

Enchains my heart, and bows me to thy will,  
 Bids me forgive thy words of bitterness,  
 Thy deep distrust, thy coldness and thy scorn,  
 And fills my soul with one impassion'd thought  
 Wherein thy image only is enshrined.  
 Turn not away with that disdainful look—  
 Art thou a woman, and canst not be mov'd  
 With borage such as mine? Cast not away  
 A pearl of price—and such, a husband's love.  
 Ne'er has it wander'd, ne'er been false to thee—  
 Still, in all dangers, and in fearful storms,  
 Has turned to thee, as to the beacon light  
 Of its best hopes, its guide to peace and joy,  
 From hurrying thoughts, and all the vexing cares  
 Of kingly state. Then, dearest, spurn me not—  
 But yield thy hand to mine, and let that cheek  
 Lie pillowed on my breast, its rightful bed,  
 And let me banquet on these fragrant lips,  
 And hear that melting voice, in love's fond tone,  
 Call on my name, as in our early days  
 Of wedded love.

(While he is speaking, Salome, the king's sister, enters unperceived at a distant door, and remains concealed by a projecting pillar, from observation.)

MARIANNE,

(starting with abhorrence from Herod's offered embrace.)

Nay, touch me not! there's blood upon thy hand!  
 And ne'er again shall mine be linked with it  
 In kindly grasp! Not false to me, said'st thou?  
 Thou hast been false in every cruel wrong  
 Heaped on my friends. In every deathly blow  
 Struck at their hearts, thou'st pierced my own, and  
 turned  
 its gentle thoughts, its fond and warm desires,  
 To bitter hatred, lasting and intense.  
 Henceforth, 'twixt thee and me, come no glad word—  
 No ray of sunny joy shine on our path—  
 But chilling silence and distrustful gloom,  
 Brood o'er our hearts, and disunite our hopes.  
 Herod, this must be so—'tis fate's decree—  
 Then never seek to change my changeless mind,  
 And by unmanly pleas, force me to say,  
 What I would have unsaid. 'Tis hard to speak  
 To those we once have loved, of hate and scorn!

HEROD.

Enough! enough!

Enough! enough!  
 Of thy calm voice, and in the tones  
 Aye, this is vengeance more than I deserve,  
 E'en for my deeds—since 'tis my fearful doom  
 To love thee still, to dote upon thy looks,  
 And languish for thy presence, as the child  
 For its fond mother's arms. Whence comes this  
 fire.

This deep absorbing passion, that consumes  
 With a fierce flame my soul? Know'st thou from  
 whence?

I fain would render bitter hate for hate,  
 And deep disdain for all thy cruel scorn,  
 But that those eyes melt my most stern resolves,  
 And crowd my heart, when it would shut thee out,  
 With passionate thoughts, that frame themselves in  
 words,  
 Would shame a woman's tongue.

SALOME,

(advancing towards them, and casting a look of angry defiance on Marianne, addresses Herod.)

And would forever fix disgrace on thine,  
 But for the wicked spell by which thou'rt bound,  
 Wrought by this sorceress, to enslave thy soul  
 In her accursed chains. Think'st thou thy love,  
 Thy madness, let me say, would still endure,  
 Spite of her proud disdain, her bitter taunts,  
 Her baseless calumnies, and broken faith,  
 Wert thou not plied with drugs of devilish power,  
 That bind thee as with adamantine chains,  
 In slavery worse than death—and make it vain,  
 Though she doth spurn thee, to withstand her  
 charms,  
 Or burst her cruel thrall!

HEROD.

Ha! say'st thou so! and whence thy knowledge  
 gained?

Accuse her not unjustly—give me proof—  
 And by my crown, if this be true, she dies!  
 A spell, forsooth! 'tis that which fires my brain!

(Turning sternly to Marianne,)

Madam, if this be true, thou know'st thy fate—  
 Tremble! and be prepared!

MARIANNE, (with calm dignity.)

I tremble not!

Fear is for those whose hearts can frame, whose  
 tongues

Can utter lies. The guiltless know it not.

SALOME.

Heed not her boasts!

I would withdraw the veil that blinds thine eyes,  
 That thou may'st see her, odious as she is—  
 Like one of those fair palaces, which stand  
 Upon the dead sea's bank—all bright without,  
 But fill'd with unclean beasts—the brooding owl,  
 Dark bat with leathern wing, and slimy snake,  
 That there abide, and make their loathsome nests.  
 I slander not—and if thou doubt'st my word,  
 Summon thy page, Demetrius—he will tell  
 Of bribes received, and of a subtle drug,  
 Poured in thy cup, by the command of her,  
 Thy spotless wife, to make thee mad with love,