

Poems of
Felicia Hemans
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THE MAGIC GLASS.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

How lived — how loved — how died they ?

BYRON.

I.

“ THE Dead ! the glorious Dead !—And shall they rise ?
Shall they look on thee with their proud, bright eyes ?—

Thou ask'st a fearful spell !

Yet say, from shrine or dim sepulchral hall,
What kingly vision shall obey my call ?—

The deep grave knows it well !

II.

“ Wouldst thou behold earth's Conquerors ?— Shall they
pass

Before thee, flushing all the Magic Glass

With Triumph's long array ?—

Speak ! and those dwellers of the marble urn,
Robed for the feast of victory, shall return,

As on their proudest day.

III.

“ Or wouldst thou look upon the Lords of Song?—
O'er the dark mirror that immortal throng
 Shall waft a solemn gleam!
Passing with lighted eyes and radiant brows,
Under the foliage of green laurel-boughs,
 But silent as a dream.”

IV.

“ Not these, O mighty Master!—Though their lays
Be unto man's free heart, and tears, and praise,
 Hallowed for evermore!
And not the buried conquerors!—Let them sleep,
And let the flowery earth her sabbaths keep
 In joy, from shore to shore!

V.

“ But, if the narrow-house may be so moved,
Call the bright shadows of the most beloved,
 Back from their couch of rest!
That I may learn if *their* meek eyes be filled
With peace; if human love hath ever stilled
 The yearning human breast.”

VI.

“ Away, fond youth!—An idle quest is thine:
These have no trophy, no memorial shrine;
 I know not of their place!

Midst the dim valleys, with a secret flow,
Their lives, like shepherd reed-notes, faint and low,
Have passed, and left no trace.

VII.

“ Haply, begirt with shadowy woods and hills,
And the wild sounds of melancholy rills,
This covering turf may bloom ;
But ne'er hath Fame made relics of its flowers,—
Never hath pilgrim sought their household bowers,
Or poet hailed their tomb.”

VIII.

“ Adieu, then, master of the midnight spell !
Some voice perchance by those lone graves may tell
That which I pine to know !
I haste to seek, from woods and valleys deep,
Where the beloved are laid in lowly sleep,
Records of joy and woe.”



THE SISTERS OF SCIO

Painted by A. Phalipon Engraved by Henry Rolls

THE SISTERS OF SCIO.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

As are our hearts, our way is one,
And cannot be divided. Strong affection
Contentds with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
Will I not live with thee? Will I not cheer thee?
Wouldst thou be lonely then? Wouldst thou be sad?

JOANNA BAILLIE.

I.

“SISTER, sweet sister! let me weep awhile!
Bear with me—give the sudden passion way!
Thoughts of our own lost home—our sunny isle—
Come, as the wind that o'er a reed hath sway;
Till my heart dies with yearnings and sick fears;—
Oh! could my life melt from me in these tears!

II.

“Our father's voice—our mother's gentle eye—
Our brother's bounding step—where are they, where?
Desolate, desolate our chambers lie:
How hast thou won thy spirit from despair?
O'er mine, swift shadows, gusts of terror sweep;
I sink away—bear with me—let me weep!”

III.

“ Yes, weep, my sister ! weep, till from thy heart
The weight flow forth in tears—yet sink thou not !
I bind my sorrow to a lofty part,
For thee, my gentle one ! our orphan lot,
To meet in quenchless trust :—my soul is strong—
Thou, too, wilt rise in holy might, ere long.

IV.

“ A breath of our free heavens and noble sires,
A memory of our old victorious dead,—
These mantle me with power ; and though their fires
In a frail censer briefly may be shed,
Yet shall they light us onward, side by side :—
Have the wild birds, and have not *we* a guide ?

V.

“ Cheer, then, beloved ! on whose meek brow is set
Our mother’s image—in whose voice a tone,
A faint, sweet sound of hers is lingering yet,
An echo of our childhood’s music gone ;—
Cheer thee ! thy sister’s heart and faith are high ;
Our path is one —with thee I live and die !”

THE MIRROR IN THE DESERTED HALL.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

I.

O dim, forsaken Mirror!
How many a stately throng
Hath o'er thee gleamed, in vanished hours,
Of the wine-cup and the song!

II.

The song hath left no echo,
The bright wine hath been quaffed,
And hushed is every silvery voice
That lightly here hath laughed.

III.

O Mirror, lonely Mirror,
Thou of the silent Hall!
Thou hast been flushed with beauty's bloom—
Is this too vanished all?

IV.

It is, with the scattered garlands
Of triumphs long ago,
With the melodies of buried lyres,
With the faded rainbow's glow.

V.

And for all the gorgeous pageants,
For the glance of gem and plume,
For lamp, and harp, and rosy wreath,
And vase of rich perfume ;

VI.

Now, dim, forsaken Mirror,
Thou giv'st but faintly back
The quiet stars and the sailing moon,
On her solitary track.

VII.

And thus with man's proud spirit
Thou tellest me 't will be,
When the forms and hues of this world fade
From his memory as from thee :

VIII.

And his heart's long-troubled waters
At last in stillness lie,
Reflecting but the images
Of the solemn world on high.
