

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
MRS. FELICIA HEMANS:

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.



NEW EDITION,

WITH

A CRITICAL PREFACE, AND A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR.



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Trust me to Heaven, my husband!—this, thy son,
The babe whom I have born thee, must be free!
And the sweet memory of our pleasant hearth
May well give strength—if aught be strong on
earth.

“Thou hast been brooding o'er the silent dread
Of my desponding tears; now lift once more,
My hunter of the hills! thy stately head,
And let thine eagle glance my joy restore!
I can bear all, but seeing *thee* subdued,—
Take to thee back thine own undaunted mood.

“Go forth beside the waters, and along
The chamois-paths, and through the forests go;
And tell, in burning words, thy tale of wrong
To the brave hearts that midst the hamlets glow.
God shall be with thee, my beloved!—Away!
Bless but thy child, and leave me,—I can pray!”

He sprang up like a warrior-youth awaking
To clarion-sounds upon the ringing air;
He caught her to his breast, while proud tears
breaking

From his dark eyes, fell o'er her braided hair,—
And “Worthy art thou,” was his joyous cry,
“That man for thee should gird himself to die.

“My bride, my wife, the mother of my child!
Now shall thy name be armour to my heart;
And this our land, by chains no more defiled,
Be taught of thee to choose the better part!
I go—thy spirit on my words shall dwell,
Thy gentle voice shall stir the Alps—Farewell!

And thus they parted, by the quiet lake,
In the clear starlight: he, the strength to rouse
Of the free hills; she, thoughtful for his sake,
To rock her child beneath the whispering
boughs
Singing its blue, half-curtained eyes to sleep,
With a low hymn, amidst the stillness deep.

PROPERZIA ROSSI.

Properzia Rossi, a celebrated female sculptor of Bologna, possessed also of talents for poetry and music, died in consequence of an unrequited attachment.—A painting by Ducis, represents her showing her last work, a basso-relievo of Ariadne, to a Roman Knight, the object of her affection, who regards it with indifference.

—Tell me no more, no more
Of my soul's lofty gifts! Are they not vain
To quench its haunting thirst for happiness?
Have I not loved, and striven, and failed to bind
One true heart unto me, whereon my own
Might find a resting-place, a home for all
Its burden of affections? I depart,

Unknown, though Fame goes with me; I must leave
The earth unknown. Yet it may be that death
Shall give my name a power to win such tears
As would have made life precious.

I.

ONE dream of passion and of beauty more!
And in its bright fulfilment let me pour
My soul away! Let earth retain a trace
Of that which lit my being, though its race
Might have been loftier far.—Yet one more dream:
From my deep spirit one victorious gleam
Ere I depart! For thee alone, for thee!
May this last work, this farewell triumph be,
Thou, loved so vainly! I would leave enshrined
Something immortal of my heart and mind,
That yet may speak to thee when I am gone,
Shaking thine inmost bosom with a tone
Of lost affection;—something that may prove
What she hath been, whose melancholy love
On thee was lavished; silent pang and tear,
And fervent song, that gushed when none were
near,

And dream by night, and weary thought by day,
Stealing the brightness from her life away,—
While thou—Awake! not yet within me die,
Under the burden and the agony
Of this vain tenderness,—my spirit, wake
Ev'n for thy sorrowful affection's sake,
Live! in thy work breathe out!—that he may yet,
Feeling sad mastery there, perchance regret
Thine unrequited gift.

II.

It comes,—the power
Within me born, flows back; my fruitless dower
That could not win me love. Yet once again
I greet it proudly, with its rushing train
Of glorious images:—they throng—they press—
A sudden joy lights up my loneliness,—
I shall not perish all!

The bright work grows
Beneath my hand, unfolding, as a rose,
Leaf after leaf, to beauty; line by line,
I fix my thought, heart, soul, to burn, to shine,
Through the pale marble's veins. It grows—and
now

I give my own life's history to thy brow,
Forsaken Ariadne! thou shalt wear
My form, my lineaments; but oh! more fair,
Touched into lovelier being by the glow

Which in me dwells, as by the summer-light
All things are glorified. From thee my wo
Shall yet look beautiful to meet his sight,
When I am passed away. Thou art the mould,
Wherein I pour the fervent thoughts, th' untold,
The self-consuming! Speak to him of me,
Thou, the deserted by the lonely sea,

With the soft sadness of thine earnest eye,
 Speak to him, lorn one! deeply, mournfully,
 Of all my love and grief! Oh! could I throw
 Into thy frame a voice, a sweet and low,
 And thrilling voice of song! when he came nigh,
 To send the passion of its melody
 Through his pierced bosom—on its tones to bear,
 My life's deep feeling, as the southern air
 Wafts the faint myrtle's breath,—to rise, to swell,
 To sink away in accents of farewell,
 Winning but one, *one* gush of tears, whose flow
 Surely my parted spirit yet might know
 If love be strong as death!

III.

Now fair thou art,
 Thou form, whose life is of my burning heart!
 Yet all the vision that within me wrought,
 It can not make thee! Oh! I might have given
 Birth to creations of far nobler thought,
 I might have kindled with the fire of heaven,
 Things not of such as die! But I have been
 Too much alone; a heart whercon to lean,
 With all these deep affections, that o'erflow
 My aching soul, and find no shore below;
 An eye to be my star, a voice to bring
 Hope o'er my path, like sounds that breathe of
 spring,
 These are denied me—dreamt of still in vain,—
 Therefore my brief aspirings from the chain,
 Are ever but as some wild fitful song,
 Rising triumphantly, to die ere long
 In dirge-like echoes.

IV.

Yet the world will see
 Little of this, my parting work, in thee,
 Thou shalt have fame! Oh, mockery! give the
 reed
 From storms a shelter, give the drooping vine
 Something round which its tendrils may entwine,—
 Give the parched flower a rain-drop, and the
 meed
 Of love's kind words to woman! Worthless fame!
 That in *his* bosom wins not for my name
 Th' abiding-place it asked! Yet how my heart,
 In its own fairy world of song and art,
 Once beat for praise!—Are those high longings
 o'er?
 That which I have been can I be no more?
 Never, oh! never more; though still thy sky
 Be blue as then, my glorious Italy!
 And though the music, whose rich breathings fill
 Thine air, with soul, be wandering past me still,
 And though the mantle of thy sunlight streams,
 Unchanged on forms, instinct with poet-dreams;

Never, oh! never more! Where'er I move,
 The shadow of this broken-hearted love
 Is on me and around! Too well *they* know,
 Whose life is all within, too soon and well,
 When there the blight hath settled;—but I go
 Under the silent wings of peace to dwell;
 From the slow wasting, from the lonely pain,
 The inward burning of those words—“*in vain,*”
 Seared on the heart—I go. 'T will soon be past.
 Sunshine, and song, and bright Italian heaven,
 And thou, oh! thou, on whom my spirit cast
 Unvalued wealth,—who knowest not what was
 given

In that devotedness,—the sad, and deep,
 And unrepaid—farewell! If I could weep
 Once, only once, beloved one! on thy breast,
 Pouring my heart forth ere I sink to rest!
 But that were happiness, and unto me
 Earth's gift is *fame*. Yet I was formed to be
 So richly blest! With thee to watch the sky
 Speaking not, feeling but that thou wert nigh;
 With thee to listen, while the tones of song
 Swept ev'n as part of our sweet air along,
 To listen silently;—with thee to gaze
 On forms, the deified of olden days,
 This had been joy enough:—and hour by hour,
 From its glad well-springs drinking life and power,
 How had my spirit soared, and made its fame
 A glory for thy brow!—Dreams, dreams!—the
 fire

Burns faint within me. Yet I leave my name—
 As a deep thrill may linger on the lyre
 When its full chords are hushed—awhile to live,
 And one day haply in thy heart revive
 Sad thoughts of me:—I leave it, with a sound,
 A spell o'er memory, mournfully profound,
 I leave it, on my country's air to dwell,—
 Say proudly yet—“'T was *her's* who loved me
 well!”

GERTRUDE,

OR FIDELITY TILL DEATH.

The Baron Von Der Wart, accused, though it
 is believed unjustly, as an accomplice in the assassi-
 nation of the Emperor Albert, was bound alive
 on the wheel, and attended by his wife Gertrude,
 throughout his last agonizing hours, with the most
 heroic devotedness. Her own sufferings, with
 those of her unfortunate husband, are most affect-
 ingly described in a letter which she afterwards ad-
 dressed to a female friend, and which was published
 some years ago, at Haarlem, in a book entitled
 Gertrude Von Der Wart or Fidelity till Death.