

A Poem of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
The Amulet, 1830

compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

The Unknown Poet's Grave
Portrait—The Minstrel of Chamouni (Pickersgill)

THE UNKNOWN POET'S GRAVE.

BY L. E. L.

" In the divine land which he had so yearned to tread—in the purple air in which poesy and inspiration mingled with the common breath and atmosphere of life—his restless and unworldly spirit sighed itself away: and the heart which silence and concealment had been long breaking broke at last."

THE DISOWNED.

THERE is no memory of his fate,
No record of his name ;
A few wild songs are left behind—
But what are they to fame ?
No one will gaze upon the scene,
Remembering—but there he has been.

Not his the memory that makes
A shrine of every place,
Wherever step or song of his
Had left their deathless trace ;
None say " 'twas here his burning line
Was dreamed—and hence is all divine."

Yet here thy step has often been,
And here thy songs were sung ;
Here were thy beating heart and lute
Chord after chord unstrung ;
Thy dying breath was on this air—
It hath not left its music there.

No :—nameless is the lowly spot
Where that young poet sleeps ;
No glory lights its funeral lamp,
No pity on it weeps ;
There weeds may grow, or flowers may bloom,
For his is a forgotten tomb.

And yet how often those dark pines,
Once heard thy twilight song ;
'Twas written on those autumn leaves
The wild winds bear along.
Of all who gaze on Tivoli,
Who is there that remembers thee ?

That dark-eyed lady, she who taught
Thy most impassioned tone ;
The spirit of thy poetry—
Her fate has been thine own :
A weary brow, a faded cheek,
A heart that only beat to break.

Thy friends, thou wert too delicate.
For many to be thine ;
And like words written on the sands
Are those on Friendship's shrine :
A few set words, a few vain tears,
And so is clos'd the faith of years.

The world it had no part in thee ;
Too sensitive to bear
Unkindness or repulse ; too true
The usual mask to wear :
Alas ! the gold too much refined,
Is not for common use designed.

Thy dreams of fame were vague and void,
The mystery of a star,
Whose glory lifted us from earth,
The beautiful, the far ;
And yet these dreams of fame to thee
Were dearer than reality.

Alas ! e'en these have been in vain,
The prize has not been won ;
Thy lute is a forgotten lute,—
Thy name, a nameless one :
The wild wind in the pine tree bough,
Is all the requiem for thee now.

And I, who, in vain sympathy,
 These mournful words have said,
Not mine the hand that can bestow
 The laurel on the dead :
I only know thy nameless fate
To me seems life's most desolate.

Methinks it is not much to die—
 To die, and leave behind
A spirit in the hearts of men
 A voice amid our kind ;
When fame and death, in unison,
Have giv'n thousand lives for one.

Our thoughts, we live again in them,
 Our nature's noblest part ;
Our life in many a memory,
 Our home in many a heart :
When not a lip that breathes our strain,
But calls us into life again.

No, give me some green laurel leaves
 To float down memory's wave ;
One tone remain of my wild songs,
 To sanctify my grave ;
And then but little should I care
How soon within that grave I were.

Painting based on a portrait of Letitia Landon



THE MINSTREL OF CHAMOUNI

Painted by H. W. Pickersgill R. A. Engraved by John H. Robinson