

Hedone

Catullus from his Sirmian bow'r

The world of fancy thrust away,
And drunken in the moonlit hour,
Midst roses with his Lesbia lay.

For him in vain dead cities dream'd,

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And isles of wonder starr'd the sea;
Blind while the Roman eagles gleam'd,
Deaf to the songs of victory.

And as the days of dalliance sped,

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And moons and roses came and went,
The lips of Lesbia comforted
A heart with present bliss content.

But month by month and year by year

Before the moon a shadow grew,
And roses, shrivelling and sere,
Fell blighted by a poison dew.

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Those lips so tempting once to him

Now drool'd repulsive in his sight,
Whilst o'er the ivory cheek and limb
Spread age and vice, a livid blight.

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Weary of love he turn'd at last

To once-scorn'd dreams in late desire,
But found his deaden'd soul bound fast
To foetid flesh and charnel fire.

So frantick thro' the Sirmian dusk

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Catullus flees in endless pain,
As ghostly winds of rose and musk
Recall his idle hours in vain.

III. OCCASIONAL VERSE

And at his heels there seems to prowl
A dogging shape with matted hair, 30
Whose burning breath, obscene and foul,
Pours horror on the midnight air.

But in the Mantuan moonlight still
The golden fancies sparkling lie,
Whilst wonder hovers on the hill 35
In forms too old and pure to die.

Proud o'er the plain the eagles press,
And glory crowns the Palatine,
For godlike dreams the dreamer bliss
With festive joys of source divine! 40