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**By**  
**Deter J. Bolton**

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THE ANCESTRAL SONG.

A long war disturb'd your mind,—  
Here your perfect peace is sign'd:  
'Tis now full tide 'twixt night and day,  
End your moan and come away.

WINTER.—*Duchess of Malfy.*

There were faint sounds of weeping ;—fear and gloom,  
And midnight vigil in a stately room  
Of Chatillon's old halls :—rich odours there  
Fill'd the proud chamber as with Indian air,  
And soft light fell, from lamps of silver thrown,  
On jewels that with rainbow-lustre shone  
Over a gorgeous couch : there emeralds gleam'd,  
And deeper crimson from the ruby stream'd  
Than in the heart-leaf of the rose is set,  
Hiding from sunshine :—Many a carcanet  
Starry with diamonds, many a burning chain  
Of the red gold, shed forth a radiance vain :  
And sad, and strange, the canopy beneath,  
Whose shadowy curtain, round a bed of death,  
Hung drooping solemnly :—for there one lay,  
Passing from all earth's glories fast away,  
Amidst those queenly treasures :—They had been  
Gifts of her Lord, from far-off Paynim lands,  
And for *his* sake, upon their orient sheen,  
She had gaz'd fondly, and, with faint, cold hands,  
Had pressed to her languid heart once more,  
Melting in child-like tears :—But this was o'er,

Love's last vain clinging unto life ; and now  
 A mist of dreams was hovering o'er her brow,  
 Her eye was fix'd, her spirit seem'd removed,  
 Though not from earth, from all it knew or loved,  
 Far, far away :—her handmaids watch'd around,  
 In awe, that lent to each low, midnight sound  
 A might, a mystery ; and the quivering light  
 Of wind-sway'd lamps, made spectral in their sight  
 The forms of buried beauty, sad, yet fair,  
 Gleaming along the walls, with braided hair,  
 Long in the dust grown dim :—And she, too, saw,  
 But with the spirit's eye of raptur'd awe,  
 Those pictured shapes :—a bright, but solemn train,  
 Beckoning, they floated o'er her dreamy brain,  
 Clothed in diviner hues ; while on her ear  
 Strange voices fell, which none besides might hear ;  
 Sweet, yet profoundly mournful, as the sigh  
 Of winds o'er harp-strings through a midnight sky ;  
 And thus, it seem'd, in that low, thrilling tone,  
 Th' Ancestral Shadows call'd away their own.

Come, come, come !

Long thy fainting soul hath yearn'd  
 For the step that ne'er return'd ;  
 Long thine anxious ear hath listen'd,  
 And thy watchful eye hath glisten'd  
 With the hope, whose parting strife  
 Shook the flower-leaves from thy life.  
 Now the heavy day is done,  
 Home awaits thee, wearied one !

Come, come, come !

From the quenchless thoughts that burn  
 In the seal'd heart's lonely urn ;  
 From the coil of memory's chain,  
 Wound about the throbbing brain ;  
 From the veins of sorrow deep,  
 Winding through the world of sleep ;  
 From the haunted halls and bowers,  
 Throng'd with ghosts of happier hours ;

Come, come, come !

On our dim and distant shore  
 Aching Love is felt no more.  
 We have lov'd with earth's excess—  
 Past is now that weariness !  
 We have wept, that weep not now—  
 Calm is each once-throbbing brow !  
 We have known the Dreamer's woes—  
 All is now one bright repose !

Come, come, come !

Weary heart that long hast bled,  
 Languid spirit, drooping head,  
 Restless memory, vain regret,  
 Pining love whose light is set,  
 Come away !—'tis hush'd, 'tis well,  
 Where by shadowy fountains we dwell,  
 All the fever-thirst is still'd,  
 All the air with peace is fill'd !

Come, come, come !

And with her spirit rapt in that wild lay,  
 She pass'd, as twilight melts to night, away !

THE STORM-PAINTER\* IN HIS DUNGEON.

—Where of ye, O tempests, is the goal?  
Are ye like those that shake the human breast,  
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some high nest?  
*Childe Harold.*

MIDNIGHT! and silence deep!  
The air is fill'd with sleep,  
With the stream's whisper and the citron's breath;  
The fixed and solemn stars  
Gleam thro' my dungeon-bars—  
Wake, rushing winds! this breezeless calm is death!

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\* Pietro Mulier, called Il Tempesta, from his surprising pictures of storms. "His compositions," says Lanzi, "inspire a real horror, presenting to our eyes death-devoted ships overtaken by tempests and darkness, fired by lightning, now rising on the mountain-waves, and again submerged in the abyss of ocean." During an imprisonment of five years in Genoa, the pictures which he painted in his dungeon were marked by additional power and gloom.—See Lanzi's *History of Painting*, translated by Roscoe.

Ye watch-fires of the skies !  
The stillness of your eyes  
Looks too intensely thro' my troubled soul ;  
I feel this weight of rest  
An earth-load on my breast—  
Wake, rushing winds, awake ! and dark clouds, roll !

I am your own, *your* child,  
O ye, the fierce and wild  
And kingly tempests ! Will ye not arise ?  
Hear the bold Spirit's voice,  
That knows not to rejoice,  
But in the peal of your strong harmonies !

By sounding Ocean-waves,  
And dim Calabrian caves,  
And flashing torrents, I have been your mate ;  
And with the rocking pines  
Of the olden Apennines,  
In your dark path stood fearless and elate !

Your lightnings were as rods  
That smote the deep abodes  
Of thought within me, and the stream gush'd free ;  
Come, that my soul again  
May swell to burst its chain—  
Bring me the music of the sweeping sea !

Within me dwells a flame,  
An eagle caged and tame,  
Till call'd forth by the harping of the blast ;  
Then is its triumph's hour,  
It springs to sudden power,  
As mounts the billow o'er the quivering mast.

Then, then, the canvass o'er,  
With hurried hand I pour  
The lava-floods and gusts of my own soul ;  
Kindling to fiery life  
Dreams, worlds, of pictured strife ;—  
Wake, rushing winds, awake ! and dark clouds, roll !

Wake, rise !—the reed may bend,  
The trembling leaf descend,  
The forest branch give way before your might ;  
But I, your strong compeer,  
Call, summon, wait you here—  
Answer, my Spirit, answer ! Storm and Night !

SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS.

I.

THE RECALL.

Alas! the kind, the playful, and the gay,  
They who have gladden'd their domestic board,  
And cheer'd the winter hearth—do they return?

JOANNA BAILLIE.

COME home!—there is a sorrowing breath  
In music since ye went;  
And the early flower-scents wander by,  
With mournful memories blent:  
The sounds of every household voice  
Are grown more sad and deep,  
And the sweet word—*Brother*—wakes a wish  
To turn aside and weep.

O ye beloved, come home!—the hour  
Of many a greeting tone,  
The time of hearth-light and of song  
Returns—and ye are gone!  
And darkly, heavily it falls  
On the forsaken room,  
Burdening the heart with tenderness,  
That deepens midst the gloom.

Where finds it you, our wandering ones?  
With all your boyhood's glee  
Untamed, beneath the desert's palm,  
Or on the lone mid-sea?  
'Mid stormy hills of battles old,  
Or where dark rivers foam?  
Oh! Life is dim where ye are not—  
Back, ye beloved! come home!

Come with the leaves and winds of spring,  
And swift birds o'er the main!  
Our love is grown too sorrowful,  
Bring us its youth again!  
Bring the glad tones to music back—  
—Still, still your home is fair;  
The spirit of your sunny life  
Alone is wanting there!

F. H.

II.

THE INDIAN WITH HIS DEAD CHILD.\*

Then the hunter turn'd away from that scene,  
Where the home of his fathers once had been,  
And burning thoughts flash'd o'er his mind,  
Of the white man's faith and love unkind.

BRYANT.

IN the silence of the midnight,  
I journey with the dead :

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\* " A striking display of Indian character occurred some years since in a town in Maine. An Indian of the Kennebeck tribe, remarkable for his good conduct, received a grant of land from the state, and fixed himself in a new township, where a number of families were settled. Though not ill treated, yet the common prejudice against Indians prevented any sympathy with him. This was shewn on the death of his only child, when none of the people came near him. Shortly after, he gave up his farm, dug up the body of his child, and carried it with him two hundred miles through the forest, to join the Canadian Indians."—TUDOR'S *Letters on the Eastern States of America*.



In the darkness of the forest boughs,  
A lonely path I tread.

But my heart is high and fearless,  
As by mighty wings upborne ;  
The mountain-eagle hath not plumes  
So strong as love and scorn.

I have raised thee from the grave-sod,  
By the white man's path defiled ;  
On to th' ancestral wilderness  
I bear thy dust, my child !

I have ask'd the ancient deserts  
To give my dead a place,  
Where the stately footsteps of the free  
Alone should leave a trace :

And the rocking pines made answer—  
Go, bring us back thine own !  
And the streams from all the hunter's hills,  
Rush'd with an echoing tone.

Thou shalt rest by sounding waters,  
That yet untamed may roll ;  
The voices of those chainless ones  
With joy shall fill thy soul.

In the silence of the midnight  
I journey with the dead,  
Where the arrows of my father's bow  
Their falcon-flight have sped.

I have left the spoilers' dwellings  
For evermore behind ;  
Unmingled with their household sounds,  
For me shall sweep the wind.

Alone, amidst their hearth-fires,  
I watch'd my child's decay ;  
Uncheer'd I saw the spirit-light  
From his young eyes fade away.

When his head sank on my bosom,  
When the death-sleep o'er him fell,  
Was there one to say—"A friend is near?"  
There was none !—Pale race, farewell !

To the forests, to the cedars,  
To the warrior and his bow,  
Back, back ! I bore thee laughing thence,  
—I bear thee slumbering now !

I bear him unto burial  
With the mighty hunters gone ;—  
I shall hear thee in the forest-breeze,—  
Thou wilt speak of joy, my son !

In the silence of the midnight  
I journey with the dead ;  
But my heart is strong, my step is fleet,  
My father's path I tread.

F. H.

III.

THE TWO HOMES.

Oh! if the soul immortal be,  
Is not its love immortal too?

SEEST thou my home?—'Tis where yon woods are waving  
In their dark richness, to the sunny air;  
Where yon blue stream, a thousand flower-banks laving,  
Leads down the hills a vein of light—'tis there!

Midst these green haunts how many a spring lies gleaming,  
Fringed with the violet, colour'd with the skies,  
My boyhood's haunt, through days of summer dreaming,  
Under young leaves that shook with melodies!

My home!—the spirit of its love is breathing  
In every wind that plays across my track,  
From its white walls the very tendrils wreathing  
Seem with soft links to draw the wanderer back.

There am I loved—there pray'd for!—there my mother  
Sits by the hearth with meekly thoughtful eye,  
There my young sisters watch to greet their brother;  
Soon their glad footsteps down the path will fly!

There, in sweet strains of kindred music blending,  
All the home-voices meet at day's decline;  
One are those tones, as from one heart ascending—  
—There laughs *my* home. Sad stranger! where is thine?

—Ask'st thou of *mine*?—In solemn peace 'tis lying,  
Far o'er the deserts and the tombs away;  
'Tis where *I* too am loved, with love undying,  
And fond hearts wait my step—But where are they?

Ask where the earth's departed have their dwelling,  
Ask of the clouds, the stars, the trackless air!—  
I know it not—yet trust the whisper, telling  
My lonely heart, that love unchanged is there.

And what is home, and where, but with the loving?  
Happy *thou* art, that so canst gaze on thine!  
My spirit feels but, in its weary roving,  
That with the dead, where'er they be, is mine.

Go to thy home, rejoicing son and brother!  
Bear in fresh gladness to the household scene!  
For me, too, watch the sister and the mother,  
I will believe—but dark seas roll between.

F. H.

SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS.

BY MRS HEMANS.

IV.

THE RETURN.

Oh ! bid him reverence, in his manhood's prime  
His youth's bright morning-dream. DON CARLOS.

“ Art thou come with the heart of thy childhood back,  
‘I he free, the pure, the kind?’  
—So murmur’d the trees in my homeward track,  
As they play’d to the mountain wind :

“ Hast thou been true to thine early love?  
Whisper’d my native streams ;  
“ Doth the spirit, rear’d amidst hill and grove,  
Still revere its first high dreams ?”

“ Hast thou borne in thy bosom the holy prayer  
Of the child in his parent-halls ?” —  
Thus breathed a voice on the thrilling air  
From the old ancestral walls :

“ Hast thou kept thy faith with the faithful dead,  
Whose place of rest is nigh ?  
With the father’s blessing o’er thee shed ?  
With the mother’s trusting eye ?”

Then my tears gush’d forth in sudden rain,  
As I answer’d—“ O ye shades !  
I bring not my childhood’s heart again  
To the freedom of your glades !

“ I have turn'd from my first pure love aside,  
O bright rejoicing streams !  
Light after light in my soul have died  
The early glorious dreams !

“ And the holy prayer from my thoughts hath pass'd,  
The prayer at my mother's knee—  
Darken'd and troubled I come at last,  
Thou home of my boyish glee !

“ But I bear from my childhood a gift of tears  
To soften and atone ;  
And, O ye scenes of those blessed years !  
They shall make me again your own.”

V.

THE WISH.

Holy hath been our converse, gentle friend !  
Full of high thoughts breathing of heavenward hope,  
Deepen'd by tenderest memories of the dead ;  
Therefore, beyond the Grave, I surely deem  
That we shall meet again.

Come to me, when my soul  
Hath but a few dim hours to linger here ;  
When earthly chains are as a shrivel'd scroll,  
Oh ! let me feel thy presence ! be but near !

That I may look once more  
Into thine eyes, which never changed for me ;  
That I may speak to thee of that bright shore,  
Where, with our treasures, we have yearn'd to be.

Thou friend of many days !  
Of sadness and of joy, of home and hearth !  
Will not thy spirit aid me then to raise  
The trembling pinions of my hope from earth ?

By every solemn thought  
Which on our hearts hath sunk, in years gone by,  
From the deep voices of the mountains caught,  
Or all th' adoring silence of the sky :

By every lofty theme,  
Wherein, in low-toned reverence, we have spoken ;  
By our communion in each fervent dream  
That sought from realms beyond the grave, a token :

And by our tears for those  
Whose loss hath touch'd our world with hues of death ;  
And by the hopes that with their dust repose,  
As flowers await the south wind's vernal breath :

Come to me in that day—  
The one—the sever'd from all days !—O Friend !  
Even then, if human thought may then have sway,  
My soul with thine shall yet rejoice to blend.

Nor then, nor *there* alone :  
I ask my heart if all indeed must die ;  
All that of holiest feeling it hath known ?  
And my heart's VOICE replies—*Eternity !*

SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS.

BY MRS HEMANS.

VI.

THE SOLDIER'S DEATH-BED.

Wie herrlich die sonne dort untergeht ! Da ich  
Noch ein Hube war—war's mein Lieblingsgedanke,  
Wie sie zu leben, zu sterben wie sie.

DIE KAUSER.

*Like thee to die, thou Sun !—My boyhood's dream,  
Was this ; and now my spirit, with thy beam,  
Ebbs from a field of victory !—yet the hour  
Bears back upon me, with a torrent's power,  
Nature's deep longings :—Oh ! for some kind eye,  
Wherein to meet Love's fervent farewell gaze ;  
Some breast, to pillow Life's last agony ;  
Some voice, to speak of Hope and brighter days,  
Beyond the Pass of Shadows !—But I go,  
I, that have been so loved, go hence alone ;  
And ye, now gathering round my own hearth's glow,  
Sweet friends ! it may be that a softer tone,  
Even in this moment, with your laughing glee,  
Mingles its feeling while ye speak of me :  
Of me, your soldier, midst the mountains lying,  
On the red banner of his battles dying,  
Far, far away ! And oh ! your parting prayer !  
Will not his name be fondly murmur'd there ?—  
It will !—a blessing on that holy hearth !  
Though clouds are darkening to o'ercast its mirth.  
Mother ! I may not hear thy voice again ;  
Sisters ! ye watch to greet my step in vain ;  
Young brother, fare thee well !—on each dear head,  
Blessing and love a thousand fold be shed,  
My soul's last earthly breathings !—May your home  
Smile for you ever !—May no winter come,  
No *world*, between your hearts !—May even your tears,  
For my sake, full of long-remember'd years,  
Quicken the true affections that entwine  
Your lives in one bright bond !—I may not sleep  
Amidst our Fathers, where those tears might shine  
Over my slumbers ; yet your love will keep  
My memory living in th' ancestral halls,  
Where shame hath never trod.—The dark night falls,  
And I depart.—The Brave are gone to rest,  
The brothers of my combats ; on the breast  
Of the red field they reap'd :—their work is done—  
Thou, too, art set—farewell, farewell, thou Sun !  
The last lone watcher of the bloody sod,  
Offers a trusting spirit up to God.*

VII.

THE CHARMED PICTURE.

Oh! that those lips had language!—Life had pass'd  
With me but roughly since I saw thee last.

THINE eyes are charm'd—thine earnest eyes,  
Thou Image of the Dead!  
A spell within this sweetness lies,  
A virtue thence is shed.

Oft in their meek blue light enshrined,  
A blessing seems to be;  
And sometimes there, my wayward mind  
A still reproach can see.

And sometimes Pity—soft and deep,  
And quivering through a tear;  
Ev'n as if Love in Heaven could weep,  
For Grief left drooping here.

And oh! my spirit needs that balm,  
Needs it midst fitful mirth,  
And in the night-hour's haunted calm,  
And by the lonely hearth.

Look on me *thus*, when hollow Praise  
Hath made the weary pine,  
For one true tone of other days,  
One glance of love like thine!

Look on me *thus*, when sudden glee  
Bears my quick heart along,  
On wings that struggle to be free  
As bursts of skylark song.

In vain, in vain!—too soon are felt  
The wounds they cannot flee;  
Better in child-like tears to melt,  
Pouring my soul on thee!

Sweet face, that o'er my childhood shone,  
Whence is thy power of change,  
Thus, ever shadowing back my own,  
The rapid and the strange?

Whence are they charm'd—those earnest eyes?—  
I know the mystery well!  
In my own trembling bosom lies  
The Spirit of the Spell.

Of Memory, Conscience, Love, 'tis born—  
Oh! change no longer, Thou!  
For ever be the blessing worn  
On thy pure thoughtful brow!



VIII.

THE DREAMING CHILD.

Alas! what kind of grief should thy years know?  
Thy brow and cheek are smooth as waters are  
When no breath troubles them.

DEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

AND is there sadness in thy dream, my Boy?—  
What should the cloud be made of?—blessed child!  
Thy spirit, borne upon a breeze of joy,  
All day hath ranged through sunshine, clear yet mild:

And now thou tremblest!—Wherefore?—in *thy* soul  
There lies no Past, no Future. Thou hast heard  
The sound of presage from the distance roll,  
Thy breast bears traces of no arrowy word:

From thee no Love hath gone: thy mind's young eye  
Hath look'd not into Death's, and thence become  
A questioner of mute Eternity,  
A weary searcher for a viewless home:

Nor hath thy sense been quicken'd into pain,  
By feverish watching for some step beloved;—  
Free are thy thoughts, an ever-changeful train,  
Glancing like dewdrops, and as lightly moved.

Yet now, on billows of strange Passion toss'd,  
How art thou wilder'd in the cave of Sleep!  
My gentle child! midst what dim phantoms lost,  
Thus in mysterious anguish dost thou weep?

Awake! they sadden me—those early tears,  
First gushings of the strong dark River's flow,  
That *must* o'ersweep thy soul with coming years—  
Th' unfathomable flood of human woe!

Awful to watch, ev'n rolling through a dream,  
Forcing wild spray-drops but from Childhood's eyes!—  
Wake, wake! as yet thy life's transparent stream  
Should wear the tide of none but summer skies.

Come from the shadow of those realms unknown,  
Where now thy thoughts dismay'd and darkling rove,  
Come to the kindly region all thine own,  
The Home still bright for thee with guardian Love!

Happy, fair child! that yet a Mother's voice  
Can win thee back from visionary strife!—  
Oh! shall *my* Soul, thus waken'd to rejoice,  
Start from the dream-like Wilderness of Life?