

"It's better here in the open, comrades. When the sun's out he's a fool who would stay in the house."

There was the clatter of accoutrements and the metallic ring of flagons.

"A toast to grace the liquor," said one.

"And a song. Why not a song?" shouted another in a raucous voice. "Gustav shall sing to us. It will serve to blow the dust from his throat."

There was some protest from Gustav, drowned by heavy fists pounding a wooden table, then a moment's silence followed by a man's voice, singing:

"Which best shall serve as a theme for a toast,
Liquor or maiden, which like you the most?
Love is a phantom which leads us to pain,
Wine gives its pleasures again and again.
So drink, deeply drink
If your toast be as mine;
Who cares for love
While there's wine—good wine?"

There was a noisy chorus, tankards were drained, and the table was pounded again, bringing a fat and short-winded landlord bustling from the house with more liquor.

"Wake up those sleepy old bones of yours," said a great bearded trooper in a voice which matched his ample proportions. "It's a brimming cup we'll have for each stanza. Sing on, Gustav, my son. Pray heaven no unlucky blade ever slits your weasand, for it's a sweet pipe you have which I swear might be envied by many a paid singer."

"Maids will deceive, 'tis their fashion we know,
We're not the men to believe them I trow:
Maid's kiss for fool, but for man who is wise
That kiss is best which in the wine cup lies:
Then drink, deeply drink
If your heart be as mine;

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