

Poems of
Felicia Hemans
in
The Winter's Wreath, 1832

Compiled
by
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Prayer at Sea after Victory.

BY MRS. HERMANS.

————— The Lord shall never rue,
So England to herself do prove but true.—SHAKESPEARE.

THROUGH evening's bright repose
A voice of prayer arose,
 When the sea-fight was done ;
The sons of England knelt,
 With hearts that now could melt,
For, on the wave, her battle had been won.

Round their tall ship, the main
Heaved with a dark red stain,
 Caught not from sunset's cloud ;
While with the tide swept past
Pennon and shivered mast,
Which to the Ocean-Queen that day had bowed.

But free and fair on high,
A native of the sky,
 Her streamer met the breeze ;
It flowed o'er fearless men,
 Though hushed and child-like then,
Before their God they gathered on the seas.

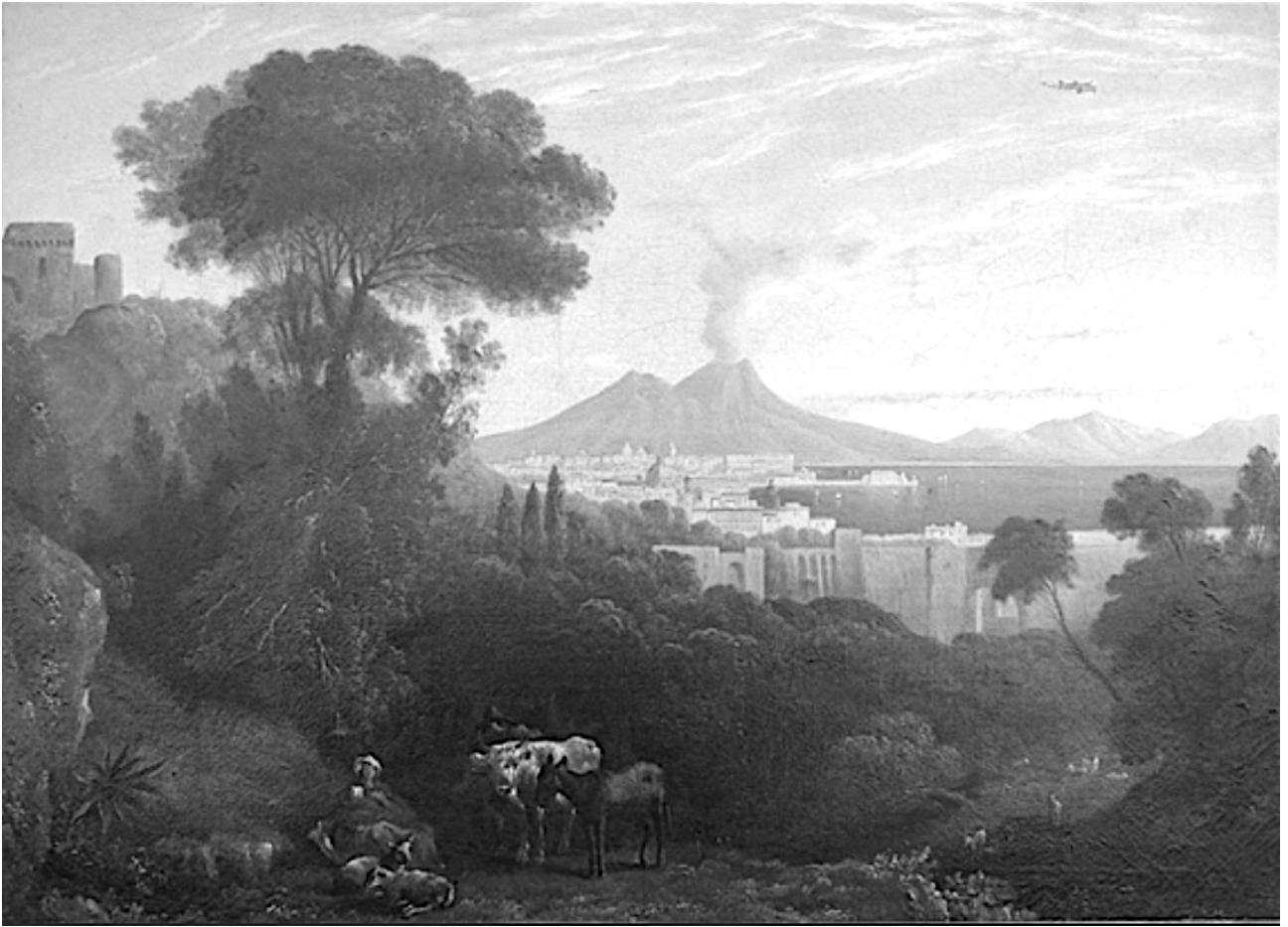
Oh ! did not thought of home
O'er each bold spirit come,
 As from the land, sweet gales ?
In every word of prayer,
 Had not some hearth a share,
Some bower, inviolate 'midst England's vales ?

Yes! bright green spots that lay
In beauty far away,
Hearing no billow's roar ;
Safer from touch of spoil,
For that day's fiery toil,
Rose on high hearts, that now with love gush'd o'er.

A solemn scene, and dread !
The victors and the dead—
The breathless, burning sky !
And, passing with the race
Of waves that keep no trace,
The wild, brief signs of human victory !

A stern, yet holy scene !
Billows, where strife hath been,
Sinking to awful sleep ;
And words that breathe the sense
Of God's omnipotence,
Making a minster of that silent deep !

Borne through such hours afar,
Thy flag hath been a star
Where eagle's wing ne'er flew ;
England ! the unprofaned,
Thou of the homes unstained !
Oh ! to the banner and the shrine be true !



NAPLES

Painting by W. Linton

Engraved by E. Goodall

Naples.

THE SONG OF THE SYREN.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Then gentle winds arose
 With many a mingled close,
 Of wild Æolian sound and mountain odour keen ;
 Where the clear Brian ocean
 Welters with air-like motion
 Within, above, around its bowers of starry green.

SHELLEY.

STILL is the Syren warbling on thy shore,
 Bright City of the Waves !—her magic song
 Still, with a dreamy sense of extacy,
 Fills thy soft summer's air :—and while my glance
 Dwells on thy pictured loveliness, that lay
 Floats thus o'er Fancy's ear ; and thus to thee,
 Daughter of Sunshine ! doth the Syren sing.

“Thine is the glad wave's flashing play,
 Thine is the laugh of the golden day,
 The golden day, and the glorious night,
 And the vine with its clusters all bathed in light !
 —Forget, forget, that thou art not free !
 Queen of the summer sea !

“Favored and crowned of the earth and sky !
 Thine are all voices of melody,
 Wandering in moonlight through fane and tower,
 Floating o'er fountain and myrtle bower ;
 Hark ! now they melt o'er thy glittering sea ;
 —Forget that thou art not free !

“ Let the wine flow in thy marble halls !
Let the lute answer thy fountain falls !
And deck thy beach with the myrtle bough,
And cover with roses thy glowing brow !
Queen of the day and the summer sea,
Forget that thou art not free !”

* * * * *

So doth the Syren sing, while sparkling waves
Dance to her chaunt.—But sternly, mournfully,
O city of the deep ! from Sybil grots
And Roman tombs, the echoes of thy shore
Take up the cadence of her strain alone,
Murmuring—“ Thou art not free !”

Books and Flowers.

BY MRS. HEKMAN.

La vue d'un fleur caresse mon imagination, et flatte mes sens a un point inexprimable. Sous le tranquille abri du toit paternel, j'étois nourrie des l'infance avec des fleurs et des livres;—dans l'etrote enceinte d'une prison, au milieu des fers imposes par la tyrannie, j'oublie l'injustice des hommes, leurs sottises et mes maux, avec des livres et des fleurs.

MADAME ROLAND.

COME, let me make a sunny realm around thee,
Of thought and beauty! Here are books and flowers,
With spells to loose the fetter which hath bound thee,
The ravelled coil of this world's feverish hours.

The soul of song is in these deathless pages,
Even as the odour in the flower enshrined;
Here the crowned spirits of departed ages,
Have left the silent melodies of mind.

Their thoughts, that strove with time, and change, and
anguish,
For some high place where Faith her wing might rest,
Are burning here;—a flame that may not languish,
Still pointing upward to that bright Hill's crest!

Their grief, the veiled infinity exploring
For treasures lost, is here;—their boundless love,
Its mighty streams of gentleness outpouring
On all things round, and clasping all above.

And the bright beings, their own hearts' creations,
Bright, yet all human, here are breathing still ;
Conflicts, and agonies, and exultations,
Are here, and victories of prevailing will !

Listen, oh, listen ! Let their high words cheer thee !
Their swan-like music, ringing through all woes !
Let my voice bring their holy influence near thee,
The Elysian air of their divine repose !

Oh, wouldst thou turn to earth ! *Not* earth, all furrowed
By the old traces of man's toil and care,
But the green youthful world, that never sorrowed,
The world of leaves, and dews, and summer air.

Look on these flowers ! As o'er an altar, shedding
O'er Milton's page, soft light from coloured urns !
They are the links, man's heart to nature wedding,
When to her breast the prodigal returns.

They are from lone wild places, forest-dingles,
Fresh banks of many a low-voiced hidden stream,
Where the sweet star of eve looks down, and mingles
Faint lustre with the water-lily's gleam.

They are from where the soft winds play in gladness,
Covering the turf with pearly blossom-showers ;
—Too richly dowered, O friend ! are we for sadness,
Look on an Empire—Mind and Nature—ours !