

Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
The English Bijou Almanacks,
1836-1839

compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

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The English Bijou Almanacks

(Otherwise known as Schloss's Bijou Almanacks)

Details of the first three of these tiny gift volumes, which measured 3/4 inch by 1/2 inch can be found in the advertisement that follows. Letitia Landon's poems therein belong to a class of poems that were her own original conception, first published as Medallion Wafers in 1823: commodity poems. Once again she is keeping herself at the forefront of media development and, although the poems in the Almanacks were designed to be sold as commodities they are, as such, each a little jewel.

Because these volumes are so small, it is unlikely they will be scanned and all the texts have been taken from other sources. The only poem I have been unable to track down is King William IV., in the 1838 volume. However, the accompanying illustrations cannot be traced. A contemporary source and the advert that follows attribute the engravings to T. H. Jones but the etching of the texts appears to be the work of Benjamin Rees Davies.

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The English Bijou Almanack, 1836

All the poems for 1836 are taken from the Literary Gazette, 26th December 1835,
page 831

Poem from the "English Bijou Almanack, for 1836."

By L. E. L.

"Schiller."

"Oh, many are the lovely shapes
That glide along thy lovelier line,
And glorious is the breathing life
That warms that burning page of thine.
But never yet a form more fair
Amid the poet's visions moved,
Than Thekla, thy sweet fancy's child,
The German maid who 'lived and loved.'
For her sad sake shall woman's tears
Bedew thy low sepulchral cell,
And say—thrice blessed be the sleep
Of him who knew our hearts so well,

“Hymns.”

“Where the purple violet groweth
Beneath the willow-tree,
Where the early snowdrop bloweth,
Seek we a wreath for thee.

For the violet's breath perfumeeth
The open air around,
And the gentle snowdrop bloometh
When none beside are found.

We will gather these, these only,
To strew thy grave along;
They are lovely, they are lonely,
And they haunt us like thy song.

“ *Byron.*

“ Thy fate upon the Grecian ground
Lies broken : let it lie :
’Twas worthy such funeral mound,
’Twas worthy of such sky.

Beside thy old Castilian groves
It breathed its noblest words :
The pine-woods and the ancient hills
Attend its dying chords.

All nature owned its bitter spell,
And answered to the tone :
For in the sorrow of the strain
Each heart recalled its own.

“ Retsch.

“ Close it not yet—that graceful page,
That page of many fancies,
Which realise to common eyes
The mind-create romances.
Here is the history of the Bell—
A history containing
Our actual world of hopes and fears,
Rejoicing and complaining.
Thanks, charmed art, that thus can catch
The poets’ wildest measure:
And to the music of their page
Can add another pleasure.

Staffaelle.

“ Oh, born beneath those summer hours,
That turn our common earth to flowers,
Where wind the myrtles round the hill,
And sunshine dances on the rill,
Till life is loveliness, and teems
With all the spirit's fairest dreams :
Young painter, this inspired thy hand,
Thy own rose-bound Italian land,
And made thy soft and flowing line
Of human beauty half divine.
Thy colours caught the heaven above,
Till painting turned to life and love.

“ Martin.

“ Mighty painter, thou hast bowed
To thy will the thunder-cloud;
To thy lifted hand is given
How to wield the fiery Levin:
And thine are the solemn walls
Of Palmyra's desert halls;
And thy art doth build again
Palace, temple, tomb, and fane.
Other painters lend a grace
To the present's lovely face,
But a nobler gift thou hast—
Thou art master of the past.”

The English Bijou Almanack, 1837

From The Literary Gazette, 24th December, 1836.
Opening address to Queen Adelaide.

“ Address.

**We dream no more that fairies dwell
In the white lily's fragrant cell ;
And yet our little book seems planned
By elfin touch, in elfin land,
And sent by Oberon, I ween,
An offering to our English queen.
Such small, fair page, should only mark
The olive leaves of life's dull ark ;
A fairy chronicle, but meant
For days of hope and of content.
The tiny almanack found here,
May it record a glad new year !”**

From The Literary Gazette, 24th December, 1836.

“ Von Raumer.

He has recalled the past as still
The present should the past recall;
With careful patience seeking truths,
And asking lessons from them all.
’Tis the historian’s part to weigh
The glories of a former hour;
His are the trophies that outlast
The storied arch, the lofty tower.
We mark the progress of the mind—
How changed to what it was of yore!
And every point of knowledge gained
Seems an encouragement for more!”

From The Literary Gazette, 24th December, 1836.

" Mrs. Somerville.

She has brought down beside the hearth
The secrets of the skies,
And made the far and mighty stars
Familiar to our eyes.

This has a woman done; and she
Is graceful, winning, mild;
And mingles with the sage's lore
The sweetness of a child.

In life's divine and common things
Alike she has her part;
The gifted and the glorious mind
Touched by the gentle heart."

MADAME MALIBRAN.

Mournfully, ah ! mournfully
Shed the myrtle o'er her ;
Not alone with verse and flower—
With the heart deplore her.

Sweet emotions, smiles, and tears,
Lived amid her numbers ;
Let their tender memory
Sanctify her slumbers.

Angels claim the angel one ;
Fling the palm above her ;
Too late, with a fond regret,
We find how much we love her.

From The Herald, New York, 24th November 1837

COOPER.

**He was the first who ever told
The history of those warriors bold,
The dark, stern race, whose fated age
Has little left beside his page.]**

**And he has told how death and toil
Were round the settlers on the soil,
Who left their native vales, to be
Free as they even now are free.**

**How, in the great and glorious hour
That yet awaits Columbia's power,
When, save his line, the past is dim,
How will she read her youth in him.**

From The Bookworm, page 280

“ He was the first who ever told
The history of those warriors bold—
The dark, stern race, whose fated age
Has little left besides his page.
And he has told how death and toil
Were round the settlers on the soil,
Who left their native vales to be
Free, as they even now are free.
Now, in the great and glorious hour,
That yet awaits Columbia's power,
When, save his line, the past is dim—
Now she will read her youth in him.”

From The Herald, New York, 24th November 1837

GOETHE.

**A proud and mighty monument
So great a name should bear ;
We carve the marble, yet we fling
The sweet wild flowers, too, there.**

**The universal heart of love
His universal shrine,
As treasured in our little book,
As upon history's line.**

**The young, the old, the grave, the gay,
Alike to him belong ;
There is no human pulse but finds
An echo in his song.**

From Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung Band 1, page 364

**A proud and mighty monument
So great a name should bear,
We carve the marble, yet we fling
The sweet wild-flowers, too, there.**

**The universal heart of love
His universal shrine
As treasured in our little book,
As upon history's line.**

**The young, the old, the grave, the gay,
Alike to him, belong:
There is no human pulse but finds
An echo in his song.**

From The Herald, New York, 24th November 1837

COLERIDGE.

**He told the lay of Christabelle,
He sang the song of Genevieve ;
The sweetest note that ever waked
A silent summer eve.**

**He roused our English late from sleep,
And hung it, with a votive vow,
For worship and the following,
On the green myrtle bough.**

**Still o'er the poet's haunted grave
Its melancholy murmurs sweep ;
On! lovely is the face of Death
By music lulled to sleep.**

The English Bijou Almanack, 1838

From The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction, 1837, Supplement,
page 422

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY, QUEEN VICTORIA.

AND has that young and graceful hand
Empire o'er land and sea ;
Yet though upon the lion's mane ;
Our little tome may be
A fitting offering, calling back
Thy childish days to thee.

A toy—a trifle, not the less
Our fairy volume brings
The heartfelt wishes for thy sake
That wait on graver things ;
May every hour its tablets note
For thee wear angels' wings.

Not available at present

KING WILLIAM IV.

First line

A Thousand torches light the air,

“ To L. K. L.

**“ By John A. Heraud, Esq. Author of ‘ The Judgment
of the Flood,’ &c.**

**“ Sappho of a polished age!
Loves and graces sweetly fling
Chastened splendours o’er thy page,
Like moonlight on a fairy’s wing,
Feelings fresh as morning’s dews,
Breathings gentle as the May’s,
Verses soft as violet’s hues,
Once sported in thy happy lays,
Sad is now thy plaintive strain,
Melancholy is thy mood —
Bring us back thy youth again!
For Cheerfulness befits the good.
Yet, if thou be sad — ’tis well!
If we weep, — ’tis not in vain!
Sighs, attuned to Sappho’s shell,
Allure us into love with pain!”**

GIULIETTA GRISI.

I HEARD her, and the air was filled
With one delicious song ;
Such as when leaves and flowers are hushed ,
The night hours bear along ;
When singing to the sweet south west,
The nightingale broods o'er her nest.

I saw her, and the large dark eyes,
Were lit with heart and thought ;
A thousand fairy fantasies,
By that sweet face were brought.
Lady art thou what thou dost seem,
Or art thou but a lovely dream ?

LINES ON WALTER SCOTT.

BY MISS LONDON,

Now honour to the glorious head
Numbered with the immortal dead,
Yet leaving life behind,
Creations to whose charmed powers
We owe so many happy hours—
The treasures of the mind.

White be the marble for his grave,
And o'er it let the laurel wave,
Till time itself depart.
But marble white, and laurel tree,
For memory, what needeth he
Whose shrine is in our heart!

**MISS LANDON'S LATEST EFFUSION TO
THE MUSICAL GENIUS OF MOZART.**

It lingereth on the ear at night,
It haunteth it by day,
The spirit of a lonely song
That will not pass away ;
The music, which he left behind,
Is of the heart, and of the mind.

How can we honour them enough,
Men who bequeath to earth
The spiritual and beautiful
Which in themselves had birth !
Give them life's noblest gift, let fame
Shed its long sunshine round their name.

The English Bijou Almanack, 1839

All the poems from this publication were reproduced in The New Yorker,
23rd February 1839, following its obituary tribute to L. E. L. (Mrs. Maclean).

Page 358

THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

A widow with an only child,
The mother of our queen;
A stranger in a foreign land,
Thy lot has various been.
How many claims attend with thee
Upon a nations sympathy!
How many anxious watching hours
Thy Mother's heart has known,
Before the blossom was a flower—
The orphan on a throne!
Ah! may a glorious future wait
On thee—thy child—and England's fate!

LADY BLESSINGTON.

Yet on the haunted canvass dwells
The beauty of that face,
Which art's departed master held
His sweetest task to trace;
None see it but are prisoners held
In its strong toil of grace.

Nature, thy fairy godmother,
Has lavished, for thy part,
A prodigality of gifts
To make thee what thou art:
The lovely face, the gifted mind,
The kind and generous heart.

PASTA.

I see thee, with thy night-black hair
Flung wild and loose in thy despair;
Upraised are thy imploring hands
To heaven, which yet thy prayer withstands;
And in thy deep and flashing eye
Is passion's utter agony.

A Grecian statue dost thou seem,
Wrought up in some tumultuous dream;
While in the music of thy tone
Is every thrill to sorrow known.
Queen art thou—and still must be queen,
While one heart keeps thy haunting scene.

WELLINGTON.

The conqueror of a thousand fields !
Not as in olden time,
When carnage urged its crimson path,
And conquest was a crime—
But in a universal war
For every right sublime.
The laurel that he wears should have
In English hearts its birth ;
His victories kept inviolate
Our island's sacred earth ;
They were the glorious ransom given
For every English hearth.

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

Thy hand is cold!—thy colors weave
Their graceful lines no more!
Yet, painter of each lovely face
That lit our island shore,
These faces from the canvass shine,
And haunt us still with thee and thine.
Hero and beauty—all who flung
Their spell around their day—
Owe to thy pencil memories
That will not pass away;
The past—the present seems to be,
Thanks to thy art and thee!

BEETHOVEN.

A stately and a solemn song,
Such as the evening winds prolong
 In some cathedral aisle,
When holy hope and lofty thought,
From the soul's deep recesses brought,
 Attend the hymn the while.

There mingle with thy glorious strain
No common fancies light and vain ;
 Thy spirit was enshrined—
Thy chords were thoughts—thy notes were given
To all that links this earth with heaven,
 Musician of the mind !

FAREWELL.

My little fairy chronicle,
The prettiest of my tasks, farewell!
Ere other eyes shall meet this line,
Far other records will be mine;
How many miles of trackless sea
Will roll between my land and me!
I said thine elfin almanac
Should call all pleasant hours back;
Amid those pleasant hours, will none
Think kindly on what I have done?
Then, fairy page, I leave with thee
Some memory of my songs and me.