

Poems of  
Felicia Hemans  
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Compiled  
by  
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Painted by H. Howard, R.A.

Engraved by W. Finden.

WISDOM COTTAGE GIRL.

## THE COTTAGE GIRL.

A CHILD beside a hamlet's fount at play,  
Her fair face laughing at the sunny day ;  
The cheerful girl her labour leaves a while,  
To gaze on Heaven's and Earth's unsullied smile ;  
Her happy dog looks on her dimpled cheeks,  
And of his joy in his own language speaks ;  
A gush of waters, tremulously bright,  
Kindling the air to gladness with their light ;  
And a soft gloom beyond, of summer-trees,  
Darkening the turf, and, shadowed o'er by these,  
A low, dim, woodland cottage : — this was all !

What had the scene for memory to recall  
With a fond look of love ? What secret spell  
With the heart's pictures bade its image dwell ?  
What but the spirit of the joyous child,  
That freshly forth o'er stream and verdure smiled,  
Casting upon the common things of earth  
A brightness, born and gone with infant mirth !

F. H.

## THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

CHILD, amidst the flowers at play,  
While the red light fades away ;  
Mother, with thine earnest eye,  
Ever following silently ;  
Father, by the breeze of eve  
Called thy harvest-work to leave ;—  
Pray ! — Ere yet the dark hours be,  
Lift the heart and bend the knee.

Traveller, in the stranger's land,  
Far from thine own household band ;  
Mourner, haunted by the tone  
Of a voice from this world gone ;  
Captive, in whose narrow cell  
Sunshine hath not leave to dwell ;  
Sailor, on the darkening sea ;—  
Lift the heart and bend the knee !

Warrior, that from battle won,  
Breathest now at set of sun ;  
Woman, o'er the lowly slain,  
Weeping on his burial-plain ;  
Ye that triumph, ye that sigh,  
Kindred by one holy tie !  
Heaven's first star alike ye see—  
Lift the heart and bend the knee !

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## THE CROSS IN THE WILDERNESS.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

SILENT and mournful sat an Indian chief,  
In the red sunset, by a grassy tomb ;  
His eyes, that might not weep, were dark with grief,  
And his arms folded in majestic gloom,  
And his bow lay unstrung beneath the mound,  
Which sanctified the gorgeous waste around.

For a pale Cross above its greensward rose,  
Telling the cedars and the pines that there  
Man's heart and hope had struggled with his woes,  
And lifted from the dust a voice of prayer.  
Now all was hushed—and eve's last splendour shone  
With a rich sadness on the attesting stone.

There came a lonely traveller o'er the wild,  
And he too paused in reverence by that grave,  
Asking the tale of its memorial, piled  
Between the forest and the lake's bright wave ;  
Till, as a wind might stir a wither'd oak,  
On the deep dream of age his accents broke :

And the grey chieftain, slowly rising, said,—

“ I listened for the words, which years ago  
Passed o'er these waters: though the voice is fled  
Which made them as a singing fountain's flow ;  
Yet, when I sit in their long-faded track,  
Sometimes the forest's murmur gives them back.

“ Ask'st thou of Him, whose house is lone beneath ?  
I was an eagle in my youthful pride,  
When o'er the seas he came, with summer's breath,  
To dwell amidst us, on the lake's green side.  
Many the times of flowers have been since then,—  
Many, but bringing nought like *Him* again !

“ Not with the hunter's bow and spear he came  
O'er the blue hills to chase the flying roe ;  
Not the dark glory of the woods to tame,  
Laying their cedars like the corn-stalks low ;  
But to spread tidings of all holy things,  
Gladdening our souls as with the motning's wings.

“ Doth not yon cypress whisper how we met,  
I and my brethren that from earth are gone,  
Under its boughs to hear his voice, which yet  
Seems through their gloom to send a silvery tone !  
He told of One, the grave's dark bands who broke,  
And our hearts burned within us as he spoke !

“ He told of far and sunny lands which lie  
Beyond the dust wherein our fathers dwell.  
Bright must they be ! for *there* are none that die,  
And none that weep, and none that say, ‘ Farewell !’  
He came to guide us thither,—but away  
The happy called him, and he might not stay.

“ We saw him slowly fade—athirst, perchance,  
For the fresh waters of that lovely clime ;  
Yet was there still a sunbeam in his glance,  
And on his gleaming hair no touch of time :  
Therefore we hoped—but now the lake looks dim,  
For the green summer comes—and finds not Him.

“ We gather’d round him in the dewy hour  
Of one still morn, beneath his chosen tree ;  
From his clear voice at first the words of power  
Came low, like moanings of a distant sea ;  
But swelled, and shook the wilderness ere long,  
As if the spirit of the breeze grew strong.

“ And then once more they trembled on his tongue,  
And his white eyelids fluttered, and his head  
Fell back, and mists upon his forehead hung—  
Know’st thou not how we pass to join the dead ?  
It is enough !—he sank upon my breast,—  
Our friend that loved us, he was gone to rest !



“ We buried him where he was wont to pray,  
By the calm lake, e'en here, at eventide ;  
We reared this Cross in token where he lay,  
For on the Cross, he said, his Lord had died !  
Now hath he surely reached, o'er mount and wave,  
That flowery land whose green turf hides no grave ! ”

“ But I am sad—I mourn the clear light taken  
Back from my people, o'er whose place it shone,  
The pathway to the better shore forsaken,  
And the true words forgotten, save by one,  
Who hears them faintly sounding from the past,  
Mingled with death-songs in each fitful blast.”

Then spoke the wanderer forth with kindling eye :  
“ Son of the Wilderness ! despair thou not,  
Though the bright hour may seem to thee gone by,  
And the cloud settled o'er thy nation's lot :  
Heaven darkly works,—yet where the seed hath been,  
There shall the fruitage, glowing yet, be seen.

“ Hope on, hope ever !—by the sudden springing  
Of green leaves which the winter hid so long ;  
And by the bursts of free, triumphant singing,  
After cold, silent months, the woods among ;  
And by the rending of the frozen chains,  
Which bound the glorious rivers on their plains ;

“ Deem not the words of light that here were spoken,  
But as a lovely song, to leave no trace !  
Yet shall the gloom which wraps thy hills be broken,  
And the full day-spring rise upon thy race !  
And fading mists the better paths disclose,  
And the wide desert blossom as the rose.”

So by the Cross they parted, in the wild,  
Each fraught with musings for life's after-day,  
Memories to visit *one*, the Forest's Child,  
By many a blue stream on its lonely way ;  
And upon *one*, midst busy throngs to press  
Deep thoughts and sad, yet full of holiness.

## THE BELL AT SEA.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

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The dangerous islet called the Bell Rock, on the coast of Fife, used formerly to be marked only by a Bell, which was so placed as to be swung by the motion of the waves, when the tide rose above the rock. A light-house has since been erected there.

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WHEN the tide's billowy swell  
Had reached its height,  
Then tolled the Rock's lone Bell,  
Sternly by night.

Far over cliff and surge  
Swept the deep sound,  
Making each wild wind's dirge  
Still more profound.

Yet that funereal tone  
The sailor bless'd,  
Steering through darkness on,  
With fearless breast.

E'en so may we, that float  
On life's wide sea,  
Welcome each warning note,  
Stern though it be !

## CHRIST STILLING THE TEMPEST.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

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“ But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary.”

ST. MATTHEW, Chap. xiv. Ver. 24.

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FEAR was within the tossing bark,  
When stormy winds grew loud,  
And waves came rolling high and dark,  
And the tall mast was bowed.

And men stood breathless in their dread,  
And baffled in their skill—  
But One was there, who rose and said  
To the wild sea, Be still !

And the wind ceased—it ceased—that word  
Passed through the gloomy sky ;  
The troubled billows knew their Lord,  
And sank beneath his eye.

And slumber settled on the deep,  
And silence on the blast,  
As when the righteous falls asleep,  
When death's fierce throes are past.

Thou that didst rule the angry hour,  
And tame the tempest's mood,—  
Oh! send thy Spirit forth in power,  
O'er our dark souls to brood!

Thou that didst bow the billow's pride,  
Thy mandates to fulfil,—  
So speak to passion's raging tide,  
Speak and say,—Peace, be still!

## THE FOUNTAIN OF MARAH.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

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- “ And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.  
“ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink ?  
“ And he cried unto the Lord ; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.” — Exod. xv. 23—25.
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WHERE is the tree the prophet threw  
Into the bitter wave ?  
Left it no scion where it grew,  
The thirsting soul to save ?

Hath Nature lost the hidden power  
Its precious foliage shed ?  
Is there no distant Eastern bower,  
With such sweet leaves o'erspread ?

Nay, wherefore ask ? — since gifts are ours,  
Which yet may well imbue  
Earth's many troubled founts with showers  
Of Heaven's own balmy dew.

Oh ! mingled with the cup of grief,  
Let Faith's deep spirit be,  
And every prayer shall win a leaf  
From that blest healing tree !