

SONG 2: 1 I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. Lover.

A description of the bridegroom, and his love to the bride, Sol 2:1-9. A fine description of spring, Sol 2:10-13. The mutual love of both, Sol 2:14-17.

Verse 1

I am the rose of Sharon - Sharon was a very fruitful place, where David's cattle were fed, 1Chr 27:29. It is mentioned as a place of excellence, Isa 35:2, and as a place of flocks, Isa 65:10, Perhaps it would be better, with almost all the versions, to translate, "I am the rose of the field." The bridegroom had just before called her fair; she with a becoming modesty, represents her beauty as nothing extraordinary, and compares herself to a common flower of the field. This, in the warmth of his affection, he denies, insisting that she as much surpasses all other maidens as the flower of the lily does the bramble, Sol 2:2.

SONG 2: 2 As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. Beloved.

SONG 2: 3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Verse 3

As the apple tree - The bride returns the compliment, and says, As the apple or citron tree is among the trees of the wood, so is the bridegroom among all other men.

I sat down under his shadow - I am become his spouse, and my union with him makes me indescribably happy.

SONG 2: 4 He brought me to the banquet hall. His banner over me is love.

Verse 4

He brought me to the banqueting house - Literally, the house of wine. The ancients preserved their wine, not in barrels or dark cellars under ground, as we do, but in large pitchers, ranged against the wall in some upper apartment in the house, the place where they kept their most precious effects. We have a proof of this in Homer: - Ως φαν· ὁ δ' ὑψοραφον θαλομον κατεβησατο πατρος Ευρυν, ὀθινητος χρυσος και χαλκος εκειτο, Εσθης τ' εν χηλοισιν, ἄλις τ' ευωδες ελαιον. Εν δε πιθοι οινιοι παλαιου ἡδυποτοιο Εστασαν, ακρητον θειον ποτον εντος εχοντες, Ἐξειης ποτε τοιχον αρηροτες· ειποτ' Οδυσσευς Οικαδε νοστησειε, και αλγεα πολλα μογησας. Κληϊσται δ' επεσαν σανιδες πυκινως αραιυιαι, Δικλιδες· εν δε γυνη ταμιη νυκτας τε και ημαρ Εσχ', κ. τ. λ.. Od. lib. ii., ver. 337.

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys,

Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.

Here, ruddy brass and gold refulgent blazed;
There, polished chests embroider'd gestures graced.
Here, pots of oil breathed forth a rich perfume;
There, jars of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. (Pure flavorful wine, by gods in bounty given,
And worthy to exalt the feasts of heaven).
Untouch'd they stood, till, his long labors o'er,
The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.
A double strength of bars secured the gates;
Fast by the door wise Euryclea waits, etc.
Pope.

SONG 2: 5 Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples; For I am faint with love.

Verse 5

Stay me with flagons - I believe the original words mean some kind of cordials with which we are unacquainted. The versions in general understand some kind of ointment or perfumes by the first term. I suppose the good man was perfectly sincere who took this for his text, and, after having repeated, Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love sat down, perfectly overwhelmed with his own feelings, and was not able to proceed! But while we admit such a person's sincerity, who can help questioning his judgment?

SONG 2: 6 His left hand is under my head. His right hand embraces me.

SONG 2: 7 I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, or by the hinds of the field, that you not stir up, nor awaken love, until it so desires.

Verse 7

I charge you - by the roes - This was probably some rustic mode of adjuration. The verses themselves require little comment. With this verse the first night of the first day is supposed to end.

SONG 2: 8 The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping on the mountains, skipping on the hills.

Verse 8

Behold, he cometh leaping - This appears to be highly characteristic of the gambols of the shepherds, and points out the ecstasy with which those who were enamoured ran to their mates. It is supposed that the second day's eclogue begins at this verse. The author of what was then called A New Translation of Solomon's Song, observes,

1. The bride relates how the bridegroom, attended by his companions, had come under her window, and called upon her to come forth and enjoy the beauties of the spring, Sol 2:9-11, etc.
2. She then returns to her narration, Sol 3:1. The bridegroom did not come according to her wishes. Night came on; she did not find him in her bed; she went out to seek him; found him, and brought him to her mother's pavilion, Sol 3:4; and then, as before, conjures the virgins not to disturb his repose, Sol 3:5.

SONG 2: 9 My beloved is like a roe or a young deer. Behold, he stands behind our wall! He looks in at the windows. He glances through the lattice.

Verse 9

He standeth behind our wall - This may refer to the wall by which the house was surrounded, the space between which and the house constituted the court. He was seen first behind the wall, and then in the court; and lastly came to the window of his bride's chamber.

SONG 2: 10 My beloved spoke, and said to me, "Rise up, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

SONG 2: 11 For, behold, the winter is past. The rain is over and gone.

Verse 11

The winter is past - Mr. Harmer has made some good collections on this part, from Drs. Shaw and Russel, which I shall transcribe. One part of the winter is distinguished from the rest of it by the people of the East, on account of the severity of the cold. At Aleppo it lasts about forty days, and is called by the natives *maurbanie*. I would propose it to the consideration of the learned, whether the word here used, and translated winter, may not be understood to mean what the Aleppines express by the term *maurbanie*. It occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament; and another word is used for the rainy part of the year in general. If this thought be admitted, it will greatly illustrate the words of the bridegroom: Lo, the winter is past; the rain is over, and gone. For then the last clause will not be explanatory of the first, and signify that the moist part of the year was entirely past; with which, Dr. Russel assures us, all pleasantness withdraws at Aleppo; but the words will import: "The *maurbanie* is past and over; the weather is become agreeably warm; the rain too is just ceased, and consequently hath left us the prospect of several days of serenity and undisturbed pleasantness."

The weather of Judea was in this respect, I presume, like that at Algiers; where, after two or three days of rain, there is usually, according to Dr. Shaw, "a week, a fortnight, or more, of fair and good weather. Of such a sort of cessation of rain alone, the bridegroom, methinks, is here to be understood; not of the absolute termination of the rainy season, and the summer droughts being come on. And if so, what can the time that is past mean but the *maurbanie*? Indeed, Dr. Russel, in

giving us an account of the excursions of the English merchants at Aleppo, has undesignedly furnished us with a good comment on this and the two following verses. These gentlemen, it seems, dine abroad under a tent, in spring and autumn on Saturdays, and often on Wednesdays. They do the same during the good weather in winter; but they live at the gardens in April, and part of May. In the heat of the summer they dine at the gardens, as once or twice a week they dine under a tent in autumn and spring." The cold weather is not supposed by Solomon to have been long over, since it is distinctly mentioned; and the Aleppines make these incursions very early; the narcissus flowers during the whole of the maurbanie; the hyacinths and violets at least before it is quite over. The appearing of flowers, then, doth not mean the appearing of the first and earliest flowers, but must rather be understood of the earth's being covered with them; which at Aleppo is not till after the middle of February, a small crane's bill appearing on the banks of the river there about the middle of February, quickly after which comes a profusion of flowers. The nightingales, too, which are there in abundance, not only afford much pleasure by their songs in the gardens, but are also kept tame in the houses, and let out at a small rate to divert such as choose it in the city; so that no entertainments are made in the spring without a concert of these birds. No wonder, then, that Solomon makes the bridegroom speak of the singing of birds; and it teaches us what these birds are, which are expressly distinguished from turtle doves.

SONG 2: 12 The flowers appear on the earth. The time of the singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

SONG 2: 13 The fig tree ripens her green figs. The vines are in blossom. They give out their fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away." Lover.

Verse 13

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs - The fig tree in Judea bears double crops; the first of which is ripe in spring. But the tree, as I have elsewhere observed, bears figs all the year through, in the climes congenial to it. That is, the fig tree has always ripe or unripe fruit on it. I never saw a healthy tree naked. But in the beginning of spring they grow fast, and become turgid.

The vines with the tender grape - The versions understand this of the flowers of the vine. These were formerly put into the new wine (2 lbs. to every cask) to give it a fine flavour.

SONG 2: 14 My dove in the clefts of the rock, In the hiding places of the mountainside, Let me see your face. Let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

Verse 14

My dove - in the clefts of the rock - He compares his bride hiding herself in her secret chambers and closets to a dove in the clefts of the rock.

SONG 2: 15 Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that plunder the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom. Beloved.

Verse 15

Take us the foxes - That these were ruinous to vines all authors allow. They love the vine, and they are eaten in autumn in some countries, according to Galen, when they are very fat with eating the grapes. They abounded in Judea; and did most damage when the clusters were young and tender. It is likely that these are the words of the bridegroom to his companions, just as he was entering the apartment of his spouse. "Take care of the vineyard: set the traps for the foxes, which are spoiling the vines; and destroy their young as far as possible."

SONG 2: 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his. He browses among the lilies.

Verse 16

My beloved is mine - The words of the bride on his entering: "I am thy own; thou art wholly mine."

He feedeth among the lilies - The odor with which he is surrounded is as fine as if he passed the night among the sweetest scented flowers.

SONG 2: 17 Until the day is cool, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a roe or a young deer on the mountains of Bether.

Verse 17

Until the day break - Literally, until the day breathe; until the first dawn, which is usually accompanied with the most refreshing breezes.

The shadows flee away - Referring to the evening or setting of the sun, at which all shadows vanish.

The mountains of Bether - Translated also mountains of division, supposed to mean the mountains of Beth-horon.

There was a place called Bithron, 2Sam 2:29, on the other side of Jordan; and as the name signifies Partition, it might have had its name from the circumstance of its being divided or separated from Judea by the river Jordan.

With this chapter the second night is supposed to end.