

Poems of
Felicia Hemans
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MADLINE.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

“ MY child, my child, thou leav’st me !—I shall hear
The gentle voice no more that blessed mine ear
With its first utterance :—I shall miss the sound
Of thy light footstep, midst the flowers around,
And thy soft-breathing hymn at evening’s close,
And thy ‘ Good-night,’ at parting for repose.
Under the vine-leaves I shall sit alone,
And the low breeze will have a mournful tone
Among their tendrils, while I think of thee,
My child !—and thou, along the moonlight sea,
With a soft sadness haply in thy glance,
Shalt watch thine own, thy pleasant land of France
Fading to air ! Yet blessings with thee go—
Love guard thee, gentlest ! and the exile’s woe
From thy young heart be far !—And sorrow not
For me, sweet daughter, in my lonely lot
God will be with me ! Now farewell, farewell,
Thou that hast been what words may never tell
Unto thy mother’s bosom, since the days
When thou wert pillowed there ; and wont to raise

In sudden laughter thence thy loving eye,
That still sought mine. Those moments are gone by—
Thou too must go, my flower! yet round thee dwell
The peace of God! One, one more gaze—farewell!”

This was a mother's parting with her child—
A young, meek bride, on whom fair Fortune smiled,
And wooed her, with a voice of Love, away
From Childhood's home. Yet there, with fond delay,
She lingered on the threshold: heard the note
Of her caged bird through trellised rose-trees float;
And fell upon her mother's neck, and wept,
Whilst old remembrances, that long had slept,
Streamed o'er her soul; and many a vanished day,
As in one picture traced, before her lay.

But the farewell was said; and on the deep,
When its breast heaved in sunset's golden sleep,
With a stilled heart, young Madeline, ere long,
Poured forth her own low solemn vesper-song
To chiming waves. Through stillness heard afar,
And duly rising with the first pale star,
That voice was on the waters; till at last
The sounding ocean-solitudes were passed,
And the bright land was reached; the youthful world
That glows along the West: the sails were furled
In its clear sunshine; and the gentle bride
Looked on the home, which promised hearts untried

A bower of bliss to be. Alas! we trace
The map of our own paths ; and long ere years
With their dull steps the brilliant lines efface,
Comes the swift storm, and blots them out in tears.
That home was darkened soon : the summer's breeze
Welcomed with death the wanderers from the seas !
Death unto one ! and anguish, how forlorn
To her that, widowed in her marriage-morn,
Sat in the lonely dwelling, whence with him,
Her bosom's first beloved, her friend and guide,
Joy had gone forth, and left the green earth dim,
As from the sun shut out on every side,
By the close veil of misery. Oh ! but ill,
When with rich hopes o'erfraught, the young high heart
Bears its first blow ! It knows not yet the part
Which life will teach—to suffer and be still !
And with submissive love, to count the flowers
Which yet are spared ; and through the future hours
To send no busy dream ! She had not learned
Of sorrow till that blight, and therefore turned
In weariness from life. Then came the' unrest,
The vague sad yearnings of the exile's breast ;
The haunting sounds of voices far away,
And household steps : until at last she lay
On her lone couch of sickness—lost in dreams
Of the gay vineyards and blue glancing streams,
Of her own sunny land—and murmuring oft
Familiar names in accents wild, yet soft,

To strangers round that bed, who knew not aught
Of the deep spells wherewith each word was fraught.
To strangers?—oh! could strangers raise the head,
Gently as her's was raised?—did strangers shed
The kindly tears which bathed that pale young brow,
And feverish cheek, with half unconscious flow?—
Something was there, that through the heavy night
Outwatches patiently the taper's light;
Something that bows not to the day's distress,
That knows not change, that fears not weariness:
Love, true and perfect love!—Whence came that power,
Upbearing through the storm the fragile flower?
Whence?—who can ask?—the long delirium passed,
And from her eyes the spirit looked at last
Into her mother's face!—and, wakening, knew
The brow's calm grace, the hair's dear silvery hue—
The kind, sweet smile of old!—And had she come,
Thus in life's evening from her distant home,
To save her child? Even so. Nor yet in vain—
In that young heart a light sprung up again!
And lovely still, with so much love to give,
Seemed this fair world, though faded; still to live
Was not to pine forsaken! On the breast
That rocked her childhood, falling in soft rest—
“Sweet mother! gentlest mother!—can it be?”
The lorn one cried—“And do I gaze on thee?
Take home thy wanderer from this fatal shore—
Peace shall be our's, amidst our vines once more!”

THE WINGS OF THE DOVE.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

"Oh! that I had the wings of a Dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!"

I.

OH! for thy wings, thou dove!
Now sailing by with sunshine on thy breast;
That borne like thee above,
I too might flee away, and be at rest!

II.

Where wilt thou fold those plumes,
Bird of the forest-shadows, holiest bird?
In what rich leafy glooms,
By the sweet voice of hidden water stirred?

III.

Over what blessed home,
What roof with dark, deep summer-foliage crowned,
O fair as Ocean's foam!
Shall thy bright bosom shed a gleam around?

IV.

Or seek'st thou some old shrine
 Of nymph or saint, no more by Votary wooed,
 Tho' still, as if divine,
 Breathing a spirit o'er the solitude ?

V.

Yet wherefore ask thy way ?
 Blest, ever blest, whate'er its aim, thou art !
 Unto the greenwood spray
 Bearing no dark remembrance at thy heart !

VI.

No echoes that will blend
 A sadness with the rustlings of the grove ;
 No memory of a friend
 Far off, or dead, or chang'd to thee, thou Dove !

VII.

Oh ! to some cool recess
 Take, take me with thee on the summer-wind !
 Leaving the weariness,
 And all the fever of this life behind :

VIII.

The aching and the void
 Within the heart whereunto none reply,
 The early hopes destroyed—
 Bird ! bear me with thee thro' the sunny sky.

IX.

—Wild wish, and longing vain,
And brief upspringing to be glad and free !
Go to thy woodland reign !
My soul is bound and held—I may not flee.

X.

For even by all the fears
And thoughts that haunt my dreams—untold,
unknown,
And by the woman's tears
Poured from mine eyes in silence and alone ;

XI.

Had I thy wings, thou Dove !
High 'midst the gorgeous isles of cloud to soar,
Soon the strong cords of love
Would draw me earthwards—homewards—yet once
more !



PSYCHE

BORNE BY THE ZEPHYRS TO THE ISLAND OF PLEASURE

Painted by John Wood Engraved by F. Engleheart

PSYCHE BORNE BY ZEPHYRS TO THE
ISLAND OF PLEASURE.

I.

FEARFULLY and mournfully
Thou bid'st the earth farewell,
And yet thou'rt passing, loveliest one !
In a brighter land to dwell.

II.

Ascend, ascend rejoicing !
The sunshine of that shore
Around thee, as a glorious robe,
Shall stream for evermore.

III.

The breezy music wandering
There through the' Elysian sky,
Hath no deep tone that seems to float
From a happier time gone by :

IV.

And there the day's last crimson
Gives no sad memories birth ;
No thought of dead or distant friends,
Or partings—as on earth.

V.

Yet fearfully and mournfully
Thou bid'st that earth farewell,
Altho' thou 'rt passing, loveliest one !
In a brighter land to dwell.

VI.

A land where all is deathless—
The sunny wave's repose,
The wood, with its rich melodies,
The summer and its rose.

VII.

A land that sees no parting,
That hears no sound of sighs,
That waits thee with immortal air—
Lift, lift those anxious eyes !

VIII.

Oh ! how like *thee*, thou trembler !
Man's spirit fondly clings,
With timid love, to this, its world
Of old familiar things !

IX.

We pant, we thirst for fountains
That gush not here below ;
On, on we toil, allured by dreams
Of the living water's flow :

X.

We pine for kindred natures,
To mingle with our own ;
For communings more full and high
Than aught by mortal known :

XI.

We strive with brief aspirings
Against our bounds in vain ;
Yet summoned to be free at last,
We shrink—and clasp our chain !

XII.

And fearfully and mournfully
We bid the earth farewell,
Tho' passing from its mists, like thee,
In a brighter world to dwell.

THE VOICE OF HOME.

To the Prodigal.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

I.

OH! when wilt thou return
To thy spirit's early loves?
To the freshness of the morn,
To the stillness of the groves?

II.

The summer-birds are calling,
Thy household porch around,
And the merry waters falling,
With sweet laughter in their sound.

III.

And a thousand bright-veined flowers,
'Midst the banks of moss and fern,
Breathe of the sunny hours—
—But when wilt thou return?

IV.

Oh ! thou hast wandered long
From thy home without a guide,
And thy native woodland song
In thine altered heart hath died.

V.

Thou hast flung the wealth away,
And the glory of thy spring,
And to thee the leaves' light play
Is a long-forgotten thing.

VI.

—But when wilt thou return ?
Sweet dews may freshen soon
The flower within whose urn
Too fiercely gazed the noon.

VII.

O'er the image of the sky
Which the lake's clear bosom wore,
Darkly may shadows lie—
But not for evermore.

VIII.

Give back thy heart again
To the gladness of the woods,
To the birds' triumphant strain,
To the mountain-solitudes !

IX.

—But when wilt thou return ?
Along thine own free air,
There are young sweet voices borne—
Oh ! should not thine be there ?

X.

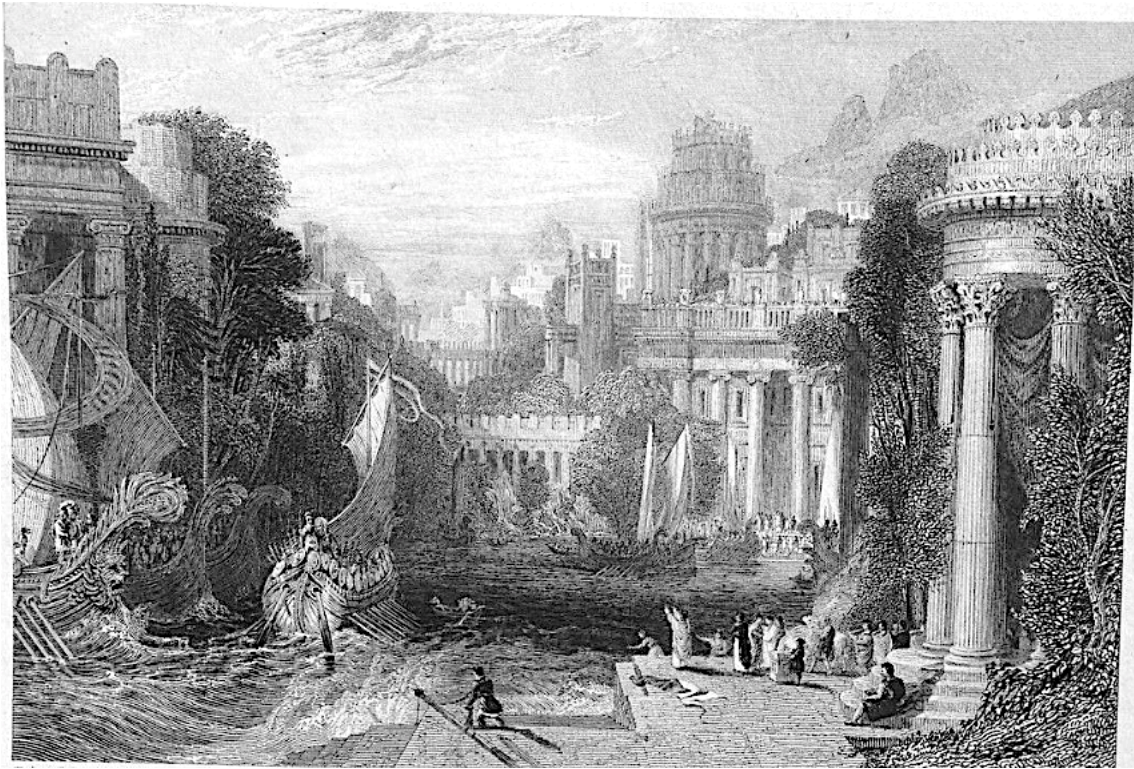
Still at thy father's board
There is kept a place for thee,
And by thy smile restored,
Joy round the hearth shall be.

XI.

Still hath thy mother's eye,
Thy coming step to greet,
A look of days gone by,
Tender, and gravely sweet.

XII.

Still, when the prayer is said,
For thee kind bosoms yearn,
For thee fond tears are shed—
—Oh ! when wilt thou return ?



**THE RETURN OF A VICTORIOUS ARMAMENT
TO A GREEK CITY**

Painted by William Linton Esq.

Engraved by Edward Goodall

ANCIENT SONG OF VICTORY.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine,
Our virgins dance beneath the shade.

Byron.

I.

Io! they come, they come!
Garlands for every shrine!
Strike lyres to greet them home;
Bring roses, pour ye wine!

II.

Swell, swell the Dorian flute
Thro' the blue, triumphal sky!
Let the Cittern's tone salute
The Sons of Victory!

III.

With the offering of bright blood,
They have ransomed hearth and tomb,
Vineyard, and field, and flood;—
Io! they come, they come!

IV.

Sing it where olives wave,
 And by the glittering sea,
 And o'er each hero's grave,—
 Sing, sing, the land is free !

V.

Mark ye the flashing oars,
 And the spears that light the deep ?
 How the festal sunshine pours
 Where the lords of battle sweep !

VI.

Each hath brought back his shield ;—
 Maid, greet thy lover home !
 Mother, from that proud field,
 Io ! thy son is come !

VII.

Who murmured of the dead ?
 Hush, boding voice ! We know
 That many a shining head
 Lies in its glory low.

VIII.

Breathe not those names to-day !
 They shall have their praise ere long,
 And a power all hearts to sway,
 In ever-burning song.

IX.

But now shed flowers, pour wine,
To hail the conquerors home !
Bring wreaths for every shrine—
Io ! they come, they come !

THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

FORGET them not!—tho' now their name
Be but a mournful sound,
Tho' by the hearth its utterance claim
A stillness round.

Tho' for their sakes this earth no more
As it hath been may be,
And shadows, never marked before,
Brood o'er each tree ;

And tho' their image dim the sky,
Yet, yet forget them not !
Nor, where their love and life went by,
Forsake the spot !

They have a breathing influence there,
A charm, not elsewhere found ;
Sad—yet it sanctifies the air,
The stream—the ground.

Then, tho' the wind an altered tone
Through the young foliage bear,
Tho' every flower, of something gone,
A tinge may wear ;

Oh ! fly it not !—no *fruitless* grief
Thus in their presence felt,
A record links to every leaf
There, where they dwelt.

Still trace the path which knew their tread,
Still tend their garden-bower,
And call them back, the holy Dead,
To each lone hour !

The *holy* Dead !—oh ! blest we are,
That we may name them so,
And to their spirits look afar,
Through all our woe !

Blest, that the things they loved on earth,
As relics we may hold,
Which wake sweet thoughts of parted worth,
By springs untold !

Blest, that a deep and chastening power
Thus o'er our souls is given,
If but to bird, or song, or flower,
Yet all for Heaven !