

Poems of
Felicia Hemans
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ITALIAN GIRL'S HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

O sanctissima, O, purissima,
Dulcis Virgo Maria!
Mater amata intemerata
Ora, Ora, pro nobis.

Sicilian Mariner's Hymn.

In the deep hour of dreams,
Through the dark woods, and past the moaning sea,
And by the starlight gleams,
Mother of Sorrows! O, I come to thee.

Unto thy shrine I bear
Night-blooming flowers, like my own heart to lie,
All, all unfolded there,
Beneath the meekness of thy pitying eye.

For thou that once didst move,
In thy still beauty, through an earthly home,
Thou know'st the grief, the love,
The fear of woman's soul; to thee I come.

Many, and sad, and deep,
Were the thoughts folded in thy silent breast;
Thou too couldst watch and weep—
Hear, gentlest Mother! hear a heart oppress!

There is a wandering bark,
Bearing one from me o'er the restless wave;
Oh! let thy soft eye mark
His course—be with him, Holiest, guide and save!

My soul is on that way,
My thoughts are travellers o'er the waters dim,
Through the long weary day
I walk, o'ershadowed by vain dreams of him.

Aid him, and me too, aid!
Oh! 'tis not well, this earthly love's excess!
On thy weak child is laid
The burthen of too deep a tenderness.

Too much o'er him is poured
My being's hope—scarce leaving Heaven a part:
Too tearfully adored,
Oh! make not him the chastener of my heart!

I tremble with a sense
Of grief to be—I hear a warning low—
Sweet Mother call me hence;
This wild idolatry must end in woe.

The troubled joy of life,
Love's lightning happiness, my soul hath known,
And, worn with feverish strife,
Would fold its wings—take back, take back thine
own!

Hark! how the wind swept by!
The tempest's voice comes rolling o'er the wave—
Hope of the sailor's eye
And maiden's heart, blest Mother, guide and save!

SECOND SIGHT.

BY MRS. DEMANS,

A mournful gift is mine, O friends !
A mournful gift is mine !
A murmur of the soul, which blends
With the flow of song and wine.

An eye that through the triumph's hour
Beholds the coming wo,
And dwells upon the faded flower,
Midst the rich summer's glow.

Ye smile to view fair faces bloom
Where the father's board is spread ;
I see the stillness and the gloom
Of a home whence all are fled.

I see the wither'd garlands lie
Forsaken on the earth,
While the lamps yet burn, and the
dancers fly
Through the ringing hall of mirth.

I see the blood-red future stain
On the warrior's gorgeous crest,
And the bier amidst the bridal train,
When they come with roses drest.

I hear the still small moan of Time
Through the ivy-branches made,
Where the palace, in its glory's prime,
With the sunshine stands arrayed.

The thunder of the seas I hear,
The shriek along the wave,
When the bark sweeps forth, and song
and cheer
Salute the parting brave.

With every breeze a spirit sends
To me some warning sign ;—
A mournful gift is mine, O friends !
A mournful gift is mine !

Oh, prophet heart ! thy grief, thy power,
To all deep souls belong ;
The shadow in the sunny hour,
The wail in the mirthful song.

This sight is all too sadly clear—
For them a veil is riven ;
Their piercing thought repose not here,
Their home is but in heaven !”

TO A DEPARTED SPIRIT.

BY MRS. MEMANS.

From the bright stars, or from the viewless air,
Or from some world, unreached by human thought
Spirit, sweet spirit! if thy home be there,
And if thy visions with the past be fraught,
Answer me, answer me!

Have we not communed here, of life and death?
Have we not said that love, such love as ours,
Was not to perish, as a rose's breath,
To melt away, like song from festal bowers?
Answer, oh! answer me!

Thine eye's last light was mine—the soul that shone
Intensely, mournfully, through gathering haze;
Didst thou bear with thee, to the shores unknown,
Nought of what lived in that long, earnest gaze?
Hear, hear, and answer me!

Thy voice— its low, soft, fervent, farewell tone
Thrilled through the tempest of the parting strife,
Like a faint breeze:—oh! from that music flown
Send back one sound, if love's be quenchless life!
But once, oh! answer me!

In the still noontide, in the sunset's hush,
In the dead hour of night, when thought grows deep;
When the heart's phantoms from the darkness rush,
Fearfully beautiful, to strive with sleep;
Spirit! then answer me!

By the remembrance of our blended prayer;
By all our tears, whose mingling made them sweet;
By our last hope, the victor o'er despair;
Speak!—if our souls in deathless yearnings meet,
Answer me, answer me!

The grave is silent—and the far-off sky,
And the deep midnight:—silent all, and lone!
Oh! if thy buried love make no reply,
What voice has earth!—Hear, pity, speak! mine own
Answer me, answer me!

From the same.

THE BATTLE FIELD.

I LOOKED on the field ^{I.} where the battle was
spread,
When thousands stood forth in their glancing
array,
And the beam from the steel of the valiant was
shed
Through the dun rolling clouds that o'ersha-
dowed the fray.

I saw the dark forest ^{II.} of lances appear.
As the ears of the harvest unnumbered they
stood ;
I heard the stern shout as the foeman drew
near,
Like the storm, that lays low the proud pines
of the wood.

Afar, the harsh notes ^{III.} of the war-drum were
rolled,
Uprousing the wolf from the depth of his lair ;
On high to the gust stream'd the banner's red
fold,
O'er the death-close of Hate, and the scowl of
Despair,—

IV.

I looked on the field of contention again.
 When the sabre was sheathed and the tempest
 had past ;
 The wild weed and thistle grew rank on the
 plain,
 And the fern softly sighed in the low wailing
 blast.

V.

Unmoved lay the lake in its hour of repose,
 And bright shone the stars through the sky's
 deepened blue ;
 And sweetly the song of the night-bird arose,
 Where the foxglove lay gemmed with its pearl-
 drops of dew.

VI.

But where swept the ranks of that dark frown-
 ing host,
 As the ocean in might—as the storm-cloud in
 speed ?
 Where now were the thunders of victory's
 boast,—
 The slayer's dread wrath and the strength of
 the steed :

VII.

Not a time-wasted cross, not a mouldering
 stone,
 To mark the lone scene of their shame or their
 pride ;—
 One grass-covered mound told the traveller
 alone,
 Where thousands lay down in their anguish
 and died :

VIII.

Oh ! glory !—behold thy famed guerdon's ex-
 tent,
 For this toil thy slaves through their earth-
 wasting lot ;
 A name like the mist, when night's beacons
 are spent—
 A grave, with its tenants unwept and forgot !
 F. H.