

Felicia Dorothy Hemans, "The Maremma", in *Poems of Felicia Hemans*, Edinburgh & London, William Blackwood and Sons, 1872, pp. 191-194.

THERE are bright scenes beneath Italian skies,
Where glowing suns their purest light diffuse,
Uncultured flowers in wild profusion rise,
And Nature lavishes her warmest hues;
But trust thou not her smile, her balmy breath,
Away! her charms are but the pomp of death!

He in the vine-clad bowers, unseen, is dwelling,
Where the cool shade its freshness round thee throws;
His voice, in every perfumed zephyr swelling,
With gentlest whisper lures thee to repose;
And the soft sounds that through the foliage sigh
But woo thee still to slumber and to die.

Mysterious danger lurks, a siren there,
Not robed in terrors, or announced in gloom,
But stealing o'er thee in the scented air,
And veiled in flowers, that smile to deck thy tomb;
How may we deem, amidst their deep array,
That heaven and earth but flatter to betray?

Sunshine and bloom and verdure! Can it be
That these but charm us with destructive wiles?
Where shall we turn, O Nature, if in thee
Danger is masked in beauty, death in smiles?
O, still the Circe of that fatal shore,
Where she, the Sun's bright daughter, dwelt of yore!

There, year by year, that secret peril spreads,
Disguised in loveliness, its baleful reign,
And viewless blights o'er many a landscape sheds,
Gay with the riches of the south, in vain;
O'er fairy bowers and palaces of state
Passing unseen, to leave them desolate.

And pillared halls, whose airy colonnades
Were formed to echo music's choral tone,
Are silent now, amidst deserted shades,
Peopled by sculpture's graceful forms alone;
And fountains dash unheard, by lone alcoves,

Neglected temples, and forsaken groves.

And there, where marble nymphs, in beauty gleaming,
Midst the deep shades of plane and cypress rise
By wave or grot might Fancy linger, dreaming
Of old Arcadia's woodland deities.
Wild visions!—there no sylvan powers convene:
Death reigns the genius of the Elysian scene.