

A Poem of  
Felicia Hemans  
in  
The Bijou, 1828

compiled  
by  
Peter J. Bolton

The Child and Flowers



**THE CHILD AND FLOWERS.**

Painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence P. R.A.    Engraved by W. Humphreys

## THE CHILD AND FLOWERS.

By Mrs. Hemans.

---

All good and guiltless as thou art,  
Some transient griefs will touch thy heart,  
Griefs that along thy altered face  
Will breathe a more subduing grace,  
Than even those looks of joy that lie  
On the soft cheek of infancy.

WILSON.

---

HAST thou been in the woods with the honey-bee ?  
Hast thou been with the lamb in the pastures free ?  
With the hare through the copses and dingles wild ?  
With the butterfly over the heath, fair child ?  
Yes : the light fall of thy bounding feet  
Hath not startled the wren from her mossy seat ;  
Yet hast thou ranged the green forest-dells,  
And brought back a treasure of buds and bells.

Thou know'st not the sweetness, by antique song  
Breathed o'er the names of that flowery throng ;  
The woodbine, the primrose, the violet dim,  
The lily that gleams by the fountain's brim :

These are old words, that have made each grove  
A dreary haunt for romance and love ;  
Each sunny bank, where faint odours lie  
A place for the gushings of Poesy.

Thou know'st not the light wherewith fairy lore  
Sprinkles the turf and the daisies o'er ;  
Enough for thee are the dews that sleep  
Like hidden gems in the flower-urns deep ;  
Enough the rich crimson spots that dwell  
Midst the gold of the cowslip's perfumed cell ;  
And the scent by the blossoming sweet-briars shed,  
And the beauty that bows the wood-hyacinth's head.

Oh ! happy child in thy fawn-like glee !  
What is remembrance or thought to thee ?  
Fill thy bright locks with those gifts of spring,  
O'er thy green pathway their colours fling ;  
Bind them in chaplet and wild festoon—  
What if to droop and to perish soon ?  
Nature hath mines of such wealth—and thou  
Never wilt prize its delights as now !

For a day is coming to quell the tone  
That rings in thy laughter, thou joyous one !  
And to dim thy brow with a touch of care,  
Under the gloss of its clustering hair ;

And to tame the flash of thy cloudless eyes  
Into the stillness of autumn skies ;  
And to teach thee that grief hath her needful part,  
Midst the hidden things of each human heart !

Yet shall we mourn, gentle child ! for this ?  
Life hath enough of yet holier bliss !  
Such be thy portion !—the bliss to look  
With a reverent spirit, through Nature's book ;  
By fount, by forest, by river's line,  
To track the paths of a love divine ;  
To read its deep meanings—to see and hear  
God in earth's garden—and not to fear !