



THE CAPTIVE.

## DEATH AND THE CAPTIVE.

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LIBERTY! Liberty!\* thou hast heard  
 My weary prayer at length,  
 But the plumeless wing of the captive bird  
 Is shorn of its buoyant strength;  
 I am too weary now to roam  
 Through sun-light and the air,  
 To bear me to my mountain home,  
 Or joy if I were there.

Liberty! Liberty! thou hast been  
 The prayer of my burning heart,  
 Till the silent thoughts that were within  
 Into life and form would start;  
 And, oh! the glorious dreams that roll'd,  
 Like scenes of things that be,  
 And voices of the night that told—  
 “The captive and the earth are free!”

\* The author, in order, as it would appear, to avoid the almost inevitable monotony of the subject, has represented the Captive as at first mistaking the Vision of the King of Terrors for that of Liberty—the burning passionate hope of the heart, cherished through years of gloom, may well, indeed, be imagined to have this effect in the feverish excitement of struggling nature.—EDITOR.

Liberty! Liberty! I have prayed  
To see thy form again,  
And borne, with spirit undecayed,  
The dungeon and the chain;  
But darkling art thou come to me,  
In silence and in dread,  
And round thee many a form I see  
Of thine own tombless dead.

Oh! altered is that glorious mien,  
That burning brow of pride,  
That shone before me in the scene  
Where patriot thousands died;  
Oh! changed since when I bore the brand  
In glory and in youth,  
And saw my leagued brothers stand  
For Freedom and the truth.

Long years of woe have chill'd my breast,  
And faint my spirit grows,—  
Here now my drooping head might rest,  
And here could find repose;  
But darkly as thy shadow gleams  
Before my weary gaze,  
Thou hast brought back the blessed dreams  
Of youth's unclouded days.



Oh! lead me forth where'er thy reign,  
 Where'er thy dwelling be;  
 I would bear all I've borne again,  
 To feel one moment free;  
 To feel my soul no longer press'd  
 By this dim night of woe,—  
 To know, where'er this heart may rest,  
 The living light shall flow.

Frown not! I once could brave for thee  
 The dagger at my side,—  
 And I have borne the misery  
 That few could bear beside.  
 There were who loved me,—where are they?  
 Friends, country, home, and name,—  
 They have passed like a dream away,  
 But left my heart the same.

I've bartered all to see thee smile  
 Upon my native shore;  
 Nor change I, though my rest the while  
 Be on a dungeon-floor.  
 The love of woman, or man's praise,  
 I sigh not now for them,—  
 It is enough that distant days  
 Shall wear thy diadem.

Yet leave me not again to lie  
Through untold years of gloom,  
I would once more behold the sky  
And earth's unwasted bloom ;  
Not yet hath hung the chilly air  
So murky in my cell,—  
The heavy darkness seems to glare,  
The dreary night-gales swell.

And art thou she—the holy one !  
Whose banner o'er the world,  
Before their destined race was run,  
Chiefs, prophets, saints, unfurled ;  
Art thou the starry form that bowed  
Beside the patriot's shield,  
When, with clos'd lips and bosom proud,  
They bore him from the field ?

Thou art not she,—I know thee now !  
The glorious dream is past,—  
There is a fever on my brow,  
And life is ebbing fast.  
Unmoved I bow me to thy power,  
Stern friend of human kind !  
Thou canst not make the spirit cower,  
A dungeon could not bind.

H. S.