

A Poem of
Felicia Hemans
in
The Court Magazine
Volume II
1833

Compiled
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The Silent Multitude

THE SILENT MULTITUDE.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

“ No conversation,
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
No careful father's counsel ; nothing's heard,
Nor nothing is, but all oblivion,
Dust and an endless darkness.”

FLETCHER.

A MIGHTY and a mingled throng,
Were gather'd in one spot,
The dwellers of a thousand homes,
Yet 'midst them voice was not.
The soldier and his chief were there,
The mother and her child ;
The friends, the sisters of one hearth—
None spoke, none mov'd, none smiled.
Those lovers met, between whose lives
Years had swept darkly by ;
After that heart-sick Hope deferr'd,
They met—but silently !
You might have heard the gliding brook,
The breeze's faintest sound,
The shiver of an insect's wing,
On that thick-peopled ground.
Your voice to whispers would have died
For that deep Quiet's sake ;

Your step the softest moss have sought,
Such stillness not to break !
What held the countless multitude
Bound in that spell of peace ?
How could the ever-sounding life
Among so many cease ?
Was it some pageant of the heavens,
Some glory high above,
That link'd and hush'd those human souls,
In reverential love ?
Or did some burdening Passion's weight
Hang on this in-drawn breath ?
Awe—the pale awe that freezes words ?
Fear—the strong fear of death ?
A mightier thing—Death, Death himself,
Lay on each lonely heart ;
Kindred were these, yet hermits all—
Thousands—but each apart !