she cries, "of every urn,  
 In which unnumber'd rubies burn,  
 Beneath the pillars of Chilminar;  
 I know where the Isles of Perfume are,  
 Many a fathom down in the sea,  
 To the south of sun-bright Araby;  
 I know, too, where the Genii hid  
 The jewell'd cup of their King Jamshid,  
 With Life's elixir sparkling high, —  
 But gifts like these are not for the sky.  
 Where was there ever a gem that shone  
 Like the steps of Alla's wonderful Throne?  
 And the Drops of Life — oh, what would they be  
 In the boundless Deep of Eternity?"

While thus she mused, her pinions fann'd  
 The air of that sweet Indian land  
 Whose air is balm, whose ocean spreads  
 O'er coral rocks and amber beds;  
 Whose mountains, pregnant by the beam  
 Of the warm sun, with diamonds teem;  
 Whose rivulets are like rich brides,  
 Lovely, with gold beneath their tides;

Whose sandal groves and bowers of spice  
Might be a Peri's Paradise!

But crimson now her rivers ran

With human blood: the smell of death  
Came reeking from those spicy bowers,  
And man, the sacrifice of man,

Mingled his taint with every breath  
Upwafted from the innocent flowers.  
Land of the Sun, what foot invades  
Thy Pagods and thy pillar'd shades,  
Thy cavern shrines, and Idol stones,  
Thy Monarchs and their thousand Thrones?  
'Tis he of Gazna, — fierce in wrath

He comes, and India's diadems  
Lie scatter'd in his ruinous path.

His bloodhounds he adorns with gems,  
Torn from the violated necks  
Of many a young and loved Sultana;  
Maidens, within their pure Zenana,

Priests in the very fane, he slaughters,  
And chokes up with the glittering wrecks  
Of golden shrines the sacred waters!

Downward the Peri turns her gaze,  
And through the war-field's bloody haze  
Beholds a youthful warrior stand,

Alone, beside his native river, —  
The red blade broken in his hand,

And the last arrow in his quiver.  
“Live,” said the Conqueror, “live to share  
The trophies and the crowns I bear!”



Silent that youthful warrior stood,  
 Silent he pointed to the flood  
 All crimson with his country's blood,  
 Then sent his last remaining dart,  
 For answer, to the Invader's heart.

False flew the shaft, though pointed well:  
 The Tyrant lived, the Hero fell! —  
 Yet mark'd the Peri where he lay,  
 And when the rush of war was past,  
 Swiftly descending on a ray  
 Of morning light, she caught the last,  
 Last glorious drop his heart had shed,  
 Before its free-born spirit fled!

“Be this,” she cried, as she wing'd her flight,  
 “My welcome gift at the Gates of Light.  
 Though foul are the drops that oft distil  
 On the field of warfare, blood like this,  
 For Liberty shed, so holy is,  
 It would not stain the purest rill  
 That sparkles among the Bowers of Bliss!  
 Oh, if there be, on this earthly sphere,  
 A boon, an offering Heaven holds dear,  
 'Tis the last libation Liberty draws  
 From the heart that bleeds and breaks in her  
 cause!”

“Sweet,” said the Angel, as she gave  
 The gift into his radiant hand,

“ Sweet is our welcome of the Brave  
 Who die thus for their native Land.  
 But see, alas ! the crystal bar  
 Of Eden moves not, — holier far  
 Than even this drop the boon must be,  
 That opes the Gates of Heaven for thee.”

Her first fond hope of Eden blighted,  
 Now among Afric’s lunar Mountains,  
 Far to the South the Peri lighted ;  
 And sleek’d her plumage at the fountains  
 Of that Egyptian tide, whose birth  
 Is hidden from the sons of earth  
 Deep in those solitary woods,  
 Where oft the Genii of the Floods  
 Dance round the cradle of their Nile,  
 And hail the new-born Giant’s smile.  
 Thence over Egypt’s palmy groves,  
 Her grotts, and sepulchres of Kings,  
 The exiled Spirit sighing roves ;  
 And now hangs listening to the doves  
 In warm Rosetta’s vale — now loves  
 To watch the moonlight on the wings  
 Of the white pelicans that break  
 The azure calm of Mœris’ Lake.  
 ’Twas a fair scene — a land more bright  
 Never did mortal eye behold !  
 Who could have thought, that saw, this night,  
 Those valleys and their fruits of gold  
 Basking in Heaven’s serenest light ;

Those groups of lovely date-trees bending  
     Languidly their leaf-crown'd heads,  
 Like youthful maids, when sleep descending  
     Warns them to their silken bed ;  
 Those virgin lilies, all the night  
     Bathing their beauties in the lake,  
 That they may rise more fresh and bright,  
     When their belovèd Sun's awake ;  
 Those ruin'd shrines and towers that seem  
 The relics of a splendid dream,  
     Amid whose fairy loneliness  
 Nought but the lapwing's cry is heard,  
 Nought seen but — when the shadows, flitting  
 Fast from the moon, unsheathe its gleam —  
 Some purple-wing'd Sultana sitting  
     Upon a column, motionless  
 And glittering like an Idol bird ! —  
 Who could have thought, that there, **even there,**  
 Amid those scenes so still and fair,  
 The Demon of the Plague hath cast  
 From his hot wing a deadlier blast,  
 More mortal far than ever came  
 From the red Desert's sands of flame !  
 So quick, that every living thing  
 Of human shape, touch'd by his wing,  
 Like plants where the Simoon hath past,  
 At once falls black and withering !

The sun went down on many a brow  
     Which, full of bloom and freshness then,

Is rankling in the pest-house now,  
And ne'er will feel that sun again.  
And, oh ! to see the unburied-heaps  
On which the lonely moonlight sleeps —  
The very vultures turn away,  
And sicken at so foul a prey !  
Only the fierce hyæna stalks  
Throughout the city's desolate walks  
At midnight, and his carnage plies : —  
Woe to the half-dead wretch who meets  
The glaring of those large blue eyes  
Amid the darkness of the streets !

“ Poor race of men ! ” said the pitying Spirit,  
“ Dearly ye pay for your primal Fall —  
Some flowerets of Eden ye still inherit,  
But the trail of the Serpent is over them all ! ”  
She wept — the air grew pure and clear  
Around her, as the bright drops ran :  
For there's a magic in each tear  
Such kindly Spirits weep for man !  
Just then beneath some orange-trees,  
Whose fruit and blossoms in the breeze  
Were wantoning together, free,  
Like age at play with infancy, —  
Beneath that fresh and springing bower,  
Close by the Lake, she heard the moan  
Of one who, at this silent hour,  
Had thither stolen to die alone :

One who in life, where'er he moved,  
Drew after him the hearts of many,  
Yet now, as though he ne'er were loved,  
Dies here unseen, unwept by any!  
None to watch near him — none to slake  
The fire that in his bosom lies,  
With even a sprinkle from that lake  
Which shines so cool before his eyes!  
No voice, well-known through many a day,  
To speak the last, the parting word,  
Which, when all other sounds decay,  
Is still like distant music heard;  
That tender farewell on the shore  
Of this rude world, when all is o'er,  
Which cheers the spirit, ere its bark  
Puts off into the unknown Dark.

Deserted youth! one thought alone  
Shed joy around his soul in death:  
That she, whom he for years had known,  
And loved, and might have call'd his own,  
Was safe from this foul midnight's breath, —  
Safe in her father's princely halls,  
Where the cool airs from fountain falls,  
Freshly perfumed by many a brand  
Of the sweet wood from India's land,  
Were pure as she whose brow they fann'd.

But see! who yonder comes by stealth,  
This melancholy bower to seek,

Like a young envoy, sent by Health  
With rosy gifts upon her cheek!  
'Tis she! — far off, through moonlight dim,  
He knew his own betrothèd bride,  
She, who would rather die with him,  
Than live to gain the world beside! —  
Her arms are round her lover now,  
His livid cheek to hers she presses,  
And dips, to bind his burning brow,  
In the cool lake her loosen'd tresses.  
Ah! once, how little did he think  
An hour would come, when he should shrink  
With horror from that dear embrace,  
Those gentle arms, that were to him  
Holy as is the cradling place  
Of Eden's infant cherubim!  
And now he yields — now turns away,  
Shuddering as if the venom lay  
All in those proffer'd lips alone,  
Those lips that, then so fearless grown,  
Never until that instant came  
Near his unask'd or without shame.  
“ Oh, let me only breathe the air,  
That blessed air, that's breathed by thee  
And whether on its wings it bear  
Healing or death, 'tis sweet to me!  
There — drink my tears, while yet they fall  
Would that my bosom's blood were balm  
And well thou know'st, I'd shed it all,  
To give thy brow one minute's calm.

Nay, turn not from me that dear face —  
 Am I not thine? — thine own loved bride? —  
 The one, the chosen one, whose place  
 In life or death is by thy side?  
 Think'st thou that she, whose only light  
 In this dim world from thee hath shone,  
 Could bear the long, the cheerless night,  
 That must be hers when thou art gone?  
 That I can live, and let thee go,  
 Who art my life itself? — No, no! —  
 When the stem dies, the leaf that grew  
 Out of its heart must perish too!  
 Then turn to me, mine own love, turn,  
 Before, like thee, I fade and burn;  
 Cling to these yet cool lips, and share  
 The last pure life that lingers there!"  
 She fails — she sinks — as dies the lamp  
 In charnel airs or cavern-damp,  
 So quickly do his baleful sighs  
 Quench all the sweet light of her eyes.  
 One struggle, and his pain is past!  
 Her lover is no longer living!  
 One kiss the maiden gives, one last  
 Long kiss, which she expires in giving!

"Sleep," said the Peri, as softly she stole  
 The farewell sigh of that vanishing soul —  
 As true as e'er warm'd a woman's breast;  
 "Sleep on, in visions of odor rest,

In balmier airs than ever yet stirr'd  
The enchanted pile of that lonely bird,  
Who sings at the last his own death-lay,  
And in music and perfume dies away!"

Thus saying, from her lips she spread  
Unearthly breathings through the place,  
And shook her sparkling wreath, and shed  
Such lustre o'er each paly face,  
That like two lovely saints they seem'd,  
Upon the eve of doomsday taken  
From their dim graves, in odor sleeping, —  
While that benevolent Peri beam'd  
Like their good angel, calmly keeping  
Watch o'er them till their souls would waken.

But morn is blushing in the sky:  
Again the Peri soars above,  
Bearing to Heaven that precious sigh  
Of pure self-sacrificing love.  
High throbb'd her heart, with hope elate;  
The Elysian palm she soon shall win,  
For the bright Spirit at the gate  
Smiled as she gave that offering in;  
And she already hears the trees  
Of Eden, with their crystal bells  
Ringing in that ambrosial breeze  
That from the throne of Alla swells;



And she can see the starry bowls  
That lie around that lucid lake,  
Upon whose banks admitted Souls  
Their first sweet draught of glory take!

But ah! even Peris' hopes are vain: —  
Again the Fates forbade, again  
The immortal barrier closed: — “Not yet.”  
The Angel said, as with regret  
He shut from her that glimpse of glory;  
“True was the maiden, and her story,  
Written in light o'er Alla's head,  
By seraph eyes shall long be read.  
But, Peri, see — the crystal bar  
Of Eden moves not — holier far  
Than even this sigh the boon must be  
That opes the Gates of Heaven for thee.”

Now, upon Syria's land of roses  
Softly the light of Eve reposes,  
And, like a glory, the broad sun  
Hangs over sainted Lebanon;  
Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,  
And whitens with eternal sleet,  
While Summer, in a vale of flowers,  
Is sleeping rosy at his feet.

To one who look'd from upper air  
O'er all the enchanted regions there,  
How beauteous must have been the glow,  
The life, the sparkling, from below!

Fair gardens, shining streams; with ranks  
Of golden melons on their banks,  
More golden where the sunlight falls;  
Gay lizards, glittering on the walls

Of ruin'd shrines, busy and bright  
As they were all alive with light;  
And yet more splendid, numerous flocks  
Of pigeons, settling on the rocks,  
With their rich restless wings that gleam  
Variously in the crimson beam  
Of the warm West, — as if inlaid  
With brilliants from the mine, or made  
Of tearless rainbows such as span  
The unclouded skies of Peristan.

And then the mingling sounds that come  
Of shepherd's ancient reed, with hum  
Of the wild bees of Palestine,

    Banqueting through the flowery vales;  
And, Jordan, those sweet banks of thine,  
    And woods, so full of nightingales.

But nought can charm the luckless Peri:  
Her soul is sad, her wings are weary:  
Joyless she sees the Sun look down  
On that great Temple, once his own,  
Whose lonely columns stand sublime,  
    Flinging their shadows from on high,  
Like dials which the wizard Time  
    Had raised to count his ages by!

Yet haply there may lie conceal'd  
 Beneath those Chambers of the Sun,  
 Some amulet of gems anneal'd  
 In upper fires, some tablet seal'd  
 With the great name of Solomon,  
 Which, spell'd by her illumined eyes,  
 May teach her where, beneath the moon,  
 In earth or ocean, lies the boon,  
 The charm that can restore so soon  
 An erring Spirit to the skies.

Cheer'd by this hope, she bends her thither:—  
 Still laughs the radiant eye of Heaven,—  
 Nor have the golden bowers of Even  
 In the rich West begun to wither;  
 When, o'er the vale of Balbec winging  
 Slowly, she sees a child at play,  
 Among the rosy wild-flowers singing,  
 As rosy and as wild as they;  
 Chasing, with eager hands and eyes,  
 The beautiful blue damsel-flies  
 That flutter'd round the jasmine stems,  
 Like wingèd flowers or flying gems:—  
 And, near the boy, who, tired with play,  
 Now nestling 'mid the roses lay,  
 She saw a wearied man dismount  
 From his hot steed, and on the brink  
 Of a small imaret's rustic fount  
 Impatient fling him down to drink.

Then swift his haggard brow he turn'd  
To the fair child, who fearless sat,  
Though never yet hath day-beam burn'd  
Upon a brow more fierce than that, —  
Sullenly fierce, a mixture dire,  
Like thunder-clouds, of gloom and fire,  
In which the Peri's eye could read  
Dark tales of many a ruthless deed :  
The ruin'd maid — the shrine profaned —  
Oaths broken — and the threshold stain'd  
With blood of guests ! — *there* written, all,  
Black as the damning drops that fall  
From the denouncing Angel's pen,  
Ere Mercy weeps them out again.

Yet tranquil now that man of crime  
(As if the balmy evening time  
Soften'd his spirit) look'd and lay,  
Watching the rosy infant's play : —  
Though still, whene'er his eye by chance  
Fell on the boy's, its lurid glance  
Met that unclouded joyous gaze, —  
As torches that have burnt all night  
Through some impure and godless rite,  
Encounter morning's glorious rays.

But hark ! the vesper call to prayer,  
As slow the orb of daylight sets,  
Is rising sweetly on the air,  
From Syria's thousand minarets !

The boy has started from the bed  
 Of flowers where he had laid his head,  
 And down upon the fragrant sod  
     Kneels, with his forehead to the south  
 Lispering the eternal name of God  
     From Purity's own cherub mouth,  
 And looking, while his hands and eyes  
 Are lifted to the glowing skies,  
 Like a stray babe of Paradise,  
 Just lighted on that flowery plain,  
 And seeking for its home again.  
 Oh, 'twas a sight — that Heaven — that child —  
 A scene which might have well beguiled  
 Even haughty Eblis of a sigh  
 For glories lost and peace gone by !

And how felt he, the wretched man  
 Reclining there — while memory ran  
 O'er many a year of guilt and strife,  
 Flew o'er the dark flood of his life,  
 Nor found one sunny resting-place,  
 Nor brought him back one branch of grace !  
 “ There *was* a time,” he said, in mild  
 Heart-humbled tones, “ thou blessed child !  
 When, young and haply pure as thou,  
 I look'd and pray'd like thee ; but now ” —  
 He hung his head : each nobler aim,  
     And hope, and feeling, which had slept  
 From boyhood's hour, that instant came  
     Fresh o'er him, and he wept — he wept !

Blest tears of soul-felt penitence !

    In whose benign redeeming flow

Is felt the first, the only sense

    Of guiltless joy that guilt can know.

“ There’s a drop,” said the Peri, “ that down from  
    the moon

Falls through the withering airs of June

Upon Egypt’s land, of so healing a power,

So balmy a virtue, that e’en in the hour

The drop descends, contagion dies,

And health re-animates earth and skies ! —

Oh, it is not thus, thou man of sin,

    The precious tears of repentance fall ?

Though foul thy fiery plagues within,

    One heavenly drop hath dispell’d them all ! ”

And now, behold him kneeling there

By the child’s side, in humble prayer,

While the same sunbeam shines upon

The guilty and the guiltless one,

And hymns of joy proclaim through Heaven

The triumph of a Soul Forgiven !

’Twas when the golden orb had set,

While on their knees they linger’d yet,

There fell a light more lovely far

Than ever came from sun or star,

Upon the tear that, warm and meek,

Dew’d that repentant sinner’s cheek.

To mortal eye this light might seem

A northern flash or meteor beam, —

But well the enraptured Peri knew  
 'Twas a bright smile the Angel threw  
 From Heaven's gate, to hail that tear  
 Her harbinger of glory near!

“Joy, joy forever! my task is done —  
 The Gates are pass'd, and Heaven is won!  
 Oh, am I not happy? I am, I am —  
 To thee, sweet Eden! how dark and sad  
 Are the diamond turrets of Shadukiam,  
 And the fragrant bowers of Amberabad!  
 Farewell, ye odors of Earth, that die  
 Passing away like a lover's sigh!  
 My feast is now of the Tooba Tree,  
 Whose scent is the breath of Eternity!  
 Farewell, ye vanishing flowers, that shone  
 In my fairy wreath, so bright and brief!  
 Oh, what are the brightest that e'er have blown,  
 To the lote-tree, springing by Alla's throne,  
 Whose flowers have a soul in every leaf!  
 Joy, joy forever! — my task is done! —  
 The Gates are pass'd, and Heaven is won!”

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“AND this,” said the Great Chamberlain, “is poetry! this flimsy manufacture of the brain, which, in comparison with the lofty and durable monuments of genius, is as the gold filigree-work of Zamara beside the eternal architecture of

Egypt!" After this gorgeous sentence, which, with a few more of the same kind, Fadladeen kept by him for rare and important occasions, he proceeded to the anatomy of the short poem just recited. The lax and easy kind of metre in which it was written ought to be denounced, he said, as one of the leading causes of the alarming growth of poetry in our times. If some check were not given to this lawless facility, we should soon be overrun by a race of bards as numerous and as shallow as the hundred-and-twenty thousand streams of Basra. They who succeeded in this style deserved chastisement for their very success, — as warriors have been punished, even after gaining a victory, because they had taken the liberty of gaining it in an irregular or unestablished manner. What, then, was to be said to those who failed? to those who presumed, as in the present lamentable instance, to imitate the license and ease of the bolder sons of song, without any of that grace or vigor which gave a dignity even to negligence, — who, like them, flung the jereed carelessly, but not, like them, to the mark; — "and who." said he, raising his voice to excite a proper degree of wakefulness in his hearers, "contrive to appear heavy and constrained in the midst of all the latitude they allow themselves, like one of those young pagans that dance before the Princess, who is ingenious enough to move as if her limbs were fettered, in a pair of the lightest and loosest drawers of Masulipatam!"



It was but little suitable, he continued, to the grave march of criticism, to follow this fantastical Peri, of whom they had just heard, through all her flights and adventures between earth and Heaven; but he could not help adverting to the puerile conceitedness of the Three Gifts which she is supposed to carry to the skies, — a drop of blood, forsooth, a sigh, and a tear! How the first of these articles was delivered into the Angel's "radiant hand" he professed himself at a loss to discover; and as to the safe carriage of the sigh and the tear, such Peris and such poets were beings by far too incomprehensible for him even to guess how they managed such matters. "But, in short," said he, "it is a waste of time and patience to dwell longer upon a thing so incurably frivolous, — puny even among its own puny race, and such as only the Banyan Hospital for Sick Insects should undertake."

In vain did Lalla Rookh try to soften this inexorable critic; in vain did she resort to her most eloquent common-places, — reminding him that poets were a timid and sensitive race, whose sweetness was not to be drawn forth, like that of the fragrant grass near the Ganges, by crushing and trampling upon them; — that severity often extinguished every chance of the perfection which it demanded; and that, after all, perfection was like the Mountain of the Talisman, — no one had ever yet reached its summit. Neither these gentle

axioms, nor the still gentler looks with which they were inculcated, could lower for one instant the elevation of Fadladeen's eyebrows, or charm him into anything like encouragement, or even toleration of her poet. Toleration, indeed, was not among the weaknesses of Fadladeen: — he carried the same spirit into matters of poetry and of religion, and though little versed in the beauties or sublimities of either, was a perfect master of the art of persecution in both. His zeal was the same, too, in either pursuit, — whether the game before him was pagans or poetasters, worshippers of cows or writers of epics.

They had now arrived at the splendid city of Lahore, whose mausoleums and shrines, magnificent and numberless, where Death appeared to share equal honors with Heaven, would have powerfully affected the heart and imagination of Lalla Rookh, if feelings more of this earth had not taken entire possession of her already. She was here met by messengers, despatched from Cashmere, who informed her that the King had arrived in the Valley, and was himself superintending the sumptuous preparations that were then making in the Saloons of the Shalimar for her reception. The chill she felt on receiving this intelligence, — which to a bride whose heart was free and light would have brought only images of affection and pleasure, — convinced her that her peace was gone forever, and that she was in love, irretriev-

ably in love, with young Feramorz. The veil had fallen off in which this passion at first disguises itself, and to know that she loved was now as painful as to love without knowing it had been delicious. Feramorz, too, — what misery would be his, if the sweet hours of intercourse so imprudently allowed them should have stolen into his heart the same fatal fascination as into hers; if, notwithstanding her rank, and the modest homage he always paid to it, even *he* should have yielded to the influence of those long and happy interviews where music, poetry, the delightful scenes of nature, — all had tended to bring their hearts close together, and to waken by every means that too ready passion, which often, like the young of the desert-bird, is warmed into life by the eyes alone! She saw but one way to preserve herself from being culpable as well as unhappy, and this, however painful, she was resolved to adopt. Feramorz must no more be admitted to her presence. To have strayed so far into the dangerous labyrinth was wrong, but to linger in it, while the clew was yet in her hand, would be criminal. Though the heart she had to offer to the King of Bucharia might be cold and broken, it should at least be pure; and she must only endeavor to forget, the short dream of happiness she had enjoyed, — like that Arabian shepherd, who, in wandering into the wilderness, caught a glimpse of the Gardens of Irim, and then lost them again forever!

The arrival of the young Bride at Lahore was celebrated in the most enthusiastic manner. The Rajas and Omras in her train, who had kept at a certain distance during the journey, and never encamped nearer to the Princess than was strictly necessary for her safeguard, here rode in splendid cavalcade through the city, and distributed the most costly presents to the crowd. Engines were erected in all the squares, which cast forth showers of confectionery among the people; while the artisans, in chariots adorned with tinsel and flying streamers, exhibited the badges of their respective trades through the streets. Such brilliant displays of life and pageantry among the palaces, and domes, and gilded minarets of Lahore, made the city altogether like a place of enchantment, — particularly on the day when Lalla Rookh set out again upon her journey, when she was accompanied to the gate by all the fairest and richest of the nobility, and rode along between ranks of beautiful boys and girls, who kept waving over their heads plates of gold and silver flowers, and then threw them around to be gathered by the populace.

For many days after their departure from Lahore, a considerable degree of gloom hung over the whole party. Lalla Rookh, who had intended to make illness her excuse for not admitting the young minstrel, as usual, to the pavilion, soon found that to feign indisposition was unnecessary; Fadladeen felt the loss of the good road they had hitherto travelled,

and was very near cursing Jehan-Guire (of blessed memory!) for not having continued his delectable alley of trees, at least as far as the mountains of Cashmere; while the Ladies, who had nothing now to do all day but to be fanned by peacocks' feathers and listen to Fadladeen, seemed heartily weary of the life they led, and, in spite of all the Great Chamberlain's criticisms, were so tasteless as to wish for the poet again. One evening, as they were proceeding to their place of rest for the night, the Princess, who, for the freer enjoyment of the air, had mounted her favorite Arabian palfrey, in passing by a small grove heard the notes of a lute from within its leaves, and a voice, which she **but too well knew**, singing the following words:—

TELL me not of joys above,  
 If that world can give no bliss,  
 Truer, happier than the Love  
 Which enslaves our souls in this.

Tell me not of Houris' eyes;—  
 Far from me their dangerous glow,  
 If those looks that light the skies  
 Wound like some that burn below.

Who, that feels that Love is here,  
 All its falsehood, — all its pain, —  
 Would, for even Elysium's sphere,  
 Risk the fatal dream again?

Who, that midst a desert's heat  
Sees the waters fade away,  
Would not rather die than meet  
Streams again as false as they?

The tone of melancholy defiance in which these words were uttered, went to Lalla Rookh's heart; and as she reluctantly rode on, she could not help feeling it to be a sad but still sweet certainty, that Feramorz was to the full as enamoured and miserable as herself.

The place where they encamped that evening was the first delightful spot they had come to since they left Lahore. On one side of them was a grove full of small Hindoo temples, and planted with the most graceful trees of the East; where the tamarind, the cassia, and the silken plantains of Ceylon, were mingled in rich contrast with the high fan-like foliage of the Palmyra, — that favorite tree of the luxurious bird that lights up the chambers of its nest with fire-flies. In the middle of the lawn where the pavilion stood there was a tank surrounded by small mango-trees, on the clear cold waters of which floated multitudes of the beautiful red lotus; while at a distance stood the ruins of a strange and awful-looking tower, which seemed old enough to have been the temple of some religion no longer known, and which spoke the voice of desolation in the midst of all that bloom and loveliness. This singular ruin excited the wonder and conjectures of all. Lalla

Rookh guessed in vain, and the all-pretending Fad-ladeen, who had never till this journey been beyond the precincts of Delhi, was proceeding most learnedly to show that he knew nothing whatever about the matter, when one of the Ladies suggested that perhaps Feramorz could satisfy their curiosity. They were now approaching his native mountains, and this tower might perhaps be a relic of some of those dark superstitions which had prevailed in that country before the light of Islam dawned upon it. The Chamberlain, who usually preferred his own ignorance to the best knowledge that any one else could give him, was by no means pleased with this officious reference, and the Princess, too, was about to interpose a faint word of objection; but, before either of them could speak, a slave was despatched for Feramorz, who, in a very few minutes, made his appearance before them, — looking so pale and unhappy in Lalla Rookh's eyes, that she repented already of her cruelty in having so long excluded him.

That venerable tower, he told them, was the remains of an ancient Fire-temple, built by those Ghebers or Persians of the old religion, who, many hundred years since, had fled hither from their Arab conquerors, preferring liberty and their altars in a foreign land to the alternative of apostasy or persecution in their own. It was impossible, he added, not to feel interested in the many glorious but unsuccessful struggles which had been made by these



original natives of Persia to cast off the yoke of their bigoted conquerors. Like their own Fire in the Burning Field at Bakou, when suppressed in one place they had but broken out with fresh flame in another; and, as a native of Cashmere, of that fair and Holy Valley which had in the same manner become the prey of strangers, and seen her ancient shrines and native princes swept away before the march of her intolerant invaders, he felt a sympathy, he owned, with the sufferings of the persecuted Ghebers, which every monument like this before them but tended more powerfully to awaken.

It was the first time that Feramorz had ever ventured upon so much prose before Fadladeen, and it may easily be conceived what effect such prose as this must have produced upon that most orthodox and most pagan-hating personage. He sat for some minutes aghast, ejaculating only at intervals, "Bigoted conquerors! sympathy with Fire-worshippers!"—while Feramorz, happy to take advantage of this almost speechless horror of the Chamberlain, proceeded to say that he knew a melancholy story, connected with the events of one of those struggles of the brave Fire-worshippers against their Arab masters, which, if the evening was not too far advanced, he should have much pleasure in being allowed to relate to the Princess. It was impossible for Lalla Rookh to refuse: he had never before looked half so animated, and when he spoke of the Holy Valley, his eyes had



sparkled, she thought, like the talismanic characters on the scimitar of Solomon. Her consent was therefore most readily granted; and while Fadla-deen sat in unspeakable dismay, expecting treason and abomination in every line, the poet thus began his story of the Fire-worshippers.

## THE FIRE-WORSHIPPERS.

---

'TIS moonlight over Oman's Sea ;  
Her banks of pearl and balmy isles  
Bask in the night-beam beauteously,  
And her blue waters sleep in smiles.  
'Tis moonlight in Harmozia's walls,  
And through her Emir's porphyry halls,  
Where, some hours since, was heard the swell  
Of trumpet and the clash of zel,  
Bidding the bright-eyed sun farewell, —  
The peaceful sun, whom better suits  
The music of the bulbul's nest,  
Or the light touch of lovers' lutes,  
To sing him to his golden rest.  
All hush'd — there's not a breeze in motion :  
The shore is silent as the ocean :  
If zephyrs come, so light they come  
Nor leaf is stirr'd nor wave is driven :  
The wind-tower on the Emir's dome  
Can hardly win a breath from heaven.

Even he, that tyrant Arab, sleeps  
Calm, while a nation round him weeps ;

While curses load the air he breathes,  
And falchions from unnumber'd sheaths  
Are starting to avenge the shame  
His race hath brought on Iran's name.  
Hard, heartless Chief, unmoved alike  
'Mid eyes that weep, and swords that strike;  
One of that saintly, murderous brood,  
    To carnage and the Koran given,  
Who think through unbelievers' blood  
    Lies their directest path to heaven; —  
One who will pause and kneel unshod  
    In the warm blood his hand hath pour'd.  
To mutter o'er some text of God  
    Engraven on his reeking sword;  
Nay, who can coolly note the line,  
The letter of those words divine,  
To which his blade, with searching art,  
Had sunk into its victim's heart!

Just Alla! what must be thy look,  
    When such a wretch before thee stands  
Unblushing, with thy Sacred Book, —  
    Turning the leaves with blood-stain'd hands,  
And wresting from its page sublime  
His creed of lust, and hate, and crime:  
Even as those bees of Trebizond,  
    Which, from the sunniest flowers that glad  
With their pure smiles the gardens round,  
    Draw venom forth that drives men mad.

Never did fierce Arabia send  
     A satrap forth more direly great ;  
 Never was Iran doom'd to bend  
     Beneath a yoke of deadlier weight.  
 Her throne had fallen — her pride was crush'd —  
 Her sons were willing slaves, nor blush'd,  
 In their own land — no more their own —  
 To crouch beneath a stranger's throne.  
 Her towers, where Mithra once had burn'd,  
 To Moslem shrine — O shame ! — were turn'd,  
 Where slaves, converted by the sword,  
 Their mean apostate worship pour'd,  
 And cursed the faith their sires adored.  
 Yet has she hearts, 'mid all this ill,  
 O'er all this wreck, high, buoyant still  
 With hope and vengeance ; hearts that yet —  
     Like gems, in darkness, issuing rays  
 They've treasured from the sun that's set, —  
     Beam all the light of long-lost days !  
 And swords she hath, nor weak nor slow  
     To second all such hearts can dare ;  
 As he shall know, well, dearly know,  
     Who sleeps in moonlight luxury there,  
 Tranquil as if his spirit lay  
 Becalm'd in Heaven's approving ray.  
 Sleep on, — for purer eyes than thine  
 Those waves are hush'd, those planets shine ;  
 Sleep on, and be thy rest unmoved  
     By the white moonbeam's dazzling power : —  
 None but the loving and the loved  
     Should be awake at this sweet hour.

And see — where, high above those rocks  
That o'er the deep their shadows fling,  
Yon turret stands ; where ebon locks,  
As glossy as a heron's wing  
Upon the turban of a king,  
Hang from the lattice, long and wild —  
'Tis she, that Emir's blooming child,  
All truth and tenderness and grace,  
Though born of such ungentle race :  
An image of Youth's radiant Fountain  
Springing in a desolate mountain !

Oh, what a pure and sacred thing  
Is beauty, curtain'd from the sight  
Of the gross world, illumining  
One only mansion with her light !  
Unseen by man's disturbing eye, —  
The flower that blooms beneath the sea,  
Too deep for sunbeams, doth not lie  
Hid in more chaste obscurity.  
So, Hinda, have thy face and mind,  
Like holy mysteries, lain enshrined.  
And oh, what transport for a lover  
To lift the veil that shades them o'er ! —  
Like those who, all at once, discover  
In the lone deep some fairy shore,  
Where mortal never trod before,  
And sleep and wake in scented airs  
No lip had ever breathed but theirs.

Beautiful are the maids that glide,  
 On summer-eves, through Yemen's dales,  
 And bright the glancing looks they hide  
 Behind their litters' roseate veils;  
 And brides, as delicate and fair  
 As the white jasmine flowers they wear,  
 Hath Yemen in her blissful clime,  
 Who, lull'd in cool kiosk or bower,  
 Before their mirrors count the time,  
 And grow still lovelier every hour.  
 But never yet hath bride or maid  
 In Araby's gay Haram smiled,  
 Whose boasted brightness would not fade  
 Before Al Hassan's blooming child.

Light as the angel shapes that bless  
 An infant's dream, yet not the less  
 Rich in all woman's loveliness;  
 With eyes so pure, that from their ray  
 Dark Vice would turn abash'd away,  
 Blinded like serpents when they gaze  
 Upon the emerald's virgin blaze;  
 Yet fill'd with all youth's sweet desires,  
 Mingling the meek and vestal fires  
 Of other worlds with all the bliss,  
 The fond weak tenderness of this:  
 A soul, too, more than half divine,  
 Where, through some shades of earthly feeling,  
 Religion's soften'd glories shine,  
 Like light through summer foliage stealing,

Shedding a glow of such mild hue,  
So warm, and yet so shadowy too,  
As makes the very darkness there  
More beautiful than light elsewhere.

Such is the maid who, at this hour,  
Hath risen from her restless sleep,  
And sits alone in that high bower,  
Watching the still and shining deep.  
Ah! 'twas not thus — with tearful eyes  
And beating heart — she used to gaze  
On the magnificent earth and skies,  
In her own land, in happier days.  
Why looks she now so anxious down  
Among those rocks, whose rugged frown  
Blackens the mirror of the deep?  
Whom waits she all this lonely night?  
Too rough the rocks, too bold the steep,  
For man to scale that turret's height! —

So deem'd at least her thoughtful sire,  
When high, to catch the cool night-air,  
After the day-beam's withering fire,  
He built her bower of freshness there,  
And had it deck'd with costliest skill,  
And fondly thought it safe as fair —  
Think, reverend dreamer! think so still,  
Nor wake to learn what love can dare —  
Love, all-defying Love, who sees  
No charm in trophies won with ease;

Whose rarest, dearest fruits of bliss  
Are pluck'd on Danger's precipice !  
Bolder than they who dare not dive

For pearls, but when the sea's at rest,  
Love, in the tempest most alive,  
Hath ever held that pearl the best  
He finds beneath the stormiest water.  
Yes — Araby's unrivall'd daughter,  
Though high that tower, that rock-way rude,  
There's one who, but to kiss thy cheek,  
Would climb the untrodden solitude

Of Ararat's tremendous peak,  
And think its steps, though dark and dread,  
Heaven's pathways, if to thee they led !  
Even now thou seest the flashing spray,  
That lights his oar's impatient way ;  
Even now thou hear'st the sudden shock  
Of his swift bark against the rock,  
And stretchest down thine arms of snow,  
As if to lift him from below !  
Like her to whom at dead of night,  
The bridegroom, with his locks of light,  
Came, in the flush of love and pride,  
And scaled the terrace of his bride ;  
When, as she saw him rashly spring,  
And midway up in danger cling,  
She flung him down her long black hair,  
Exclaiming, breathless, " There, love, there !"  
And scarce did manlier nerve uphold

The hero Zal in that fond hour,



Than wings the youth who, fleet and bold,  
Now climbs the rocks to Hinda's bower  
See! light as up their granite steeps  
The rock-goats of Arabia clamber,  
Fearless from crag to crag he leaps,  
And now is in the maiden's chamber.

She loves — but knows not whom she loves,  
Nor what his race, nor whence he came, —  
Like one who meets, in Indian groves,  
Some beauteous bird without a name,  
Brought by the last ambrosial breeze  
From isles in the undiscover'd seas,  
To show his plumage for a day  
To wondering eyes, and wing away!  
Will *he* thus fly — her nameless lover?  
Alla forbid! 'twas by a moon  
As fair as this, while singing over  
Some ditty to her soft Kanoon,  
Alone, at this same witching hour,  
She first beheld his radiant eyes  
Gleam through the lattice of the bower,  
Where nightly now they mix their sighs;  
And thought some spirit of the air  
(For what could waft a mortal there?)  
Was pausing on his moonlit way  
To listen to her lonely lay!  
This fancy ne'er hath left her mind;  
And though, when terror's swoon had past,

She saw a youth, of mortal kind,  
Before her in obeisance cast,  
Yet often since, when he hath spoken  
Strange awful words, and gleams have broken  
From his dark eyes, too bright to bear,  
Oh, she hath fear'd her soul was given  
To some unhallow'd child of air,  
Some erring Spirit cast from Heaven, —  
Like those angelic youths of old,  
Who burn'd for maids of mortal mould,  
Bewilder'd, left the glorious skies,  
And lost their heaven for woman's eyes.

Fond girl! nor fiend nor angel he  
Who woos thy young simplicity;  
But one of earth's impassion'd sons,  
As warm in love, as fierce in ire,  
As the best heart whose current runs  
Full of the Day-God's living fire.

But quench'd to-night that ardor seems,  
And pale his cheek, and sunk his brow;  
Never before, but in her dreams,  
Had she beheld him pale as now:  
And those were dreams of troubled sleep,  
From which 'twas joy to wake and weep,—  
Visions, that will not be forgot,  
But sadden every waking scene,  
Like warning ghosts, that leave the spot  
All wither'd where they once have been.

“How sweetly,” said the trembling maid,  
Of her own gentle voice afraid,  
So long had they in silence stood,  
Looking upon that tranquil flood,—

“How sweetly does the moonbeam smile  
To-night upon yon leafy isle!

Oft, in my fancy’s wanderings,  
I’ve wish’d that little isle had wings,  
And we, within its fairy bowers,

Were wafted off to seas unknown,  
Where not a pulse should beat but ours,  
And we might live, love, die, alone!

Far from the cruel and the cold,

Where the bright eyes of angels only  
Should come around us, to behold

A paradise so pure and lonely!  
Would this be world enough for thee?”

Playful she turn’d, that he might see

The passing smile her cheek put on;  
But when she mark’d how mournfully

His eyes met hers, that smile was gone,  
And, bursting into heartfelt tears,

“Yes, yes,” she cried, “my hourly fears,  
My dreams have boded all too right—

We part—forever part—to-night!

I knew, I knew it *could* not last—

’Twas bright, ’twas heavenly, but ’tis past!

Oh, ever thus, from childhood’s hour

I’ve seen my fondest hopes decay;

I never loved a tree or flower,

But 'twas the first to fade away ;  
 I never nursed a dear gazelle,  
     To glad me with its soft black eye,  
 But when it came to know me well,  
     And love me, it was sure to die !  
 Now, too, the joy most like divine  
     Of all I ever dreamt or knew, —  
 To see thee, hear thee, call thee mine,  
     Oh, misery ! must I lose *that* too?  
 Yet go — on peril's brink we meet :  
     Those frightful rocks ! that treacherous sea ! —  
 No, never come again ! — though sweet,  
     Though heaven, it may be death to thee  
 Farewell ! and blessings on thy way,  
     Where'er thou goest, belovèd stranger !  
 Better to sit and watch that ray,  
 And think thee safe, though far away,  
     Than have thee near me, and in danger !”

“ Danger ! — oh, tempt me not to boast ! ”  
 The youth exclaim'd — “ Thou little know'st  
 What he can brave, who, born and nurst  
 In Danger's paths, has dared her worst ;  
 Upon whose ear the signal word  
     Of strife and death is hourly breaking ;  
 Who sleeps with head upon the sword  
     His fever'd hand must grasp in waking.  
 Danger ! ” —

                                    “ Say on — thou fear'st not then ?  
 And we may meet — oft meet again ? ”

“ Oh, look not so ! beneath the skies  
I now fear nothing but those eyes.  
If aught on earth could charm or force  
My spirit from its destined course,  
If aught could make this soul forget  
The bond to which its seal is set, —  
'Twould be those eyes : — they, only they,  
Could melt that sacred seal away !  
But no, 'tis fixed, — mine awful doom  
If fix'd — on this side of the tomb  
We meet no more. Why, why did Heaven  
Mingle two souls that earth has riven,  
Has rent asunder wide as ours ?  
O Arab maid, as soon the Powers  
Of Light and Darkness may combine,  
As I be link'd with thee or thine !  
Thy Father ” —

“ Holy Alla save

His gray head from that lightning glance !  
Thou know'st him not — he loves the brave ;  
Nor lives there under heaven's expanse  
One who would prize, would worship thee  
And thy bold spirit, more than he.  
Oft when, in childhood, I have play'd  
With the bright falchion by his side,  
I've heard him swear his lisp'ing maid  
In time should be a warrior's bride.  
And still, whene'er at Haram hours  
I take him cool sherbets and flowers,

He tells me, when in playful mood,  
 A hero shall my bridegroom be,  
 Since maids are best in battle woo'd,  
 And won with shouts of victory!  
 Nay, turn not from me — thou alone  
 Art form'd to make both hearts thine own.  
 Go — join his sacred ranks: thou know'st  
 The unholy strife these Persians wage,—  
 Good Heaven, that frown! — even now thou  
 glow'st

With more than mortal warrior's rage.  
 Haste to the camp by morning's light,  
 And when that sword is raised in fight,  
 Oh, still remember, Love and I  
 Beneath its shadow trembling lie!  
 One victory o'er those Slaves of Fire,  
 Those impious Ghebers, whom my sire  
 Abhors" —

“ Hold, hold! thy words are death!”

The stranger cried, as wild he flung  
 His mantle back, and show'd beneath  
 The Gheber belt that round him clung;  
 “ Here, maiden, look — weep — blush to see  
 All that thy sire abhors in me!  
 Yes — *I* am of that impious race,  
 Those Slaves of Fire, who, morn and even,  
 Hail their Creator's dwelling-place  
 Among the living lights of heaven:  
 Yes — *I* am of that outcast few,  
 To Iran and to vengeance true,

Who curse the hour your Arabs came  
To desolate our shrines of flame,  
And swear, before God's burning eye,  
To break our country's chains, or die!  
Thy bigot sire, — nay, tremble not, —  
    He who gave birth to those dear eyes,  
With me is sacred as the spot  
From which our fires of worship rise!  
But know — 'twas he I sought that night,  
    When, from my watch-boat on the sea,  
I caught this turret's glimmering light,  
    And up the rude rocks desperately  
Rush'd to my prey: — thou know'st the rest:  
I climb'd the gory vulture's nest,  
And found a trembling dove within;  
Thine, thine the victory — thine the sin —  
If Love hath made one thought his own,  
That Vengeance claims first — last — alone!  
Oh, had we never, never met,  
Or could this heart e'en now forget  
How link'd, how bless'd we might have been,  
Had fate not frown'd so dark between!  
Hadst thou been born a Persian maid,  
In neighboring valleys had we dwelt,  
Through the same fields in childhood play'd,  
    At the same kindling altar knelt,  
Then, then, while all those nameless ties,  
In which the charm of Country lies,  
Had round our hearts been hourly spun,  
Till Iran's cause and thine were one;

While in thy lute's awakening sigh

I heard the voice of days gone by,

And saw, in every smile of thine,

Returning hours of glory shine ;

While the wrong'd Spirit of our Land

Lived, look'd, and spoke her wrongs thro'  
thee,

God ! who could then this sword withstand ?

Its very flash were victory !

But now — estranged, divorced forever,

Far as the gasp of Fate can sever :

Our only ties what love has wove, —

In faith, friends, country, sunder'd wide, —

And then, then only, true to love,

When false to all that's dear beside !

Thy father, Iran's deadliest foe —

Thyself perhaps, even now — but no —

Hate never look'd so lovely yet !

No — sacred to thy soul will be

The land of him who could forget

All but that bleeding land for thee.

When other eyes shall see, unmoved,

Her widows mourn, her warriors fall,

Thou'lt think how well one Gheber loved,

And for *his* sake thou'lt weep for all !

But look " —

With sudden start he turn'd

And pointed to the distant wave,

Where lights, like charnel meteors, burn'd

Blue, as o'er some seaman's grave ;



And fiery darts, at intervals,  
Flew up all sparkling from the main,  
As if each star that nightly falls  
Were shooting back to heaven again.  
“ My signal lights ! I must away —  
Both, both are ruin'd, if I stay.  
Farewell, — sweet life ! thou cling'st in vain, —  
Now, Vengeance, I am thine again ! ”

Fiercely he broke away, nor stopp'd,  
Nor look'd, — but from the lattice dropp'd  
Down 'mid the pointed crags beneath,  
As if he fled from love to death.  
While pale and mute young Hinda stood,  
Nor moved, till in the silent flood  
A momentary plunge below  
Startled her from her trance of woe ;  
Shrieking, she to the lattice flew, —  
“ I come — I come — if in that tide  
Thou sleep'st to-night, I'll sleep there too,  
In death's cold wedlock, by thy side.  
Oh, I would ask no happier bed  
Than the chill wave my love lies under ;  
Sweeter to rest together dead,  
Far sweeter, than to live asunder ! ”  
But no, their hour has not yet come ;  
Again she sees his pinnace fly,  
Wafting him fleetly to his home,  
Where'er that ill-starr'd home may lie ;

And calm and smooth it seem'd to win  
Its moonlight way before the wind,  
As if it bore all peace within,  
Nor left one breaking heart behind !

---

THE Princess, whose heart was sad enough already, could have wished that Feramorz had chosen a less melancholy story ; as it is only to the happy that tears are a luxury. Her ladies, however, were by no means sorry that love was once more the Poet's theme ; for whenever he spoke of love, they said, his voice was as sweet as if he had chewed the leaves of that enchanted tree which grows over the tomb of the musician Tan-Sein.

Their road all the morning had lain through a very dreary country, — through valleys covered with a low bushy jungle, where, in more than one place, the awful signal of the bamboo staff, with the white flag at its top, reminded the traveller that, in that very spot, the tiger had made some human creature his victim. It was, therefore, with much pleasure that they arrived at sunset in a safe and lovely glen, and encamped under one of those holy trees whose smooth columns and spreading roofs seem to destine them for natural temples of religion. Beneath this spacious shade, some pious hands had erected a row of pillars ornamented with the most beautiful porcelain, which now supplied the use of mirrors to

the young maidens, as they adjusted their hair in descending from the palankeens. Here, while, as usual, the Princess sat listening anxiously, with Fadladeen, in one of his loftiest moods of criticism, by her side, the young Poet, leaning against a branch of the tree, thus continued his story:—

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THE morn hath risen clear and calm,  
And o'er the Green Sea palely shines,  
Revealing Bahrein's groves of palm,  
And lighting Kishma's amber vines.  
Fresh smell the shores of Araby,  
While breezes from the Indian sea  
Blow round Selama's sainted cape,  
And curl the shining flood beneath,  
Whose waves are rich with many a grape,  
And cocoa-nut and flowery wreath,  
Which pious seamen, as they pass'd,  
Had toward that holy headland cast —  
Oblations to the Genii there,  
For gentle skies and breezes fair!  
The nightingale now bends her flight  
From the high trees, where all the night  
She sung so sweet, with none to listen;  
And hides her from the morning star  
Where thickets of pomegranate glisten  
In the clear dawn, — bespangled o'er

With dew, whose night-drops would not stain  
The best and brightest scimitar  
That ever youthful Sultan wore  
On the first morning of his reign.

And see! the Sun himself! On wings  
Of glory up the East he springs.  
Angel of Light! who, from the time  
Those heavens began their march sublime,  
Hath first of all the starry choir  
Trode in his Maker's steps of fire!

Where are the days, thou wondrous sphere,  
When Iran, like a sun-flower, turn'd  
To meet that eye where'er it burn'd?

When, from the banks of Bendemeer  
To the nut-groves of Samarcand,  
Thy temples flamed o'er all the land?  
Where are they? ask the shades of them

Who, on Cadessia's bloody plains,  
Saw fierce invaders pluck the gem  
From Iran's broken diadem,

And bind her ancient faith in chains:—  
Ask the poor exile, cast alone  
On foreign shores, unloved, unknown,  
Beyond the Caspian's Iron Gates,

Or on the snowy Mossian mountains,  
Far from his beauteous land of dates,

Her jasmine bowers and sunny fountains, —  
Yet happier so than if he trod

His own beloved but blighted sod,  
Beneath a despot stranger's nod! —  
Oh, he would rather houseless roam  
Where Freedom and his God may lead,  
Than be the sleekest slave at home  
That crouches to the conqueror's creed?

Is Iran's pride then gone forever,  
Quench'd with the flame in Mithra's caves?  
No — she has sons, that never, never,  
Will stoop to be the Moslem's slaves,  
While heaven has light or earth has graves, —  
Spirits of fire, that brood not long,  
But flash resentment back for wrong;  
And hearts where, slow but deep, the seeds  
Of vengeance ripen into deeds,  
Till, in some treacherous hour of calm,  
They burst, like Zeilan's giant palm,  
Whose buds fly open with a sound  
That shakes the pigmy forests round!

Yes, Emir! he who scaled that tower,  
And, had he reach'd thy slumbering breast,  
Had taught thee in a Gheber's power  
How safe e'en tyrant heads may rest,  
Is one of many, brave as he,  
Who loathe thy haughty race and thee;  
Who, though they know the strife is vain,  
Who, though they know the riven chain

Snaps but to enter in the heart  
 Of him who rends its links apart,  
 Yet dare the issue, — blest to be  
 E'en for one bleeding moment free,  
 And die in pangs of liberty!  
 Thou know'st them well — 'tis some moons since  
 Thy turban'd troops and blood-red flags,  
 Thou satrap of a bigot Prince!  
 Have swarm'd among these Green Sea crags;  
 Yet here, e'en here, a sacred band, —  
 Ay, in the portal of that land  
 Thou, Arab, dar'st to call thine own, —  
 Their spears across thy path have thrown;  
 Here, ere the winds half wing'd thee o'er,  
 Rebellion braved thee from the shore.

Rebellion! foul dishonoring word,  
 Whose wrongful blight so oft has stain'd  
 The holiest cause that tongue or sword  
 Of mortal ever lost or gain'd!  
 How many a spirit, born to bless,  
 Hath sunk beneath that withering name,  
 Whom but a day's, an hour's success  
 Had wafted to eternal fame!  
 As exhalations, when they burst  
 From the warm earth, if chill'd at first,  
 If check'd in soaring from the plain,  
 Darken to fogs and sink again;  
 But, if they once triumphant spread  
 Their wings above the mountain-head,

Become enthroned in upper air,  
And turn to sun-bright glories there!

And who is he, that wields the might  
Of Freedom on the Green Sea brink,  
Before whose sabre's dazzling light  
The eyes of Yemen's warriors wink?  
Who comes, embower'd in the spears  
Of Kerman's hardy mountaineers?  
Those mountaineers that truest, last,  
Cling to their country's ancient rites,  
As if that God, whose eyelids cast  
Their closing gleam on Iran's heights,  
Among her snowy mountains threw  
The last light of his worship too!

'Tis Hafed — name of fear, whose sound  
Chills like the muttering of a charm! —  
Shout but that awful name around,  
And palsy shakes the manliest arm!  
'Tis Hafed, most accursed and dire  
(So rank'd by Moslem hate and ire)  
Of all the rebel Sons of Fire;  
Of whose malign, tremendous power,  
The Arabs, at their mid-watch hour,  
Such tales of fearful wonder tell,  
That each affrighted sentinel  
Pulls down his cowl upon his eyes,  
Lest Hafed in the midst should rise!

A man, they say, of monstrous birth,  
A mingled race of flame and earth,  
Sprung from those old enchanted kings,  
Who, in their fairy helms, of yore,  
A feather from the mystic wings  
Of the Simoorgh resistless wore;  
And gifted by the Fiends of Fire,  
Who groan'd to see their shrines expire,  
With charms that, all in vain withstood,  
Would drown the Koran's light in blood!

Such were the tales that won belief,  
And such the coloring Fancy gave  
To a young, warm, and dauntless Chief, —  
One who, no more than mortal brave,  
Fought for the land his soul adored,  
For happy homes and altars free, —  
His only talisman, the sword,  
His only spell-word, Liberty!  
One of that ancient hero line,  
Along whose glorious current shine  
Names that have sanctified their blood, —  
As Lebanon's small mountain-flood  
Is render'd holy by the ranks  
Of sainted cedars on its banks.  
'Twas not for him to crouch the knee  
Tamely to Moslem tyranny;  
'Twas not for him, whose soul was cast  
In the bright mould of ages past,



Whose melancholy spirit, fed  
With all the glories of the dead,  
Though framed for Iran's happiest years,  
Was born among her chains and tears! —

'Twas not for him to swell the crowd  
Of slavish heads, that shrinking bow'd  
Before the Moslem as he pass'd,  
Like shrubs beneath the poison-blast! —  
No, far he fled — indignant fled

The pageant of his country's shame,  
While every tear her children shed

Fell on his soul like drops of flame;  
And, as a lover hails the dawn

Of a first smile, so welcomed he  
The sparkle of the first sword drawn  
For Vengeance and for Liberty!

But vain was valor — vain the flower  
Of Kermān, in that deathful hour,  
Against Al Hassan's whelming power.  
In vain they met him, helm to helm,  
Upon the threshold of that realm  
He came in bigot pomp to sway,  
And with their corpses block'd his way, —  
In vain — for every lance they raised,  
Thousands around the Conqueror blazed;  
For every arm that lined their shore,  
Myriads of slaves were wafted o'er, —  
A bloody, bold, and countless crowd,

Before whose swarm as fast they bow'd  
As dates beneath the locust cloud.

There stood — but one short league away  
From old Harmoza's sultry bay —  
A rocky mountain, o'er the Sea  
Of Oman beetling awfully :  
A last and solitary link

Of those stupendous chains that reach  
From the broad Caspian's reedy brink  
Down winding to the Green Sea beach.

Around its base the bare rocks stood,  
Like naked giants in the flood,

As if to guard the Gulf across ;  
While, on its peak, that brave the sky,  
A ruin'd Temple tower'd, so high

That oft the sleeping albatross  
Struck the wild ruins with her wing,  
And from her cloud-rock'd slumbering  
Started — to find man's dwelling there  
In her own silent fields of air !

Beneath, terrific caverns gave  
Dark welcome to each stormy wave  
That dash'd, like midnight revellers, in ;  
And such the strange mysterious din  
At times throughout those caverns roll'd,  
And such the fearful wonders told  
Of restless sprites imprison'd there,  
That bold were Moslem who would dare,

At twilight hour, to steer his skiff  
Beneath the Gheber's lonely cliff.

On the land side, those towers sublime,  
That seem'd above the grasp of Time,  
Were sever'd from the haunts of men  
By a wide, deep, and wizard glen,  
So fathomless, so full of gloom,  
No eye could pierce the void between:  
It seem'd a place where Gholes might come  
With their foul banquets from the tomb,  
And in its caverns feed unseen.  
Like distant thunder, from below,  
The sound of many torrents came,  
Too deep for eye or ear to know  
If 'twere the sea's imprison'd flow,  
Or floods of ever-restless flame.  
For, each ravine, each rocky spire  
Of that vast mountain stood on fire;  
And, though forever past the days  
When God was worshipp'd in the blaze  
That from its lofty altar shone, —  
Though fled the priests, the votaries gone, —  
Still did the mighty flame burn on,  
Through chance and change, through good and ill,  
Like its own God's eternal will,  
Deep, constant, bright, unquenchable!

Thither the vanquish'd Hafed led  
His little army's last remains;

" Welcome, terrific glen ! " he said,  
 " Thy gloom, that Eblis' self might dread,  
   Is Heaven to him who flies from chains ! "

O'er a dark narrow bridge-way, known  
 To him and to his Chiefs alone,  
 They cross'd the chasm and gain'd the towers  
 " This home," he cried, " at least, is ours ;  
 Here we may bleed, unmock'd by hymns  
   Of Moslem triumph o'er our head ;  
 Here we may fall, nor leave our limbs  
   To quiver to the Moslem's tread.  
 Stretch'd on this rock while vultures' beaks  
 Are whetted on our yet warm cheeks,  
 Here — happy that no tyrant's eye  
 Gloats on our torments — we may die ! "

'Twas night when to those towers they came,  
 And gloomily the fitful flame,  
 That from the ruin'd altar broke,  
 Glared on his features, as he spoke :  
 " 'Tis o'er — what men could do, we've done :  
 If Iran *will* look tamely on,  
 And see her priests, her warriors driven  
   Before a sensual bigot's nod,  
 A wretch who shrines his lusts in heaven,  
   And makes a pander of his God ;  
 If her proud sons, her high-born souls,  
   Men in whose veins — oh, last disgrace ! —  
 The blood of Zal and Rustam rolls, —  
   If they *will* court this upstart race,

And turn from Mithra's ancient ray,  
To kneel at shrines of yesterday;  
If they *will* crouch to Iran's foes,  
Why, let them — till the land's despair  
Cries out to Heaven, and bondage grows

Too vile for e'en the vile to bear!  
Till shame at last, long hidden, burns  
Their inmost core, and conscience turns  
Each coward tear the slave lets fall  
Back on his heart in drops of gall.

But *here*, at least, our arms unchain'd,  
And souls that thralldom never stain'd;

This spot, at least, no foot of slave  
Or satrap ever yet profaned;

And though but few, — though fast the wave  
Of life is ebbing from our veins,  
Enough for vengeance still remains!

As panthers, after set of sun,  
Rush from the roots of Lebanon  
Across the dark sea-robber's way,  
We'll bound upon our startled prey;  
And when some hearts that proudest swell  
Have felt our falchion's last farewell, —  
When Hope's expiring throb is o'er,  
And e'en despair can prompt no more, —  
This spot shall be the sacred grave  
Of the last few who, vainly brave,  
Die for the land they cannot save!"

His Chiefs stood round — each shining blade  
Upon the broken altar laid;

And though so wild and desolate  
Those courts, where once the Mighty sate,  
Nor longer on those mouldering towers  
Was seen the feast of fruits and flowers,  
With which of old the Magi fed  
The wandering Spirits of their Dead ;  
Though neither priest nor rites were there,  
Nor charmèd leaf of pure pomegranate ;  
Nor hymn, nor censer's fragrant air,  
Nor symbol of their worshipp'd planet ;  
Yet the same God that heard their sires  
Heard *them*, while on that altar's fires  
They swore the latest, holiest deed  
Of the few hearts still left to bleed  
Should be, in Iran's injured name,  
To die upon that Mount of Flame—  
The last of all her patriot line,  
Before her last untrampled Shrine!

Brave suffering souls ! they little knew  
How many a tear their injuries drew  
From one weak maid, one gentle foe,  
Whom love first touch'd with others' woe, —  
Whose life, as free from thought as sin,  
Slept like a lake, till Love threw in  
His talisman, and woke the tide,  
And spread its trembling circlès wide.  
Once, Emir ! thine unheeding child,  
'Mid all this havoc, bloom'd and smiled, —

Tranquil as on some battle plain  
The Persian lily shines and towers,  
Before the combat's reddening stain  
Hath fallen upon her golden flowers.  
Light-hearted maid, unawed, unmoved,  
While Heaven but spared the sire she loved,  
Once at thine evening tales of blood  
Unlistening and aloof she stood, —  
And oft, when thou hast paced along  
Thy Haram halls with furious heat,  
Hast thou not cursed her cheerful song,  
That came across thee, calm and sweet? —  
Like lutes of angels, touch'd so near  
Hell's confines, that the damn'd can hear!

Far other feelings Love hath brought, —  
Her soul all flame, her brow all sadness,  
She now has but the one dear thought,  
And thinks that o'er, almost to madness!  
Oft does her sinking heart recall  
His words — “ For *my* sake weep for all ; ”  
And bitterly, as day on day  
Of rebel carnage fast succeeds,  
She weeps a lover snatch'd away  
In every Gheber wretch that bleeds :  
There's not a sabre meets her eye,  
But with his life-blood seems to swim ;  
There's not an arrow wings the sky,  
But fancy turns its point to him.

No more she brings with footstep light  
Al Hassan's falchion for the fight ;  
And had he look'd with clearer sight,  
Had not the mists that ever rise  
From a foul spirit dimm'd his eyes,  
He would have mark'd her shuddering frame,  
When from the field of blood he came,  
The faltering speech — the look estranged —  
Voice, step, and life, and beauty changed, —  
He would have mark'd all this, and known  
Such change is wrought by Love alone !

Ah, not the Love, that should have bless'd  
So young, so innocent a breast ;  
Not the pure, open, prosperous Love,  
That, pledged on earth and seal'd above,  
Grows in the world's approving eyes,  
In friendship's smile and home's caress,  
Collecting all the heart's sweet ties  
Into one knot of happiness !

No, Hinda, no, — thy fatal flame  
Is nursed in silence, sorrow, shame ;  
A passion, without hope or pleasure,  
In thy soul's darkness buried deep,  
It lies, like some ill-gotten treasure, —  
Some idol, without shrine or name,  
O'er which its pale-eyed votaries keep  
Unholy watch, while others sleep.

Seven nights have darken'd Oman's sea,  
Since last, beneath the moonlight ray,



She saw his light oar rapidly  
Hurry her Gheber's bark away ;  
And still she goes, at midnight hour,  
To weep alone in that high bower,  
And watch and look along the deep  
For him whose smiles first made her weep :  
But watching, weeping, all was vain,  
She never saw his bark again.  
The owlet's solitary cry,  
The night-hawk flitting darkly by,  
And oft the hateful carrion bird,  
Heavily flapping his clogg'd wing,  
Which reek'd with that day's banquetting—  
Was all she saw, was all she heard.

'Tis the eighth morn. Al Hassan's brow  
Is brighten'd with unusual joy ;  
What mighty mischief glads him now,  
Who never smiles but to destroy ?  
The sparkle upon Herkend's Sea,  
When toss'd at midnight furiously,  
Tells not of wreck and ruin nigh,  
More surely than that smiling eye !  
“ Up, daughter, up ! the Kerna's breath  
Has blown a blast would waken death,  
And yet thou sleep'st ; — up, child, and see  
This blessed day for Heaven and me,  
A day more rich in Pagan blood  
Than ever flash'd o'er Oman's flood !

Before another dawn shall shine,  
 His head — heart — limbs — will all be mine ;  
 This very night his blood shall steep  
 These hands all over e'er I sleep ! —  
 “ *His blood !* ” she faintly scream'd, her mind  
 Still singling *one* from all mankind. —  
 “ Yes — spite of his ravines and towers,  
 Hated, my child, this night is ours :  
 Thanks to all-conquering treachery,  
 Without whose aid the links accurst,  
 That bind these impious slaves, would be  
 Too strong for Alla's self to burst !  
 That rebel fiend, whose blade has spread  
 My path with piles of Moslem dead,  
 Whose baffling spells had almost driven  
 Back from their course the Swords of Heaven.  
 This night, with all his band, shall know  
 How deep an Arab's steel can go,  
 When God and Vengeance speed the blow.  
 And — Prophet ! by that holy wreath  
 Thou worst on Ohod's field of death,  
 I swear, for every sob that parts  
     In anguish from these heathen hearts,  
 A gem from Persia's plunder'd mines  
 Shall glitter on thy Shrine of Shrines !  
 But, ha ! — she sinks — that look so wild —  
 Those livid lips, — my child, my child,  
 This life of blood befits not thee,  
 And thou must back to Araby.

Ne'er had I risk'd thy timid sex  
In scenes that man himself might dread,  
Had I not hoped our every tread  
Would be on prostrate Persian necks —  
Curst race, they offer swords instead!  
But, cheer thee, maid,— the wind that now  
Is blowing o'er thy feverish brow,  
To-day shall waft thee from the shore;  
And, ere a drop of this night's gore  
Have time to chill in yonder towers,  
Thou'lt see thine own sweet Arab bowers!"

His bloody boast was all too true:  
There lurk'd one wretch among the few  
Whom Hafed's eagle eye could count  
Around him on that fiery mount,—  
One miscreant who for gold betray'd  
The pathway through the valley's shade  
To those high towers where Freedom stood  
In her last hold of flame and blood.  
Left on the field that dreadful night,  
When, sallying from their sacred height,  
The Ghebers fought hope's farewell fight,  
He lay — but died not with the brave:  
That sun, which should have gilt his grave,  
Saw him a traitor and a slave: —  
And, while the few, who thence return'd  
To their high rocky fortress, mourn'd  
For him among the matchless dead  
They left behind on glory's bed,

He lived, and, in the face of morn,  
Laugh'd them and Faith and Heaven to scorn.

Oh, for a tongue to curse the slave,  
Whose treason, like a deadly blight,  
Comes o'er the councils of the brave,  
And blasts them in their hour of might!  
May Life's unblessèd cup for him  
Be drugg'd with treacheries to the brim,—  
With hopes, that but allure to fly,  
With joys, that vanish while he sips,  
Like Dead Sea fruits, that tempt the eye,  
But turn to ashes on the lips!  
His country's curse, his children's shame,  
Outcast of virtue, peace, and fame,  
May he, at last, with lips of flame  
On the parch'd desert thirsting die,—  
While lakes that shone in mockery nigh  
Are fading off, untouch'd, untasted,  
Like the once glorious hopes he blasted!  
And when from earth his spirit flies,  
Just Prophet, let the damn'd one dwell  
Full in the sight of Paradise,  
Beholding Heaven, and feeling Hell!

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LALLA ROOKH had, the night before, been visited by a dream, which, in spite of the impending fate of poor Hafed, made her heart more than usually cheerful during the morning, and gave her cheeks

all the freshened animation of a flower that the Bid-musk had just passed over. She fancied that she was sailing on that Eastern Ocean, where the sea-gypsies, who live forever on the water, enjoy a perpetual summer in wandering from isle to isle, when she saw a small gilded bark approaching her. It was like one of those boats which the Maldivian islanders send adrift at the mercy of winds and waves, loaded with perfumes, flowers, and odoriferous wood, as an offering to the Spirit whom they call King of the Sea. At first, this little bark appeared to be empty, but, on coming nearer —

She had proceeded thus far in relating the *dream* to her Ladies, when Feramorz appeared at the door of the pavilion. In his presence, of course, everything else was forgotten, and the continuance of the story was instantly requested by all. Fresh wood of aloes was set to burn in the cassolets; the violet sherbets were hastily handed round; and after a short prelude on his lute, in the pathetic measure of Nava, which is always used to express the lamentations of absent lovers, the Poet thus continued.

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THE day is lowering,—stilly black  
Sleeps the grim wave, while heaven's rack,  
Dispersed and wild, 'twixt earth and sky  
Hangs like a shatter'd canopy.

There's not a cloud in that blue plain  
But tells of storm to come or past :  
Here, flying loosely as the mane  
Of a young war-horse in the blast :  
There, roll'd in masses dark and swelling,  
As proud to be the thunder's dwelling !  
While some already burst and riven,  
Seem melting down the verge of heaven,—  
As though the infant storm had rent  
The mighty womb that gave him birth,  
And having swept the firmament,  
Was now in fierce career for earth.  
On earth 'twas yet all calm around,  
A pulseless silence, dread, profound,  
More awful than the tempest's sound.  
The diver steer'd for Ormus' bowers,  
And moor'd his skiff till calmer hours ;  
The sea-birds, with portentous screech,  
Flew fast to land ; upon the beach,  
The pilot oft had paused, with glance  
Turn'd upward to that wild expanse ;  
And all was boding, drear, and dark  
As her own soul, when Hinda's bark  
Went slowly from the Persian shore.

No music timed her parting oar,  
Nor friends upon the lessening strand  
Linger'd, to wave the unseen hand,  
Or speak the farewell, heard no more ;

But lone, unheeded, from the bay  
The vessel takes its mournful way,  
Like some ill-destined bark that steers  
In silence through the Gate of Tears.  
And where was stern Al Hassan then?  
Could not that saintly scourge of men  
From bloodshed and devotion spare  
One minute for a farewell there?  
No, — close within, in changeful fits  
Of cursing and of prayer, he sits  
In savage loneliness to brood  
Upon the coming night of blood, —  
    With that keen second-scent of death,  
By which the vulture snuffs his food  
    In the still warm and living breath!  
While o'er the wave his weeping daughter  
Is wafted from these scenes of slaughter, —  
As a young bird of Babylon,  
Let loose to tell of victory won,  
Flies home, with wing, ah! not unstain'd  
By the red hands that held her chain'd.

And does the long-left home she seeks  
Light up no gladness on her cheeks?  
The flowers she nursed, — the well-known groves,  
Where oft in dreams her spirit roves;  
Once more to see her dear gazelles  
Come bounding with their silver bells;  
Her birds' new plumage to behold,  
    And the gay gleaming fishes count,

She left, all filleted with gold,  
Shooting around their jasper fount ;  
Her little garden mosque to see,  
And once again, at evening hour,  
To tell her ruby rosary  
In her own sweet acacia bower : —  
Can these delights, that wait her now,  
Call up no sunshine on her brow ?  
No ; — silent, from her train apart —  
As if e'en now she felt at heart  
The chill of her approaching doom, —  
She sits, all lovely in her gloom  
As a pale Angel of the Grave ;  
And o'er the wide tempestuous wave  
Looks, with a shudder, to those towers  
Where, in a few short awful hours,  
Blood, blood, in streaming tides shall run,  
Foul incense for to-morrow's sun !  
“ Where art thou, glorious stranger ! thou,  
So loved, so lost, where art thou now ?  
Foe — Gheber — infidel — whate'er  
The unhallow'd name thou'rt doom'd to bear,  
Still glorious, — still to this fond heart  
Dear as its blood, whate'er thou art !  
Yes, — Alla, dreadful Alla ! yes, —  
If there be wrong, be crime in this,  
Let the black waves that round us roll  
Whelm me this instant, ere my soul,  
Forgetting faith — home — father — all,  
Before its earthly idol fall,



Nor worship e'en Thyself above him —  
For, oh, so wildly do I love him,  
Thy Paradise itself were dim  
And joyless, if not shared with him !”

Her hands were clasp'd, her eyes upturn'd,  
Dropping their tears like moonlight rain ;  
And though her lip, fond raver ! burn'd  
With words of passion, bold, profane,  
Yet was there light around her brow, —  
A holiness in those dark eyes,  
Which show'd, though wandering earthward now,  
Her spirit's home was in the skies.  
Yes ; for a spirit pure as hers  
Is always pure, e'en while it errs, —  
As sunshine, broken in the rill,  
Though turn'd astray, is sunshine still !

So wholly had her mind forgot  
All thoughts but one, she heeded not  
The rising storm — the wave that cast  
A moment's midnight, as it pass'd ;  
Nor heard the frequent shout, the tread  
Of gathering tumult o'er her head —  
Clash'd swords, and tongues that seem'd to vie  
With the rude riot of the sky.  
But, hark ! — that war-whoop on the deck !  
That crash ! as if each engine there,  
Masts, sails, and all, were gone to wreck,  
'Mid yells and stampings of despair !

Merciful Heaven ! what can it be?  
'Tis not the storm, though fearfully  
The ship has shudder'd as she rode  
O'er mountain-waves. — “ Forgive me, God !  
Forgive me ! ” shriek'd the maid, and knelt,  
Trembling all over, — for she felt  
As if her judgment hour was near ;  
While crouching round, half-dead with fear,  
Her handmaids clung, nor breathed, nor stirr'd —  
When, hark ! a second crash — a third —  
And now, as if a bolt of thunder  
Had riven the laboring planks asunder,  
The deck falls in — what horrors then !  
Blood, waves, and tackle, swords, and men,  
Come mix'd together through the chasm, —  
Some wretches in their dying spasm  
Still fighting on, and some that call  
“ For God and Iran ! ” as they fall !

Whose was the hand that turn'd away  
The perils of the infuriate fray,  
And snatch'd her breathless from beneath  
This wilderment of wreck and death?  
She knew not, — for a faintness came  
Chill o'er her, and her sinking frame  
Amid the ruins of that hour  
Lay, like a pale and scorched flower,  
Beneath the red volcano's shower.  
But, oh ! the sights and sounds of dread  
That shock'd her ere her senses fled !

The yawning deck, — the crowd that strove  
Upon the tottering planks above, —  
The sail whose fragments, shivering o'er  
The strugglers' heads all dash'd with gore,  
Flutter'd like bloody flags, — the clash  
Of sabres, and the lightning's flash  
Upon their blades, high toss'd about  
Like meteor brands, as if throughout  
The elements one fury ran,  
One general rage, that left a doubt  
Which was the fiercer, Heaven or Man!

Once too — but no, it could not be :  
'Twas fancy all, — yet once she thought  
While yet her fading eyes could see,  
High on the ruin'd deck she caught  
A glimpse of that unearthly form,  
That glory of her soul, — e'en then,  
Amid the whirl of wreck and storm,  
Shining above his fellow-men ;  
As, on some black and troublous night,  
The Star of Egypt, whose proud light  
Never hath beam'd on those who rest  
In the White Islands of the West,  
Burns through the storm with looks of flame  
That put Heaven's cloudier eyes to shame.  
But no, 'twas but the minute's dream —  
A fantasy, — and ere the scream  
Had half-way pass'd her pallid lips,  
A death-like swoon, a chill eclipse

Of soul and sense its darkness spread  
Around her, and she sunk as dead.

How calm, how beautiful, comes on  
The stilly hour, when storms are gone !  
When warring winds have died away,  
And clouds, beneath the glancing ray,  
Melt off, and leave the land and sea  
Sleeping in bright tranquillity, —  
Fresh as if Day again were born,  
Again upon the lap of Morn ;  
When the light blossoms, rudely torn  
And scatter'd at the whirlwind's will,  
Hang floating in the pure air still,  
Filling it all with precious balm,  
In gratitude for this sweet calm ;  
And every drop the thunder-showers  
Have left upon the grass and flowers  
Sparkles, as 'twere that lightning-gem  
Whose liquid flame is born of them !  
When, 'stead of one unchanging breeze,  
    There blow a thousand gentle airs,  
    And each a different perfume bears, —  
As if the loveliest plants and trees  
Had vassal breezes of their own  
To watch and wait on them alone,  
    And waft no other breath than theirs ;  
When the blue waters rise and fall,  
In sleepy sunshine mantling all ;

And e'en that swell the tempest leaves  
Is like the full and silent heaves  
Of lovers' hearts, when newly blest, —  
Too newly to be quite at rest.

Such was the golden hour that broke  
Upon the world, when Hinda woke  
From her long trance, and heard around  
No motion but the water's sound  
Rippling against the vessel's side,  
As slow it mounted o'er the tide. —  
But where is she? — her eyes are dark,  
Are wilder'd still — is this the bark,  
The same, that from Harmoza's bay  
Bore her at morn, — whose bloody way  
The sea-dog track'd? — no, strange and new  
Is all that meets her wondering view.  
Upon a galliot's deck she lies,

Beneath no rich pavilion's shade,  
No plumes to fan her sleeping eyes,  
Nor jasmine on her pillow laid;  
But the rude litter, roughly spread  
With war-cloaks, is her homely bed,  
And shawl and sash, on javelins hung,  
For awning o'er her head are flung.  
Shuddering, she look'd around: — there lay

A group of warriors in the sun,  
Resting their limbs, as for that day  
Their ministry of death were done;

Some gazing on the drowsy sea,  
 Lost in unconscious reverie ;  
 And some who seem'd but ill to brook  
 That sluggish calm, with many a look  
 To the slack sail impatient cast,  
 As loose it flagg'd around the mast.

Blest Alla ! who shall save her now ?  
 There's not in all that warrior band  
 One Arab sword, one turban'd brow,  
 From her own Faithful Moslem land.  
 Their garb : the leathern belt that wraps  
 'Each yellow vest, — that rebel hue, —  
 The Tartar fleece upon their caps,  
 Yes, yes ! her fears are all too true,  
 And Heaven hath, in this dreadful hour,  
 Abandon'd her to Hafed's power, —  
 Hafed, the Gheber ! — at the thought  
 Her very heart's blood chills within, —  
 He, whom her soul was hourly taught  
 To loathe, as some foul fiend of sin,  
 Some minister whom Hell had sent  
 To spread its blast, where'er he went,  
 And fling, as o'er our earth he trod,  
 His shadow betwixt man and God !  
 And she is now his captive, — thrown  
 In his fierce hands, alive, alone ;  
 His the infuriate band she sees,  
 All infidels — all enemies !



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What was the daring hope that then  
 Cross'd her like lightning, as again,  
 With boldness that despair had lent,  
     She darted through that armèd crowd  
 A look so searching, so intent,  
     That e'en the sternest warrior bow'd  
 Abash'd, when he her glances caught,  
 As if he guess'd whose form they sought?  
 But no, — she sees him not: 'tis gone,  
 The vision that before her shone,  
 Through all the maze of blood and storm,  
 Is fled — 'twas but a phantom form, —  
 One of those passing rainbow dreams,  
 Half light, half shade, which Fancy's beams  
 Paint on the fleeting mists that roll  
 In trance or slumber round the soul.

But now the bark, with livelier bound,  
     Scales the blue wave: the crew's in motion:  
 The oars are out, and with light sound  
     Break the bright mirror of the ocean,  
 Scattering its brilliant fragments round.  
 And now she sees — with horror sees —  
     Their course is toward that mountain-hold,  
 Those towers, that make her life-blood freeze,  
 Where Mecca's godless enemies  
     Lie, like beleaguer'd scorpions, roll'd  
     In their last deadly venomous fold!  
 Amid the illumined land and flood  
 Sunless that mighty mountain stood;

Save where, above its awful head,  
There shone a flaming cloud, blood-red,  
As 'twere the flag of destiny  
Hung out to mark where death would be!

Had her bewilder'd mind the power  
Of thought in this terrific hour,  
She well might marvel where or how  
Man's foot could scale that mountain's brow,  
Since ne'er had Arab heard or known  
Of path but through the glen alone. —  
But every thought was lost in fear,  
When, as their bounding bark drew near  
The craggy base, she felt the waves  
Hurry them toward those dismal caves,  
That from the Deep in windings pass  
Beneath that Mount's volcanic mass;  
And loud a voice on deck commands  
To lower the masts and light the brands!  
Instantly o'er the dashing tide  
Within a cavern's mouth they glide,—  
Gloomy as that eternal Porch

Through which departed spirits go:  
Not e'en the flare of brand and torch  
Its flickering light could further throw  
Than the thick flood that boil'd below.  
Silent they floated, — as if each  
Sat breathless and too awed for speech  
In that dark chasm, where even sound  
Seem'd dark, — so sullenly around

The goblin echoes of the cave  
Mutter'd it o'er the long black wave,  
As 'twere some secret of the grave !

But soft, — they pause, — the current turns  
Beneath them from its onward track ;  
Some mighty unseen barrier spurns  
The vexed tide, all foaming, back,  
And scarce the oars' redoubled force  
Can stem the eddy's whirling course ;  
When, hark ! — some desperate foot has sprung  
Among the rocks, — the chain is flung, —  
The oars are up, — the grapple clings,  
And the toss'd bark in moorings swings.  
Just then, a day-beam through the shade  
Broke tremulous ; but ere the maid  
Can see from whence the brightness steals,  
Upon her brow she shuddering feels  
A viewless hand, that promptly ties  
A bandage round her burning eyes ;  
While the rude litter where she lies,  
Uplifted by the warrior throng,  
O'er the steep rocks is borne along.

Blest power of sunshine ! genial Day,  
What balm, what life is in thy ray !  
To feel thee is such real bliss,  
That had the world no joy but this,  
To sit in sunshine calm and sweet,  
It were a world too exquisite

For man to leave it for the gloom,  
 The deep, cold shadow of the tomb.  
 E'en Hinda, though she saw not where  
     Or whither wound the perilous road,  
 Yet knew by that awakening air  
     Which suddenly around her glow'd  
 That they had risen from darkness then,  
 And breathed the sunny world again !

But soon this balmy freshness fled ;  
 For now the sleepy labyrinth led  
 Through damp and gloom, 'mid crash of boughs,  
 And fall of loosen'd crags that rouse  
 The leopard from his hungry sleep, —  
     Who, starting, thinks each crag a prey,  
 And long is heard, from steep to steep,  
     Chasing them down their thundering way !  
 The jackal's cry, — the distant moan  
 Of the hyæna, fierce and lone, —  
 And that eternal saddening sound  
     Of torrents in the glen beneath,  
 As 'twere the ever-dark Profound  
     That rolls beneath the Bridge of Death !  
 All, all is fearful, — e'en to see,  
     To gaze on those terrific things  
 She now but blindly hears, would be  
     Relief to her imaginings ;  
 Since never yet was shape so dread,  
     But Fancy, thus in darkness thrown,  
 And by such sounds of horror fed,  
     Could frame more dreadful of her own.

But does she dream? has Fear again  
Perplex'd the workings of her brain,  
Or did a voice, all music, then  
Come from the gloom? low whispering near —  
“Tremble not, love, thy Gheber's here!”  
She does not dream — all sense, all ear,  
She drinks the words, “Thy Gheber's here.”  
'Twas his own voice, — she could not err, —  
Throughout the breathing world's extent  
There was but one such voice for her, .

So kind, so soft, so eloquent!  
Oh, sooner shall the rose of May  
Mistake her own sweet nightingale,  
And to some meaner minstrel's lay  
Open her bosom's glowing veil,  
Than Love shall ever doubt a tone,  
A breath of the beloved one!

Though blest, 'mid all her ills, to think  
She has that one beloved near,  
Whose smile, though met on ruin's brink.

Hath power to make e'en ruin dear, —  
Yet soon this gleam of rapture, crost  
By fears for him, is chill'd and lost.  
How shall the ruthless Hafed brook  
That one of Gheber blood should look,  
With aught but curses in his eye,  
On her, a maid of Araby, —  
A Moslem maid, — the child of him  
Whose bloody banner's dire success

Hath left their altars cold and dim,  
 And their fair land a wilderness!  
 And, worse than all, that night of blood  
 Which comes so fast — oh, who shall **stay**  
 The sword, that once hath tasted food  
 Of Persian hearts, or turn its way?  
 What arm shall then the victim cover,  
 Or from her father shield her lover?

“ Save him, my God ! ” she inly cries, —  
 “ Save him this night ! and if thine eyes  
 Have ever welcomed with delight  
 The sinner’s tears, the sacrifice  
 Of sinners’ hearts, guard him this night !  
 And here, before Thy throne, I swear  
 From my heart’s inmost core to tear  
 Love, hope, remembrance, though they **be**  
 Link’d with each quivering life-string there,  
 And give it bleeding all to Thee !  
 Let him but live, — the burning tear,  
 The sighs, so sinful, yet so dear,  
 Which have been all too much his own,  
 Shall from this hour be Heaven’s alone :  
 Youth pass’d in penitence, and age  
 In long and painful pilgrimage,  
 Shall leave no traces of the flame  
 That wastes me now, — nor shall his **name**  
 E’er bless my lips, but when I pray  
 For his dear spirit, that away  
 Casting from its angelic ray

The eclipse of earth, he, too, may shine  
Redeem'd, all glorious and all Thine!  
Think — think what victory to win  
One radiant soul like his from sin, —  
One wandering star of virtue back  
To its own native, heavenward track!  
Let him but live, and both are Thine,  
    Together Thine — for, blest or crost,  
Living or dead, his doom is mine,  
    And, if he perish, both are lost !”

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THE next evening, Lalla Rookh was entreated by her Ladies to continue the relation of her wonderful dream; but the fearful interest that hung round the fate of Hinda and her lover had completely removed every trace of it from her mind, — much to the disappointment of a fair seer or two in her train, who prided themselves on their skill in interpreting visions, and who had already remarked, as an unlucky omen, that the Princess, on the very morning after the dream, had worn a silk dyed with the blossoms of the sorrowful tree, Nilica.

Fadladeen, whose indignation had more than once broken out during the recital of some parts of this heterodox poem, seemed at length to have made up his mind to the infliction; and took his seat this evening with all the patience of a martyr, while the Poet resumed his profane and seditious story as follows: —

To tearless eyes and hearts at ease,  
The leafy shores and sun-bright seas,  
That lay beneath that mountain's height,  
Had been a fair enchanting sight.  
'Twas one of those ambrosial eyes  
A day of storm so often leaves  
At its calm setting, — when the West  
Opens her golden bowers of rest,  
And a moist radiance from the skies  
Shoots trembling down, as from the eyes  
Of some meek penitent, whose last  
Bright hours atone for dark ones past,  
And whose sweet tears, or wrong forgiven,  
Shine, as they fall, with light from Heaven !

'Twas stillness all : the winds that late  
Had rush'd through Kerman's almond groves,  
And shaken from her bowers of date  
That cooling feast the traveller loves,  
Now, lull'd to languor, scarcely curl  
The Green Sea wave, whose waters gleam  
Limpid, as if her mines of pearl  
Were melted all to form the stream ;  
And her fair islets, small and bright,  
With their green shores reflected there,  
Look like those Peri isles of light  
That hang by spell-work in the air.

But vainly did those glories burst  
On Hinda's dazzled eyes when first



The bandage from her brow was taken,  
And, pale and awed as those who waken  
In their dark tombs, when, scowling near,  
The Searchers of the Grave appear, —  
She shuddering turn'd to read her fate

    In the fierce eyes that flash'd around;  
And saw those towers all desolate,

    That o'er her head terrific frown'd,  
As if defying e'en the smile

Of that soft heaven to gild their pile.

In vain, with mingled hope and fear,

She looks for him, whose voice so dear

Had come, like music, to her ear: —

Strange, mocking dream! again 'tis fled

And oh, the shoots, the pangs of dread

That through her inmost bosom run,

    When voices from without proclaim —

“Hafed, the Chief!” — and one by one

    The warriors shout that fearful name!

He comes! the rock resounds his tread! —

How shall she dare to lift her head,

Or meet those eyes whose scorching glare

Not Yemen's boldest sons can bear?

In whose red beam, the Moslem tells,

Such rank and deadly lustre dwells,

As in those hellish fires that light

The mandrake's charnel leaves at night.

How shall she bear that voice's tone?

At whose loud battle-cry alone

Whole squadrons oft in panic ran,

Scatter'd like some vast caravan,

When, stretch'd at evening round the well,  
They hear the thirsting tiger's yell!  
Breathless she stands, with eyes cast down,  
Shrinking beneath the fiery frown  
Which, fancy tells her, from that brow  
Is flashing o'er her fiercely now;  
And shuddering as she hears the tread  
Of his retiring warrior band:  
Never was pause so full of dread, —  
Till Hafed with a trembling hand  
Took hers, and, leaning o'er her, said —  
“Hinda”: — that word was all he spoke,  
And 'twas enough — the shriek that broke  
From her full bosom told the rest.  
Panting with terror, joy, surprise,  
The maid but lifts her wondering eyes,  
To hide them on her Gheber's breast!  
'Tis he, 'tis he! — the man of blood,  
The fellest of the Fire-fiend's brood,  
Hafed, the demon of the fight,  
Whose voice unnerves, whose glances blight, —  
Is her own loved Gheber, mild  
And glorious as when first he smiled  
In her lone tower, and left such beams  
Of his pure eye to light her dreams,  
That she believed her bower had given  
Rest to some wanderer from Heaven.

Moments there are, and this was one,  
Snatch'd like a minute's gleam of sun

Amid the black Simoom's eclipse, —  
Or like those verdant spots that bloom  
Around the crater's burning lips,  
Sweetening the very edge of doom!  
The past, — the future, — all that Fate  
Can bring of dark or desperate  
Around such hours, but makes them cast  
Intenser radiance while they last!

Even he, this youth — though dimm'd and gone  
Each star of Hope that cheer'd him on:  
His glories lost, his cause betray'd;  
Iran, his dear-loved country, made  
A land of carcasses and slaves,  
One dreary waste of chains and graves!  
Himself but lingering, dead at heart,  
To see the last long struggling breath  
Of Liberty's great soul depart,  
Then lay him down and share her death: —  
Even he, so sunk in wretchedness,  
With doom still darker gathering o'er him,  
Yet, in this moment's pure caress,  
In the mild eyes that shown before him,  
Beaming that blest assurance, worth  
All other transports known on earth, —  
That he was loved — well, warmly loved, —  
Oh! in this precious hour he proved  
How deep, how thorough-felt, the glow  
Of rapture, kindling out of woe;

How exquisite one single drop  
Of bliss, thus sparkling to the top  
Of misery's cup, — how keenly quaff'd,  
Though death must follow on the draught!

She, too, while gazing on those eyes  
That sink into her soul so deep,  
Forgets all fears, all miseries, —  
Or feels them like the wretch in sleep,  
Whom Fancy cheats into a smile,  
Who dreams of joy, and sobs the while!  
The mighty Ruins where they stood,  
Upon the mount's high rocky verge,  
Lay open towards the ocean flood,  
Where lightly o'er the illumined surge  
Many a fair bark that all the day  
Had lurk'd in sheltering creek or bay,  
Now bounded on, and gave their sails,  
Yet dripping, to the evening gales, —  
Like eagles, when the storm is done,  
Spreading their wet wings in the sun.  
The beauteous clouds, though daylight's Star  
Had sunk behind the hills of Lar,  
Were still with lingering glories bright, —  
As if, to grace the gorgeous West,  
The Spirit of departing Light  
That eve had left his sunny vest  
Behind him, ere he wing'd his flight.  
Never was scene so form'd for love, —

Beneath them waves of crystal move  
In silent swell, — Heaven glows above,  
And their pure hearts, to transport given,  
Swell like the wave, and glow like Heaven.

But, ah ! too soon that dream is past !  
Again, again her fear returns : —  
Night, dreadful night, is gathering fast,  
More faintly the horizon burns,  
And every rosy tint that lay  
On the smooth sea hath died away.  
Hastily to the darkening skies  
A glance she casts, — then wildly cries :  
“ *At night*, he said, — and look, 'tis near ! —  
Fly, fly ! — if yet thou lov'st me, fly ! —  
Soon will his murderous band be here,  
And I shall see thee bleed and die. —  
Hush ! heard'st thou not the tramp of men  
Sounding from yonder fearful glen ?  
Perhaps e'en now they climb the wood —  
Fly, fly ! — though still the West is bright,  
He'll come — oh, yes ! he wants thy blood ! —  
I know him — he'll not wait for night ! ”

In terrors e'en to agony  
She clings around the wondering Chief :  
“ Alas, poor wilder'd maid ! to me  
Thou owest this raving trance of grief :

Lost as I am, nought ever grew  
 Beneath my shade but perish'd too, —  
 My doom is like the Dead Sea air,  
 And nothing lives that enters there!  
 Why were our barks together driven  
 Beneath this morning's furious heaven?  
 Why, when I saw the prize that chance  
     Had thrown into my desperate arms,  
 When, casting but a single glance  
     Upon thy pale and prostrate charms,  
 I vow'd (though watching viewless o'er  
     Thy safety through that hour's alarms)  
 To meet the unmanning sight no more, —  
 Why have I broke that heart-wrung vow?  
 Why weakly, madly, met thee now? —  
 Start not, — that noise is but the shock  
     Of torrents through yon valley hurl'd;  
 Dread nothing here, — upon this rock  
     We stand above the jarring world,  
 Alike beyond its hope — its dread —  
 In gloomy safety, like the Dead!  
 Or, could e'en Earth and Hell unite  
 In league to storm this Sacred Height,  
 Fear nothing thou: myself, to-night,  
 And each o'erlooking star that dwells  
 Near God, will be thy sentinels; —  
 And ere to-morrow's dawn shall glow,  
 Back to thy sire " —

“ To-morrow! — no!”

The maiden scream'd — “ thou'lt never see  
 To-morrow's sun! death, death will be

The night cry through each reeking tower,  
Unless we fly, ay, fly this hour !  
Thou art betray'd : some wretch who knew  
That dreadful glen's mysterious clew —  
Nay, doubt not, by yon stars, 'tis true ! —  
Hath sold thee to my vengeful sire ;  
This morning, with that smile so dire  
He wears in joy, he told me all,  
And stamp'd in triumph through our hall,  
As though thy heart already beat  
Its last life-throb beneath his feet !  
Good Heaven ! how little dream'd I then  
His victim was mine own loved youth ! —  
Fly — send — let some one watch the glen, —  
By all my hopes of Heaven, 't is truth ! ”

Oh, colder than the wind that freezes  
Founts that but now in sunshine play'd,  
Is that congealing pang which seizes  
The trusting bosom, when betray'd.  
He felt it — deeply felt — and stood,  
As if the tale had frozen his blood,  
So mazed and motionless was he, —  
Like one whom sudden spells enchant,  
Or some mute marble habitant  
Of the still Halls of Ishmonie !

But soon the painful chill was o'er,  
And his great soul, herself once more,

Look'd from his brow in all the rays  
Of her best, happiest, grandest days.  
Never in moment most elate

Did that high spirit softer rise ;  
While bright, serene, determinate,  
His looks are lifted to the skies,  
As if the signal lights of Fate

Were shining in those awful eyes !  
'Tis come, — his hour of martyrdom  
In Iran's sacred cause is come ;  
And, though his life hath pass'd away  
Like lightning on a stormy day,  
Yet shall his death-hour leave a track

Of glory, permanent and bright,  
To which the brave of after-times,  
The suffering brave, shall long look back  
With proud regret, — and by its light  
Watch through the hours of Slavery's night  
For vengeance on the Oppressor's crimes.

This rock, his monument aloft,

Shall speak the tale to many an age ;  
And hither bards and heroes oft

Shall come in secret pilgrimage,  
And bring their warrior sons, and tell  
The wondering boys where Hafed fell,  
And swear them on those lone remains  
Of their lost country's ancient fanes, —  
Never, while breath of life shall live  
Within them; never to forgive  
The accursed race, whose ruthless chain







Hath left on Iran's neck a stain  
Blood, blood alone can cleanse again!

Such are the swelling thoughts that now  
Enthroned themselves on Hafed's brow;  
And ne'er did saint of Issa gaze

On the red wreath, for martyrs twined,  
More proudly than the youth surveys

That pile, which through the gloom behind,  
Half lighted by the altar's fire,

Glimmers — his destined funeral pyre!

Heap'd by his own, his comrades' hands,

Of every wood of odorous breath,

There, by the Fire-God's shrine it stands,

Ready to fold in radiant death

The few still left of those who swore

To perish there, when hope was o'er, —

The few, to whom that couch of flame,

Which rescues them from bonds and shame,

Is sweet and welcome as the bed

For their own infant Prophet spread,

When pitying Heaven to roses turn'd

The death-flames that beneath him burn'd!

With watchfulness the maid attends

His rapid glance, where'er it bends, —

Why shoot his eyes such awful beams?

What plans he now? what thinks or dreams?

Alas! why stands he musing here,

When every moment teems with fear?

"Hafed, mine own beloved Lord,"  
 She kneeling cries, "first, last, adored!  
 If in that soul thou'st ever felt  
     Half what thy lips impassion'd swore,  
 Here on my knees, that never knelt  
     To any but their God before,  
 I pray thee, as thou lov'st me, fly!—  
 Now, now!—ere yet their blades are nigh.  
 Oh, haste!—the bark that bore me hither  
     Can waft us o'er yon darkening sea,  
 East, — west, — alas, I care not whither,  
     So thou art safe, and I with thee!  
 Go where we will, this hand in thine,  
     Those eyes before me smiling thus,  
 Through good and ill, through storm and shine,  
     The world's a world of love for us!  
 On some calm blessed shore we'll dwell,  
 Where 'tis no crime to love too well;  
 Where thus to worship tenderly  
 An erring child of light like thee  
 Will not be sin, — or, if it be,  
 Where we may weep our faults away,  
 Together kneeling, night and day,  
 Thou, for *my* sake, at Alla's shrine,  
 And I — at *any* God's for thine!"

Wildly these passionate words she spoke, —  
     Then hung her head, and wept for shame;  
 Sobbing as if her heart-string broke  
     With every deep-heaved sob that came.

While he, young, warm, — oh, wonder not  
If, for a moment, pride and fame,  
His oath, his cause, that shrine of flame,  
And Iran's self, are all forgot  
For her whom at his feet he sees  
Kneeling in speechless agonies.  
No, blame him not, if Hope awhile  
Dawn'd in his soul, and threw her smile  
O'er hours to come, — o'er days and nights,  
Wing'd with those precious pure delights  
Which she, who bends all beauteous there,  
Was born to kindle and to share.  
A tear or two, which, as he bow'd  
To raise the suppliant, trembling stole,  
First warn'd him of this dangerous cloud  
Of softness passing o'er his soul.  
Starting, he brush'd the drops away,  
Unworthy o'er that cheek to stray, —  
Like one who, on the morn of fight,  
Shakes from his sword the dews of night,  
That had but dimm'd, not stain'd, its light.  
Yet, though subdued the unnerving thrill,  
Its warmth, its weakness linger'd still,  
So touching in each look and tone  
That the fond, fearing, hoping maid  
Half counted on the flight she pray'd,  
Half thought the hero's soul was grown  
As soft, as yielding as her own,  
And smiled and bless'd him, while he said :  
“ Yes, if there be some happier sphere,  
Where fadeless truth like ours is dear, —

If there be any land of rest  
For those who love and ne'er forget, —  
Oh, comfort thee ; for, safe and blest,  
We'll meet in that calm region yet ! ”

Scarce had she time to ask her heart  
If good or ill these words impart,  
When the roused youth impatient flew  
To the tower-wall where, high in view,  
A ponderous sea-horn hung, and blew  
A signal, deep and dread as those  
The storm-fiend at his rising blows.  
Full well his Chieftains, sworn and true  
Through life and death, that signal knew ;  
For 'twas the appointed warning-blast,  
The alarm to tell when hope was past,  
And the tremendous death-die cast !  
And there, upon the mouldering tower,  
Hath hung this sea-horn many an hour,  
Ready to sound o'er land and sea  
That dirge-note of the brave and free.  
They came — his Chieftains at the call  
Came slowly round, and with them all —  
Alas, how few ! — the worn remains  
Of those who late o'er Kerman's plains  
Went gaily prancing to the clash  
Of Moorish zel and tymbalon,  
Catching new hope from every flash  
Of their long lances in the sun,

And, as their coursers charged the wind,  
And the white ox-tails stream'd behind,  
Looking as if the steeds they rode  
Were wing'd, and every Chief a God!  
How fallen, how alter'd now! how wan  
Each scarr'd and faded visage shone,  
As round the burning shrine they came!

How deadly was the glare it cast,  
As mute they paused before the flame

To light their torches as they pass'd!  
'Twas silence all — the youth had plann'd  
The duties of his soldier-band;  
And each determined brow declares  
His faithful Chieftains well know theirs.

But minutes speed — night gems the skies —  
And oh, how soon, ye blessed eyes  
That look from heaven, ye may behold  
Sights that will turn your star-fires cold!  
Breathless with awe, impatience, hope,  
The maiden sees the veteran group  
Her litter silently prepare,

And lay it at her trembling feet;  
And now the youth, with gentle care,  
Hath placed her in the shelter'd seat,  
And press'd her hand — that lingering press  
Of hands, that for the last time sever;  
Of hearts, whose pulse of happiness,  
When that hold breaks, is dead forever.

And yet to her this sad caress  
 Gives hope — so fondly hope can err !  
 'Twas joy, she thought, joy's mute excess —  
 Their happy flight's dear harbinger ;  
 'Twas warmth — assurance — tenderness, —  
 'Twas anything but leaving her.

“ Haste, haste ! ” she cried, “ the clouds grow  
 dark,  
 But still, ere night, we'll reach the bark ;  
 And by to-morrow's dawn — oh, bliss ! —  
 With thee upon the sun-bright deep,  
 Far off, I'll but remember this,  
 As some dark vanish'd dream of sleep ;  
 And thou ” — But ah ! — he answers not :  
 Good Heaven ! — and does she go alone ?  
 She now has reach'd that dismal spot,  
 Where, some hours since, his voice's tone  
 Had come to soothe her fears and ills,  
 Sweet as the angel Israfil's,  
 When every leaf on Eden's tree  
 Is trembling to his minstrelsy, —  
 Yet now — oh, now, he is not nigh.  
 “ Hafed ! my Hafed ! — if it be  
 Thy will, thy doom this night to die,  
 Let me but stay to die with thee,  
 And I will bless thy lovèd name,  
 Till the last life-breath leave this frame.  
 Oh, let our lips, our cheeks, be laid  
 But near each other while they fade ;



Let us but mix our parting breaths,  
And I can die ten thousand deaths!

You too, who hurry me away  
So cruelly, one moment stay —

Oh, stay — one moment is not much —  
He yet may come — for *him* I pray —  
Hafed! dear Hafed! ”— All the way

In wild lamentings, that would touch  
A heart of stone, she shriek'd his name  
To the dark woods — no Hafed came:  
No, hapless pair, you've look'd your last;

Your hearts should both have broken then;  
The dream is o'er — your doom is cast —  
You'll never meet on earth again!

Alas for him, who hears her cries!

Still half-way down the steep he stands,  
Watching with fix'd and feverish eyes

The glimmer of those burning brands,  
That down the rocks, with mournful ray,  
Light all he loves on earth away!

Hopeless as they who, far at sea,

By the cold moon have just consign'd  
The corse of one, loved tenderly,

To the bleak flood they leave behind;  
And on the deck still lingering stay,  
And long look back, with sad delay,  
To watch the moonlight on the wave  
That ripples o'er that cheerless grave.

But see — he starts! — what heard he then?  
 That dreadful shout! — across the glen  
 From the land-side it comes, and loud  
 Rings through the chasm; as if the crowd  
 Of fearful things, that haunt that dell,  
 Its Gholes and Dives and shapes of Hell,  
 Had all in one dread howl broke out, —  
 So loud, so terrible that shout!

“ They come — the Moslems come ! ” he  
 cries,

His proud soul mounting to his eyes;

“ Now, Spirits of the Brave, who roam  
 Enfranchised through yon starry dome,  
 Rejoice — for souls of kindred fire  
 Are on the wing to join your choir ! ”

He said — and, light as bridegrooms bound

To their young loves, reclimb'd the steep  
 And gain'd the Shrine; his Chiefs stood round —

Their swords, as with instinctive leap,  
 Together, at that cry accurst,

Had from their sheaths, like sunbeams, burst.  
 And hark! — again — again it rings;

Near and more near its echoings

Peal through the chasm — oh, who that then

Had seen those listening warrior-men,

With their swords grasp'd, their eyes of flame

Turn'd on their Chief — could doubt the  
 shame,

The indignant shame with which they thrill

To hear those shouts and yet stand still?

He read their thoughts — they were his own :

“ What ! while our arms can wield these blades,  
Shall we die tamely? — die alone,

Without one victim to our shades,  
One Moslem heart, where, buried deep,  
The sabre from its toil may sleep?  
No — God of Iran’s burning skies,  
Thou scorn’st the inglorious sacrifice !  
No — though of all earth’s hope bereft,  
Life, swords, and vengeance still are left !

We’ll make yon valley’s reeking caves  
Live in the awe-struck minds of men,  
Till tyrants shudder, when their slaves  
Tell of the Gheber’s bloody glen.

Follow, brave hearts ! — this pile remains  
Our refuge still from life and chains ;  
But his the best, the holiest bed,  
Who sinks entomb’d in Moslem dead ! ”

Down the precipitous rocks they sprung,  
While vigor, more than human, strung  
Each arm and heart. — The exulting foe  
Still through the dark defiles below,  
Track’d by his torches’ lurid fire,

Wound slow, as through Golconda’s vale  
The mighty serpent, in his ire,

Glides on with glittering, deadly trail.  
No torch the Ghebers need — so well  
They know each mystery of the dell,  
So oft have, in their wanderings,

Cross'd the wild race that round them dwell,  
The very tigers from their delves  
Look out, and let them pass, as things  
Untamed and fearless like themselves !

There was a deep ravine, that lay  
Yet darkling in the Moslem's way ;  
Fit spot to make invaders rue  
The many fallen before the few.  
The torrents from that morning's sky  
Had fill'd the narrow chasm breast high,  
And, on each side, aloft and wild,  
Huge cliffs and toppling crags were piled, —  
The guards with which young Freedom lines  
The pathways to her mountain-shrines.  
Here, at this pass, the scanty band  
Of Iran's last avengers stand ;  
Here wait, in silence like the dead,  
And listen for the Moslem's tread  
So anxiously, the carrion-bird  
Above them flaps his wing unheard !

They come — that plunge into the water  
Gives signal for the work of slaughter !  
Now, Ghebers, now — if e'er your blades  
Had point or prowess, prove them now !  
Woe to the file that foremost wades !  
They come — a falchion greets each brow,  
And, as they tumble, trunk on trunk,  
Beneath the gory waters sunk,

Still o'er their drowning bodies press  
New victims quick and numberless ;  
Till scarce an arm in Hafed's band,  
    So fierce their toil, hath power to stir,  
But listless from each crimson hand  
    The sword hangs, clogg'd with massacre.  
Never was horde of tyrants met  
With bloodier welcome — never yet  
To patriot vengeance hath the sword  
More terrible libations pour'd.

All up the dreary long ravine,  
By the red murky glimmer seen  
Of half-quench'd brands that o'er the flood  
Lie scatter'd round and burn in blood,  
What ruin glares ! what carnage swims !  
Heads, blazing turbans, quivering limbs,  
Lost swords that, dropp'd from many a hand,  
In that thick pool of slaughter stand, —  
Wretches who wading, half on fire  
    From the toss'd brands that round them fly,  
'Twixt flood and flame, in shrieks expire ;  
    And some who, grasp'd by those that die,  
Sink woundless with them, smother'd o'er  
In their dead brethren's gushing gore !

But vainly hundreds, thousands bleed, —  
Still hundreds, thousands more succeed ;

Countless as toward some flame at night  
 The North's dark insects wing their flight,  
 And quench or perish in its light,  
 To this terrific spot they pour —  
 Till, bridged with Moslem bodies o'er,  
 It bears aloft their slippery tread,  
 And o'er the dying and the dead, —  
 Tremendous causeway! — on they pass.  
 Then, hapless Ghebers, then, alas!  
 What hope was left for you? — for you,  
 Whose yet warm pile of sacrifice  
 Is smoking in their vengeful eyes!  
 Whose swords how keen, how fierce they knew,  
 And burn with shame to find how few!

Crush'd down by that vast multitude,  
 Some found their graves where first they stood;  
 While some with hardier struggle died,  
 And still fought on by Hafed's side,  
 Who, fronting to the foe, trod back  
 Toward the high towers his gory track;  
 And, as a lion swept away

By sudden swell of Jordan's pride  
 From the wild covert where he lay,  
 Long battles with the o'erwhelming tide,  
 So fought he back with fierce delay,  
 And kept both foes and fate at bay.

But whither now? — their track is lost,  
 Their prey escaped — guide, torches gone;

By torrent-beds and labyrinths crost,  
The scatter'd crowd rushed blindly on :  
"Curse on those tardy lights that wind,"  
They panting cry, "so far behind !  
Oh, for a bloodhound's precious scent,  
To track the way the Gheber went !"  
Vain wish — confusedly along  
They rush, more desperate as more wrong :  
Till, wilder'd by the far-off lights  
Yet glittering up those gloomy heights,  
Their footing, mazed and lost, they miss,  
And down the darkling precipice  
Are dash'd into the deep abyss ;  
Or midway hang, impaled on rocks,  
A banquet, yet alive, for flocks  
Of ravening vultures, — while the dell  
Re-echoes with each horrible yell.

Those sounds — the last, to vengeance dear,  
That e'er shall ring in Hafed's ear, —  
Now reach'd him, as aloft, alone,  
Upon the steep way breathless thrown,  
He lay beside his reeking blade,  
Resign'd, as if life's task were o'er,  
Its last blood-offering amply paid,  
And Iran's self could claim no more.  
One only thought, one lingering beam,  
Now broke across his dizzy dream  
Of pain and weariness : 'twas she,  
His heart's pure planet, shining yet

Above the waste of memory,  
When all life's other lights were set.  
And never to his mind before  
Her image such enchantment wore.  
It seem'd as if each thought that stain'd,  
Each fear that chill'd their loves, was past;  
And not one cloud of earth remain'd  
Between him and her radiance cast; —  
As if to charms, before so bright,  
New grace from other worlds was given,  
And his soul saw her by the light  
Now breaking o'er itself from heaven!

A voice spoke near him — 'twas the tone  
Of a loved friend, the only one,  
Of all his warriors, left with life  
From that short night's tremendous strife.  
“And must we then, my Chief, die here?  
Foes around us, and the Shrine so near!”  
These words have roused the last remains  
Of life within him. “What! not yet  
Beyond the reach of Moslem chains!”  
The thought could make e'en Death forget  
His icy bondage; with a bound  
He springs, all bleeding, from the ground,  
And grasps his comrade's arm, now grown  
E'en feebler, heavier than his own,  
And up the painful pathway leads,  
Death gaining on each step he treads.



Speed them, thou God who heard'st their vow!  
They mount — they bleed; oh, save them now!  
The crags are red they've clamber'd o'er,  
The rock-weed's dripping with their gore;  
Thy blade too, Hafed, false at length,  
Now breaks beneath thy tottering strength!  
Haste, haste! — the voices of the Foe  
Come near and nearer from below;  
One effort more — thank Heaven! 'tis past;  
They've gain'd the topmost steep at last.  
And now they touch the temple's walls,  
Now Hafed sees the Fire divine, —  
When, lo! — his weak, worn comrade falls  
Dead on the threshold of the Shrine.  
“Alas, brave soul, too quickly fled!  
And must I leave thee withering here,  
The sport of every ruffian's tread,  
The mark for every coward's spear?  
No, by yon altar's sacred beams!”  
He cries, and, with a strength that seems  
Not of this world, uplifts the frame  
Of the fallen Chief, and toward the flame  
Bears him along; — with death-damp hand  
The corpse upon the pyre he lays,  
Then lights the consecrated brand,  
And fires the pile, whose sudden blaze  
Like lightning bursts o'er Oman's Sea.  
“Now, Freedom's God! I come to Thee,”  
The youth exclaims; and with a smile  
Of triumph vaulting on the pile

In that last effort, ere the fires  
Have harm'd one glorious limb, expires!

What shriek was that on Oman's tide?  
It came from yonder drifting bark,  
That just hath caught upon her side  
The death-light — and again is dark.  
It is the boat — ah, why delayed? —  
That bears the wretched Moslem maid;  
Confided to the watchful care  
Of a small veteran band, with whom  
Their generous Chieftain would not share  
The secret of his final doom,  
But hoped when Hinda, safe and free,  
Was render'd to her father's eyes,  
Their pardon, full and prompt, would be  
The ransom of so dear a prize.  
Unconscious, thus, of Hafed's fate,  
And proud to guard their beauteous freight,  
Scarce had they clear'd the surfy waves  
That foam around those frightful caves,  
When the curst war-whoops, known so well,  
Came echoing from the distant dell;  
Sudden each oar, upheld and still,  
Hung dripping o'er the vessel's side,  
And, driving at the current's will,  
They rock'd along the whispering tide;  
While every eye, in mute dismay,  
Was toward that fatal mountain turn'd,

Where the dim altar's quivering ray  
As yet all lone and tranquil burn'd.

Oh, 'tis not, Hinda, in the power  
Of Fancy's most terrific touch  
To paint thy pangs in that dread hour —  
Thy silent agony! 'twas such  
As those who feel could paint too well,  
But none e'er felt and lived to tell!  
'Twas not alone the dreary state  
Of a lorn spirit crush'd by fate,  
When, though no more remains to dread,  
The panic chill will not depart;  
When, though the inmate Hope be dead,  
Her ghost still haunts the mouldering heart.  
No — pleasures, hopes, affections, gone,  
The wretch may bear, and yet live on,  
Like things within the cold rock found  
Alive, when all's congeal'd around.  
But there's a blank repose in this,  
A calm stagnation, that were bliss  
To the keen, burning, harrowing pain,  
Now felt through all thy breast and brain; —  
That spasm of terror, mute, intense,  
That breathless, agonized suspense,  
From whose hot throb, whose deadly aching,  
The heart hath no relief but breaking!

Calm is the wave — heaven's brilliant lights  
Reflected dance beneath the prow;

Time was when, on such lovely nights,  
 She who is there, so desolate now,  
 Could sit all cheerful, though alone,  
 And ask no happier joy than seeing  
 That starlight o'er the waters thrown —  
 No joy but that, to make her blest,  
 And the fresh, buoyant sense of being,  
 Which bounds in youth's yet careless breast, —  
 Itself a star, not borrowing light,  
 But in its own glad essence bright.  
 How different now! — But hark! again  
 The yell of havoc rings! — brave men,  
 In vain, with beating hearts, ye stand  
 On the bark's edge — in vain each hand  
 Half draws the falchion from its sheath;  
 All's o'er — in rust your blades may lie:  
 He, at whose word they've scatter'd death,  
 E'en now, this night, himself must die!  
 Well may ye look to yon dim tower,  
 And ask, and wandering guess, what means  
 The battle-cry at this dead hour!  
 Ah, she could tell you — she who leans  
 Unheeded there, pale, sunk, aghast,  
 With brow against the dew-cold mast;  
 Too well she knows — her more than life,  
 Her soul's first idol and its last,  
 Lies bleeding in that murderous strife.

But see! what moves upon the height?  
 Some signal! — 'tis a torch's light:

What bodes its solitary glare?  
In grasping silence toward the Shrine  
All eyes are turn'd — thine, Hinda, thine  
    Fix their last fading life-beams there.  
'Twas but a moment : fierce and high  
The death-pile blazed into the sky,  
And far away, o'er rock and flood,  
    Its melancholy radiance sent ;  
While Hafed, like a vision, stood  
Reveal'd before the burning pyre,  
Tall, shadowy, like a Spirit of Fire  
    Shrined in its own grand element !  
“ 'Tis he ! ” the shuddering maid exclaims, —  
    But, while she speaks, he's seen no more ;  
High burst in air the funeral flames,  
    And Iran's hopes and hers are o'er !  
One wild heart-broken shriek she gave, —  
    Then sprung, as if to reach that blaze,  
    Where still she fix'd her dying gaze,  
And, gazing, sunk into the wave, —  
Deep, deep, — where never care or pain  
Shall reach her innocent heart again !

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Farewell — farewell to thee, Araby's daughter !  
    (Thus warbled a Peri beneath the dark sea),  
No pearl ever lay, under Oman's green water,  
    More pure in its shell than thy spirit in thee.

Oh, fair as the sea-flower close to thee growing,  
How light was thy heart till Love's witchery came,  
Like the wind of the south o'er a summer lute  
blowing,  
And hush'd all its music, and wither'd its frame!

But long, upon Araby's green sunny highlands,  
Shall maids and their lovers remember the doom  
Of her who lies sleeping among the Pearl Islands,  
With nought but the sea-star to light up her tomb.

And still, when the merry date-season is burning,  
And calls to the palm-groves the young and the  
old,  
The happiest there, from their pastime returning  
At sunset, will weep when thy story is told.

The young village-maid, when with flowers she  
dresses  
Her dark flowing hair for some festival day,  
Will think of thy fate, till, neglecting her tresses,  
She mournfully turns from the mirror away.

Nor shall Iran, beloved of her Hero, forget thee,  
Though tyrants watch over her tears as they start;  
Close, close by the side of that Hero she'll set thee,  
Embalm'd in the innermost shrine of her heart.

Farewell — be it ours to embellish thy pillow  
With everything beauteous that grows in the deep,

Each flower of the rock and each gem of the billow  
Shall sweeten thy bed and illumine thy sleep.

Around thee shall glisten the loveliest amber  
That ever the sorrowing sea-bird has wept ;  
With many a shell, in whose hollow-wreathed  
chamber,  
We, Peris of Ocean, by moonlight have slept.

We'll dive where the gardens of coral lie darkling,  
And plant all the rosiest stems at thy head ;  
We'll seek where the sands of the Caspian are  
sparkling,  
And gather their gold to strew over thy bed.

Farewell — farewell ! until Pity's sweet fountain  
Is lost in the hearts of the fair and the brave,  
They'll weep for the Chieftain who died on that  
mountain,  
They'll weep for the Maiden who sleeps in this  
wave.

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THE singular placidity with which Fadladeen had listened, during the latter part of this obnoxious story, surprised the Princess and Feramorz exceedingly ; and even inclined towards him the hearts of

these unsuspecting young persons, who little knew the source of a complacency so marvellous. The truth was, he had been organizing, for the last few days, a most notable plan of persecution against the Poet, in consequence of some passages that had fallen from him on the second evening of recital, — which appeared to this worthy Chamberlain to contain language and principles for which nothing short of the summary criticism of the Chabuk would be advisable. It was his intention, therefore, immediately on their arrival at Cashmere, to give information to the King of Bucharia of the very dangerous sentiments of his minstrel; and if, unfortunately, that monarch did not act with suitable vigor on the occasion (that is, if he did not give the Chabuk to Feramorz, and a place to Fadladeen), there would be an end, he feared, of all legitimate government in Bucharia. He could not help, however, auguring better both for himself and the cause of potentates in general; and it was the pleasure arising from these mingled anticipations that diffused such unusual satisfaction through his features, and made his eyes shine, out, like poppies of the desert, over the wide and lifeless wilderness of that countenance.

Having decided upon the Poet's chastisement in this manner, he thought it but humanity to spare him the minor tortures of criticism. Accordingly, when they assembled the following evening in the pavilion, and Lalla Rookh was expecting to see all



The beauties of her bard melt away, one by one, in the acidity of criticism, like pearls in the cup of the Egyptian queen, — he agreeably disappointed her, by merely saying with an ironical smile, that the merits of such a poem deserved to be tried at a much higher tribunal; and then suddenly passed off into a panegyric upon all Mussulman sovereigns, more particularly his august and Imperial master, Aurungzebe, — the wisest and best of the descendants of Timur, — who, among other great things he had done for mankind, had given to him, Fadladeen, the very profitable posts of Betel-carrier and Taster of Sherbets to the Emperor, Chief Holder of the Girdle of Beautiful Forms, and Grand Nazir, or Chamberlain of the Haram.

They were now not far from that Forbidden River, beyond which no pure Hindoo can pass; and were reposing for a time in the rich valley of Hussun Abdual, which had always been a favorite resting-place of the Emperors in their annual migrations to Cashmere. Here often had the Light of the Faith, Jehan-Guire, been known to wander with his beloved and beautiful Nourmahal; and here would Lalla Rookh have been happy to remain forever, giving up the throne of Bucharia and the world for Feramorz and love in this sweet, lonely valley. But the time was now fast approaching when she must see him no longer, — or, what was still worse, behold him with eyes whose every look belonged to another; and there was a melancholy preciousness in these

last moments, which made her heart cling to them as it would to life. During the latter part of the journey, indeed, she had sunk into a deep sadness, from which nothing but the presence of the young minstrel could awake her. Like those lamps in tombs, which only light up when the air is admitted, it was only at his approach that her eyes became smiling and animated. But here, in this dear valley, every moment appeared an age of pleasure; she saw him all day, and was, therefore, all day happy, — resembling, she often thought, that people of Zinge, who attribute the unfading cheerfulness they enjoy to one genial star that rises nightly over their heads.

The whole party, indeed, seemed in their liveliest mood during the few days they passed in this delightful solitude. The young attendants of the Princess, who were here allowed a much freer range than they could safely be indulged with in a less sequestered place, ran wild among the gardens and bounded through the meadows, lightly as young roes over the aromatic plains of Tibet. While Fad-ladeen, in addition to the spiritual comfort derived by him from a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Saint from whom the valley is named, had also opportunities of indulging, in a small way, his taste for victims, by putting to death some hundreds of those unfortunate little lizards which all pious Mussulmans make it a point to kill; — taking for granted, that the manner in which the creature hangs its head is

meant as a mimicry of the attitude in which the Faithful say their prayers.

About two miles from Hussun Abdaul were those Royal Gardens which had grown beautiful under the care of so many lovely eyes, and were beautiful still, though those eyes could see them no longer. This place, with its flowers and its holy silence, interrupted only by the dipping of the wings of birds in its marble basins filled with the pure water of those hills, was to Lalla Rookh all that her heart could fancy of fragrance, coolness, and almost heavenly tranquillity. As the Prophet said of Damascus, "It was too delicious;" and here, in listening to the sweet voice of Feramorz, or reading in his eyes what yet he never dared to tell her, the most exquisite moments of her whole life were passed. One evening, when they had been talking of the Sultana Nourmahal, the Light of the Haram, who had so often wandered among these flowers, and fed with her own hands, in those marble basins, the small shining fishes of which she was so fond, — the youth, in order to delay the moment of separation, proposed to recite a short story, or rather rhapsody, of which this adored Sultana was the heroine. It related, he said, to the reconciliation of a sort of lovers' quarrel which took place between her and the Emperor during a Feast of Roses at Cashmere; and would remind the Princess of that difference between Haroun-al-Raschid and his fair mistress Marida which was so happily made up by the soft

strains of the musician Moussali. As the story was chiefly to be told in song, and Feramorz had unluckily forgotten his own lute in the valley, he borrowed the vina of Lalla Rookh's little Persian slave, and thus began :—

## THE LIGHT OF THE HARAM

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WHO has not heard of the vale of Cashmere,  
With its roses the brightest that earth ever gave,  
Its temples, and grottos, and fountains as clear  
As the love-lighted eyes that hung over their wave?

Oh, to see it at sunset, — when warm o'er the Lake  
Its splendor at parting a summer eve throws,  
Like a bride, full of blushes, when lingering to take  
A last look of her mirror at night ere she goes! —  
When the shrines through the foliage are gleaming  
half shown,

And each hallows the hour by some rites of its own.  
Here the music of prayer from a minaret swells,  
Here the Magian his urn, full of perfume, is  
swinging,

And here, at the altar, a zone of sweet bells  
Round the waist of some fair Indian dancer is  
ringing.

Or to see it by moonlight, — when mellowly shines  
The light o'er its palaces, gardens, and shrines;  
When the water-falls gleam, like a quick fall of stars,  
And the nightingale's hymn from the Isle of Chenars

Is broken by laughs and light echoes of feet  
 From the cool shining walks where the young people  
     meet.

Or at morn, — when the magic of daylight awakes  
 A new wonder each minute, as slowly it breaks,  
 Hills, cupolas, fountains, call'd forth every one  
 Out of darkness, as if but just born of the Sun ;  
 When the Spirit of Fragrance is up with the day,  
 From his Haram of night-flowers stealing away ;  
 And the wind, full of wantonness, woos like a lover  
 The young aspen-trees, till they tremble all over ;  
 When the East is as warm as the light of first hopes,  
     And Day, with his banner of radiance unfurl'd,  
 Shines in through the mountainous portal that opes,  
     Sublime, from that Valley of Bliss to the world !

But never yet, by night or day,  
 In dew of spring or summer's ray,  
 Did the sweet Valley shine so gay  
 As now it shines — all love and light,  
 Visions by day and feasts by night !  
 A happier smile illumines each brow,  
     With quicker spread each heart uncloses,  
 And all is ecstasy — for now  
     The Valley holds its Feast of Roses ;  
 The joyous time, when pleasures pour  
 Profusely round, and in their shower  
 Hearts open, like the Season's Rose, —  
     The Floweret of a hundred leaves,

Expanding while the dew-fall flows,  
And every leaf its balm receives.

'Twas when the hour of evening came  
Upon the Lake, serene and cool,  
When Day had hid his sultry flame  
Behind the palms of Baramoule,  
When maids began to lift their heads,  
Refresh'd from their embroider'd beds  
Where they had slept the sun away,  
And waked to moonlight and to play. |  
All were abroad — the busiest hive  
On Bela's hills is less alive,  
When saffron-beds are full in flower,  
Than look'd the Valley in that hour.  
A thousand restless torches play'd  
Through every grove and island shade ;  
A thousand sparkling lamps were set  
On every dome and minaret ;  
And fields and pathways, far and near,  
Were lighted by a blaze so clear  
That you could see, in wandering round,  
The smallest rose-leaf on the ground.  
Yet did the maids and matrons leave  
Their veils at home, that brilliant eve ;  
And there were glancing eyes about,  
And cheeks, that would not dare shine out  
In open day, but thought they might  
Look lovely then, because 'twas night.

And all were free, and wandering,  
And all exclaim'd to all they met,  
That never did the summer bring  
So gay a Feast of Roses yet ; —  
The moon had never shed a light  
So clear as that which bless'd them there ;  
The roses ne'er shone half so bright,  
Nor they themselves look'd half so fair

And what a wilderness of flowers !  
If seem'd as though from all the bowers  
And fairest fields of all the year,  
The mingled spoil were scatter'd here.  
The Lake, too, like a garden breathes,  
With the rich buds that o'er it lie, —  
As if a shower of fairy wreaths  
Had fallen upon it from the sky !  
And then the sounds of joy, — the beat  
Of tabers and and of dancing feet ; —  
The minaret-crier's chant of glee  
Sung from his lighted gallery,  
And answer'd by a ziralet  
From neighboring Haram, wild and sweet ;  
The merry laughter, echoing  
From gardens, where the silken swing  
Wafts some delighted girl above  
The top leaves of the orange grove ;  
Or, from those infant groups at play  
Among the tents that line the way,  
Flinging, unawed by slave or mother,  
Handfuls of roses at each other.



Then, the sounds from the Lake, the low whispering  
in boats,

As they shoot through the moonlight; the dipping  
of oars,

And the wild airy warbling that everywhere floats,  
Through the groves, round the islands, — as if  
all the shores,

Like those of Kathay, utter'd music, and gave  
An answer in song to the kiss of each wave.

But the gentlest of all are those sounds, full of  
feeling,

That soft from the lute of some lover are stealing, —  
Some lover who knows all the heart-touching power  
Of a lute and a sigh in this magical hour.

Oh, best of delights as it everywhere is

To be near the loved One, — what a rapture is his  
Who in moonlight and music thus sweetly may glide  
O'er the Lake of Cashmere, with that One by his side!

If women can make the worst wilderness dear,

Think, think what a Heaven she must make of  
Cashmere!

So felt the magnificent Son of Acbar,

When from power and pomp and the trophies of war  
He flew to that Valley, forgetting them all

With the Light of the Haram, his young Nourmahal.

When free and uncrown'd as the Conqueror roved

By the banks of that Lake, with his only beloved,

He saw, in the wreaths she would playfully snatch

From the hedges, a glory his crown could not match,

And preferr'd in his heart the least ringlet that curl'd  
Down her exquisite neck to the throne of the world.  
There's a beauty, forever unchangingly bright,  
Like the long sunny lapse of a summer-day's light,  
Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,  
Till Love falls asleep in its sameness of splendor.  
This was not the beauty — oh, nothing like this, —  
That to young Nourmahal gave such magic of bliss !  
But that loveliness, ever in motion, which plays  
Like the light upon autumn's soft shadowy days,  
Now here and now there, giving warmth as it flies  
From the lip to the cheek, from the cheek to the eyes ;  
Now melting in mist and now breaking in gleams,  
Like the glimpses a saint hath of Heaven in his  
dreams.

When pensive, it seem'd as if that very grace,  
That charm of all others, was born with her face !  
And when angry, — for e'en in the tranquildest climes  
Light breezes will ruffle the blossoms sometimes, —  
The short, passing anger but seem'd to awaken  
New beauty, like flowers that are sweetest when  
shaken.

If tenderness touch'd her, the dark of her eye  
At once took a darker, a heavenlier dye,  
From the depth of whose shadow, like holy revealings  
From innermost shrines, came the light of her feel-  
ings.

Then her mirth — oh, 'twas sportive as ever took  
wing  
From the heart with a burst, like the wild-bird in  
spring ;

Illumed by a wit that would fascinate sages,  
Yet playful as Peris just loosed from their cages.

While her laugh, full of life, without any control  
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her  
soul;

And where it most sparkled no glance could discover,  
In lip, cheek, or eyes, for she brighten'd all over, —  
Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,  
When it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun.  
Such, such were the peerless enchantments that gave  
Nourmahal the proud Lord of the East for her  
slave:

And tho' bright was his Haram — a living parterre  
Of the flowers of this planet, — though treasures  
were there

For which Soliman's self might have given all the  
store

That the navy from Ophir e'er wing'd to his shore,  
Yet dim before *her* were the smiles of them all,  
And the Light of his Haram was young Nourmahal!

But where is she now, this night of joy,  
When bliss is every heart's employ? —

When all around her is so bright,  
So like the visions of a trance,  
That one might think, who came by chance  
Into the Vale this happy night,  
He saw that City of Delight  
In Fairy-land whose streets and towers  
Are made of gems and light and flowers! —

Where is the loved Sultana? where,  
When mirth brings out the young and fair,  
Does she, the fairest, hide her brow,  
In melancholy stillness now?

Alas! — how light a cause may move  
Dissension between hearts that love!  
Hearts that the world in vain had tried,  
And sorrow but more closely tied;  
That stood the storm when waves were rough,  
Yet in a sunny hour fall off, —  
Like ships that have gone down at sea,  
When heaven was all tranquillity!  
A something, light as air — a look,  
A word unkind or wrongly taken, —  
Oh, love, that tempests never shook,  
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.  
And ruder words will soon rush in  
To spread the breach that words begin;  
And eyes forget the gentle ray  
They wore in courtship's smiling day;  
And voices lose the tone that shed  
A tenderness round all they said;  
Till fast declining, one by one,  
The sweetnesses of love are gone,  
And hearts, so lately mingled, seem  
Like broken clouds, — or like the stream,  
That smiling left the mountain's brow  
As though its waters ne'er could sever,

Yet, ere it reach the plain below,  
Breaks into floods, that part forever.

Oh, you that have the charge of Love,  
Keep him in rosy bondage bound,  
As in the Fields of Bliss above  
He sits, with flowerets fetter'd round ;  
Loose not a tie that round him clings,  
Nor ever let him use his wings ;  
For e'en an hour, a minute's flight  
Will rob the plumes of half their light :  
Like that celestial bird, — whose nest  
Is found beneath far Eastern skies, —  
Whose wings, though radiant when at rest,  
Lose all their glory when he flies !

Some difference, of this dangerous kind,  
By which, though light, the links that bind  
The fondest hearts may soon be riven, —  
Some shadow in Love's summer heaven,  
Which, though a fleecy speck at first,  
May yet in awful thunder burst, —  
Such cloud it is that now hangs over  
The heart of the Imperial Lover,  
And far hath banish'd from his sight  
His Nourmahal, his Haram's Light !  
Hence is it, on this happy night,  
When Pleasure through the fields and groves  
Has let loose all her world of loves,

And every heart has found its own,  
He wanders, joyless and alone,  
And weary as that bird of Thrace  
Whose pinion knows no resting-place.  
In vain the loveliest cheeks and eyes  
This Eden of the Earth supplies

    Come crowding round : the cheeks are pale,  
The eyes are dim : — though rich the spot  
With every flower this earth has got,

    What is it to the nightingale,  
If there his darling rose is not?  
In vain the Valley's smiling throng  
Worship him, as he moves along ;  
He heeds them not — one smile of hers  
Is worth a world of worshippers.  
They but the Star's adorers are,  
She is the Heaven that lights the Star !

Hence is it, too, that Nourmahal,  
    Amid the luxuries of this hour,  
Far from the joyous festival,

    Sits in her own sequester'd bower,  
With no one near, to soothe or aid,  
But that inspired and wondrous maid,  
Namouna, the Enchantress, — one  
O'er whom his race the golden sun  
For unremember'd years has run,  
Yet never saw her blooming brow  
Younger or fairer than 'tis now.

Nay, rather, — as the west wind's sigh  
Freshens the flower it passes by, —  
Time's wing but seem'd, in stealing o'er,  
To leave her lovelier than before.  
Yet on her smiles a sadness hung,  
And when, as oft, she spoke or sung  
Of other worlds, there came a light  
From her dark eyes so strangely bright  
That all believed nor man nor earth  
Were conscious of Namouna's birth!  
All spells and talismans she knew,  
From the great Mantra, which around  
The Air's sublimer Spirits drew,  
To the gold gems of Afric, bound  
Upon the wandering Arab's arm,  
To keep him from the Siltim's harm.  
And she had pledged her powerful art, —  
Pledged it with all the zeal and heart  
Of one who knew, though high her sphere,  
What 'twas to lose a love so dear, —  
To find some spell that should recall  
Her Salim's smile to Nourmahal!

'Twas midnight; through the lattice, wreathed  
With woodbine, many a perfume breathed  
From plants that wake when others sleep, —  
From timid jasmine buds, that keep  
Their odor to themselves all day,  
But when the sunlight dies away

Let the delicious secret out  
 To every breeze that roams about, —  
 When thus Namouna: “ ’Tis the hour  
 That scatters spells on herb and flower,  
 And garlands might be gather’d now,  
 That, twined around the sleeper’s brow,  
 Would make him dream of such delights,  
 Such miracles and dazzling sights,  
 As Genii of the Sun behold,  
 At evening, from their tents of gold,  
 Upon the horizon — where they play  
 Till twilight comes, and, ray by ray,  
 Their sunny mansions melt away.  
 Now, too, a chaplet might be wreathed  
 Of buds o’er which the moon has breathed,  
 Which, worn by her whose love has stray’d  
 Might bring some Peri from the skies,  
 Some sprite, whose very soul is made  
 Of flowerets’ breaths and lovers’ sighs,  
 And who might tell ” —

“ For me, for me,”

Cried Nourmahal impatiently, —  
 “ Oh, twine that wreath for me to-night ! ”  
 Then, rapidly, with foot as light  
 As the young musk-roe’s, out she flew,  
 To cull each shining leaf that grew  
 Beneath the moonlight’s hallowing beams,  
 For this enchanted Wreath of Dreams.  
 Anemones and Seas of Gold,  
 And new-blown lilies of the river,



And those sweet flowerets that unfold  
Their buds on Camadeva's quiver ;  
The tuberose, with her silvery light,  
That in the Gardens of Malay  
Is call'd the Mistress of the Night, —  
So like a bride, scented and bright,  
She comes out when the sun's away ;  
Amaranths, such as crown the maids  
That wander through Zamara's shades ;  
And the white moon-flower, as it shows,  
On Serendib's high crags, to those  
Who near the isle at evening sail,  
Scenting her clove-trees in the gale ;  
In short, all flowerets and all plants,—  
From the divine Amrita tree,  
That blesses heaven's inhabitants  
With fruits of immortality,  
Down to the basil tuft, that waves  
Its fragrant blossom over graves,  
And to the humble rosemary,  
Whose sweets so thanklessly are shed  
To scent the desert and the dead ; —  
All in that garden bloom, and all  
Are gather'd by young Nourmahal,  
Who heaps her baskets with the flowers  
And leaves, till they can hold no more ;  
Then to Namouna flies, and showers  
Upon her lap the shining store.

With what delight the Enchantress views  
So many buds, bathed with the dews

And beams of that bless'd hour! — her glance  
 Spoke something, past all mortal pleasures,  
 As, in a kind of holy trance,  
 She hung above those fragrant treasures,  
 Bending to drink their balmy airs,  
 As if she mix'd her soul with theirs.  
 And 'twas, indeed, the perfume shed  
 From flowers and scented flame, that fed  
 Her charmèd life — for none had e'er  
 Beheld her taste of mortal fare,  
 Nor ever in aught earthly dip,  
 But the morn's dew, her roseate lip.  
 Fill'd with the cool inspiring smell,  
 The Enchantress now begins her spell,  
 Thus singing as she winds and weaves  
 In mystic form the glittering leaves : —

“ I know where the wing'd visions dwell  
 That round the night-bed play ;  
 I know each herd and floweret's bell,  
 Where they hide their wings by day.  
     Then hasten we, maid,  
     To twine our braid ;  
 To-morrow the dreams and flowers will fade.

“ The image of love, that nightly flies  
 To visit the bashful maid,  
 Steals from the jasmine flower, that sighs  
 Its soul, like her, in the shade.

The dream of a future happier hour,  
That alights on misery's brow,  
Springs out of the silvery almond-flower,  
That blooms on a leafless bough.  
Then hasten we, maid,  
To twine our braid ;  
To-morrow the dreams and flowers will fade.

“ The visions, that oft to worldly eyes  
The glitter of mines unfold,  
Inhabit the mountain-herb that dyes  
The tooth of the fawn like gold.  
The phantom shapes — oh, touch not them ! —  
That appal the murderer's sight,  
Lurk in the fleshly mandrake's stem,  
That shrieks, when pluck'd at night !  
Then hasten we, maid,  
To twine our braid ;  
To-morrow the dreams and flowers will fade.”

“ The dream of the injured, patient mind,  
That smiles at the wrongs of men,  
Is found in the bruised and wounded rind  
Of the cinnamon, sweetest then.  
Then hasten we, maid,  
To twine our braid ;  
To-morrow the dreams and flowers will fade.”

No sooner was the flowery crown  
Placed on her head, than sleep came down,

Gently as nights of summer fall,  
 Upon the lids of Nourmahal ;  
 And, suddenly, a tuneful breeze,—  
 As full of small, rich harmonies  
 As ever wind that o'er the tents  
 Of Azab blew was full of scents,—  
 Steals on her ear, and floats and swells,  
     Like the first air of morning creeping  
 Into those wreathy, Red-Sea shells,  
     Where Love himself, of old, lay sleeping ;  
 And now a Spirit, form'd, 'twould seem,  
     Of music and of light, — so fair,  
 So brilliantly his features beam,  
     And such a sound is in the air  
 Of sweetness when he waves his wings,—  
 Hovers around her and thus sings :—

“ From Chindara's warbling fount I come,  
     Call'd by that moonlight garland spell ;  
 From Chindara's fount, my fairy home,  
     Where in music, morn and night, I dwell :  
 Where lutes in the air are heard about,  
     And voices are singing, the whole day long,  
 And every sigh the heart breathes out  
     Is turn'd, as it leaves the lips, to song !  
     Hither I come  
     From my fairy home ;  
 And if there's a magic in Music's strain,  
     I swear by the breath  
     Of that moonlight wreath,  
 Thy Lover shall sigh at thy feet again.

“For mine is the lay that lightly floats,  
And mine are the murmuring, dying notes,  
That fall as soft as snow on the sea,  
And melt in the heart as instantly ;  
And the passionate strain that, deeply going,  
Refines the bosom it trembles through,  
As the musk-wind, over the water blowing,  
Ruffles the wave, but sweetens it too.

“Mine is the charm whose mystic sway  
The Spirits of past Delight obey ;  
Let but the tuneful talisman sound,  
And they come, like Genii, hovering round.  
And mine is the gentle song that bears  
From soul to soul, the wishes of love,  
As a bird that wafts through genial airs  
The cinnamon-seed from grove to grove.

“ ’Tis I that mingle in one sweet measure  
The past, the present, and future of pleasure ;  
When Memory links the tone that is gone  
With the blissful tone that’s still in the ear ;  
And Hope from a heavenly note flies on  
To a note more heavenly still that is near.

“The warrior’s heart, when touch’d by me,  
Can as downy soft and as yielding be  
As his own white plume, that high amid death  
Thro’ the field hast shone — yet moves with a  
breath !

And oh, how the eyes of Beauty glisten,  
When Music has reach'd her inward soul,  
Like the silent stars, that wink and listen  
While Heaven's eternal melodies roll.  
So, hither I come  
From my fairy home ;  
And if there's a magic in Music's strain,  
I swear by the breath  
Of that moonlight wreath,  
Thy Lover shall sigh at thy feet again."

'Tis dawn — at least that earlier dawn,  
Whose glimpses are again withdrawn,  
As if the morn had waked, and then  
Shut close her lids of light again.  
And Nourmahal is up and trying  
The wonders of her lute, whose strings —  
Oh, bliss ! — now murmur like the sighing  
From that ambrosial Spirit's wings.  
And then, her voice — 'tis more than human ;  
Never, till now, had it been given  
To lips of any mortal woman  
To utter notes so fresh from heaven ;  
Sweet as the breath of angel sighs,  
When angel sighs are most divine. —  
" Oh, let it last till night," she cries,  
" And he is more than ever mine !"  
And hourly she renews the lay,  
So fearful lest its heavenly sweetness

Should, ere the evening, fade away, —

For things so heavenly have such fleetness !

But, far from fading, it but grows

Richer, diviner, as it flows ;

Till rapt she dwells on every string,

And pours again each sound along,

Like echo, lost and languishing,

In love with her own wondrous song.

That evening (trusting that his soul

Might be from haunting love released

By mirth, by music, and the bowl),

The Imperial Selim held a feast

In his magnificent Shalimar :

In whose Saloons, when the first star

Of evening o'er the waters trembled,

The valley's loveliest all assembled ;

All the bright creatures that, like dreams,

Glide through its foliage, and drink beams

Of beauty from its founts and streams ;

And all those wandering minstrel-maids,

Who leave — how *can* they leave? — the shades

Of that dear Valley, and are found

Singing in Gardens of the South

Those songs, that ne'er so sweetly sound

As from a young Cashmerian's mouth.

There, too, the Haram's inmates smile :

Maids from the West, with sun-bright hair,

And from the Garden of the Nile,

Delicate as the roses there ;

Daughters of Love from Cyprus' rocks,  
With Paphian diamonds in their locks ;  
Light Peri forms, such as there are  
On the gold meads of Candahar ;  
And they, before whose sleepy eyes  
    In their own bright Kathaian bowers,  
Sparkle such rainbow butterflies,  
    That they might fancy the rich flowers  
That round them in the sun lay sighing  
Had been by magic all set flying.

Everything young, everything fair,  
From East and West is blushing there,  
Except — except — O Nourmahal !  
Thou loveliest, dearest of them all,  
The one whose smile shone out alone,  
Amidst a world the only one ;  
Whose light, among so many lights,  
Was like that star on starry nights  
The seaman singles from the sky  
To steer his bark forever by !  
Thou wert not there — so Selim thought, —  
    And everything seem'd drear without thee ;  
But ah ! thou wert, thou wert, — and brought  
    Thy charm of song all fresh about thee.  
Mingling unnoticed with a band  
Of lutanists from many a land,  
And veil'd by such a mask as shades  
The features of young Arab maids —



A mask that leaves but one eye free,  
To do its best in witchery, —  
She roved, with beating heart, around,  
    And waited, trembling, for the minute  
When she might try if still the sound  
    Of her loved lute had magic in it.

The board was spread with fruits and wine:  
With grapes of gold, like those that shine  
On Casbin's hills; pomegranates full  
    Of melting sweetness, and the pears  
And sunniest apples that Caubul  
    In all its thousand gardens bears;  
Plantains, the golden and the green,  
Malaya's nectar'd mangusteen;  
Prunes of Bokara, and sweet nuts  
    From the far groves of Samarcand,  
And Basra dates, and apricots,  
    Seed of the Sun, from Iran's land;  
With rich conserve of Visna cherries,  
Of orange flowers, and of those berries  
That, wild and fresh, the young gazelles  
Feed on in Erac's rocky dells; —  
All these in richest vases smile,  
    In baskets of pure santal-wood,  
And urns of porcelain from that isle  
    Sunk underneath the Indian flood,  
Whence oft the lucky diver brings  
Vases to grace the halls of kings.

Wines, too, of every clime and hue,  
Around their liquid lustre threw :  
Amber Rosolli, — the bright dew  
From vineyards of the Green-Sea gushing ;  
And Shiraz wine, that richly ran  
As if that jewel, large and rare,  
The ruby for which Kublai-Khan  
Offer'd a city's wealth, were blushing  
Melted within the goblets there !

And amply Selim quaffs of each,  
And seems resolved the flood shall reach  
His inward heart, shedding around  
A genial deluge, as they run,  
That soon shall leave no spot undrown'd,  
For Love to rest his wings upon.  
He little knew how well the boy  
Can float upon a goblet's streams,  
Lighting them with his smile of joy ; —  
As bards have seen them in their dreams,  
Down the blue Ganges laughing glide  
Upon a rosy lotus wreath,  
Catching new lustre from the tide  
That with his image shone beneath.

But what are cups, without the aid  
Of song to speed them as they flow?  
And see — a lovely Georgian maid,  
With all the bloom, the freshen'd glow

Of her own country maidens' looks,  
When warm they rise from Teflis' brooks ;  
And with an eye whose restless ray,  
    Full, floating, dark — oh, he who knows  
His heart is weak, of Heaven should pray  
    To guard him from such eyes as those ! —  
With a voluptuous wildness flings  
Her snowy hand across the strings  
Of a syrinda, and thus sings : —

“ Come hither, come hither ! by night and by day,  
    We linger in pleasures that never are gone ;  
Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,  
    Another as sweet and as shining comes on.

And the love that is o'er, in expiring, gives birth  
    To a new one as warm, as unequall'd in bliss ;  
And oh, if there be an Elysium on earth,  
    It is this, it is this !

“ Here maidens are sighing, and fragrant their sigh  
    As the flower of the Amra just oped by a bee ;  
And precious their tears as that rain from the sky,  
    Which turns into pearls as it falls in the sea.  
Oh, think what the kiss and the smile must be  
    worth  
    When the sigh and the tear are so perfect in  
    bliss ;  
And oh, if there be an Elysium on earth,  
    It is this, it is this !

“ Here sparkles the nectar, that, hallow'd by love,  
    Could draw down those angels of old from their  
        sphere,  
Who for wine of this earth left the fountains above,  
    And forgot heaven's stars for the eyes we have  
        here.  
And, bless'd with the odor our goblet gives forth,  
    What Spirit the sweets of his Eden would miss?  
For oh, if there be an Elysium on earth,  
    It is this, it is this !”

The Georgian's song was scarcely mute,  
    When the same measure, sound for sound,  
Was caught up by another lute,  
    And so divinely breathed around,  
That all stood hush'd and wondering,  
    And turn'd and look'd into the air,  
As if they thought to see the wing  
    Of Israfil the Angel there ;

So powerfully on every soul  
That new, enchanted measure stole.  
While now a voice, sweet as the note  
Of the charm'd lute, was heard to float  
Along its chords, and so entwine  
    Its sounds with theirs, but none knew **whether**  
The voice or lute was most divine,  
    So wondrously they went together :

“ There’s a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has  
told,

When two, that are link’d in one heavenly tie,  
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,  
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die!  
One hour of a passion so sacred is worth

Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss ;  
And oh, if there be an Elysium on earth,  
It is this, it is this !”

’Twas not the air, ’twas not the words,  
But that deep magic in the chords  
And in the lips, that gave such power  
As Music knew not till that hour.

At once a hundred voices said,  
“ It is the mask’d Arabian maid !”

While Selim, who had felt the strain  
Deepest of any, and had lain  
Some minutes rapt as in a trance,

After the fairy sounds were o’er,  
Too inly touch’d for utterance,  
Now motion’d with his hand for more,

“ Fly to the desert, fly with me !  
Our Arab tents are rude for thee ;  
But oh, the choice what heart can doubt,  
Of tents with love, or thrones without ?

“ Our rocks are rough, but smiling there  
The acacia waves her yellow hair,

Lonely and sweet, nor loved the less  
For flowering in a wilderness.

“ Our sands are bare, but down their slope  
The silvery-footed antelope,  
As gracefully and gaily springs  
As o'er the marble courts of kings.

“ Then come — thine Arab maid will be  
The loved and lone acacia-tree,  
The antelope, whose feet shall bless  
With their light sound thy loneliness.

“ Oh, there are looks and tones that dart  
An instant sunshine through the heart, —  
As if the soul that minute caught  
Some treasure it through life had sought ;

“ As if the very lips and eyes,  
Predestined to have all our sighs,  
And never be forgot again,  
Sparkled and spoke before us then !

“ So came thine every glance and tone,  
When first on me they breathed and shone ;  
New, as if brought from other spheres,  
Yet welcome as if loved for years.

“ Then fly with me, — if thou hast known  
No other flame, nor falsely thrown  
A gem away, that thou hadst sworn  
Should ever in thy heart be worn.

“ Come, if the love thou hast for me  
Is pure and fresh as mine for thee, —  
Fresh as the fountain underground,  
When first 'tis by the lapwing found.

“ But if for me thou dost forsake  
Some other maid, and rudely break  
Her worshipp'd image from its base,  
To give to me the ruin'd place, —

“ Then, fare thee well — I'd rather make  
My bower upon some icy lake  
When thawing suns begin to shine,  
Than trust to love so false as thine!”

There was a pathos in this lay  
That, e'en without enchantment's art,  
Would instantly have found its way  
Deep into Selim's burning heart;  
But breathing, as it did, a tone  
To earthly lutes and lips unknown,  
With every chord fresh from the touch  
Of Music's Spirit, — 'twas too much!  
Starting, he dash'd away the cup, —  
Which all the time of this sweet air  
His hand had held, untasted, up,  
As if 'twere fix'd by magic there, —  
And naming her, so long unnamed,  
So long unseen, wildly exclaim'd,  
“O Nourmahal! O Nourmahal!  
Hadst thou but sung this witching strain,

I could forget — forgive thee all,  
And never leave those eyes again.”

The mask is off — the charm is wrought —  
And Selim to his heart has caught,  
In blushes, more than ever bright,  
His Nourmahal, his Haram's Light!  
And well do vanish'd frowns enhance  
The charm of every brighten'd glance;  
And dearer seems each dawning smile  
For having lost its light awhile;  
And, happier now for all her sighs,  
As on his arm her head reposes,  
She whispers him with laughing eyes,  
“Remember, love, the Feast of Roses!”

---

FADLADEEN, at the conclusion of this light rhapsody, took occasion to sum up his opinion of the young Cashmerian's poetry, — of which, he trusted, they had that evening heard the last. Having recapitulated the epithets “frivolous” — “inharmonious” — “nonsensical,” he proceeded to say that, viewing it in the most favorable light, it resembled one of those Maldivian boats to which the Princess had alluded in the relation of her dream, — a slight, gilded thing, sent adrift without rudder or ballast, and with nothing but vapid sweets



and faded flowers on board. The profusion, indeed, of flowers and birds which this poet had ready on all occasions, — not to mention dews, gems, etc., — was a most oppressive kind of opulence to his hearers; and had the unlucky effect of giving to his style all the glitter of the flower-garden without its method, and all the flutter of the aviary without its song. In addition to this, he chose his subjects badly, and was always most inspired by the worst parts of them. The charms of paganism, the merits of rebellion, — these were the themes honored with his particular enthusiasm; and, in the poem just recited, one of his most palatable passages was in praise of that beverage of the Unfaithful, wine; — “being, perhaps,” said he, relaxing into a smile, as conscious of his own character in the Haram on this point, “one of those bards whose fancy owes all its illumination to the grape, like that painted porcelain, so curious and so rare, whose images are only visible when liquor is poured into it.” Upon the whole, it was his opinion, from the specimens which they had heard, and which, he begged to say, were the most tiresome part of the journey, that — whatever other merits this well-dressed young gentleman might possess — poetry was by no means his proper avocation: “and indeed,” concluded the critic, “from his fondness for flowers and for birds, I would venture to suggest that a florist or a bird-catcher is a much more suitable calling for him than a poet.”

They had now begun to ascend those barren mountains which separate Cashmere from the rest of India; and as the heats were intolerable, and the time of their encampments limited to the few hours necessary for refreshment and repose, there was an end to all their delightful evenings, and Lalla Rookh saw no more of Feramorz. She now felt that her short dream of happiness was over, and that she had nothing but the recollection of its few blissful hours, like the one draught of sweet water that serves the camel across the wilderness, to be her heart's refreshment during the dreary waste of life that was before her. The blight that had fallen upon her spirits soon found its way to her cheek, and her ladies saw with regret — though not without some suspicion of the cause — that the beauty of their mistress, of which they were almost as proud as of their own, was fast vanishing away at the very moment of all when she had most need of it. What must the King of Bucharia feel, when, instead of the lively and beautiful Lalla Rookh, whom the poets of Delhi had described as more perfect than the divinest images in the house of Azor, he should receive a pale and inanimate victim, upon whose cheek neither health nor pleasure bloomed, and from whose eyes Love had fled, — to hide himself in her heart?

If anything could have charmed away the melancholy of her spirits, it would have been the fresh airs and enchanting scenery of that Valley which

the Persians so justly called the Unequaled. But neither the coolness of its atmosphere, so luxurious after toiling up those bare and burning mountains, — neither the splendor of the minarets and pagodas that shone out from the depth of its woods, nor the grottos, hermitages, and miraculous fountains which make every spot of that region holy ground, — neither the countless water-falls that rush into the Valley from all those high and romantic mountains that encircle it, nor the fair city on the Lake, whose houses, roofed with flowers, appeared at a distance like one vast and variegated parterre; — not all these wonders and glories of the most lovely country under the sun could steal her heart for a minute from those sad thoughts, which but darkened and grew bitterer every step she advanced.

The gay pomps and processions that met her upon her entrance into the Valley, and the magnificence with which the roads all along were decorated, did honor to the taste and gallantry of the young King. It was night when they approached the city, and, for the last two miles, they had passed under arches, thrown from hedge to hedge, festooned with only those rarest roses from which the Attar Gul, more precious than gold, is distilled, and illuminated in rich and fanciful forms with lanterns of the triple-colored tortoise-shell of Pegu. Sometimes, from a dark wood by the side of the road, a display of fireworks would break out, so sudden and so brilliant, that a Brahmin might fancy he beheld

that grove in whose purple shade the God of Battles was born, bursting into a flame at the moment of his birth ;— while, at other times, a quick and playful irradiation continued to brighten all the fields and gardens by which they passed, forming a line of dancing lights along the horizon ; like the meteors of the north, as they are seen by those hunters who pursue the white and blue foxes on the confines of the Icy Sea.

These arches and fireworks delighted the Ladies of the Princess exceedingly ; and with their usual good logic, they deduced from his taste for illuminations, that the King of Bucharica would make the most exemplary husband imaginable. Nor, indeed, could Lalla Rookh herself help feeling the kindness and splendor with which the young bridegroom welcomed her ; but she also felt how painful is the gratitude which kindness from those we cannot love excites ; and that their best blandishments come over the heart with all that chilling and deadly sweetness which we can fancy in the cold, odoriferous wind that is to blow over this earth in the last days.

The marriage was fixed for the morning after her arrival, when she was, for the first time, to be presented to the monarch in that Imperial Palace beyond the lake called the Shalimar. Though never before had a night of more wakeful and anxious thought been passed in the Happy Valley, yet, when she rose in the morning, and her Ladies came around her, to assist in the adjustment of the bridal

ornaments, they thought they had never seen her look half so beautiful. What she had lost of the bloom and radiancy of her charms was more than made up by that intellectual expression, that soul beaming forth from the eyes, which is worth all the rest of loveliness. When they had tinged her fingers with the Henna leaf, and placed upon her brow a small coronet of jewels, of the shape worn by the ancient Queens of Bucharia, they flung over her head the rose-colored bridal veil, and she proceeded to the barge that was to convey her across the Lake; — first kissing, with a mournful look, the little amulet of cornelian which her father at parting had hung about her neck.

The morning was as fresh and fair as the maid on whose nuptials it rose, and the shining Lake, all covered with boats, the minstrels playing upon the shores of the islands, and the crowded summer-houses on the green hills around, with shawls and banners waving from their roofs, presented such a picture of animated rejoicing, as only she, who was the object of it all, did not feel with transport. To Lalla Rookh alone it was a melancholy pageant; nor could she have even borne to look upon the scene, were it not for a hope that, among the crowds around, she might once more perhaps catch a glimpse of Feramorz. So much was her imagination haunted by this thought, that there was scarcely an islet or boat she passed on the way, at which her heart did **not** flutter with the momentary fancy that he was

there. Happy, in her eyes, the humblest slave upon whom the light of his dear looks fell!— in the barge immediately after the Princess sat Fadladeen, with his silken curtains thrown widely apart, that all might have the benefit of his august presence, and with his head full of the speech he was to deliver to the King, “ concerning Feramorz, and literature, and the Chabuk, as connected therewith.”

They now had entered the canal which leads from the Lake to the splendid domes and saloons of the Shalimar, and went gliding on through the gardens that ascended from each bank, full of flowering shrubs that made the air all perfume; while from the middle of the canal rose jets of water, smooth and unbroken, to such a dazzling height, that they stood like tall pillars of diamond in the sunshine. After sailing under the arches of various saloons, they at length arrived at the last and most magnificent, where the monarch awaited the coming of his bride; and such was the agitation of her heart and frame that it was with difficulty she could walk up the marble steps, which were covered with cloth of gold for her ascent from the barge. At the end of the hall stood two thrones, as precious as the Cerulean Throne of Coolburga, on one of which sat Aliris, the youthful King of Bucharia, and on the other was, in a few minutes, to be placed the most beautiful Princess in the world. Immediately upon the entrance of Lalla Rookh into the saloon, the monarch descended from his throne to

meet her ; but scarcely had he time to take her hand in his, when she screamed with surprise, and fainted at his feet. It was Feramorz himself that stood before her ! Feramorz was, himself, the Sovereign of Bucharia, who in this disguise had accompanied his young bride from Delhi, and, having won her love as an humble minstrel, now amply deserved to enjoy it as a King.

The consternation of Fadladeen at this discovery was, for the moment, almost pitiable. But change of opinion is a resource too convenient in courts for this experienced courtier not to have learned to avail himself of it. His criticisms were all, of course, recanted instantly : he was seized with an admiration of the King's verses, as unbounded as, he begged him to believe, it was disinterested ; and the following week saw him in possession of an additional place, swearing by all the Saints of Islam that never had there existed so great a poet as the Monarch Aliris, and, moreover, ready to prescribe his favorite regimen of the Chabuk for every man, woman, and child that dared to think otherwise.

Of the happiness of the King and Queen of Bucharia, after such a beginning, there can be but little doubt ; and, among the lesser symptoms, it is recorded of Lalla Rookh, that, to the day of her death, in memory of their delightful journey, she never called the King by any other name than Feramorz.









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