

Poems of
Felicia Hemans
in
Friendship's Offering, 1826

compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

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A MONARCH'S DEATH-BED.

The Emperor Albert First, assassinated by his nephew, John, surnamed the Parricide, expired on the banks of the river Reuss, in the field afterwards called Königsfelden, supported only by a female peasant, who was accidentally passing at the time.

A MONARCH in his death-pangs lay—
Did censers breathe perfume,
And soft lamps pour their silvery ray,
Through his proud chamber's gloom?—
He lay upon a greensward bed,
Beneath a darkening sky,
A lone tree waving o'er his head,
A swift stream rolling by.

Had he then fallen as warriors fall,
Where spear strikes fire with spear?
Was there a banner for his pall,
A buckler for his bier?
Not so:—nor cloven shields nor helms
Had strewn the bloody sod,
Where he, the helpless lord of realms,
Yielded his soul to God!

Were there not friends with words of cheer,
And princely vassals nigh?
And priests, the crucifix to rear
Before the fading eye?—
A peasant girl that royal head
Upon her bosom laid,
And, shrinking not for woman's dread,
The face of death surveyed.

Alone she sat:—from hill and wood
Red sank the mournful sun;
Fast gushed the fount of noble blood,
Treason its worst had done.
With her long hair she vainly prest
The wounds, to staunch their tide;—
Unknown, on that meek, humble breast,
Imperial Albert died!



SLEEPING CHILD

After Chantrey

Drawn by H. Corbould Engraved by W. T. Fry

THE CHILD'S LAST SLEEP.

The lovely child is dead!
All, all his innocent thoughts, like rose-leaves, scattered,
And his glad childhood nothing but a dream!

WILSON.

THOU sleepest!—but when wilt thou wake, fair child!
When the fawn awakes, in the forest wild?
When the lark's wing mounts, with the breeze of morn?
When the first rich breath of the rose is born?—
Lovely thou sleepest—yet something lies
Too deep and still on thy soft-sealed eyes!
Mournful, though sweet, is thy rest to see;
—When will the hour of thy rising be?

Not when the fawn wakes,—not when the lark,
On the crimson cloud of the morn, floats dark!
—Grief, with vain passionate tears, hath wet
The hair shedding gleams o'er thy pale brow, yet;
Love, with sad kisses—unfelt—hath prest
Thy meek drooped eyelids, and quiet breast;—
And the glad spring, calling out bird and bee,
Shall colour all blossoms, fair child, but thee!
Thou art gone from us, bright one!—that *thou*
should'st die,
And life be left to the butterfly!
Thou art gone, as a dew-drop is blown from the bough,
—Oh! for the world where thy home is now!—
How may we love but in doubt and fear,
How may we anchor our fond hearts *here*,
How should even joy but a trembler be,
Beautiful dust! when we look on thee!

F. H.

TO AN INFANT.

THOU wak'st from happy sleep, to play,
With bounding heart, my boy !
Before thee lies a long, bright day
Of summer and of joy !

Thou hast no heavy thought or dream,
To cloud thy fearless eye ;—
Long be it thus !—life's early stream
Should still reflect the sky !

Yet,—ere the cares of earth lie dim,
On thy young spirit's wings,—
Now, in thy morn, forget not *Him*
From whom each pure thought springs !

So,—in thy onward vale of tears,
Where'er thy path may be,
When strength hath bowed to evil years,—
He will remember thee !

F. H.

THE LAST WISH.

Go to the forest shade ;
Seek thou the well-known glade
Where, heavy with sweet dew, the violets lie,
Gleaming through moss-tufts deep,
Like dark eyes filled with sleep,
And bathed in hues of summer's midnight sky.

Bring me their buds, to shed
Around my dying bed,
A breath of May, and of the wood's repose ;
For I, in sooth, depart
With a reluctant heart,
That fain would linger where the bright sun glows.

Fain would I stay with thee,—
Alas ! this must not be ;
Yet bring me still the gifts of happier hours !
Go where the fountain's breast
Catches, in glassy rest,
The dim green light that pours through laurel bowers.

I know how softly bright,
Steeped in that tender light,
The water-lilies tremble there, e'en now ;
Go to the pure stream's edge,
And, from its whispering sedge,
Bring me those flowers, to cool my fevered brow.

Then,—as in Hope's young days,—
Track thou the antique maze
Of the rich garden, to its grassy mound ;
There is a lone white rose,
Shedding, in sudden snows,
Its faint leaves o'er the emerald turf around !

Well know'st thou that fair tree !
—A murmur of the bee
Dwells, ever, in the honied lime above ;
Bring me one pearly flower,
Of all its clustering shower,—
For, on that spot we first revealed our love !

Gather one woodbine bough,
Then, from the lattice low
Of the bowered cottage which I bade thee mark,
When, by the hamlet, last,
Through dim wood-lanes, we passed,
Where dews were glancing to the glow-worm's spark.

Haste ! to my pillow bear
Those fragrant things, and fair ;—
My hand no more may bind them up at eve ;

Yet shall their odour soft
One bright dream round me waft,
Of life, youth, summer,—all that I must leave !

And oh ! if thou would'st ask
Wherefore thy steps I task
The grove, the stream, the hamlet-vale to trace ;
'Tis that some thought of me
—When I am gone,—may be
The spirit bound to each familiar place.

I bid mine image dwell,
(Oh ! break thou not the spell !)
In the deep wood, and by the fountain side !
Thou must not, my beloved !
Rove where we two have roved,
Forgetting her that in her spring-time died !

F. H.