Maria Logan, â??To Opiumâ?•

Description

MARIA LOGAN

â??TO OPIUMâ?•

Let others boast the golden spoil
Which Indian climes afford;
And still, with unavailing toil,
Increase the shining hoard:â??-

Still let Golcondaâ??s dazzling pride
On Beautyâ??s forehead glow,
And round the fair, on evâ??ry side,
Sabean odours flow: â??-

Be mine the balm, whose sovâ??reign powâ??r
Can still the throb of Pain;
The produce of the scentless flowâ??r,
That strews Hindostanâ??s plain.

No gaudy hue its form displays,
To catch the roving eye;
And Ignorance, with vacant gaze,
May pass regardless by.

But shall the Muse with cold disdain,
Its simple charms behold!
Shall she devote the tuneful strain
To incense, gems, or gold!

When latent ills the frame pervade,
And mock the healing art;
Thy friendly balm shall lend its aid,
And transient ease impart;

Shall charm the restless hours of day,
And cheer the midnight gloom;
Shall blunt each thorn, which strews the way
That leads us to the tomb.

And oft, when Reason vainly tries
To calm the troubled breast,

Thy powâ??r can seal our streaming eyes,
And bid our sorrows rest.

What thoâ?? this calm must quickly cease,
And Grief resume its powâ??r,
The heart that long has sighâ??d for ease,
Will prize the tranquil hour!

A short oblivion of its care
Relieves the wearyâ??d mind,
Till suffâ??ring nature learns to bear
The weight by Heavâ??n assignâ??d.

Revivâ??d by thee, my drooping Muse
Now pours the grateful strain,
And Fancyâ??s hand sweet flowâ??rets strews
Around the bed of Pain.

At her command gay scenes arise
To charm my rapturâ??d sight,
While Memoryâ??s faithful hand supplies
Past objects of delight.

Yet Memoryâ??s soothing charms were vain,
Without thy friendly aid;
And sportive Fancyâ??s smiling train,
Would fly Diseaseâ??s shade â??-

Did not thy magic powâ??r supply,
A mild, thoâ?? transient ray;
As meteors in a northern sky,
Shed artificial day.

And shall my humble Muse alone
Thy peerless worth declare!
A Muse to all the world unknown,
Whose songs are lost in air.

O! may the bard, whose tuneful strain
Resounds throâ?? Derwentâ??s vale,
At whose command the hosts of Pain,
Disease and Sickness, failâ??-

That Sage, to whom the God of Day
His various gifts imparts,
Whose healing powâ??r, whose melting lay,
United, charm our heartsâ??-

May he devote one tuneful page,
To thee, neglected Flowâ??r!
Then Fame shall bid each future age,
Admiring, own thy powâ??r!

NOTES:

Title *Opium* The foremost medicinal painkiller until synthetics were isolated in the 19th century (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

1 *spoil* â??Goodsâ?¦ seized by forceâ?• (*OED).*

2 *Indian climes* The East India Company obtained much mineral wealth from India, which they controlled on Britainâ??s behalf when this poem was written in 1793 (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

5 *Golconda* A city in Southern India famous for diamonds (*Encyclopedia Britannica).*

8 *Sabean odours* An echo of Miltonâ??s *Paradise Los*t: â??SabÃ©an odors from the spicy shore/ Of Araby the Blestâ?• (Book IV, 162-163). Refers to ancient kingdom of Saba in the Arabian peninsula (*Encyclopedia Britannica).*

17 *Muse* A Goddess related to poetry and the arts, and a word referring to a particular poetâ??s inspiration (*OED*).

21 *pervade* â??To spread throughout; to permeateâ?• (*OED).*

51 *Fancy* â??Imaginationâ?• (*OED*).

52 *shade* â??A dark figure â??castâ?? upon a surfaceâ?• *(OED).*

61 *bard* An admiring reference to Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), poet and naturalist, whose popular poem *The Botanic Garden: A Poem in Two Parts* first appeared in 1789. Part II was titled â??The Loves of the Plants.â?• (*Encyclopedia Britannica).*

62 *Derwentâ??s vale* Derwent is a river in northwest England; a number of valleys could be associated with it (*Dictionary of British Place-Names*, 152).

65 *God of Day* The use of â??Hisâ?? in the next line suggests this is an allusion to Apollo, the god of light and the sun, but also of poetry. (*Encyclopedia Britannica).*

72 â??This was written just before the publication of â??The Loves of the Plants;â?• a work which had been long impatiently expected by everyone who had been so fortunate as to see any specimen of the Authorâ??s poetical abilitiesâ?• [Authorâ??s Note].

Source: *Poems on Several Occasionsâ?¦ Second edition* (York, 1793), pp. 17-21. [*Google Books*]

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