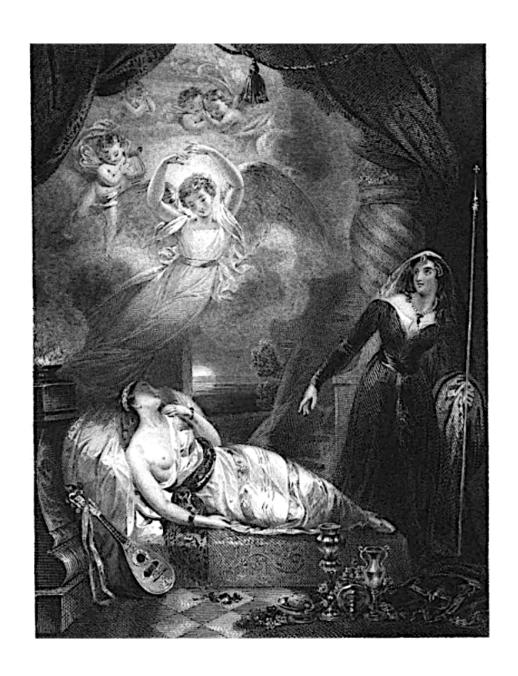
A Poem of Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L. E. L.) im Forget Me Not, 1837

committed by Peter J. Bolton

The Sleeping Beauty



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Painted by J. Wood Engraved by F. Bacon

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

BY L. E. L.

Sleep with honey-dews hath bound her,
Sleep unwaked by day;
Through the forest growing round her
None may take their way,
For it is a path forbidden
By the words of power;
There the beauty must be hidden
Till the appointed hour;
Till the young deliverer cometh,
And the maiden life resumeth.

Purple fruit and golden chalice
Lie upon the floor;
For, in that enchanted palace,
All is as before.
There still is the censer burning,
With its perfumed flame;
Years on many years returning,
See it still the same;
It will burn till light re-living
In those closed eyes quench its giving.

There her ivory lute, too, slumbers On the haunted ground, Silent are its once sweet numbers,
Like all things around;
On her cheek the rose is breathing
With its softest red;
And the auburn hair is wreathing
Round the graceful head:
Changeth not that rosy shade,
Stirreth not that auburn braid.

Hath the wild west wind then only
Leave to come and weep?
Is the lovely one left lonely
To her charmed sleep?
No, when you full moon has risen
O'er the azure lake,
Cometh one to that sweet prison
For the sleeper's sake;
On that only moonlit hour
Hath the gentle fairy power.

Then she calls fair spirits nigh her,
Each one with a dream,
So with sweet thoughts to supply her,
And those shadows seem
Real as life, but that each vision
Hath a lovelier ray,
More etherial and elysian
Than earth's common day.
Human thoughts and feelings keep
Life in that enchanted sleep.

Soon o'er that dark pine and laurel
Will a youth prevail:
Is there not a gentle moral
In that fairy tale?
Like that maiden's sleep unwaking,
Slumbereth woman's heart,
Till Love comes, that slumber breaking
For life's loveliest part.
Ah, the heart which it must waken
Soon will mourn its rest forsaken!