

Felicia Hemans

BOOKS, LETTERS, AND MANUSCRIPTS From the Collection of Paula R. Feldman

Catalogue of the Exhibition at McKissick Museum  March 1996

Felicia Hemans was one of the most widely read and influential poets of the nineteenth century. As popular in America as in Britain, her work was admired by Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lady Morgan, Matthew Arnold, William Michael Rossetti, Marian Evans ("George Eliot"), and countless other writers and literary critics of discerning taste. It continued to be widely anthologized, set to music, quoted, illustrated by artists, bound in tooled leather, and made the subject of school recitations well into the twentieth century. Oxford University Press published a volume of her collected works in 1914.

Why is this important poet not more widely known and read today? Recent commentators have suggested that gender politics played their part in the 1940s and 1950s. The poets of her time had gone out of fashion around the First World War. But when the time came to resurrect poets of the Romantic era, only male writers seem to have been considered candidates for recanonization. Now, in the 1990s, the poetry of Felicia Hemans is commanding renewed attention and respect.

This exhibition traces the highlights of her literary career and posthumous reputation through a selection of her books, as nineteenth-century readers knew them, supplemented by manuscript letters and poems, as well as by reviews, biographies, illustrations, and sheet music.



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Cover illustration: Felicia Hemans (1828), engraved by Edward Scriven, after a painting by William E. West. This engraving was first published in 1839 as the frontispiece to *The Works of Mrs. Hemans; with a Memoir of her Life, by her Sister* [Harriet Hughes].

Case One: Launching a Career: 1808-1820.

Case One covers the beginning of Hemans' career—from the subscription publication of her first book, *Poems*, in 1808, through the years of her marriage to Captain Alfred Hemans and her early association with the publisher John Murray, to the publication of *Stanzas to the Memory of the Late King* [George III] in 1820. Of particular interest is the document from Murray to Hemans, recording the sale of the copyright for *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy*.

- [1] *Poems*. Liverpool: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1808. Recently rebound in beige and black modern cloth.

First edition of the poet's first book, published by subscription when she was only 14 years old under her own name, Felicia Dorothea Browne. The volume was dedicated by permission to the Prince of Wales, the future King George IV. There were 978 subscribers, who included John Wilson Croker, Captain Alfred Hemans, Reginald Heber, Thomas Medwin (Percy Bysshe Shelley's first cousin), William Roscoe, and various members of the aristocracy. A total of 1,178 copies were printed.

- [2] *Poems and Lyrics*, a new edition. London: Henry G. Clarke, and Co., 1845. [bound with] *Poems* by Ann Radcliffe. London: Henry G. Clarke and Co., 1845. [bound with] *The Domestic Affections and Other Poems*. London: Henry G. Clarke and Co., 1844. Half-calf over marbled boards.

In 1812, the poet married Captain Alfred Hemans: shortly thereafter an elderly gentleman, Matthew Nicolson, underwrote the publication by Cadell and Davies of *The Domestic Affections*. The book was completely ignored by reviewers. Though the first edition was not a commercial or critical success, this later reprint, bound with the poetry of Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe, is an example of how, after Hemans attained literary celebrity, publishers capitalized on her name to sell her earlier work. The three titles bound together in this volume are individually paginated to allow for separate sale.

- [3] *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy: A Poem*. By a Lady. Oxford: Pearson; London: Ebers, 1816. [bound with] *Translations from Camoens, and Other Poets, with Original Poetry* by the author of "Modern Greece," and the "Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy." London: J. Murray; Oxford: J. Parker, 1818. Half-calf over marbled boards.

First editions of two scarce books—only 200 copies of the *Translations from Camoens* were printed, and this edition of *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy* precedes the one John Murray brought out later that year and was privately printed for the author. *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy*, which Lord Byron called "a good poem—very," was the first extended poem to gain Hemans significant critical and popular attention. *Translations from Camoens* features translations of sonnets from Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian Renaissance poets as well as a few original English lyrics.

- [4] *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy*. Original signed document between John Murray and Felicia Hemans, dated May 17, 1816, London.

This document, which is in a scribal hand and bears Hemans' signature, shows the young poet's earnings (70 pounds) for the copyright of *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy*.

- [5] *Translations from Camoens*. Draft of two sonnets in Hemans' hand.

This leaf contains early drafts of two of the sonnets in Heman's *Translations from Camoens*. On the recto is Hemans' rendering of Petrarch's "Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde;" on the verso, her translation of Metastasio's "Leggiadra Rosa, le cui pure fogle."

- [6] *Tales and Historic Scenes*. London: John Murray, 1823. Half-calf over marbled boards.

Second edition of a volume first published in May of 1819. At the time of the first edition's publication, Hemans pressed Murray to buy the copyright. Yet having lost money on previous Hemans books, Murray took the safer route of splitting the profits. The reviews were good and the book sold out, leading Murray to publish the second edition in November of 1823. But Murray overestimated his market, and the book was remaindered in 1837. The ownership inscription in this book is dated 1838, suggesting this was a remaindered copy.

- [7] "On the Death of the Princess Charlotte" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for April 1818. Red half-morocco over marbled boards.

This is Hemans' first publication in the periodical published by William Blackwood, with whom she was to have a long and fruitful literary relationship. A year and a half later he and Thomas Cadell would publish her prize poem "On the meeting of Wallace and Bruce," accompanied by John Wilson's appreciative comment, "Scotland has her Baillie—Ireland her Tighe—England her Hemans." During this period, John Murray was a financial backer of the magazine and took an active interest in its management and editorial practices. When Hemans was forced to leave Murray, he probably recommended her to his old friend and associate, William Blackwood.

- [8] *Stanzas to the Memory of the Late King*. London: John Murray, 1820. Disbound.

First and only separate edition of Hemans' 16-page portrait of King George III. Murray issued 750 copies. Hemans' earnings for this poem were only slightly more than six pounds.

- [9] *The Quarterly Review* for October 1820. Half-calf over marbled boards.

This appreciative four-year retrospective review of Hemans' literary career by William Gifford probably helped the sales of her new book, *The Sceptic*. Both *The Quarterly Review* and *The Sceptic* were published by John Murray. Hemans especially welcomed such efforts to promote her work after her husband left her in September 1818, shortly before the birth of their fifth son. The poet then became her family's sole breadwinner.



*Your most affectionate
W. Blackwood*

Case Two: Building a Literary Reputation: 1821-1827.

In 1821 Hemans won the Royal Society of Literature's 50 guinea prize for *Dartmoor* and began to publish regularly in periodicals such as *The New Monthly Magazine* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In addition to continuing her book publications, Hemans experimented with drama. In 1826, she began to publish in literary annuals, where eventually her name would become ubiquitous.

- [10] Holograph fragment from the original manuscript of *The Vespers of Palermo*; on one side, five lines near the end of Act II, Scene II; and on the reverse, five lines from the beginning of Act. II, Scene III; paper watermarked 1807.

Hemans began work on her five-act tragedy, *The Vespers of Palermo*, in 1821. At Reginald Heber's urging, Covent Garden produced the play, with Charles Kemble playing the tortured hero, Raimond di Procida. Anticipating a popular success, Murray paid Hemans 210 pounds for the copyright. *Vespers* opened on 12 December 1823 and closed after only one night, by all accounts a disaster. However, at Joanna Baillie's urging, Walter Scott persuaded Sarah Siddons to stage it in Edinburgh the following April, where it played successfully.

- [11] *The Siege of Valencia; A Dramatic Poem. The Last Constantine and Other Poems*. London: John Murray, 1823. Half-calf.

First edition, published in June of 1823. Hemans saw "The Siege of Valencia" as a watershed in her literary development, separating her earlier efforts from her later more mature style, which draws more confidently upon her own personal feelings and ideas. This book, she said, was influenced by her avid reading of German authors.

- [12] *The Forest Sanctuary; and Other Poems*. London: John Murray, 1825. Dark brown half-morocco over marbled paper boards.

First edition of Hemans' favorite composition, a long narrative about a Spaniard in the American wilderness. Although Murray was initially hesitant to publish the book, Hemans' shrewd and persistent negotiations won him over. Hemans earned almost 34 pounds, enough to support her family for months.

- [13] *The Forget Me Not, a Christmas and New Year's Present for 1827*, ed. Frederick Shoberl. London: R. Ackermann, [1826]. Green paper-printed boards.

Hemans' poems "Night Blowing Flowers" and "The Cliffs of Dover" appear in this literary annual along with signed contributions by Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Mary Russell Mitford, Ann Grant of Laggan, Hester Lynch Piozzi, Bernard Barton, and Thomas Hood. Also in this volume is the story "Lacy De Vere" published anonymously by Mary Shelley. Hemans' contributions to literary annuals not only increased her reading audience but helped her become self-supporting as a writer. During her poetic career, Hemans contributed at least 94 poems to 13 British literary annuals, principally during the years 1826 to 1832. This copy includes the inscription, "To Mrs. Henry de Paina on her bridal day—."

- [14] Letter by Hemans [c. 1827] to the poet Rose D'Aguiar Lawrence, of Wavertree Hall, Liverpool.

Hemans later dedicated her *National Lyrics, and Songs for Music* to the recipient of this letter. In 1827 Hemans' mother died, an event that would have a profound effect both on her life and art. This letter, on black bordered mourning paper, confides her feelings about her loss. Hemans also recommends that her friend read Grillparzer's "Sappho."

- [15] *The Forest Sanctuary; with Other Poems*. The second edition, with additions. Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1829. Green calf with gilt embossing.

This second edition includes the first printing of "Casabianca," perhaps Hemans' single most well-known lyric, beginning "The boy stood on the burning deck." For the next century, school children would recite this poem about a young boy who dies at his assigned post rather than disobey a parental order.

- [16] "Casabianca" composed by Frederic H. Cowen, sung by Madame Patey. London: Patey Willis, n.d.

[with]

- [17] "Casa Bianca," engraving by D'Elsaux of a drawing by S'Affitre.

[with]

- [18] *Casabianca, A Poem*. Illuminated for W. Agnes Davbeny by her sister, B.L. de M.D., 1874. Navy blue calf.

The extreme popularity of "Casabianca" is apparent in the many and various forms it took in the popular culture of the nineteenth century. Shown here are a steel-plate engraving portraying the boy on the deck, sheet music, and a beautiful and meticulously hand-drawn, illuminated manuscript copy of the poem created in 1874 as a gift to the artist's sister.



- [19] "The Bird's Release." Poetry and melody by Mrs. Hemans. New York: Dubois & Stodart, n.d.

[with]

- [20] "I Go Sweet Friends." Music by C. Meineke. Baltimore: G. Willig, Jr., 1836.

[with]

- [21] "The Hour of Prayer." Composed by S. Nelson. New York: Firth & Hall, n.d. [c. 1846-7].

Many of Hemans' poems were set to music by others. These examples first appeared in verse form in "Lays of Many Lands," published with "The Forest Sanctuary." "The Bird's Release" appeared in the first edition (1825), and "I Go Sweet Friends" and "The Hour of Prayer" appeared in the expanded second edition (1829) with "Casabianca."

**Case Three:
The Years of Fame: 1828-1835.**

In 1828 Hemans moved from Wales to Wavertree. She also published *Records of Woman*, an exploration of the tragic potential of woman's position in contemporary society. She moved to Dublin in 1831, where she died in 1835. At her death many of her poems had already acquired the stature of standard English lyrics—"The Stately Homes of England," "The Better Land," "The Graves of a Household," "The Treasures of the Deep," and "Casabianca," foremost among them.

- [22] *Records of Woman: with Other Poems*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1828. Black stamped and gilt full-calf with marbled endpapers.

First edition of the poet's finest and most widely acclaimed book. Written chiefly at Rhyllon, with her children at play around her, the poems in *Records of Woman* document the courage, nobility, and pain of women's lives. Hemans dedicated the book to Joanna Bailie and said of it: "I have put my heart and individual feelings into it more than any thing else I have written."

This particular copy seems to have been a well-travelled family heirloom and shows the impact Hemans' verse had on contemporary women. Her husband wrote in it, "This Book She always kept in her dressing room.—It has accompanied her in all my voyages and travels; and I should wish it carefully preserved . . . —John Hood 1842 Indian Ocean Lat. 8.30 S. Long. 69—"

- [23] *Records of Woman: with Other Poems*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1830. Third edition. Original boards.

[with]

- [24] *Records of Woman: with Other Poems*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1837. Fifth edition. Full natural calf.

Records of Woman was Hemans' most commercially successful volume, reprinted by William Blackwood four times during the poet's lifetime. The fifth edition came out two years after Hemans' death.

- [25] Photographic enlargement of an engraving by Edward Scriven after a portrait of Hemans by William E. West.

In the autumn of 1828, West painted this portrait of Hemans at the request of Alaric A. Watts, editor of the *Literary Souvenir*, who was putting together a gallery of the living British poets. It inspired Hemans' poem "To my own portrait" and was given to her sister, Harriet Hughes, who used it for the frontispiece to the seven-volume, 1839 edition of Hemans' *Works*.

- [26] *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for September 1828. Red half morocco.

This issue of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* contains the first printing of Hemans' "The Message to the Dead," later republished in *Songs of the Affections* (1830). Hemans was fortunate to have established herself with William Blackwood as a writer for his periodical when the time came to find a new publisher for her books. Also bound in this volume is the November 1828 issue of *Blackwood's* in which John Wilson praises Hemans' talents in his "Noctes Ambrosianae."

- [27] *The Keepsake for 1829*, ed. Frederick Mansel Reynolds. London: Hurst, Chance & Co.; R. Jennings, 1828. Red silk.

Hemans' poem "The Broken Chain" appears in good company in *The Keepsake for 1829*. William Wordsworth contributed "The Wishing Gate," "Sonnet: A Gravestone Upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral," "Sonnet: A Tradition of Darley Dale, Derbyshire," "The Triad," and "The Country Girl," and Mary Shelley contributed her short stories "The Sisters of Albano" and "Ferdinando Eboli," along with poems by her then deceased husband Percy Bysshe Shelley ("On Love" and "Fragments"). Walter Scott contributed "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror," "The Tapestry Chamber," "Death of the Laird's Jock," and "A Scene at Abbotsford." Other *Keepsake* authors for this year included Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Robert Southey, and Thomas Moore.

- [28] *The Amulet, or Christian and Literary Remembrancer*. London: W. Baynes and Son and Wightman and Cramp; Philadelphia: T. Wardle, 1828. Dark green silk.

Hemans contributed three poems to this literary annual: "The Wakening," "The Dial of Flowers," and "Angel Visits." Other contributors included S.T. Coleridge, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Mary Howitt, Lucy Aikin, Mary Russell Mitford, John Clare, Bernard Barton, Thomas Hood, William Howitt, and Amelia Opie. This annual includes the only text printed during the author's lifetime of Anna Letitia Barbauld's "Bouts Rimés in Praise of Old Maids" and "Lines to Mr. W—."

- [29] Letter by Hemans, dated April 1, 1825, from her home in Bronwyllfa, St. Asaph, to the publishers of *The Amulet*.

Hemans accepts an invitation to contribute to the 1826 number of the *Amulet*. The book included Hemans' poems "The Hebrew Mother," "The Trumpet," and "Christ in the Garden."

- [30] *Songs of the Affections, with Other Poems*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1830. Original paper boards.

First edition. *Songs of the Affections* consists primarily of work that had appeared previously in periodicals. For this reason, though the book sold well, it was barely noticed by reviewers. Hemans would continue to publish in magazines and literary annuals but would not bring out another new volume for four years.

- [31] *Scenes and Hymns of Life, with Other Religious Poems*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1834. Original paper boards.

First edition of Hemans' last book. Dedicated to William Wordsworth, *Scenes and Hymns* is a collection of devotional pieces. Though Hemans had high hopes for the volume, the reviews were few and disappointing.

- [32] "Sabbath Sonnet" in *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Hemans* by her sister [Harriet Hughes]. No place: no publisher, n.d. [c. 1881]. Dark green cloth.

Amid fever and delirium, Hemans dictated her last poem, the "Sabbath Sonnet," on Sunday, 26 April 1835. She died in Dublin on 16 May, at the age of 41. This account of her last days by her sister, Harriet Hughes, was widely reprinted. This curious American reprint of Hughes' memoir appears to have been made up from part of another book; the title page lists no publisher, place, or date.

Case Four: Manuscripts.

This case displays a selection of letters by and relating to the poet as well as copies in Hemans' hand of some of her poems.

- [33] Extraordinary letter from Hemans, dated October 29, n.y. to the Scottish poet and prose writer Allan Cunningham, begging him to be discrete about her domestic difficulties in a biographical sketch he was planning to write about her for the *Athenaeum*. Hemans was intensely embarrassed about her separation from her husband.
- [34] Letter by Hemans (written sometime around 1829) to an admirer, Mrs. Dugald Stewart, thanking her for a gift. Hemans became so popular that she soon bewailed the fans who turned up at her doorstep wanting an autograph or asking that she write a few lines of poetry in their albums.
- [35] Note from Hemans dated July 29 [1830] from Dove Nest Cottage, Ambleside, in the Lake District, where the poet spent time with the Wordsworths. Hemans asks the publisher Thomas Cadell, William Blackwood's London distributor, to send a copy of her *Songs of the Affections* to Colonel D'Aguiar, Rose Lawrence's brother, who was to be of great help during her last illness.
- [36] Letter from Charles Hemans, (the poet's son), dated November 29, [1834] from 20 Dawson Street, Dublin, to Rose Lawrence, telling her about "a History of America published by a Mr. Bancroft, in which the Author has endeavoured to prove Mama's descent from Oliver Cromwell . . .". On a more serious note, he reports that his mother "is now in such a very [bad] state, that she is not only unable to read, but can scarcely even hear me read to her, from the bewildered state she is in . . .".
- [37] Letter by Hemans, dated Feb. 13, [1835], shortly before her death, to Rose Lawrence, thanking her for being the one who convinced Sir Robert Peel to find a position for Hemans' son Henry. She notes, "My wish ever was to concentrate all my mental [energy] in the production of some more noble and [complete work:] something of pure and holy excellence, . . . [which might] permanently take its place as the work of an English poetess—I have always, hitherto, written as if in the breathing times of Autumn storms and billows—perhaps it may not even yet be too late to accomplish what I wish . . . though my spirits are greatly subdued by long sickness, I feel the powers of my mind in full maturity." Rose Lawrence's inscription on the letter notes that it was "The last!" to her from her friend. The poet died three months later.
- [38] Letter dated August 28 [1835] by dramatist and poet Joanna Baillie, to whom Hemans dedicated *Records of Woman*. Baillie writes from her home in Hampstead to Rose Lawrence, who would, the following year, publish a memoir of Hemans in her book *The Last Autumn at a Favorite Residence, with Other Poems; and Recollections of Mrs. Hemans*. Baillie's letter discusses Hemans' recent death, a poem written in tribute to Hemans by Lawrence, and the recent appearance of Captain Alfred Hemans in Hampstead, spreading stories about the departed poet which Baillie terms inconsistent and incredible. Baillie adds, "I have received lately letters from America lamenting her illness & approaching end.—She has long been valued & admired in that country as she deserves to be."

- [39] Signed, fair copy manuscript of "A Domestic Scene," later titled "A Father Reading the Bible," first published in *The Amulet* for 1830.
- [40] Fair copy in Hemans' hand of "The Fountain of Oblivion," published in *Songs of the Affections* (1830).
- [41] Fair copy in Hemans' hand of "The Boon of Memory," published in *The Forest Sanctuary; with Other Poems* (second edition, 1829).
- [42] Fair copy signed by Hemans of "The Invocation," published in *Records of Woman* (1828).
- [43] An early draft, in Hemans' hand, of the first two stanzas of "Ye Are Not Miss'd, Fair Flowers" containing many substantive differences from the text ultimately printed in *National Lyrics, and Songs for Music* (1834).

Case Five: Posthumous Reputation: 1836 into the Twentieth Century.

If Hemans was the preeminent woman poet of her day, her status did not diminish after her death. In fact, the years immediately following 1835 saw the appearance of books collecting her last poems, an authorized edition of her complete works, as well as many tributes and three important full-scale biographies. Her work became increasingly popular as the Victorian era progressed, with many reprints published in the 1880s when her poems went out of copyright. This case includes notable posthumous British editions of her poems and collected works, as well as other items which document her continuing popularity with the reading public.

- 44] *Poetical Remains of the Late Mrs. Hemans*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons; London: T. Cadell, 1836. Original paper boards with slipcase and matching brown cloth wrapper. First edition; a collection of Hemans' last miscellaneous pieces, edited and with an introduction by the Scottish critic David M. Moir.
- [45] *The Works of Mrs. Hemans; with a Memoir of her Life, by her Sister* [Harriet Hughes] 7 vols. Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons; London: Thomas Cadell, 1839. Green blind-stamped cloth.
- The first authorized British collected edition of Hemans' work, sponsored by her family and published by William Blackwood. (Pirated collections had been appearing for some time, especially in America.) In addition to the 315-page memoir, there are excerpts throughout this edition from critical reviews of her volumes, as well as remarks on Hemans' poetic talent by David M. Moir, Letitia E. Landon, Henry F. Chorley, and Andrews Norton.

- [46] Chorley, Henry F. *Memorials of Mrs. Hemans, with Illustrations of her Literary Character from her Private Correspondence*. 2 vols. New York: Saunders and Otley, 1836. Dark brown cloth.

In the year following the poet's death, Henry Fothergill Chorley, a young musician and journalist who had known Hemans during her Wavertree years, published a book with his reminiscences and included transcriptions of some of her correspondence. The biography appeared in American pirated editions like this one almost as soon as it was published in London. In the same year, Rose D'Aguilar Lawrence published her *Recollections of Mrs. Hemans*. Partly in response to these biographies, Harriet Hughes penned her memoir of her sister.

- [47] *Poems of Felicia Hemans*. A New Edition. Chronologically Arranged, with Illustrative Notes and a Selection of Cotemporary Criticisms. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1854. Green morocco with elaborate gilt embossing.

Though William Blackwood died in 1834, his firm, which remained in the family, continued to hold the copyright to Hemans' work. It capitalized on her continuing popularity by publishing various editions of her poetry late into the nineteenth century. This beautifully bound volume is a reprint of a one-volume edition apparently first published in 1852. It contains a useful chronology of Hemans' life; contemporary criticisms, often identified by author; a general index which includes names of critics; and an index to first lines.

- [48] *Poems*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1865. Royal blue cloth with simple gilt embossing.

A popular 365-page selected edition.

- [49] *Poems of Felicia Hemans*. Copyright Edition. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1872. Forest green publisher's cloth.

Blackwood's "copyright edition" of Hemans' works uses the same plates as the 1852 edition.

- [50] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans*. Reprinted from the Early Editions, with Memoir, Explanatory Notes, etc. "The Lansdowne Poets" series. London: Frederick Warne, n.d. [1875]. Victorian stamped and gilt green cloth.

"The Lansdowne Poets" series featured the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, Burns, Milton, Dryden, Wordsworth, Shelley, Gray, Poe, Longfellow, and others in 47 volumes. Any of "The Lansdowne Poets" could be purchased for a very affordable 3 shillings 6 pence in cloth or 8 shillings in morocco leather. This edition was frequently reprinted. Warne also included Hemans in its more exclusive "Albion Poets" series, comprising 17 volumes, and its relatively expensive "Imperial Poets," a series of only 12 volumes.

- [51] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. F. Hemans. With Memoir*. "The Landscape Series of Poets." London and Edinburgh: Gall & Inglis, n.d. [1876]. Victorian red cloth binding with elaborate gilt stamping.

Gall and Inglis' "Landscape" series is one of the most pictorially ornate of Victorian volumes, featuring elaborate illustrated borders in colored inks on each page. Hemans' work appears in this series in the company of such authors as William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. She seems to have been the only female poet published in a separate volume by this firm.

- [52] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Felicia Hemans*. Edited, with a Critical Memoir, by William Michael Rossetti. Illustrated by Thomas Seecombe, "Moxon's Popular Poets" series. London: Ward, Lock & Co., [1879]. Elaborately blind-stamped and gilt-embossed royal blue cloth.

Hemans continued to be one of the best-selling poets of the age, winning her a place in "Moxon's Popular Poets" series. An indicator of Hemans' status within the culture is the company in which she was published. Advertisements at the back of this volume list titles in this series and in Ward and Lock's "Standard Poets" series. In both instances, Hemans is the only female author included. The present copy is displayed with the uniform "Moxon's Popular Poets" edition of Percy Bysshe Shelley, both with introductions by William Michael Rossetti.

- [53] *Mrs. Hemans Birthday Book. A Selection of Beautiful Passages from the Poems of Felicia Hemans*. Arranged as a Daily Text Book by R.G.B., Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo, Hay, & Mitchell, 1885. Gilt-embossed green cloth.

This unusual book documents Hemans' status as a cultural icon. Designed much like a modern appointment calendar, the purpose of this volume was to record the birthdays of friends and relatives. Accompanying each date are verses from Hemans' poems. This particular book was a present for Gertrude Garside from her father. Poignantly, on the displayed page, under February 28, she records an infant's birth and its death two days later.

- [54] *The Poetical Works of Felicia Dorothea Hemans*. London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, Bombay: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1914. Royal blue cloth.

Hemans was still so well thought of in 1914 that she was one of the authors included in the series of "Standard Authors" published by the prestigious Oxford University Press. Her book is displayed here with the Oxford edition of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poems.

- [55] Trinder, Peter W. *Mrs. Hemans*. n.p.: University of Wales Press on behalf of the Welsh Arts Council, 1984. Paperback.

Though Hemans was virtually ignored in the mid-twentieth century, in 1984 the University of Wales Press published this study of her work by Peter W. Trinder.



Case Six: Hemans in America.

Hemans' popularity in America was as great or even greater than in Britain. Scores of imitators appeared, the most successful of whom was Lydia Sigourney, dubbed "The American Hemans." H. F. Chorley reports that "so general was the interest excited in America, that a most liberal offer of a certain income, and still more, of a friendly welcome, was made to her, in the hope of tempting her to take up her residence in Boston, for the purpose of conducting a periodical." Hemans declined. Still, the first authorized collected works of Hemans appeared not in Britain but in America in the mid-1820s, edited by Professor Andrews Norton of Harvard, for which he secured a portion of the profits for the poet. But the lack of an international copyright agreement meant that book piracy was commonplace. Many unauthorized reprintings of Hemans' books appeared in America, for which the poet, and later her heirs, received no payment. Case Six includes first American editions of some of Hemans' more important books, one true first edition printed in America, and a sampling of American reprints from the 1820s through the 1840s.

- [56] *The League of the Alps. The Siege of Valencia. The Vespers of Palermo, and Other Poems.* [ed. Andrews Norton.] Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1826. Half-calf over marbled paper boards.

In the fall of 1825, Andrews Norton, who with critic Andrew Peabody ranked Hemans' work more highly than that of Milton and Homer, edited a collected edition of her works. The Boston firm of Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins brought out at least four titles by Hemans from 1826 to 1828. Hemans' earning from these American editions are unknown, but their sale was said to be extensive.

This presentation copy is inscribed on the verso of the half-title, "Mrs. Harriet Bowdler—with Felicia Hemans's best regards." Hemans has corrected in ink the second line of "Casabianca" in this copy from "When all but him had fled" to "When all but he had fled." This was the first volume in the earliest recorded multi-volume collected edition of Hemans' work.

- [57] *Hymns on the Works of Nature, for the Use of Children.* [ed. Andrews Norton.] Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1827. Paper wrappers.

Though published in Boston, this 35-page booklet is the first edition of this work, not reprinted overseas until 1834 when the Dublin publisher Curry brought it out under the title *Hymns for Childhood*. It appears to have been intended for use in Sunday Schools.

- [58] Letter by Hemans, dated May 29, 1826, to The Rev. J. G. Palfrey thanking him for bringing a package from Andrews Norton. This package initiated the friendship between the poet and the professor from Harvard. Hemans writes, "I cannot too strongly express the delight I take in my now frequent intercourse with the pure and noble minds of New England."

- [59] *Records of Woman: with Other Poems.* Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1828. Dark brown cloth spine with paper boards. Andrews Norton's authorized American edition of *Records of Woman* appeared in the same year as William Blackwood's British edition.

- [60] *Records of Woman: with Other Poems.* New York: William P. Gilley, 1828. Linen-backed green paper boards.

This unauthorized American edition of Hemans' *Records* also appeared in the same year as its British publication and attests to the popularity of Hemans in America. (Only the most sought-after authors were pirated.) The book would appear to have been taken from the British edition rather than from the Boston edition, for it prints "A Monarch's Death Bed," "To Wordsworth," and other poems omitted by Norton.

- [61] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Felicia Hemans*, in which is Added Many Pieces not Contained in any Former Edition, 2 vols. New Haven: Nathan Whiting, 1828. Burgundy calf.

Described on the title page as the fifth American edition, this is an early example of American fine hand-tooled binding.

- [62] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans*, 2 vols. Philadelphia: Thomas T. Ash, 1832. Red morocco with elaborate gilt embossing.

This two-volume miniature book was reprinted by Ash in 1837 and several times by Henry F. Anners, also of Philadelphia. Anners' was a short-lived publishing concern (1842-50), best known for reprinting the work of temperance novelist Timothy Shay Arthur.

- [63] *The Poetical Works of Hemans, Heber and Pollok, Complete in One Volume.* Philadelphia: John Grigg, 1832. Full natural calf.

Hemans' poetry accounts for two-thirds of this volume. Each section was individually paginated, allowing the works of each poet to be sold separately as well as collectively.

- [64] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Felicia Hemans; Complete in One Volume.* Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliot, 1836. Full natural calf.

Four leaves of publisher's advertisements preceding the frontispiece indicate that this volume was part of a series of "Splendid Library Editions" which included Hemans as the only woman author in the company of Byron, Goldsmith, Milton, Sterne, Cowper, Thomson, and others. The advertisement after the title page is dated October 1835, suggesting the book was sold in 1835 for Christmas and New Year's gift giving. It says in part: "Several years have elapsed since the publishers of the present volume collected the various detached pieces of Mrs. Hemans' poetry, and gave them to the public, in connection with the poetry of Heber and Pollok in a single volume. Many additional effusions from her pen have since been published in British journals; these have been industriously sought for, and superadded, in this new edition, to the number contained in the prior publication." Grigg and Elliot reprinted Hemans' works many times, often resetting the plates.

- [65] *Poems by Felicia Hemans, with an Essay on her Genius by H.T. Tuckerman*, ed. Rufus W. Griswold. Philadelphia: Sorin and Ball, 1845. Full red morocco.

Best known as the executor of Poe's literary estate, Griswold, who well understood the economics of publishing and was one of the first anthologizers of American and British literature, did not miss the opportunity to exploit Hemans' popularity. This edition was reprinted by Sorin and Ball and served as the basis for two volumes printed by Leavitt of New York in the 1850s.

[66] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Felicia Hemans*, New Edition Illustrated with Steel Engravings. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1850. Black-half morocco over printed paper boards. 394 pages.

[with]

[67] *The Poetical Works of Felicia Hemans*, Complete in One Volume With a Memoir by Mrs. L.[ydia] H. Sigourney, a New Edition from the Last London Edition with all the Introductory Notes. Elegantly Illustrated from Original Designs. Boston: Phillips, Sampson; New York: J.C. Derby, 1855. Brown period cloth elaborately blind stamped. 691 pages.

[with]

[68] *The Poetical Works of Felicia Hemans*, Complete in One Volume With a Memoir by Mrs. L.H. Sigourney, a New Edition from the Last London Edition with all the Introductory Notes. Elegantly Illustrated from Original Designs. Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee and Co., 1861. Full brown morocco with elaborate blind stamping.

[and]

[69] *The Poetical Works of Felicia Hemans*. Complete in One Volume. With a Memoir by Mrs. L.H. Sigourney, a New Edition, from the Last London Edition. with all the Introductory Notes. Elegantly Illustrated from Original Designs. New York: W.I. Pooley, 1869. Elaborately blind-stamped brown morocco.

In 1848 the firm of Phillips, Sampson brought out a 394-page edition of Hemans' poetry that sold well and was reprinted throughout the 1850s. By 1853, the firm had issued a longer, 691-page edition, frequently reprinted as well. In the late 1850s, Phillips, Sampson experienced financial difficulties, and William Lee, who had worked for the firm (and had the dubious distinction of recommending not to publish *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), bought many of the firm's books and plates at auction and formed Crosby, Nichols, Lee and Co., which also reprinted Hemans. Pooley of New York seems to have bought the Hemans plates from Lee.



Case Seven: Reprintings and More Reprintings.

Many reprint houses cashed in on the public's love affair with the poetry of Felicia Hemans. Displayed here are some notable examples of the way Hemans stayed in print in collected editions. Individual titles were frequently reprinted, too, in many editions by various publishers. This case also contains examples of some of the incarnations of *Songs of the Affections* throughout the nineteenth century.

[70] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans*, with Memoir, Explanatory Notes, Etc. [by William Michael Rosetti]. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, n.d. [1880s]. White cloth backstrip over blue floral paper boards.

Crowell's edition was reprinted throughout the 1880s. The Hemans volume is displayed here with the companion Percy Bysshe Shelley volume.

[71] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans*, with Memoir, Explanatory Notes, Etc. New York: John Wurtele Lovell, 1881. Olive green cloth.

[with]

[72] *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans*, with Memoir, Explanatory Notes, Etc. New York: John B. Alden, 1883. Brown cloth.

The New York publishing firms of Lovell, Alden, and Crowell all appear to have used the same plates for their cheap Hemans reprints. The olive green Lovell volume above has "T. Y. Crowell" on the backstrip and there is an advertisement in the back for Crowell's "Red Line Poets."

[73-78] *The Breaking Waves Dashed High (The Pilgrim Fathers)* with Designs by Miss L.B. Humphrey, Engraved by Andrew. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883. Red, dark brown, green, light brown, blue, and gold cloth.

"The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" was one of America's favorite Hemans poems. This illustrated edition sold extremely well during the early 1880s, with the publisher's binding available in a variety of colors.

[79] *Songs of the Affections, National Lyrics, with Other Poems*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons; London: Thomas Cadell, 1840. Black morocco with gilt embossing.

[with]

[80] *Songs of the Affections, National Lyrics, Miscellaneous Poems*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1857. Orange cloth.

William Blackwood reprinted Volume 6 of his 1839 edition of Hemans' works and sold it separately, varying the title slightly. Here are the 1840 and the 1857 reprints.

[81] *Songs of the Affections and Other Poems*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1859. Dark brown morocco with gilt embossing.

For this 1859 reprint, Blackwood reset the text.

[82] *Songs of the Affections and Other Poems*. Liverpool: Thomas Johnson, 1840. Green gilt-stamped cloth.

This Liverpool edition was a piracy. Thomas Johnson must have known the sales would make the risk worthwhile.

[83] *Songs of the Affections*. New York: D. Appleton; Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton, n.d. [c. 1850]. Blue period cloth with elaborate gilt stamping and embossing.

This book was part of Appleton's "Miniature Classical Library."

[84] *Songs of the Affections*, Elegantly Illustrated. Philadelphia: E.H. Butler, 1860. Royal blue, period cloth with elaborate blind stamping and gilt embossing.

[with]

[85] *Songs of the Affections*, Elegantly Illustrated. Philadelphia: Burlock & Co., 1878. [bound with] Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Songs of the Intellect and the Affections*, Elegantly Illustrated. Philadelphia: Burlock & Co., 1878. Blind-stamped black morocco.

The Philadelphia firm of Burlock and Company acquired the plates of *Songs of the Affections* from E. H. Butler, another Philadelphia publisher, and bound Hemans' work with that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Case Eight: Objects of Reverence and Desire.

The meaning and value of a work of literature to its purchaser often finds expression in the book's physical appearance. Many Hemans volumes have the look of family bibles, bound in expensive hand-tooled morocco or padded leather. Others were imposing oversized ornaments for the late nineteenth-century drawing room; something like today's coffee table books, they looked luxurious and important. Some owners had their Hemans books specially clothed in fine bindings, made of calf and gilt embossed. Publishers' trade bindings, though produced more cheaply in leather or cloth, also could be quite showy, gilt edged with colorful and elaborate designs on the covers and spines. This case displays examples of the variety of bindings, many beautiful, some quite remarkable, in which Hemans' work appeared.



This catalogue, by Price McMurray and Paula R. Feldman, has been issued in an edition of 1,000 copies.