

Poems of  
Felicia Hemans  
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Compiled  
by  
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Contents

The Minster
The Song of Night
The Shadow of a Flower
The Stranger on Earth
The Exile's Dirge
The Voice of the Waves

**The Minster.**

BY MRS. HEMANS.

A fit abode, wherein appear enshrined  
Our hopes of immortality.

Byron.

SPEAK low!—the place is holy to the breath  
Of awful harmonies, of whisper'd prayer :  
Tread lightly!—for the sanctity of death  
Broods with a voiceless influence on the air ;  
Stern, yet serene!—a reconciling spell  
Each troubled billow of the soul to quell.

Leave me to linger silently awhile !  
—Not for the light that pours its fervid streams  
Of rainbow-glory down through arch and aisle,  
Kindling old banners into haughty gleams,  
Flushing proud shrines, or by some warrior's tomb  
Dying away in clouds of gorgeous gloom :

Not for rich music, though in triumph pealing,  
Mighty as forest-sounds when winds are nigh ;  
Nor yet for torch and cross, and stole, revealing  
Through incense-mists their sainted pageantry ;  
Though o'er the spirit each hath charm and power,  
Yet not for *these* I ask one lingering hour.

But by strong sympathies, whose silver cord  
Links me to mortal weal, my soul is bound ;  
Thoughts of the human hearts, that here have pour'd  
Their anguish forth, are with me and around :  
I look back on the pangs, the burning tears,  
Known to these altars of a thousand years.

Send up a murmur from the dust, Remorse !  
That here hast bow'd with ashes on thy head !  
And Thou, still battling with the tempest's force,  
Thou, whose bright spirit through all time hath bled,  
Speak, wounded Love ! if penance here, or prayer,  
Hath laid one haunting shadow of despair ?

No voice, no breath !—of conflicts past no trace !  
—Doth not this hush give answer to my quest ?  
Surely the dread religion of the place  
By every grief hath made its might confest !  
—Oh ! that within my heart I could but keep  
Holy to Heaven a spot, thus pure, and still, and deep !

## The Song of Night.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Abwärts wend' ich mich zu der heiligen, unaussprechlichen, geheimnissvollen Nacht.  
Fernab liegt die Welt, in eine tiefe Gruft versenkt; in den Saiten der Brust weht  
tiefe Wehmuth. Fernan der Erinnerung, der Kindheit Traume, der ganzen Lebens  
Freuden und Hoffnungen kommen in grauen Kleidern, wie Abendnebel nach der Sonne  
Untergang.

NOVALIS.

I COME to thee, O Earth !  
With all my gifts :—for every flower sweet dew,  
In bell, and urn, and chalice, to renew  
The glory of its birth.

Not one which glimmering lies  
Far amidst folding hills or forest-leaves,  
But, through its veins of beauty, so receives  
A spirit of fresh dyes.

I come with every star :  
Making thy streams, that on their noon-day track  
Gave but the moss, the reed, the lily back,  
Mirrors of Worlds afar.

I come with Peace ; I shed  
Sleep through thy wood-walks o'er the honey-bee,  
The lark's triumphant voice, the fawn's young glee,  
The hyacinth's meek head.

On my own heart I lay  
The weary babe, and sealing with a breath  
Its eyes of love, send fairy dreams, beneath  
The shadowing lids to play.

I come with mightier things !  
Who calls me silent ?—I have many tones—  
The dark skies thrill with low mysterious moans  
Borne on my sweeping wings.

I waft them not alone  
From the deep organ of the forest shades,  
Or buried streams, unheard amidst their glades,  
Till the bright day is done.

But in the human breast  
A thousand still small voices I awake,  
Strong in their sweetness from the soul to shake  
The mantle of its rest.

I bring them from the past :  
From true hearts broken, gentle spirits torn,  
From crush'd affections, which though long o'erborne,  
Make their tone heard at last.

I bring them from the tomb :  
O'er the sad couch of late repentant love,  
They pass—though low as murmurs of a dove,  
Like trumpets through the gloom.

I come with all my train :  
Who calls me lonely?—Hosts around me tread,  
Th' intensely bright, the Beautiful, the Dread—  
Phantoms of heart and brain !

Looks from departed eyes,  
These are my lightnings!—filled with anguish vain  
Or tenderness too piercing to sustain,  
They smite with agonies.

I, that with soft controul  
Shut the dim violet, hush the woodland song,  
I am th' Avenging One!—the Armed, the Strong,  
The Searcher of the soul !

I, that shower dewy light  
Through slumbering leaves, bring storms!—the  
tempest-birth  
Of Memory, Thought, Remorse :—be holy, Earth !  
—I am the solemn Night !

**The Shadow of a Flower.**

BY MRS. HEMANS.

La velle telle que la mort nous l'a faite!

Bossuet.

"Never was a philosophical imagination more beautiful, than that exquisite one of Kircher Digby and others, who discovered in the ashes of plants their primitive forms, which were again raised up by the power of heat. The ashes of roses say they, will again revive with roses, unsubstantial and unodoriferous; they are not roses which grow on rose-trees, but their delicate apparitions, and, like apparitions, they are seen but for a moment."

*Curiosities of Literature.*

'Twas a dream of olden days,  
That art, by some strange power,  
The visionary form could raise  
From the ashes of a flower.

That a shadow of the Rose,  
By its own meek beauty bow'd,  
Might slowly, leaf by leaf, unclose  
Like Pictures in a cloud.

Or the Hyacinth to grace  
As a second rainbow, Spring;  
Of Summer's path a dreary trace,  
A fair, yet mournful thing!

For the glory of the bloom  
That a flush around it shed,  
And the Soul within, the rich perfume,  
Where were they?—fled, all fled!

Nought but the dim faint line  
To speak of vanished hours—  
Memory! What are joys of thine?  
Shadows of buried flowers.



## The Stranger on Earth.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Das Land, das Land, so hoffungsgrun,  
 Das Land wo meine Rosen bluhn,  
 Wo meine Todten aufseh'n,  
 Wo meine Freunde wandelnd geh'n;  
 Das Land, das meine Sprache spricht,  
 Das theure Land—hier ist es nicht!

WHERE art thou? Tell me, where?  
 Land of my native air,  
 That I might feel thy breathing on my cheek!  
 And ye, whose being's tone  
 Would give me back my own,  
 Where dwell ye, children of my country? Speak!  
 Show me your home, your place,  
 O ye, my kindred race!  
 —My spirit on the dust its wealth hath flung,  
 Striving for words of power,  
 A boundless love to shower  
 O'er hearts that knew not e'en that feeling's tongue.

Along the sounding sea,  
 And 'midst the mountains free,  
 My voice finds echoes here; my soul hath none!  
 Shrinking, I feel around,  
 The solitude profound,  
 Ev'n as a child on desert-plains alone.

I know that in me lie,—  
As buried harmony  
In the Lyre's chord await the master's hand,—  
Powers, never to unclose  
From dark and cold repose,  
Save in *thine* air, my Home, my viewless land!

For in thy glorious bowers,  
Dreading no changeful hours,  
Dwells the pure Love, so faintly shadow'd here;  
Finding its language known,  
Ev'n to the deepest tone,  
A native melody in that bright sphere!

And thou, O sunny shore!  
Hast music, that no more  
Shall trouble the worn heart with vague desires;  
Like summer o'er the deep,  
I know *thy* songs will sweep  
Over those restless thoughts and wandering fires.

Where art thou? Tell me, where?  
Home of the Good and Fair!  
I seek thy trace in all things, yet in vain;  
Thy meanings, bright, and high,  
And earnest, in each eye,  
An echo of thy sounds in every strain.

Do mighty mountains old  
Thy loveliness enfold ?  
Or deserts guard thee with their burning gloom ?  
As the dread flaming brand  
That hung o'er Eden's land,  
Shut up the pathway to that world of bloom ?  
Or art thou some lone isle,  
Girt ever by the smile  
Of waves, wherein Heaven's azure slumbering lies ?  
Oh ! send by breeze or bird,  
A sign, a leaf, a word,  
A guiding flower-breath from thine own pure skies !

Yes ! mournfully profound,  
Within my soul, a sound  
Speaks, like a shell's low murmur for the sea ;  
Whispering, thou radiant clime !  
That but o'er Death and Time,  
The Exile-Spirit can be borne to thee !

## The Exile's Dirge.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious Winter's rages,  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.

CYMBELINE.

"I attended a funeral where there were a number of the German settlers present. After I had performed such service as is usual on similar occasions, a most venerable-looking old man came forward and asked me if I were willing that he should perform some of their peculiar rites. He opened a very ancient version of Luther's Hymns, and they all began to sing in German so loud that the woods echoed the strain. There was something affecting in the singing of these ancient people, carrying one of their brethren to his last home, and using the language and rites which they had brought with them over the sea from the *Vaterland*—a word which often occurred in this hymn. It was a long, slow, and mournful air, which they sang as they bore the body along. the words "*mein Gott*"—" *mein Bruder*"—and "*Vaterland*" died away in distant echoes amongst the woods. I shall long remember that funeral hymn."—*Flint's Recollections of the Valley of the Mississippi.*

There went a dirge through the forest's gloom.

—An Exile was borne to a lonely tomb.

“ Brother !” (so the chaunt was sung  
In the slumberer's native tongue)  
“ Friend and brother ! not for thee  
Shall the sound of weeping be,  
Long the Exile's woe hath lain  
On thy life a withering chain ;  
Music from thine own blue streams  
Wandered through thy fever-dreams ;  
Voices from thy Country's vines  
Met thee 'midst the alien pines,  
And thy true heart died away,  
And thy spirit would not stay.”

So swell'd the chaunt ; and the deep wind's moan  
Seemed through the cedars to murmur—“ gone !”

“ Brother ! by the rolling Rhine  
Stands the home that once was thine ;  
Brother ! now thy dwelling lies  
Where the Indian’s arrow flies !  
He that blest thine infant head  
Fills a distant greensward bed ;  
She that heard thy lisping prayer  
Slumbers low beside him there ;  
They that earliest with thee played,  
Rest beneath their own oak-shade,  
Far, far hence !—yet sea nor shore  
Haply, Brother ! part ye more ;  
God hath called thee to that band  
In the immortal Father-land !”

“ The Father-land !”—with that sweet word  
A burst of tears ’midst the strain was heard.

“ Brother ! were we there with thee,  
Rich would many a meeting be !  
Many a broken garland bound,  
Many a mourn’d one lost and found !  
But our task is still to bear,  
Still to breathe in changeful air ;  
Lov’d and bright things to resign  
As ev’n now this dust of thine,  
Yet to hope !—to hope in Heaven,  
Though flowers fall, and trees be riven ;  
Yet to pray—and wait the hand  
Beckoning to the Father-land.”

And the requiem died in the forest’s gloom,  
They had reached the Exile’s lonely tomb.

## The Voice of the Waves.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

How perfect was the calm!—it seemed no sleep,  
 No mood, which Season takes away, or brings:  
 I could have fancied that the mighty Deep  
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

• • • • •

But welcome Fortitude, and patient cheer,  
 And frequent sights of what is to be borne!

WORDSWORTH.

ANSWER, ye chiming Waves!  
 That now in sunshine sweep;  
 Speak to me, from thy hidden caves,  
 Voice of the solemn Deep!

Hath man's lone spirit here  
 With storms in battle striven?  
 Where all is now so calmly clear,  
 Hath anguish cried to Heaven?

—Then the Sea's voice arose  
 Like an earthquake's under-tone:  
 "Mortal! the strife of human woes  
 "When hath *not* Nature known?"

“ Here to the quivering mast  
“ Despair hath wildly clung,  
“ The shriek upon the wind hath past,  
“ The midnight sky hath rung.”

“ And the youthful and the brave  
“ With their beauty and renown,  
“ To the hollow chambers of the wave  
“ In darkness have gone down.

“ They are vanished from this place—  
“ Let their homes and hearths make moan !  
“ But the rolling waters keep no trace  
“ Of pang or conflict gone.”

—Alas ! thou haughty Deep !  
The strong, the sounding-far !  
My heart before thee dies—I weep  
To think on what we are !

To think that so we pass,  
High hope, and thought, and mind,  
Even as the breath-stain from the glass,  
Leaving no sign behind !

Saw'st thou nought else, thou Main ?  
Thou and the midnight sky ?  
Nought, save the struggle brief and vain,  
The parting agony !

—And the Sea's voice replied,  
“ Here noble things have been !  
“ Power with the valiant when they died,  
“ To sanctify the scene :

“ Courage, in fragile form,  
“ Faith, trusting to the last,  
“ Prayer, breathing heavenwards thro' the storm :  
“ But all alike have pass'd !”

Sound on, thou haughty Sea !  
*These* have not passed in vain ;  
My soul awakes, my hope springs free  
On victor-wings again.

*Thou*, from thine empire driven,  
May'st vanish with thy powers ;  
But, by the hearts that here have striven,  
A loftier doom is ours !