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DREAMS OF HEAVEN.

BY MRS HEMANS.

DREAM'ST *thou* of Heaven?—What dreams are *thine*?
Fair child, fair gladsome child!
With eyes that like the dewdrop shine,
And bounding footstep wild.

Tell me what hues th' immortal shore
Can wear, my Bird! to thee,
Ere yet one shadow hath pass'd o'er
Thy glance and spirit free?

" Oh! beautiful is heaven, and bright
With long, long summer days!
I see its lilies gleam in light,
Where many a fountain plays.

" And there unchecked, methinks, I rove,
Seeking where young flowers lie,
In vale and golden-fruited grove—
Flowers that are not to die!"

Thou Poet of the lonely thought,
Sad heir of gifts divine!
Say, with what solemn glory fraught
Is Heaven in dream of thine?

" Oh! where the living waters flow
Along that radiant shore,
My soul, a wanderer *here*, shall know
The exile-thirst no more!

" The burden of the stranger's heart
Which here unknown I bear,
Like the night-shadow shall depart,
With my first wakening there.

" And borne on eagle-wings afar,
Free thought shall claim its dower
From every sphere, from every star,
Of glory and of power."

O woman! with the soft sad eye
Of spiritual gleam!
Tell me of those bright realms on high,
How doth thy deep heart dream?

By thy sweet mournful voice I know,
On thy pale brow I see,
That thou hast lov'd in silent woe,
Say, what is Heaven to *thee*?

" Oh! Heaven is where no secret dread
May haunt Love's meeting hour;
Where from the past, no gloom is shed
O'er the heart's chosen bower:

" Where every sever'd wreath is bound;
And none have heard the knell
That smites the soul in that wild sound—
Farewell, Belov'd! farewell!"

TO A BUTTERFLY NEAR A TOMB.

BY MRS HEMANS.

I stood where the lip of Song lay low,
Where the dust was heavy on Beauty's brow;
Where stillness hung on the heart of Love,
And a marble weeper kept watch above.

I stood in the silence of lonely thought,
While Song and Love in my own soul wrought;
Though each unwhisper'd, each dimm'd with fear,
Each but a banish'd spirit here.

Then didst *thou* pass me in radiance by,
Child of the Sunshine, young Butterfly!
Thou that dost bear, on thy fairy wing,
No burden of inborn suffering!

Thou wert flitting past that solemn tomb,
Over a bright world of joy and bloom;
And strangely I felt, as I saw thee shine,
The all that sever'd *thy* life and mine.

Mine, with its hidden mysterious things,
Of Love and Grief, its unsounded springs,
And quick thoughts, wandering o'er earth and sky,
With voices to question Eternity!

Thine, on its reckless and glancing way,
Like an embodied breeze at play!
Child of the Sunshine, thou wing'd and free,
One moment—*one* moment—I envied thee!

Thou art not lonely, though born to roam,
Thou hast no longings that pine for home;
Thou seek'st not the haunts of the bee and bird,
To fly from the sickness of Hope deferr'd.

In thy brief being no strife of mind,
No boundless passion, is deeply shrined;
But I—as I gazed on thy swift flight by,
One hour of *my* soul seem'd Infinity!

Yet, ere I turned from that silent place,
Or ceased from watching thy joyous race,
Thou, even *Thou*, on those airy wings,
Didst waft me visions of brighter things!

Thou, that dost image the freed soul's birth,
And its flight away o'er the mists of earth,
Oh! fitly *Thou* shinest mid flowers that rise
Round the dark chamber where Genius lies!

MARGUERITE OF FRANCE.*

BY MRS HEMANS.

Thou falcon-hearted dove!
COLERIDGE.

THE Moslem spears were gleaming
Round Damietta's towers,
Though a Christian banner from her wall
Waved free its Lily-flowers.
Aye, proudly did the banner wave,
As Queen of Earth and Air;
But faint hearts throbb'd beneath its folds,
In anguish and despair.

Deep, deep in Paynim dungeon,
Their kingly chieftain lay,
And low on many an Eastern field
Their knighthood's best array.
'Twas mournful, when at feasts they met,
The wine-cup round to send,
For each that touch'd it silently,
Then miss'd a gallant friend!

And mournful was their vigil
On the beleaguer'd wall,
And dark their slumber, dark with dreams
Of slow defeat and fall.
Yet a few hearts of Chivalry
Rose high to breast the storm,
And one—of all the loftiest there—
Thrill'd in a woman's form.

A woman, meekly bending
O'er the slumber of her child,
With her soft sad eyes of weeping love,
As the Virgin Mother's mild.
Oh! roughly cradled was thy Babe,
'Midst the clash of spear and lance,
And a strange, wild bower was thine, young Queen!
Fair Marguerite of France!

A dark and vaulted chamber,
Like a scene for wizard-spell,
Deep in the Saracenic gloom
Of the warrior citadel;
And there midst arms the couch was spread,
And with banners curtain'd o'er,
For the Daughter of the Minstrel-land,
The gay Provençal shore!

* Queen of St Louis. Whilst besieged by the Turks in Damietta, during the captivity of the king, her husband, she there gave birth to a son, whom she named Tristan, in commemoration of her misfortunes. Information being conveyed to her that the knights intrusted with the defence of the city had resolved on capitulation, she had them summoned to her apartment, and, by her heroic words, so wrought upon their spirits, that they vowed to defend her and the Cross to the last extremity.

For the bright Queen of St Louis,
The star of court and hall!—
But the deep strength of the gentle heart,
Wakes to the tempest's call!
Her Lord was in the Paynim's hold,
His soul with grief oppress'd,
Yet calmly lay the Desolate,
With her young babe on her breast!

There were voices in the city,
Voices of wrath and fear—
"The walls grow weak, the strife is vain,
We will not perish here!
Yield! yield! and let the crescent gleam
O'er tower and bastion high!
Our distant homes are beautiful—
We stay not here to die!"

They bore those fearful tidings
To the sad Queen where she lay—
They told a tale of wavering hearts,
Of treason and dismay:
The blood rush'd thro' her pearly cheek,
The sparkle to her eye—
"Now call me hither those recreant knights,
From the bands of Italy!"*

Then through the vaulted chambers
Stern iron footsteps rang;
And heavily the sounding floor
Gave back the sabre's clang.
They stood around her—steel-clad men,
Moulded for storm and fight,
But they quail'd before the loftier soul
In that pale aspect bright.

Yes—as before the Falcon shrinks
The Bird of meaner wing,
So shrank they from th' imperial glance
Of Her—that fragile thing!
And her flute-like voice rose clear and high,
Through the din of arms around,
Sweet, and yet stirring to the soul,
As a silver clarion's sound.

"The honour of the Lily
Is in your hands to keep,
And the Banner of the Cross, for Him
Who died on Calvary's steep:
And the city which for Christian prayer
Hath heard the holy bell—
And is it *these* your hearts would yield
To the godless Infidel?"

* The proposal to capitulate is attributed by the French historian to the Knights of Pisa.

“ Then bring me here a breastplate,
And a helm, before ye fly,
And I will gird my woman's form,
And on the ramparts die !
And the Boy whom I have borne for woe,
But never for disgrace,
Shall go within mine arms to death
Meet for his royal race.

“ Look on him as he slumbers
In the shadow of the Lance !
Then go, and with the Cross forsake
The princely Babe of Franca !
But tell your homes ye left *one* heart
To perish undefiled ;
A Woman and a Queen, to guard
Her Honour and her Child !”

Before her words they thrill'd, like leaves,
When winds are in the wood ;
And a deepening murmur told of men
Roused to a loftier mood.
And her Babe awoke to flashing swords,
Unsheathe'd in many a hand,
As they gather'd round the helpless One,
Again a noble band !

“ We are thy warriors, Lady !
True to the Cross and thee !
The spirit of thy kindling words
On every sword shall be !
Rest, with thy fair child on thy breast,
Rest—we will guard thee well .
St Dennis for the Lily-flower,
And the Christian citadel !”

THE FREED BIRD.

BY MRS HEMANS.

Swifter far than summer's flight,
Swifter far than youth's delight,
Swifter far than happy night,
Thou art come and gone!

As the earth when leaves are dead,
As the night when sleep is sped,
As the heart when joy is fled,
I am left here, alone!

SHELLEY.

RETURN, return, my Bird!
I have dress'd thy cage with flowers,
'Tis lovely as a violet bank
In the heart of forest bowers.

"I am free, I am free, I return no more!
The weary time of the cage is o'er!
Through the rolling clouds I can soar on high,
The sky is around me, the blue bright sky!

" The hills lie beneath me, spread far and clear,
With their glowing heath-flowers and bounding deer
I see the waves flash on the sunny shore—
I am free, I am free—I return no more!"

Alas, alas, my Bird!
Why seek'st thou to be free?
Wer't thou not blest in thy little bower,
When thy song breathed nought but glee?

" Did my song of the summer breathe nought but glee?
Did the voice of the captive seem sweet to thee?
—Oh! had'st thou known its deep meaning well!
It had tales of a burning heart to tell!

" From a dream of the forest that music sprang,
Through its notes the peal of a torrent rang;
And its dying fall, when it sooth'd thee best,
Sigh'd for wild flowers and a leafy nest."

Was it with thee thus, my Bird?
Yet thine eye flash'd clear and bright!
I have seen the glance of sudden joy
In its quick and dewy light.

" It flash'd with the fire of a tameless race,
With the soul of the wild wood, my native place!
With the spirit that panted through heaven to soar—
Woo me not back—I return no more!

" My home is high, amidst rocking trees,
My kindred things are the star and breeze,
And the fount uncheck'd in its lonely play,
And the odours that wander afar, away!"

Farewell, farewell, then, Bird!
I have call'd on spirits gone,
And it may be they joy'd like *thee* to part,
Like thee, that wert all my own!

" If they were captives, and pined like me,
Though Love might guard them, they joy'd to be free!
They sprang from the earth with a burst of power,
To the strength of their wings, to their triumph's hour!

" Call them not back when the chain is riven,
When the way of the pinion is all through heaven!
Farewell!—With my song through the clouds I soar,
I pierce the blue skies—I am Earth's no more!"