

From  
The Zenana  
and Minor Poems

A Memoir of L. E. L.

by  
Emma Roberts

MEMOIR OF

L. E. L.

FEW there are who could hear the sad tidings of the death of that highly gifted creature, whose exhaustless verse seemed to fill the atmosphere with song, without feelings of deep and painful emotion ; but to her private and personal friends, who were many and true-hearted, the blow was appalling. To descant upon the genius of L. E. L.—to paint the rare and brilliant qualities of a mind so richly stored with all that could dazzle and delight—would require a much more able pen : and there are many amongst the circle of her friends and admirers who will doubtless fulfil an office to which I am scarcely adequate. Though unwilling to decline a duty, which might have been less faithfully exercised by those who were not equally well acquainted with all the circumstances of L. E. L.'s life, the task now devolving upon me is one of the most painful nature,

## MEMOIR OF L.E.L.

not only in consequence of the affliction in which the late melancholy event has plunged me, but from the mournful conviction that I cannot do justice to the friend that I have lost. I cannot depict her to the world as she existed, in all her wit, gaiety, and brightness; or show, as they merit to be shown, those endearing qualities of the heart, that finely constituted mind, which rendered her so precious to all, who, like myself, had known her intimately from the first period of her girlhood. Unpretending, however, and imperfect as the present sketch will be found, as the record of one who loved its lamented subject with the fondest affection, it can scarcely fail to be acceptable to that large portion of the community with whom her works are so deservedly popular.

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON, the descendant of a family of ancient date, and of the highest respectability, was the niece of the late Very Rev. Dr. Landon, Dean of Exeter, for many years Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, whose death was announced nearly about the same day on which intelligence was brought of her own decease. While she was yet an infant, the parents of L. E. L. removed from the house at Chelsea, in which she was born, to a country residence,

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

Trevor Park, and here were spent the days of her early childhood, amid scenes which she has vividly depicted in various portions of her later works.

The affection with which L. E. L. clung to the memory of these old haunts, her regret at the changes which had come over them, obliterating all traces of the home endeared to her by a thousand recollections, formed some of the numerous proofs of the enduring nature of her attachments. There was to her more of poetry in London, and in large cities generally, than is usually admitted by highly imaginative persons; but notwithstanding her preference of the town, no one could luxuriate with truer enjoyment in wild and solitary places, or more thoroughly appreciate the beauties of nature. It is scarcely possible to say at what period of her life L. E. L. began to write, for she composed from her infancy. The old ballads and romances, all the snatches of song, and traditionary lore, the literary recreations of the nursery, stored her mind with materials, which were promptly employed in the formation of numerous fanciful structures; and long before her tiny fingers could shape the letters of the words, she had composed volumes of poetry. To be shut up in a dark room for any childish misdemea-

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

nour, was to her no punishment, for she speedily peopled it with glorious forms, and transported herself to some paradise of her own. It may, indeed, be said, that Kilmeny, the charming creation of the Ettrick shepherd's brightest fancy, was not more completely domesticated in Fairy-land, than the infant genius who fled to it in imagination from all her little troubles.

L. E. L. at this time read with avidity every thing that came in her way, giving the preference, of course, to poetry and romance, and making romances out of graver works, travels especially, which she filled up with splendid visions, every object being viewed with a poet's eye. She gathered in this manner immense stores of information; and the germs of more abstruse and learned studies, which as she grew older engaged her attention, were acquired at an age usually exclusively directed to the perusal of gilt picture books. A brother, nearly her own age, shared the sports and studies of Trevor Park; and never was affection more warm, deep, and devoted than that which subsisted between these strongly attached relatives. Amid many others, the beautiful poem which she addressed to her brother, and which will be found in the present col-

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

lection, written originally to illustrate a portrait of Captain Cook, affords a charming and touching transcript of her feelings, both at this early period, and in after years.

In conversation with her familiar friends, L. E. L. loved to dwell upon scenes which awakened her first burst of song; and I remember, two or three years ago, when about to pay a visit to some friends in the neighbourhood of East Barnet, she charged me to make a pilgrimage to the spot which was once Trevor Park, and not fail to think of her as I stood among the gravestones of the village churchyard. While still a mere child, L. E. L. began to publish, and her poetry immediately attracted attention. Living completely in a world of her own, constructed from materials found in those agreeable fictions which had been her study and her solace; she rushed fearlessly into print, not dreaming for a moment, that verses which were poured forth like the waters from a fountain, gushing, as she has beautifully expressed it, of their own sweet will, could ever provoke stern or harsh criticism. Neither was she at all prepared for the mistaken idea produced by the plaintive nature of her song. Love, such as she had found it in the old chivalric time, was her chosen

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

theme, and in depicting its effect upon the female heart, she maintained a melancholy creed, giving to the greater number of her effusions a pensive cast of thought, and making all her stories of true love end unhappily. It was perhaps the natural gaiety of her disposition, which occasioned her to indulge in the complaints and sorrows of her somewhat mournful song, when her spirits were exhausted by the lively flow of conversation, and wanted repose. It need scarcely be said, since the fact is so well established, that it is not the writers of the gayest and most sprightly works, who are always blessed with the most cheerful temperaments; comic effusions proving often the relief of minds oppressed with many cares; while the mirthful and the happy as frequently abandon themselves to what may be truly denominated the luxury of wo. While dwelling with apparently earnest tenderness upon the sorrows of love, its disappointments and treacheries, L. E. L. identified herself with the beings of her fancy, lamenting, frequently in the first person, over miseries which she had never felt, and to which she was by no means likely to be subjected, since both then and subsequently, she manifested an almost extraordinary want of susceptibility, upon all occasions when attempts were made upon her heart.

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

The wonderful precocity of her intellect rendered it scarcely possible for those readers, beyond the then narrow circle of her acquaintance, to imagine that her poems were the production of a girl who had not yet left off her pinafores, and whose only notion of a lover was embodied in a knight wearing the brightest armour and the whitest of plumes. Such, however, was the fact, and this beau ideal preserved her from the tender passion for many a long year; none of her admirers, and they were numerous, reaching the high standard erected in her own imagination. While generally supposed to be the pining victim of unrequited love, her heart remained untouched, its overflowing tenderness being lavished upon the faithless heroes of her own creation.

At this, as well as at every other period of her life, previous to her quitting England, L. E. L. was surrounded by a small circle of female friends, living under the same roof with her, and to whom all her thoughts and feelings were well known. Being perfectly aware of her entire freedom from any affair of the heart, these friends were sometimes amused, and sometimes provoked, by the various reports which gained universal credit. At this era of her existence, the occasional



## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

gloom which was wont to tinge her views of life, appearing only in the melancholy tone of her song, L. E. L. a bright, blithe being, affectionate and glad, taking pleasure in all that pleased her associates, delighted them by her talents, and attached them by her amiability. The loss of her father while she was still a very young girl, proved her earliest domestic affliction ; and heavily it fell upon her. Mr. Landon had been a kind and most indulgent parent, and his daughter mourned his loss long and deeply. The affectionate tribute which she paid to his memory, in some very touching verses published in her poem of the Troubadour, may be cited as a faithful record of her filial piety towards one whose death was a severe misfortune.

L. E. L. from this period devoted herself to a life of literature ; finding, under every circumstance, so much delight in the outpouring of her thoughts and feelings, as fully to compensate for the trials, great as they are, which every author, however distinguished and successful, must encounter. The necessity of fulfilling engagements to the day—of writing against time, often under the infliction of indisposition or mental anxiety, form some of the numerous drawbacks which those who cannot command literary leisure experience ;

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

with which she was frequently compelled to combat, though borne with cheerfulness, could not fail to produce occasional depression of spirits, and to give to her first views of the realities of life, somewhat of a melancholy character.

L. E. L. totally destitute of what is called worldly wisdom, unconscious of a thought or feeling that needed disguise, and unapprehensive of any misinterpretation of her words or actions, was not prepared for the strictures which in some instances were certainly provoked by envy at her success. She felt all that was unkind very keenly, but, conscious that it was not merited, the effect was transient, or left no lasting impression upon her mind. There was, however, a degree of perhaps constitutional irritability about L. E. L.'s disposition, which though it never injured a temper remarkable for its sweetness, was manifested in various ways: when highly excited, sometimes from no other cause than the workings of her own imagination, she suffered from a sensation of atmospheric oppression, which, notwithstanding any inclemency of the weather, could only be relieved by rapid motion in the open air. She would in this manner pace for hours in the garden, or, feeling that too narrow, seek a wider space. At other

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

times, when the fit of inspiration, for such it might be deemed, came on, she would surprise her companions with some sudden burst of startling eloquence, filled perhaps with bitter fancies, and bearing little or no analogy to the conversation which had preceded it. Her mind always active, seeking to disburden itself in a flow of words which, when she had no other auditors, were uttered to the winds.

Though enduring illness with fortitude, the fine susceptibility of her nervous system rendered her very impatient under pain; she seemed to suffer more than others from spasms or cramps, or any transient attack of the kind, to which we are all more or less subject, and has alarmed her companions frequently by a sudden paroxysm, for which the cause subsequently alleged seemed quite inadequate. These are trifling circumstances to record; but the tragical nature of her death renders every point, however minute, which tends to throw light upon her character, of great importance: judging from my own acquaintance with her, I should say, that she was exactly the person who would fly to the most desperate remedy for relief from pain, but unless in some moment of actual delirium, brought on by excessive bodily anguish, she never wilfully would

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

have destroyed herself. I feel that I have some right to offer this opinion, since I have stood at her side when her mental sufferings have been so intense, her afflictions of so trying a nature, numerous causes combining at once to overpower her with a weight almost too heavy to bear, that, could distress of mind have driven her to so fatal an act, I cannot but think that it would have been committed long ago. These trials, however, refer to a later period of life.

No one could better bear to be told of faults ; whether connected with her writings, or merely personal, she either readily admitted, or playfully defended them, and nothing could exceed the amiable manner in which she accommodated herself to the ways of those with whom she resided. The great delight of her life seemed to be that of obliging others, anticipating the wants and wishes of her friends in the kindest and most considerate manner, and continually lavishing gifts upon them, which were rich or trifling, according to her means, and always rendered valuable by some pleasing trait of character connected with the occasion. While thus generous, she was also scrupulously just in all her pecuniary dealings, and simple in her own habits and tastes ; nothing was spent in self-indulgence.

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

A record of L. E. L.'s personal expenses would have astonished many who were acquainted with the amount of the sums which she earned, and knew how often she overtasked herself in their acquirement. A better acquaintance with habits of business would probably have saved her from the sad necessity which was so frequently injurious to her health; but had her life been spared, she would have been amply repaid for the exertions and the sacrifices made so cheerfully for those she loved.

As a companion and friend, under every mood and fancy, L. E. L. was most interesting, most delightful: a year, one of the happiest of my life, spent under the same roof with her, cemented a friendship formed long before, and which never suffered deviation or diminution. It may indeed be said, to L. E. L.'s honour, that she retained, to the last moment of existence all the friends thus domesticated with her, those who knew her most intimately being the most fondly attached. No one ever possessed a stronger phalanx of high-minded and devoted associates, who, however differing in rank, pursuits, and, it may be added, tastes, all united in doing justice to her merits! her whole life, as it has been previously stated, being spent in

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

a domestic circle of her own sex, who were cognizant of all her actions, and between whom no cloud ever arose. With the exception of an excursion to Paris, made with a lady of the highest rank and influence, her time was passed either with her relatives in the country, or under the roof of friends in London, by whom she will long be remembered with feelings of love and regret.

L. E. L. secluded herself much less from those with whom she lived in domestic intercourse, than could have been expected from the multiplicity of her literary undertakings, and the multifarious nature of her studies. She not only read, but thoroughly understood, and entered into the merits of every book that came out; while it is merely necessary to refer to her printed works, to calculate the amount of information which she had gathered from preceding authors. The history and literature of all ages and all countries were familiar to her; nor did she acquire any portion of her knowledge in a superficial manner; the extent of her learning, and the depth of her research, manifesting themselves in publications which do not bear her name; her claim to them being only known to friends, who, like myself, had access to her desk, and with whom she knew the secret might be safely trusted. Witty, fanciful,

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

acute, and discriminating, how greatly was the pleasure of reading enhanced, when she perused the same page; never was there a more kind or generous critic, one who so instantaneously detected the beauties of a work, and so thoroughly enjoyed them. The warm and graceful homage which she paid to talent of every kind, the delight which she took in the literary triumphs of her contemporaries, and the encouragement which she gave to those who required it, were as unaffected as they were amiable. She had no exclusive tastes, every department of literature affording gratification to a mind which delighted as much in the flowers beneath her feet, as in the stars that made the heaven above her glorious.

L. E. L. possessed a keen relish for the ridiculous, and frequently amused herself by putting grave things in a ludicrous point of view; but there was nothing ill-natured or unkind in her satire, all her errors in that way being those of thoughtlessness. It would be difficult to name her favourite authors, there were so many to which she recurred with never-ceasing delight. Few things pleased her better than to get hold of some old by-gone work, which had not been part or parcel of her juvenile studies. Well do I remember our sending

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

to Hookham's for a box of long-neglected novels, and the eagerness with which she perused the antiquated volumes, though I can only recollect the title of one, and the impression which it made upon her—Sydney Biddulph.

All works of art afforded L. E. L. great enjoyment; though not using the pencil herself, she saw every thing with a painter's eye, making pictures in her mind, and being struck, even in the crowded streets, with any fine effect of light or shade falling upon picturesque architecture. She was fond, in her poems, of suggesting subjects for the sister art, and many noble works might be executed from the glowing delineations of her ever-vivid pen. Music she did not profess to like, but no one more thoroughly enjoyed that which appealed to the mind rather than the ear. I have been with her to the Opera before she had acquired a taste for Italian music, and when we had some difficulty in persuading her to accompany us; and though at first inattentive, have seen her quit her seat, chosen in a remote corner, and kneel down in the front of the box, with eyes dilating and bosom heaving, as she gave her whole soul to Pasta. Those, too, who have observed how delightedly she listened to Mr. Lover's songs, and how anxiously she expressed her wish that he would give popularity



## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

to the neglected airs which soothed her childhood, could not doubt that her fine perceptions extended to music, as well as to other emanations of genius. Much of L. E. L.'s childish miseries resulted from the too common absurdity of forcing every young lady to play upon the piano ; but though she emancipated herself as speedily as possible from a species of drudgery which she found very irksome, she took some pains, at a subsequent period of her life, to learn a few sets of quadrilles, in order that she might be qualified to perform the part of musician while her friends were dancing ; and of such traits of kindness was her whole life made up.

The conversation of L. E. L. was as brilliant as her writings, shining upon all occasions which called it forth, not merely in society where she was the idol, but as the solitary companion of the rural walk, or fire-side, always ready to amuse and be amused, and avenging any little quarrel with the world by the utterance of some misanthropic sentiment, the only ebullition of temper she was ever known to indulge. L. E. L. though she could not be unconscious of her own powers, was the least exacting person imaginable, she had no ambitious feelings to gratify, no desire to appear at the head of a coterie, or to parade herself in her literary

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

character. She was delighted and gratified when sought out by men or women of genius, but she never put herself forward in any way to court applause. Neither did she set more than their proper value upon the distinctions of rank and wealth, or avail herself of the numerous advances made by parties moving in the highest circles. Many of her intimate friends belonged to the most distinguished class of society, but these were endeared to her by circumstances independent of their position and influence, and would also have been her friends had they moved in a less exalted sphere. She never cared for mere acquaintance, those who approached her were either all, or nothing ; and her indifference in this respect wounded the self-love of many who were desirous to add so great an attraction to their parties. Nothing could be more unpremeditated than the brilliant displays which L. E. L. so frequently made of her conversational powers, which indeed were upon many occasions wasted upon people very incapable of appreciating them, being called forth by some sudden impulse of her own mind. When in company with persons of congenial tastes and feelings, she never failed ; but in large assemblies, in which expectation had been highly raised, a considerable degree

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

of disappointment has been experienced, either by her remaining silent, or, in consequence of some whim, exhibiting herself in a character perfectly foreign to her own, expressing sentiments, and maintaining opinions, which gave those who saw nothing beyond the surface, an idea that she must in reality be a very un-intellectual person.

Though exceedingly indifferent concerning all that related to the mere vanities of worldly intercourse, and not caring to number lords and ladies amongst her acquaintance, for the sake of their titles alone; L. E. L. was by no means insensible to the more flattering testimonies of the esteem in which she was held by those whose good opinion conferred honour. During her canvass for the election of her brother, the Rev. Whittington Landon, to the Secretaryship of the Literary Fund, the gratifying letters which she received from noblemen and gentlemen, distinguished alike for talent, character, and station, were duly appreciated by one, who was herself always so ready to acknowledge, and pay homage to merit of every kind. It is said, and there is no reason to doubt the statement, that upon the occasion of this election, a cabinet council was broken up some minutes before the usual time, for the

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

purpose of enabling several of the ministers to go down, in person, to vote for Mr. Landon, who, though in every respect most eligible to the office, certainly owed his appointment to the high estimation in which his sister was universally held. Upon the accession of the Queen, many of Miss Landon's friends suggested the propriety of her being presented at court, strongly advising her, at the same time, to employ the interest which she so evidently possessed, in an endeavour to obtain a pension from a government liberal in its patronage of literary talent. But while straining every nerve to procure the advancement in life of one dear to her, she was careless concerning her own; and could not be persuaded to take a step which had only personal advantage for its object. The opportunity was the more favourable, in consequence of the general admiration accorded at the time, to the beautiful verses addressed to the Princess Victoria upon her coming of age, published as a "Birth-day Tribute," which, it is known, had reached the eye of the Queen.

L. E. L. could not be, strictly speaking, called handsome; her eyes being the only good feature in a countenance, which was, however, so animated, and lighted up with such intellectual expression, as to be exceedingly

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

attractive. Gay and piquant, her clear complexion, dark hair, and eyes, rendered her, when in health and spirits, a sparkling brunette ; and those who, from the style of her poetry expected a sentimental cast of countenance, pensive, and full of tender thought, could scarcely believe that this lively girl, for such from her youthful appearance she seemed to be, was the author of those mournful elegies which had impressed them with very different notions.

The prettiness of L. E. L., though generally acknowledged, was not talked about ; and many persons, on their first introduction, were as pleasingly surprised as the Ettrick Shepherd, who, gazing upon her with great admiration, exclaimed " I did na think ye had been sae bonny." Her figure was slight, and beautifully proportioned, with little hands and feet ; and these personal advantages, added to her kind and endearing manners, rendered her exceedingly fascinating. Though upon first discarding her pinafores, L. E. L. was rather careless about her dress, she afterwards manifested a very proper and womanly regard for her personal appearance, attiring herself with great elegance and taste, and always, when left entirely to her own judgment, with perfect simplicity. I remember assisting at her toilette

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

for a *bal costumé*, when we dressed her as Perdita, in the style of an Arcadian shepherdess, with a white chip hat and white roses ; and upon this occasion she was more admired than the belle and beauty of the room. Bright and intellectual as she was, it appeared to us that Shakspeare would have been charmed with such a representative of his sylvan princess.

The letters of L. E. L. were exceedingly characteristic, always written with great rapidity, and without the slightest premeditation. Distinguished by the easy gaiety which marked her conversation, the opinions, criticisms, and remarks, with which they were interspersed, were so lively and just, as almost to induce a wish that she should have had no other employment than that of chronicling passing events, and painting the form and features of the times. Notwithstanding the pressure of other avocations, she wrote frequently, and at length, to a rather numerous list of correspondents. Her letters, if collected, would make a most interesting volume ; but a doubt upon my part, whether, without the sanction of the author, confidential communications of the kind should be made public, has prevented me from availing myself of those in my possession.

It is impossible, in writing about L. E. L., not to

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

revert every moment to the affectionate kindness of her disposition, which extended even to things inanimate; while her growing partiality for every work that she undertook was very remarkable. In commencing the *Drawing Room Scrap-Book*, she looked upon it as a mere collection of engravings, to which it was no easy task to give any poetical interest; and her first effusions, beautiful as they were, being written under this impression, were less striking than those which succeeded. The work, however, became familiar and captivating; and she bestowed upon it the produce of the richest mines of her thought. In her preface to the volume for 1839 she observes, "For the last few years the *Drawing Room Scrap-Book* has been the cherished record of my poetical impressions, and my only poetical work; and I grew gradually to look forward to June and July, as recalling my first keen delight in composition." She had for some time previous to her departure from England, contemplated a republication of her favourite poems, selected from this cherished child of her fancy;<sup>a</sup> and now that the task

<sup>a</sup> In one of her letters to Mr. Fisher, urging their republication, she says, "Some of my very best poems have appeared in the *Drawing Room Scrap Book*."

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

has devolved upon me, I feel a melancholy pleasure in marking those which had been the subjects of conversation between us. She seems indeed to live again in the glowing pages of her song; and all who knew her intimately, and were acquainted with the tone and temper of her mind, must take a mournful interest in tracing throughout her works the thoughts and feelings to which she so frequently gave utterance, recalling moments of confidential intercourse, trifles forming the base of many a glorious superstructure, in which, directly or indirectly, the interlocutor may claim a part. Such memorials are of continual recurrence, and they were peculiarly delightful to me upon the perusal of the volumes published during an absence of three or four years from England, in which, on my return, I found old conversations recorded, and numerous forgotten hints rising like ancient friends in every page. It was delightful also to trace the maturer views of a mind always progressing. With a more intimate acquaintance with the world, and a deeper knowledge of human nature, all that was merely fanciful gave place to thoughts of higher elevation and to sounder deductions; and as she appealed less to the imagination, she spoke more strongly to the heart.



## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

The gaiety that to the last formed a striking characteristic of L. E. L.'s disposition, was at this later period of her career strongly contrasted by the tone of despondence which continued to pervade her works; those, however, in contemplation, or in progress, on her departure from England, were constructed more in accordance with the general taste, and would have exhibited far less gloomy pictures of human life. Her graceful deference to the representations of the friends whom she knew to be warmly interested in her literary reputation, inducing her to give up her own peculiar fancies. Though latterly her health had been impaired by very severe attacks of illness, the moment that she rallied she became as gay and as cheerful as ever; nor did she ever appear to entertain any misgivings respecting the consequences of a residence in the deleterious climate to which she was bound.

Without in the slightest degree desiring to intrude opinions concerning the chances of happiness offered in my lamented friend's marriage, it seems to be due to Mr. Maclean to say, that as the governor of Cape Coast Castle, he has distinguished himself by every trait that could do honour to the station which he held, and that he possesses a wide circle of friends to whom he is

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

endeared by all those qualities which can most justly recommend him to their esteem. If Miss Landon still retained her prejudice in favour of heroes, the perusal of Mr. Maclean's despatches was well calculated to awaken the first strong feeling. These documents can scarcely fail to inspire the highest sentiments of respect and admiration for the comprehensive mind, and daring spirit, which, with such inefficient means, could have achieved so much; while a more intimate acquaintance, must also deepen the impression in his favour: it can therefore be no subject of surprise that one who entertained so exalted a notion of the talent necessary to constitute the statesman and the soldier, should become unaffectedly and devotedly attached to him. No one could better appreciate than L. E. L. the high and sterling qualities of her lover's character, his philanthropic and unceasing endeavours to improve the condition of the natives of Africa; the noble manner in which he interfered to prevent the horrid waste of human life by the barbarian princes in his neighbourhood; and the chivalric energy with which he strove to put an end to the slave-trade. L. E. L. esteemed Mr. Maclean the more, in consequence of his not approaching her with the adulation with which

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

her ear had been accustomed, to satiety ; she was gratified by the manly nature of his attachment. Possessing, in her estimation, merits of the highest order, the influence which he gained over her promised, in the opinion of those who were best acquainted with the docility of her temper, and her ready acquiescence with the wishes of those she loved, to ensure lasting happiness. Before he would permit Miss Landon to enter into an engagement with him, Mr. Maclean, in the most honourable manner, stated all the privations incident upon a residence at Cape Coast Castle. No one could be more desirous that she should give the gravest consideration to the step she was about to take, or could more strongly impress upon her mind the magnitude of the sacrifice which she would make in accompanying him to the scene of his government. Ample time was permitted for her decision upon this most important point ; while many of her friends endeavoured to dissuade her from a purpose in which she must encounter the dangers of an unhealthy climate, and be subjected to the scarcely less trying evils to be endured in a remote colony ; but she never for an instant wavered. With a perfect knowledge of the kind of life she would be obliged to

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

lead, the entire seclusion from the society to which she had been accustomed, and the chance of not having a single female companion to cheer her solitude, she determined upon sharing the fortunes of the man she loved.

During an engagement of several months, Miss Landon possessed ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the temper and disposition of her affianced husband, and she had daily before her the means of judging whether she could be happy when domesticated with him upon a foreign and barbarous coast, a great portion of his time occupied by duties which would necessarily keep them apart, and dependent entirely upon her own resources for amusement. It may be added, that nothing of importance connected with Mr. Maclean's former residence in Africa was concealed from Miss Landon. Not being in possession of any other evidence than that which has appeared in the public prints, concerning the particulars of Mrs. Maclean's short residence at Cape Coast Castle, I cannot support my own opinion that its melancholy conclusion was wholly accidental, by stronger proofs. The regard which I entertain for the memory of my friend, renders it, however, my duty

## MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

to state a few circumstances, not generally known, relating to her marriage, which at least will show that she quitted England a gay and happy bride, oppressed with no other sorrow than that which was occasioned by the pain of parting with her friends.

Being desirous to avoid the bustle and parade of a public wedding, and the necessity which custom demands of seclusion from society, which would have abridged L. E. L.'s enjoyment of a visit paid to a family to whom she was strongly attached, the marriage ceremony was performed privately, in the presence of a few of the relatives of the bride, who returned to the hospitable mansion, which she only quitted for the purpose of plighting her vows; remaining with her friends until her departure from England, Mr. Maclean not taking up his residence under the same roof, even after the marriage had been publicly announced. During this interval, those who were in the habit of seeing L. E. L. drew happy auguries from the gaiety and even joyousness which she manifested, the effect produced by the new hopes now cherished, being so striking, as to be universally remarked. At our last interview, a very short time before her departure, she assured me of her perfect happiness with

MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

a sincerity of look and manner which could not be doubted, and the impression thus left on my mind was one of the most cheerful nature. On the 1st of January, 1839, the newspapers announced the sudden death of Mrs. George Maclean at Cape Coast Castle ; and these melancholy tidings were followed by the report of an inquest which sate upon the body, and which attributed the fatal event to incaution in taking hydrocyanic acid while suffering under an attack of spasms.

No further light has since been thrown on the melancholy fate of my early friend.

E. R.

MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

The publishers add to the foregoing account, the following most affecting letter, dated the very morning of Mrs. Maclean's death, which was found in her desk, and read at the inquest.

“ Cape Coast Castle, Oct. 15.

“ My dearest Marie,

“ I cannot but write you a brief account how I enact the part of a feminine Robinson Crusoe. I must say, in itself, the place is infinitely superior to all I ever dreamed of. The castle is a fine building—the rooms excellent. I do not suffer from heat; insects there are few or none, and I am in excellent health. The solitude, except an occasional dinner, is absolute; from seven in the morning till seven when we dine, I never see Mr. Maclean, and rarely any one else. We were welcomed by a series of dinners, which I am glad are over—for it is very awkward to be the only lady—still the great kindness with which I have been treated, and the very pleasant manners of many of the gentlemen, made me feel it as little as possible. Last week we had a visit from Captain Castle of the Pylades. His story is very melancholy. He married six months

before he left England, to one of the beautiful Miss Hills, Sir John Hill's daughter, and she died just as he received orders to return home. We also had a visit from Colonel Bosch, the Dutch governor, a most gentlemanly-like man. But fancy how awkward the next morning; I cannot induce Mr. Maclean to rise, and I have to make breakfast, and do the honours of adieu to him and his officers—white plumes, mustachios, and all. I think I never felt more embarrassed. I have not yet felt the want of society the least. I do not wish to form new friends, and never does a day pass without thinking most affectionately of my old ones. On three sides we are surrounded by the sea. I like the perpetual dash on the rocks; one wave comes up after another, and is for ever dashed in pieces, like human hopes, that only swell to be disappointed. We advance—up springs the shining froth of love or hope—"a moment white, and gone for ever." The land-view, with its cocoa and palm trees, is very striking—it is like a scene in the Arabian Nights. Of a night the beauty is very remarkable; the sea is of a silvery purple, and the moon deserves all that has been said in her favour. I have only once been out of the fort by daylight, and then was delighted. The salt-



MEMOIR OF L. E. L.

lakes were first dyed a deep crimson by the setting sun, and as we returned they seemed a faint violet in the twilight, just broken by a thousand stars, while before us was the red beacon-light. The chance of sending this letter is a very sudden one, or I should have ventured to write to General Fagan, to whom I beg the very kindest regards. Dearest, do not forget me. Pray write to me, 'Mrs. George Maclean, Cape Coast Castle; care of Messrs. Forster and Smith, 5, New City Chambers, Bishopsgate-street.' Write about yourself; nothing else half so much interests your affectionate,

"L. E. MACLEAN."

