

Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
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by
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THE DEATH SONG.

BY MISS L. E. LANDON.

ARE the roses all faded, that thus you should wear
A wreath from the dark cypress tree in your hair?
Are the violets wither'd, that funeral green
Should thus mid your long golden tresses be seen?

Come, maiden, the evening's last crimson has dyed
With the hue of its blushes the pearls at your side;
And wreath'd flowers like summer's are bright in each fold
Of the white robe whose border is heavy with gold.

Oh father, my father, now urge me no more;
No footstep of mine will be light on the floor;
The shroud cold and white is the robe I shall wear:
Now look on my face, is not death written there?

It came on the night wind, it came in the hour,
When the planet shines forth and the spirit has power:
I heard the sad music that wailing past by;
It call'd me, my father, it call'd me to die.

I heard that wild singing the night that she died,
My own gentle sister, her last sigh replied:
Again I have listen'd that funeral tone;
I knew 't was the death song, I knew 't was my own.

I am weeping, but not for this summons, my tears
They fall for your lonely, your desolate years:
I see the old hearth, but its gladness is gone;
I see the green forest, you walk there alone.

By the side of my sister's they'll hang up my lute,
But, unless the wind wake them, henceforth to be mute.
Our vault will be open'd with torch-light and song;
We must part there, my father, we part not for long.

They say to the words of the dying are given
A spirit that is not of earth, but of heaven.
Be strong in thy sorrow, and meek in thy pain:
My father, we meet, and for ever, again.



THE KNIGHT AND THE LADY

Painted by F. P. Stephanoff Engraved by Chas. Heath

LEGENDARY FRAGMENTS.

BY MISS L. E. LANDON.

The lady turn'd her weary from a world ;
 She needed time for penitence, and tears,
 And earnest prayer might win for her lone cell
 The peace a palace wanted. Solitude
 Grew fill'd with gentle thoughts of other years ;
 And one whom she had left in early youth
 Was now as dear as ever. Once her cheek
 Was a sweet summer altar for the rose—
 'T was now its tomb ; and in her dim blue eye
 Was death ; but one tie bound her yet to earth—
 She could not die till she had look'd again
 In that beloved face : she sent a ring—
 Strange she had kept that gift of plighted truth,
 Though false to all it pledged. The midnight came,
 And the red torchlight fell upon a knight
 Who stood beside the dying.

“ AND meet we thus again ? ” he said ;
 “ And meet we thus again ?
 And why should meeting be for those
 Who only meet in vain ?
 Call others round your dying bed,
 The loved of many years !
 The eyes whose smiles were all your own,
 Those are the eyes for tears.
 You thought not of me in the hall,
 When gayer knights were nigh ;
 You thought not of me when the stars
 Wrote memory on the sky.
 My heart has been with other thoughts,
 Of council and of fight ;

I've bought forgetfulness with blood
 Of one so false, so light.
 It is a dream of shame and scorn,
 That of your broken vow ;
 'Tis with the vain frail hopes of youth,
 Why speak you of it now ?"
 He nerved him with remember'd wrongs,
 He grasp'd his heavy brand ;
 She raised her sweet eyes to his face,
 She raised her dying hand :
 She strove to speak—on her faint lip
 The accents died unheard :
 Ah ! nothing could his heart have moved
 Like that unspoken word.
 A sadness stole upon his brow,
 A softness to his eyes ;
 His heart was harden'd against smiles,
 It could not be to sighs.
 It was not years that wrought the change—
 In life she yet was young ;
 Her locks of youth, her golden hair,
 In wild profusion hung.
 But youth's sweet lights had left her eye,
 For from within they shine,
 And pale her face, as those are carved
 Around some sacred shrine ;—
 On funeral marble carved, and worn
 With sorrow, sin, and shame ;
 Placed there in sign of penitence—
 And her face was the same.
 * * * * *
 " 'Tis written deep within—the vow
 We pledged in other years,

And all that vanity effaced
Has long been fresh with tears.
The red torch held by yonder monk,
He holds to see me die ;
'T will sink before the morning, sure,
And even so shall I.
And yet a voice is in my ear,
A hope is in my heart ;
And I must have them both from thee
Before I can depart.
Alas ! for festivals that leave
But lassitude behind ;
For feelings deaden'd, gifts misused,
A worn and vacant mind,
That dreads its own thoughts, yet pursues
The vanities of yore ;
Seeks pleasure's shade, though pleasure's self
Has long since been no more.
The weariness of future hours,
The sorrow for the past,
Desire of change, craving for joys,
Cling to us to the last.
I turn me to my days of youth,
My last thoughts fain would be
Of purer feelings, better hopes—
I dare not say of thee.
That beautiful, that blessed time,
'Mid all that has been mine ;
I never knew such happiness,
Nor such a love as thine."

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Her pale lips closed, inaudible
The faint low accents came ;

Yet the knight held his breath to hear—
Her last word was his name.
He flung him by the pallet's side,
He raised her fainting head ;
Her fair hair fell around his arm,
He gazed upon the dead.

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'T is an old church, the Gothic aisles
See but the evening sun ;
All light, except a fading light,
Would seem too glad a one.
For the dark pines close o'er the roof
Which sanctifies the dead,
And on the dim and sculptured walls
Only their names are read ;
And in the midst a marble form
Is laid, as if to rest ;
And meekly are the graceful arms
Folded upon the breast.
An old monk tells her history,
And ends as I do now,
"Oh, never yet could happiness
Dwell with a broken vow !"

THE FORGOTTEN ONE.

BY MISS L. E. LANDON.

I HAVE no early flowers to fling
 O'er thy yet earlier grave ;
 O'er it the morning lark may sing,
 By it the bright rose wave ;
 The very night dew disappears
 Too soon, as if it spared its tears.

Thou art forgotten!—thou, whose feet
 Were listen'd for like song !
 They used to call thy voice so sweet ;—
 It did not haunt them long.
 Thou, with thy fond and fairy mirth—
 How could they bear their lonely hearth !

There is no picture to recall
 Thy glad and open brow ;
 No profiled outline on the wall
 Seems like thy shadow now ;
 They have not even kept to wear
 One ringlet of thy golden hair.

When here we shelter'd last appears
 But just like yesterday ;
 It startles me to think that years
 Since then are past away.
 The old oak tree that was our tent,
 No leaf seems changed, no bough seems rent.

A shower in June—a summer shower,
Drove us beneath the shade ;
A beautiful and greenwood bower—
The spreading branches made.
The raindrops shine upon the bough,
The passing rain—but where art thou ?

But I forget how many showers
Have wash'd this old oak tree,
The winter and the summer hours,
Since I stood here with thee.
And I forget how chance a thought
Thy memory to my heart has brought.

I talk of friends who once have wept,
As if they still should weep ;
I speak of grief that long has slept,
As if it could not sleep ;
I mourn o'er cold forgetfulness,
Have I, myself, forgotten less ?

I've mingled with the young and fair,
Nor thought how there was laid
One fair and young as any there,
In silence and in shade.
How could I see a sweet mouth shine
With smiles, and not remember thine ?

Ah ! it is well we can forget,
Or who could linger on
Beneath a sky whose stars are set,
On earth whose flowers are gone ?
For who could welcome loved ones near,
Thinking of those once far more dear,

Our early friends, those of our youth?
We cannot feel again
The earnest love, the simple truth,
Which made us such friends then.
We grow suspicious, careless, cold ;
We love not as we loved of old.

No more a sweet necessity,
Love must and will expand,
Loved and loving we must be,
With open heart and hand,
Which only ask to trust and share
The deep affections which they bear.

Our love was of that early time ;
And now that it is past
It breathes as of a purer clime
Than where my lot is cast.
My eyes fill with their sweetest tears
In thinking of those early years.

It shock'd me first to see the sun
Shine gladly o'er thy tomb ;
To see the wild flowers o'er it run
In such luxuriant bloom.
Now I feel glad that they should keep
A bright sweet watch above thy sleep.

The heaven whence thy nature came
Only recall'd its own ;
It is Hope that now breathes thy name,
Though borrowing Memory's tone.
I feel this earth could never be
The native home of one like thee.

Farewell! the early dews that fall
Upon thy grass-grown bed
Are like the thoughts that now recall
Thine image from the dead.
A blessing hallows thy dark cell—
I will not stay to weep. Farewell!



NANTES

Painted by J. M. W. Turner R. A. Engraved by J. T. Willmore

THE RETURN.

BY MISS L. E. LANDON.

Nantz is a fair city, but it seemed the very fairest in the world to the traveller, for he had been absent years : he left it poor, but he came back rich ; and the home of his youth was again to be the home of his age.

“ DROP down your oars, the waters trace
 Their own path fast enough for me ;
 Life sometimes asks a breathing space—
 Such I am fain this hour should be.

“ Fair city, I am come once more ;
 Travel and toil are on my brow ;
 With all I thought so great of yore—
 With all I think so little now !

“ Sorrow for friends I left behind—
 Misgiving fears were with me then ;
 And yet I bore a lighter mind
 Than now I see those walls again.

“ Hope is youth's prophet, and foretells
 The future that its wish reveals ;
 The energy that in us dwells
 Then judges but by what it feels.

“ And it feels buoyant spirits, health,
 And confidence, and earnestness ;
 And it ascribes such power to wealth
 Which but to seek is to possess.

“The future was my own : my life
Has past as many men’s have past ;
Adventure, trouble, sorrow, strife,
Yet with success, and home at last.

“But Hope has fled on morning’s wings,
And Memory sits with darken’d eye ;
And I have learn’d life’s dearest things
Are those which never wealth could buy.

“Affection’s circle soon grows less—
The dead, the changed, what blanks are there!
And what avails half life’s success,
No early friends can see and share?

“My heart has still turn’d back through years,
Whose shadow now around me falls ;
I dread to turn to truth the fears,
The hopes in yonder city’s walls.

“How fair a scene, the morning light
And human life’s most cheerful sound ;
The banks so glad, the stream so bright,
I hear my native tongue around.

“Oh! for some voice I used to hear,
The grasp of one familiar hand ;
So long desired, and now so near—
On, boatmen, on, I long to land.”