

Poems of
Felicia Hemans
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Compiled
by
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The Meeting of the Ships.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

"We take each other by the hand, and we exchange a few words and looks of kindness, and we rejoice together for a few short moments;—and then days, months, years intervene—and we see and know nothing of each other.—Washington Irving.

Two barks met on the deep mid-sea,
When calms had still'd the tide ;
A few bright days of Summer glee
There found them side by side.

And voices of the fair and brave
Rose mingling thence in mirth ;
And sweetly floated o'er the wave
The melodies of earth.

Moonlight on that lone Indian main
Cloudless and lovely slept ;—
While dancing step, and festive strain
Each deck in triumph swept.

And hands were link'd, and answering eyes
With kindly meaning shone ;
—Oh ! brief and passing sympathies,
Like leaves together blown !

A little while such joy was cast
Over the deep's repose,
Till the loud singing winds at last
Like trumpet music rose.

And proudly, freely, on their way
The parting vessels bore ;
—In calm or storm, by rock or bay,
To meet—Oh ! never more !

Never to blend in Victory's cheer,
To aid in hours of woe ;—
And thus bright spirits mingle here,
Such ties are formed below !

"Fair Helen of Kirconnel."

BY MRS. HEMANS.

"Fair Helen of Kirconnel," as she is called in the Scottish Minstrelsy, throwing herself between her betrothed lover and a rival by whom his life was assailed, received a mortal wound, and died in the arms of the former.

HOLD me upon thy faithful heart,
Keep back my flitting breath ;
'Tis early, early to depart,
Sweet friend !—yet this is Death !

Look on me still :—let that kind eye
Be the last light I see !
Oh ! sad it is in spring to die,
But yet I die for thee !

For thee, my own !—*thy* stately head
Was never thus to bow ;—
Give tears when with me Love hath fled,
True Love—thou know'st it now !

Oh ! the free streams look'd bright, where'er
We in our gladness rov'd ;
And the blue skies were very fair—
Dear friend ! because we lov'd.

Farewell !—I bless thee !—live thou on,
When this young heart is low !
Surely my blood thy life hath won—
Clasp me once more—I go !

A Thought of the Rose.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Rosa, Rosa! perchè sulla tua beltà
Sempre è scritta questa parola—MORTE?

How much of memory dwells amidst thy bloom,
ROSE! ever wearing beauty for thy dower?
The Bridal day—the Festival—the Tomb—
Thou hast thy part in each—thou stateliest flower!

Therefore with thy soft breath come floating by
A thousand images of Love and Grief,
Dreams, fill'd with tokens of mortality,
Deep thoughts of all things beautiful and brief.

Not such thy spells o'er those that hail'd thee first
In the clear light of Eden's golden day;
There thy rich leaves to crimson glory burst,
Link'd with no dim remembrance of decay.

Rose! for the banquet gathered, and the bier;
Rose! coloured now by human hope or pain;
Surely where death is not—nor change, nor fear,
Yet may we meet thee, Joy's own Flower, again!

Swiss Home-Sickness.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LAST OF THE MELODIES SUNG BY THE
TYROLESE FAMILY.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

"Herr, mein Herr, warum so traurig," &c.

WHEREFORE so sad and faint, my heart !—
The stranger's land is fair ;
Yet weary, weary still thou art—
What find'st thou wanting there ?

What wanting?—all, oh ! all I love !
Am I not lonely here ?
Through a fair land in sooth I rove,
Yet what like home is dear ?

My home ! oh ! thither would I fly,
Where the free air is sweet,
My father's voice, my mother's eye,
My own wild hills to greet.

My hills, with all their soaring steeps,
With all their glaciers bright,
Where in his joy the chamois leaps,
Mocking the hunter's might.

Oh ! but to hear the herd-bell sound,
When shepherds lead the way
Up the high Alps, and children bound,
And not a lamb will stay !

Oh ! but to climb the uplands free,
And, where the pure streams foam,
By the blue shining lake, to see,
Once more, my hamlet-home !

Here, no familiar look I trace ;
I touch no friendly hand ;
No child laughs kindly in my face—
As in my own bright land !—

The Voice of Music.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound."

CHILDRE HAROLD.

WHENCE is the might of thy master-spell ?
Speak to me, Voice of sweet sound, and tell !
How canst thou wake, by one gentle breath,
Passionate visions of love and death !

How callest thou back, with a note, a sigh,
Words and low tones from the days gone by—
A sunny glance, or a fond farewell ?—
Speak to me, Voice of sweet sound, and tell !

What is thy power, from the soul's deep spring
In sudden gushes the tears to bring ;
Even 'midst the swells of thy festal glee,
Fountains of sorrow are stirred by thee !

Vain are those tears !—vain and fruitless all—
Showers that refresh not, yet still must fall ;
For a purer bliss while the full heart burns,
For a brighter home while the Spirit yearns !

Something of mystery there surely dwells,
Waiting thy touch, in our bosom cells ;
Something that finds not its answer here—
A chain to be clasped in another sphere,

Therefore a current of sadness deep
Through the stream of thy triumphs is heard to sweep,
Like a moan of the breeze through a summer sky—
Like a name of the dead when the wine foams high !

Yet speak to me still, though thy tones be fraught
With vain remembrance and troubled thought ;—
Speak ! for thou tellest my soul that its birth
Links it with regions more bright than earth !

Song.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

OH ! ye voices gone,
 Sounds of other years !
Hush that haunting tone,
 Melt me not to tears.
All around forget,
 All who loved you well,
Yet sweet voices, yet,
 O'er my soul ye swell.

With the winds of Spring,
 With the breath of flowers,
Floating back, ye bring
 Thoughts of banished hours.
Hence your music take,
 Oh ! ye voices gone !
This lone heart ye make
 But more deeply lone.



O'CONNOR'S CHILD

Painted by J. Burns Engraved by Edward Smith

O'Connor's Child.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

———" I fled the home of grief,
At Connocht Moran's tomb to fall ;
I found the helmet of my chief,
His bow still hanging on our wall,
And took it down, and vow'd to rove
This desert place, a huntress bold :
Nor would I change my buried love
For any heart of living mould."

CAMPBELL.

THE sleep of storms is dark upon the skies ;
The weight of omens heavy in the cloud :—
Bid the lorn huntress of the desert rise,
And gird the form whose beauty grief hath bowed,
And leave the tomb, as tombs *are* left—alone,
To the stars' vigil and the wind's wild moan.

Tell her of revelries in bower and hall,
Where gems are glittering, and bright wine is pour'd—
Where to glad measures chiming footsteps fall,
And soul seems gushing from the harp's full chord ;
And richer flowers amid fair tresses wave,
Than the sad "*Love lies bleeding*" of the grave.

Oh ! little know'st thou of the o'er-mastering spell,
Wherewith love binds the spirit, strong in pain,
To the spot hallow'd by a wild farewell,
A parting agony—intense, yet vain,
A look—and darkness when its gleam hath flown,
A voice—and silence when its words are gone.

She hears thee not :—her full, deep, fervent heart
Is set in her dark eyes ;—and they are bound
Unto that cross, that shrine, that world apart,
Where faithful blood hath sanctified the ground ;
And love with death striven long by tear and prayer,
And anguish frozen into still despair.

Yet on her spirit hath arisen at last
A light, a joy, of its own wanderings born ;
Around her path a vision's glow is cast,
Back, back, her lost one comes, in hues of morn !
For her the gulf is filled—the curtain shred,
Whose mystery parts the living and the dead.

And she can pour forth in such converse high,
All her soul's tide of love, the deep, the strong !
Oh ! lonelier far, perchance, *thy* destiny,
And more forlorn, amidst the world's gay throng,
Than hers,—the queen of that majestic gloom,
The tempest, and the desert, and the tomb.

* " A son of light, a lovely form
He comes, and makes her glad."

Monumental Inscription.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Elle etait du Monde, ou les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin ;
Et Rose, elle a dure, ce que durent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin.

EARTH! guard what here we lay in holy trust ;
That which hath left our home a darkened place,
Wanting the form, the smile, now veiled with dust,
The light departed with our loveliest face.
Yet from thy bonds undying hope springs free—
We have but *lent* our beautiful to thee.

But thou, oh Heaven ! keep, keep what *Thou* hast taken,
And with our treasure keep our hearts on high !
The spirit meek, and yet by pain unshaken,
The faith, the love, the lofty constancy,
Guide us where *these* are with our sister flown—
They were of *Thee*, and thou hast claim'd thine own !