

AMERICAN WOMEN POETS

of the Nineteenth Century



An Anthology

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Lydia Sigourney

FUNERAL OF MAZEEN

The Last of the Royal Line of the Mohegan Nation

'Mid the trodden turf is an open grave,
And a funeral train where the wild flowers wave,
And a manly sleeper doth seek his bed
In the narrow house of the sacred dead,
Yet the soil hath scantily drank of the tear,
For the red-brow'd few are the mourners here.

They have lower'd the prince to his resting spot,
The deep prayer hath swell'd, but they heed it not,
Their abject thoughts 'mid his ashes grope,
And quench'd in their souls is the light of hope;
Know ye their pangs, who turn away
The vassal foot from a monarch's clay?

With the dust of kings in this noteless shade,
The last of a royal line is laid,
In whose stormy veins that current roll'd
Which curb'd the chief and the warrior bold;
Yet pride still burns in their humid clay,
Though the pomp of the sceptre hath pass'd away.

They spake, and the war-dance wheel'd its round,
Or the wretch to the torturing stake was bound;
They lifted their hand, and the eagle fell
From his sunward flight, or his cloud-wrapt cell;
They frown'd, and the tempest of battle arose,
And streams were stain'd with the blood of foes.

Be silent, O Grave! o'er thy hoarded trust,
And smother the voice of the royal dust;
The ancient pomp of their council-fires,

Lydia Sigourney

Their simple trust in our pilgrim sires,
The whiles that blasted their withering race,
Hide, hide them deep in thy darkest place.

Till the rending caverns shall yield their dead,
Till the skies as a burning scroll are red,
Till the wondering slave from his chain shall spring,
And to falling mountains the tyrant cling,
Bid all their woes with their relics rest
And bury their wrongs in thy secret breast.

But, when aroused at the trump of doom,
Ye shall start, bold kings, from your lowly tomb,
When some bright-wing'd seraph of mercy shall bend
Your stranger eye on the Sinner's Friend,
Kneel, kneel, at His throne whose blood was spilt,
And plead for your pale-brow'd brother's guilt.

THE SUTTEE

~~She sat upon the pile by her dead lord,
And in her full, dark eye, and shining hair
Youth revell'd.—The glad murmur of the crowd
Applauding her consent to the dread doom,
And the hoarse chanting of infuriate priests
She heeded not, for her quick ear had caught
An infant's wail.—Feeble and low that moan,
Yet it was answer'd in her heaving heart,
For the Mimosa in its shrinking fold~~

The title refers to the practice associated with Hinduism of burning the widow on her husband's funeral pyre.