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### **The language and poetry of flowers**

**London, 1877**

Woodland Reverie.

**urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-33126**

## WOODLAND REVERIE.

THERE were thick leaves above me and around,  
And low sweet sighs like those of childhood's sleep,  
Amidst their dimness, and a fitful sound  
As of soft showers on water ; dark and deep  
Lay the oak shadows o'er the turf, so still  
They seemed but pictured glooms : a hidden rill  
Made music, such as haunts us in a dream,  
Under the fern-tufts ; and a tender gleam  
Of soft green light, as by the glow-worm shed,  
Came pouring through the woven beech-boughs down  
And steeped the magic page wherein I read  
Of royal chivalry and old renown,  
A tale of Palestine. Meanwhile the bee  
Swept past me with a tone of summer hours ;  
A drowsy bugle, wafting thoughts of flowers,  
Blue skies, and amber sunshine : brightly free,  
On filmy wings, the purple dragon-fly  
Shot glancing like a fairy javelin by ;  
And a sweet voice of sorrow told the dell  
Where sat the lone wood-pigeon.

But ere long,  
All sense of these things faded, as the spell  
Breathing from that high gorgeous tale grew strong  
On my chained soul. 'Twas not the leaves I heard ;  
A Syrian wind the Lion banner stirred  
Through its proud floating folds. 'Twas not the brook,  
Singing in secret through its glassy glen ;  
A wild shrill trumpet of the Saracen  
Pealed from the desert's lonely heart, and shook  
The burning air. Like clouds when winds are high,  
O'er glittering sands flew steeds of Araby,  
And tents rose up, and sudden lance and spear  
Flashed where a fountain's diamond wave lay clear,





Shadowed by graceful palm-trees. Then the shout  
Of merry England's joy swelled freely out,  
Sent through an Eastern heaven, whose glorious hue  
Made shields dark mirrors to its depths of blue :  
And harps were there—I heard their sounding strings,  
As the waste echoed to the mirth of kings.  
The bright mask faded. Unto life's worn track,  
What called me from its flood of glory back ?  
A voice of happy childhood ! and they passed,  
Banner, and harp, and Paynim's trumpet blast.  
Yet might I scarce bewail the splendours gone,  
My heart so leaped to that sweet laughter's tone.

*Hemans.*