



Felicia Hemans: Selected Poems, Letters, Reception Materials

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The first standard edition of the writings of Felicia Hemans (1793-1835), this volume marks a revival of interest in, and a new critical appreciation of, one of the most important literary figures of the early nineteenth century. A best-selling poet in England and America, Felicia Hemans was regarded as leading female poet in her day, celebrated as the epitome of national "feminine" values. However, this same narrow perception of her work eventually relegated Hemans to an obscurity lightened occasionally by parody and a sentimental enthusiasm for poems such as "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers" and "Casabianca." Only now is Hemans's work being rediscovered and reconsidered--for the complexity of its social and political vision, but also for its sounding of dissonances in nineteenth-century cultural ideals, and for its recasting of the traditional canon of male "Romantics."

Offering readers a firsthand acquaintance with the remarkable range of Hemans's writing, this volume includes five major works in their entirety, along with a much-admired aggregate, *Records of Woman*. Hemans's letters, many published here for the first time, reflect her views of her contemporaries, her work, her negotiations with publishers, and her emerging celebrity, while reviews and letters from others--including Lord Byron, Walter Scott, and the Wordsworths--tell the story of Hemans's reception in her time. An introduction by editor Susan Wolfson puts these writings, as well as Hemans's life and work, into much-needed perspective for the contemporary reader.

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