

Poems of  
Letitia Elizabeth Landon  
(L. E. L.)  
From  
Flowers of Loveliness, 1838

Compiled  
by  
Peter J. Bolton

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In the absence of an available digital edition of this important volume, these poems have been collected, where possible, from contemporary sources. Where such cannot be found, the texts have been transcribed from F. J. Sypher's *Poem's from the Annuals*.

In the original, the opening poem, *To Victoria*, has artist drawn capitals, each entwined with the appropriate plant.



With poetical illustrations by L. E. L.

" To *Victoria*.

**V**iolet, grace of the vernal year !  
Offer'd be thou to this spring-like reign !  
Is not thy tint to that ladye dear,  
Whose banner of blue is the lord of the main ?

**I**vy we twine of changeless green,  
Constant for ever in leaf and bough ;  
So may the heart of our maiden queen  
Be always verdant and fresh as now.

**C**arnation, laced with many a streak  
Of blooming red on its leaflets bright,  
May be a type of her mantling cheek,  
Blent with a brow of pearly white.

**T**ansy, though humble an herb it be,  
Look not upon it with scornful eye ;  
On virtue, that lurks in low degree,  
A glance should fall kind from those on high.

**O**live, thy branch, dove-borne o'er the foam,  
Was a sign for the surges of death to cease ;  
So, from the lips of our dove should come  
The soft but the sure command of peace.

**R**oses of England, ceasing from flight,  
Twine round her brow in whose veins are met  
The princely blood those roses unite  
' In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet.'

**I**ris, to thee the maid of the bow,  
That promises hope, her name has given ;  
Join, then, the wreath at her feet we throw,  
Who beams as a symbol of hope from heaven.

**A**nemone, flower of the wind ! is the last  
We cull,—and our garland is now complete :  
Gentle the current, and soft be the blast,  
Which *Victoria*, the queen of the ocean, shall  
meet !"



*CLEMATIS*

*Artist T. Uwins      Engraver H. Robinson*

**THE CLEMATIS.**

BY L. Z. L.

AROUND the cross the flower is winding,  
Around the old and ruined wall;  
And, with its fragile flowers, binding  
The arch with which it soon must fall.  
And two before that cross are praying,—  
One, with her earnest eyes above;  
The other, as the heart, delaying,  
Bleat heavenly with some earthly love.

St. Marie's shrine is now laid lowly,  
Shivered its windows' rainbow panes;  
Silent its hymn;—that pale flower solely,  
Of all its former pride remains.  
Hushed is the ancient anthem, keeping  
'The vigil of the silent night;  
Gone is the censer's silver sweeping;  
Dim is the sacred taper's light.

True, the rapt soul's divine emotion  
The desert wind to heaven may bear;  
'Tis not the shrine that makes devotion,  
The place that sanctifies the prayer;  
But yet I grieve that, thus departed,  
The faith has left the fallen cell;  
How many, lorn and broken-hearted,  
Were thankful in their shade to dwell!

Not on the young mind, filled with fancies  
And hopes, whose gloss is not yet gone;  
Not on the early world's romances,  
Should the cell close its funeral stone!  
Still is the quiet cloister wanted,  
For those who wear a weary eye;  
Whose life has long been disenchanted,  
Who have one only wish—to die.

How oft the heart of woman, yearning  
For love it dreams but never meets,  
From the world, worn and weary, turning,  
Could shelter in these dim retreats!  
There were that solemn quiet given,  
'That life's harsh, feverish, hours deny!  
There might the last prayer rise to heaven,  
"My God! I pray thee, let me die!"

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## *HYACINTH*

*Artist T. Uwins    Engraver W. H. Egleton*

### THE HYACINTH.

Where is the bee its sweetest music bringing?  
The music living in its busy wings;  
Like the small fountain's low, perpetual singing,  
Counting the quiet hours that noon-tide brings.

It is the Hyacinth, whose sweet bells stooping,  
Bend with the odors heavy in their cells;  
Amid the shadows of their fragrant drooping,  
Memory, that is itself a shadow, dwells.

Ah, do not wreath it 'mid the golden tresses  
That mock the sunshine on that childish head;  
But there the meadow flowers the wind caresses,  
Around a thousand careless blossoms shed:

But not the Hyacinth, whose purple address  
To an old world long since gone by appeals;  
What hath the child's one hour of eager gladness  
To do with all that haunted flower reveals!

Life gave its first deep color to that blossom;  
Life in an evil hour untimely shed;  
Down to the earth inclines its fragrant bosom,  
As heavy with the memory of the dead.

Deep in the twilight depths of those dark flowers  
Are mystic characters amid them furled;  
Are they the language of ancestral hours—  
The records of a younger, lovelier world!

What is the secret written in their numbers,  
Strange as the figures on Egyptian shrines?  
What marvel of the ancient earth now slumbers  
In the obscurity of those dim times?

Little we know the secrets which surround us,  
And much has vanished from our later day;  
Nature with many a mystery has bound us,  
And much of our old love has passed away.

No ancient voices in the dim woods crying  
Reveal the hidden world—no prophet's eye  
Asks the foreseeing stars for their replying,  
And reads the Future in the midnight sky.

Many the lovely things which now are banished  
From our harsh path—the actual and the cold;  
The angel and the spirit each are vanished;  
Where are the beautiful that were of old?

Vain, though so lovely, was this old believing,  
But not thus vain the faith that gave it birth;  
It was the beauty of the far-off—leaving  
The presence of the spiritual on earth.      L. R. L.  
Flowers of Loveliness for 1933.





## *HEATH*

*Artist F. Corbaux      Engraver J. Thomson*

Transcribed from F. J. Sypher

## THE HEATH

Ah, gentle flower! on which the wind  
    Delays, as if it loved delay;  
I ask of thee no wreath to bind,  
    I take no blossom from thy spray:  
I only breathe upon thy bloom,  
    And ask it, for my sake, to bear  
A message on its faint perfume,  
    Afar amid its native air.

Slight are the links that waken thought,  
    And slight are those I trust to now;  
Yet by that soft flower may be brought  
    The memory of a broken vow!  
E'en as thy soft hues fade away,  
    So fadeth love! so doth the heart  
See, in a single hour, decay  
    All that was once its loveliest part.

Ah! fairy blossoms! tell my love,—  
    Or he who once was love of mine,—  
How can the conscious heaven above  
    Upon such utter falsehood shine.  
Tell him, that since he left my fears,  
    To bear with all that absence bears,  
I have but thought of him with tears;  
    I have but breathed of him in prayers.

I loved him, like an eager child,  
    That knows not how it loves, or why!  
My spirit brightened when he smiled;  
    I never gave him cause to sigh,—  
Yet loved with woman's fondness too,  
    That knows it is her life she gives;  
Deep, earnest, passionate, and true,  
    The love that in the spirit lives.

Thou fragile flower! if thou hast brought  
His image, too beloved! to me;  
It is because I link his thought  
With every object that I see!  
I watch the morning's rosy light  
Redden amid the dewy air;  
I watch the silent stars at night;  
But only meet his image there.

Yet he is false! he loves me not!  
He leaves me lone and wretched here;  
Ye Heavens! how can they be forgot,—  
Vows that he called on ye to hear?  
And yet, I never asked a vow;  
Doubts, fears, were utterly unknown;  
The faith that is so worthless now,  
I then believed in by my own.

I read his heart by mine! and deemed  
Its truth was clear, its choice was made;  
The happiness I only dreamed,  
How bitterly has it been paid!  
Breathe, ye soft flowers, my long despair!  
But tell him, now, return is vain;  
My heart has had too much to bear,  
Ever to be his own again.



## *WATER-LILIES*

*Artist Fanny Corboux    Engraver G. Adcock*

*" The Water-Lily.*

Not 'mid the soil and the shadow of earth,  
Have we our home, or take we our birth ;  
Keep ye your valleys that breathe of the rose,  
Warry beneath the myrtle; we seek not of those,

Low in the waters our palace we make,  
Where sweepeth the river, or spreadeth the lake ;  
And the willow, that bends with its green hair above,  
Like a lady in grief, is the tree that we love.

At noon-tide we sleep to the music of shells,  
That we bring from the depths of the sea to our cells ;  
Our cells that are roofed with the crystal, whose light  
Is like the young moon's, on her first summer night.

Strange plants are around us, whose delicate leaves  
No hue from the sunshine or moonlight receives ;  
Yet, rich are the colours, as those that are given  
When the first hours of April are azure in heaven.

There branches the coral, as red as the lip  
Of the earliest rose that the honey-bees sip ;  
And above are emarsh'd a myriad of spars,  
With the hues of the rainbow, the light of the stars.

Our streams are like mirrors, reflecting the ranks  
Of the wild flowers that blossom and bend on our banks ;  
We give back their beauty—the face is as fair  
Of the rose in the wave, as it is on the air.

But the flower that we choose in our tresses to bind,—  
How long are those tresses when flung on the wind!—  
Is the lily, that floats on the shadowy tide,  
With a white cap that treasures its gold-dust inside.

The pearls that lie under the ocean are white,  
Like a bride's sunny weeping, whose tears are half light,  
And pure as the fall of the snow's early showers;  
But they are not more fair nor more pure than these  
flowers.

We float down the wave when the waters are red  
With the blushes that morning around her bath shed;  
And we wring from our long hair the damps of the night,  
The dew-drops that shine on the grass are less bright.

But alone, in the night, with the planets above,  
Or the silvery moon, is the hour that we love;  
Cold, pale is the light, and it suits with our doom,  
For our heart has no warmth, and our cheek has no  
bloom.

The night wind then bears our sad singing along;  
Ah! we unto him who shall listen the song!  
There is love in the music that floats on the air;  
But the mortal who seeks us, seeks death and despair.



*WHITE ROSE & NIGHT CONVULVUS*

*Artist Eliza Sharpe    Engraver G. Adcock*

**THE NIGHT-BLOWING CONVULVUS.**

BY L. E. L.

Not to the sunny hours  
That waken other flowers,  
Dost thou fling forth the odor on thy sighing;  
But in the time of gloom,  
Is yielded thy perfume,  
Like Love, that lives when all beside is dying.

Mournful the chamber where  
Thou dost embalm the air!  
Familiar long with watching and with weeping,  
An anxious circle gaze  
Upon the moonlit rays,  
Amid the tranquil waves of ocean sleeping.

Far on the waters wild;  
Far from his wife and child,  
For his sake, restless on their quiet pillow;  
More restless than his own,  
He who is careless thrown,                    (billow.  
Where sweeps the southern wind, where swells the

Long have they watched and wept,  
And bitter reckoning kept  
Of days, alas! that seem to have no ending;  
The hourly prayer unwon,  
They see the setting sun  
Upon the same unbroken sea descending.

To every passing cloud  
A fancy is allowed;  
It is the fair ship, through the water springing!  
Ah, no! not yet the gale  
Expands her homeward sail!  
Him whom they have so long expected bringing.



He would not know his child!  
It was an infant smiled,  
Unconscious of his sorrowful caressing;  
From the red lip was heard  
No small familiar word;  
Now, the fair boy can ask his father's blessing.

The mother was no more  
The smile and blush she wore  
In the glad days when they were last together;  
Her brow is wan with fears;  
Her eyes are dim with tears;  
Her cheek has changed with every change of weather.

Alas! her love has grown  
Too anxious, and too prone  
To tremble with its passionate emotion!  
Upon her dreams at night,  
Come visions of affright—  
All the tumultuous perils of the ocean.

When these dark thoughts prevail,  
What hope can then avail,  
But that which riseth amid prayer to heaven?  
Upon the gloomy hour,  
Like thy soft breath, sweet flower,  
Whose odors are alone to midnight given,



## *POPPY*

*Artist Miss Corbaux    Engraver T. A. Dean*

*" The Poppy.*

Pale are her enchanted slumbers ;  
Pale is she with many dreams :  
That white brow the turban cumber :  
Wan, yet feverish she seems.  
Not the fountain's silvery flowing  
Lulls that haunted sleep ;  
Round her are wild visions growing,  
Such as wake and weep.

Drugg'd is that Impassioned sleeping,  
Sleep that is like life ;  
By the unquiet pillow keeping  
Hope, and fear, and strife.  
Fast the fatal flower has bound her  
In its heavy spell ;  
Strange wild phantasms surround her,  
But she knows them well.

First, there comes an hour Elysian,  
Would it might remain !  
Bringing back Love's early vision,  
But without its pain.  
Soft the myrtles of the wild wood,  
Round her path-way part ;  
Happy, like a guileless childhood,  
With a woman's heart.

But a deeper shadow closes  
On those lovely hours,  
And the opening sky discloses  
Old ancestral towers :  
There they stand—white, stately, solemn ;  
While she looks, they fall ;  
Round her lies the broken column,  
And the ruined wall.

Then, amid a forest lonely  
Does she seem to stray;  
One huge serpent, and one only,  
Seems to mark her way.  
Then begins her hour of terror;  
Strange shapes know their time—  
Struggling with some nameless error,  
With some unknown crime.  
Phantoms crowd around, repeating  
Words that are of death;  
Loud her startled heart is beating,  
Louder than her breath.  
But a rosy lip has kissed her,  
With that kiss she wakes;  
Pale she gazes on the sister  
Who her slumber breaks.  
Mighty must have been the sorrow,  
Passionate the grief,  
Which can thus a solace borrow,  
From that haunted leaf.  
Scarcely does the broken-hearted  
Draw a living breath;  
Better it were quite departed,  
Than this life in death."



*CANTERBURY BELL*

*Artist Louisa Seyffarth    Engraver H. Robinson*

[THE CANTERBURY BELL,

" I SEE it grow beneath my hand,  
I see it day by day,  
I measure on its purple wand  
How long he is away.

" The seed was sleeping in the earth,  
The snow was on the ground,  
And Christmas gathered in its mirth  
The friends now scattered round.

" It was the time of thy farewell,  
Cold, wintry, dead—and now  
The violets are in the dell,  
The May upon the bough.

" We sowed its seed when winds were chill,  
The plant now grown so fair ;  
We placed it on the window-sill,  
To catch the sun and air !

" You said you would return again  
Before it was in bloom—  
Alas ! it sheds its light in vain  
Around our altered room.

" My heart is sick with hope defetred,  
Days, weeks pass slowly o'er—  
Alas ! one voice is still unheard,  
One step returns no more !

- " I'm weary of these watching hours,  
 That fret my life away ;  
 I do not love my favourite flowers ;  
 I loathe the sunny day.
- " Is not the heart a sacred thing ?  
 Is it not love that gives  
 The shadow of an angel's wing,  
 Where'er its presence lives ?
- " I gave my heart, I thought, for thine—  
 Mine was the gift alone ;  
 Why have the false no outward sign  
 By which they may be known ?
- " Fair flower, that I have wept to see  
 Day after day arise ;  
 I little thought that thou wouldst be  
 Welcomed with tearful eyes !
- " Why should there be divided truth ?  
 Ah ! why should one love on ?  
 I'm weary—wary of my youth,  
 Whose happiness is gone !
- " A light step makes her start the while ;  
 She sees her sister stand  
 Beside the gate, with eager smile,  
 A letter in her hand.
- " Poor girl ! she might have spared the blush  
 That with the letter came ;  
 She took the scroll—pale grew the flush—  
 It did not bear his name !"



*PANSEY*

*Artist K. Meadows    Engraver W. H. Mote*



**Flowers.....BY L. E. L.**

**THE PANSY.\***

**'A little purple flower,  
And maidens call it Love in Idleness.'** *Shakespeare.*

**His name is in the haunted flower,  
Linked with those dreams that come  
In Inspiration's lovely hour,  
Whose memory is Fame.  
He saw that flower when he was young,  
Alike in life and heart,  
And round it those sweet fancies flung  
That never more depart.**

**A thousand blossoms bloom and die  
Upon their mother Earth,  
Unnoticed in their transient sigh,  
Forgotten in their birth;  
But when the Poet's heart has cast  
Its own deep beauty there,  
The shadow of the charmed Past  
Makes every leaf more fair.**

The Poet and the Flower repay  
What each the other yields;  
He loiters on his twilight way  
Amid the summer fields,  
Delighting in the lovely things  
That round his pathway gleam,  
While over them his spirit flings  
A music and a dream.

He of the Avon's gentle wave  
Was conscious of his power;  
Was he not happy when he gave  
His fancy to that flower,  
And left a vision of delight  
Amid its folded leaves?—  
A vision delicate and bright,  
Which every heart receives.

His lot was what the Poet's lot  
Has ever been on earth;  
Yet toil and trouble were forgot  
In one enchanted birth.  
That little purple flower imparts  
A pleasure deep and true;  
Then he bequeaths to other hearts  
The joy that first he knew.

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\* Illustrating a fanciful picture of a youthful poet.



## *MARVEL OF PERU*

*Artist K. Meadows    Engraved by J. Cochran*

### THE MARVEL OF PERU.

A RADIANT beauty of the lovely South,  
As languid as her valley's scented gale;  
The rose hath only place on that sweet mouth—  
A rose it is, but the soft cheek is pale.

Her large, dark eyes are like a summer night,  
Before the moon's soft crescent shines above;  
Filled with a tender, yet a shadowy light,  
Whose silence is the eloquence of Love.

She dwelleth like a lone and fairy flower,  
That hath its home in some enchanted soil;  
What knoweth she of life's more troubled hour—  
Our northern lot of hurry, care and toil?

Half slave, half idol, she is kept apart;  
Her palace-prison is a veiled shrine;  
Enough for her the sweet world of the heart;  
Ah! little hath the ladye to resign!

Listless she dreams the solitary noon away,  
The painted fan just stirs her raven hair;  
The silken curtains yield a shadowy day,  
That makes the pale, fair beauty seem more fair.

Faint are the colors in that darkened room;  
When the wind lifts the curtain's crimson fold,  
Amid a rich obscurity of gloom  
Are seen the rainbow gems, the carved gold.  
And on a table near, a little flower  
Droops in a vase as white as sculptured snow;  
It was her favorite in her childhood's bower,  
The Marvni of Peru;—she loves it now.  
The perfumed atmosphere around is filled  
With many odors—summer's scented spoil:  
The fragrant waters from sweet woods distilled,  
Spices, and cinnamon, and precious oil.  
Oh, life of pleasant languor and repose!  
Like some frail plant that languishes at noon;  
The dark-eyed beauty need not envy those  
To whom such charmed lot were earth's best boon.  
What is the world we live in but a strife  
Of vanity and envy, hate and fear?  
That which we so miscall our social life  
Is one great error—sullen, vast and drear.  
A happier lot is Woman's thus confined  
To one deep love, and one sweet solitude;  
Oh! what availeth to awake the mind,  
Whose higher struggles are so soon subdued?



*THE LAUREL*

*Artist F. Corboux Engraver B. Holl*

From the *Flowers of Loveliness* for 1838.

THE LAUREL. (\*)

'Fling down the laurel from her golden hair:  
A woman's brow!—what doth the laurel there!'

NOR to the silent bitterness of tears  
Do I commit, oh false one! thy requiting;  
My measured moments shall be paid by years  
Of long avenging on thy faithless slighting.

I call upon the boon that nature gave,  
Ere my young spirit knew its own possessing;  
And, from the fire that has consumed me, crave  
The cold, stern power that knows its own redressing.

Love was my element: e'en as the bird  
Knows the soft air that swells around its pinion,  
Sweet thoughts and eager ones my spirit stirred,  
Whose only influence was the heart's dominion.

They were but shadows of a deeper power,  
For life is ominous, itself revealing  
By the faint likeness of the coming hour,  
Felt ere it vivify to actual feeling.

But from that fated hour is no return;  
Life has grown actual—we have done with dreaming;  
It is a bitter truth at last to learn  
That all we once believed was only seeming.

Thou who hast taught me this! upon thy head  
Be all the evils thou hast round thee scattered;  
Through thee the light that led me on is dead—  
My wreath is in the dust—my lute is shattered.

I could forgive each miserable night  
When I have waked, for that I dreaded sleeping;  
I knew that I should dream—my fevered sight  
Would bring the image I afar was keeping.

Alas, the weary hours! when I have asked  
The faint cold stars, amid the darkness shining,  
Why is mortality so overtasked?—  
Why am I grown familiar with repining?—

Then comes the weary day, that would not bring  
Impatient wishes that it were to-morrow;  
While every new and every usual thing  
Seemed but to irritate the hidden sorrow.

And this I owe to thee, to whom I brought  
A love that was half fondness, half devotion;  
Alas, the glorious triumphs of high thought  
Are now subdued by passionate emotion.

Upon my silent lute there is no song;  
I sit and grieve above my power departed;  
To others let the laurel-wreath belong;  
I only know that I am broken-hearted.

Enough yet lingers of the broken spell  
To show that once it was a thing enchanted;  
I leave my spirit to the low sweet shell  
By whose far music shall thy soul be haunted.

A thousand softs of mine are on the air,  
And they shall breathe my memory, and mine only,  
Startling thy soul with hopes no longer fair,  
And love that will but wake to leave thee lonely.

Immortal is the gift that I inherit—  
Eternal is the loveliness of verse;  
My heart thou may'st destroy, but not my spirit,  
And that shall linger round thee like a curse.

Farewell the lute that I no more shall waken!  
Its music will be marcade I after me;  
Farewell the laurel that I have forsaken!  
And, last, farewell, oh my false love, to thee! L.E.L.

[\* Illustration—a poetess, deserted by her lover, plucking the laurel from her hair.]

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## *IRIS*

*Artist Thos. Uwins      Engraver Jas. Thomson*

Transcribed from F. J. Sypher

## THE IRIS

It boots not keeping back the scroll,  
I know thy tender words,  
("My life, my idol, and my soul!")  
Its scented page affords.  
There—give it me, that I may fling  
Its fragments on the wind,  
A faithless and a worthless thing  
For such a fate designed.

What tho' the Iris in my room  
Bids Hope's sweet promise live,  
I take no lesson from its bloom,  
I have no hope to give.  
Soon, with the summer sun's control,  
Those azure leaves decay;  
And yet the words on yonder scroll  
Are more short-lived than they.

I care not for a love that springs  
Where other fancies dwell,  
The rainbow's hue upon its wings,  
The rainbow's date as well;  
By Vanity and Folly nursed:  
Of happiness it dies:  
It springeth from a fancy first,  
And with a fancy flies.

Ay, let them prettily complain,  
With graceful sorrow strive;  
They should be glad of my disdain,  
It keeps their love alive.  
I gave the ribbon from my hair,  
The blossom from my hand,  
But I have not a thought to spare  
For any of their band.

The love that haunts my midnight hour,  
A dream—and yet, how true!  
Belongs to a diviner power,  
Than vanity e'er knew:  
It giveth, like the pale pure star,  
A loveliness to night,  
And winneth from the world afar,  
Its own eternal light.

It bringeth to our earth again  
The heavens it dwells among:—  
Not to the worldly and the vain  
Can such a love belong:  
High, holy as the heaven above,  
Yet sharing life's worst part,  
Until I meet with such a love  
I cannot give my heart.



*MIGNETTE*

*Artist K. Meadows      Engraver T. W. Knight*

Transcribed from F. J. Sypher

## MIGNONETTE

Thou fairy flower! how lovely  
Thy blossoms seem to be!  
Thou art the summer's darling,  
And such thou art to me:  
Thou bringest back old fancies,  
And I am like a child;  
Alas, alas! my childhood!  
Where art thou now exiled?

Art thou amid these blossoms,  
Lull'd with their breathings sweet;  
Too much of unmarked beauty  
Lies hidden at our feet:  
We hurry on, too careless  
Of many lovely things;  
'Tis accident that often  
The dearest pleasure brings.

Sweet flowers! are ye from childhood,  
Or fairy land, or both?  
So fresh are still the fancies  
That linger round your growth.  
With what an eager fondness  
I leant your leaves above!  
Oh! in our life's beginning,  
The heart is full of love!

We have a world within us,  
Unwasted and unchilled;  
And we long to share the gladness,  
With which ourselves are filled:  
'Tis life's most bitter lesson,  
That we must leave behind  
Each warm and generous impulse,  
That lighted once the mind.

We grow too cold and careless,  
As after years come on;  
The fanciful is vanished,  
The beautiful is gone.  
Where are the old affections,  
That once appeared so true?  
And if we could, we cannot,  
Their once sweet life renew.

It is a mournful memory,  
The memory of the past;  
Each year a deeper darkness  
Is on our pathway cast.  
Ah! ye darling flowers of summer!  
Would ye could bid depart  
The shadow on my spirit,  
The coldness at my heart.