

Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
The Literary Souvenir, 1827
compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

Contents

Stanzas. Written beneath the Portrait of Lord Byron painted by Mr. West
The Minstrel's Monitor
The Inconstant
Cupid and Psyche



LORD BYRON

III.---The Last Portrait painted of Lord Byron. By Francis Engleheart ; from an original Picture, by W. E. West, in that gentleman's possession . 33

STANZAS.

**Written beneath the Portrait of Lord Byron,
painted by Mr. West.**

'Tis with strange feelings that I gaze
Upon this brow of thine,
Magnificent as if the mind
Herself had carved her shrine :
An altar unto which was given
The flowers of earth, the light of heaven.

At the first glance, that eye is proud,
But, if I read aright,
A fountain of sweet tears lies hid
Beneath its flashing light :
Tenderness, like a gushing rill
Subdued, repress, but flowing still.

That lip is curled with sneering smile,—
Alas ! what doth it prove ?—
Not in the warfare of the world
Are lessons taught of love.
So much is there hard to be borne,
The heart must either break or scorn.

And differently the poison works
On every differing mind,
Some grow false as the false they blamed,
And thus 'tis with mankind :
But there are some whose loftier mood
Grows maddened on such things to brood.

The young warm heart whose faith and love
Were all too prompt at first,
What must it feel when these are turned
To darkness and distrust ?
Wormwood to know that heart has been
Dupe of the false, prey of the mean.

Such will not ask for sympathy,
Knowing they ask in vain,—
Nor yield to softer feelings way
To be deceived again ;
And bitter laugh, and scornful sneer,
Become at once their shield and spear.

Such, methinks, was the destiny
That threw its chill o'er thee ;
Thou hadst mixed with the false, till all
Seemed but alike to be.
Could not the workings of thine heart
Another, holier creed impart ?

I read it in thy gifted page,
 In every noble thought,
 Each lofty feeling, and sweet song
 With tenderness deep fraught ;
 For there thine inmost soul was shown,—
 Their truth, their beauty, were thine own.

For out on the vain worldling's speech
 Which saith the poet's skill
 But sets forth feelings he has not ;
 Worked up, wrought out at will.
 What knows he of that sacred feeling ?
 He hath no part in its revealing.

And if sometimes he is not all
 That his own song has sung,
 It is but part of that great curse
 Which still to earth has clung.
 Whoe'er has seen, who yet shall see
 Himself as he deemed he could be ?

The mind can win eternity
 With its immortal name,
 But all too often happiness
 Is the price paid for fame :
 For not a barbed shaft can fly
 But aims to strike the mark on high.

Oh, if there be one sullied page
Unworthy of thy name,
The weakness of a mighty one,
To dwell on it were shame ;
Were cruelty, when thy fine mind
Has left such nobler store behind.

But thou art with the dead,—thy life
In such a cause was given,
Most glorious in the sight of man,
Precious in that of heaven.
Marathon, and Thermopylæ :
Such soil was fitting grave for thee !

Oh, England ! to thy young and brave
Is not this stirring call,
To free the fallen from the chain,
To break the tyrant's thrall,
His life has not been spent in vain
If Greece shall burst the Moslem chain.

L. E. L.

THE MINSTREL'S MONITOR.

I.

SILENT and dark as the source of yon river,
Whose birth-place we know not, and seek not to know,
Though wild as the flight of the shaft from yon quiver,
Is the course of its waves as in music they flow.

II.

The lily flings o'er it its silver white blossom,
Like ivory barks which a fairy hath made ;
The rose o'er it bends with its beautiful bosom,
As though 't were enamoured itself of its shade.

III.

The sunshine, like Hope, in its noontide hour slumbers
On the stream as it loved the bright place of its rest,
And its waves pass in song, as the sea shells' soft numbers
Had giv'n to those waters their sweetest and best.

IV.

The banks that surround it are flower-dropt and sunny ;
There the first birth of violets' odour-showers weep—

There the bee heaps his earliest treasure of honey,
Or sinks in the depths of the harebell to sleep.

V.

Like prisoners escaped during night from their prison,
The waters fling gaily their spray to the sun ;
Who can tell me from whence that glad river has risen ?
Who can say whence it springs in its beauty? not one.

VI.

Oh my heart, and my song which is as my heart's flowing,
Read thy fate in yon river, for such is thine own ;
'Mid those the chief praise on thy music bestowing,
Who cares for the lips from whence issue the tone.

VII.

Dark as its birth-place so dark is my spirit,
Whence yet the sweet waters of melody came ;
'Tis the long after-course, not the source, will inherit
The beauty and glory of sunshine and fame.

L. E. L.

THE INCONSTANT.

AND deem'st thou that my heart could be
A trifle and a toy for thee ;
A trophy, to be wooed and won ;
Taken but to be trampled on !

And deem'st thou that my heart would spring,
A young bird on its summer wing,
To be one moment caged in thine,
Then left, poor prisoner, to pine.

You knew me not if you could deem
I should weep o'er a vanished dream ;
The willow was not made for me,
My wreath is of the aspen tree.

There is in southern lands a breeze
Which sweeps with changeless course the seas ;
Fixed to one point, oh, faithful gale,
Thou art not for my wandering sail !

I will not own a brighter eye
Than mine has caught your truant sigh,—
I will not own a fairer brow
Than mine has made you captive now.

I deem my eye is still as bright
As when it fixed your charmed sight ;
I deem my brow is still as fair
As when you gazed and worshipped there.

But well I know that they have been
Once, twice, or thrice already seen,—
I know the charm of change too well
Not to bow down to such a spell.

Love's vows are writ upon the wave,
And are unto themselves a grave.
They call Love ever young ; but he
Is as old age in memory.

Farewell then, sometime love of mine,
Yet claim I gratitude of thine ;
Surely that love is something worth
Whose death is laughing as its birth.

L. E. L.



CUPID AND PSYCHE

**X.---Cupid and Psyche. By William Humphrys; from
an original Painting by W. E. West, in that gen-
tleman's possession**

CUPID AND PSYCHE.

LOVE,—oh do not name his name !
On this earth he only came
To deceive and to destroy,—
Lasting sorrow, fleeting joy !
Sunny light each pinion flings,
But, alas, they still are wings !
Rainbow feathers edge his shaft,
They are stained with crime and craft.
Fair but false Divinity,
Does the bosom treasure thee !
Better would its folly fare
Were the scorpion harboured there.
Does the cheek with colours burn,
Shed from passion's purple urn !
Woe for the deceiving light,
It will herald darkest night.
Go thou, ask the happiest lover,
Far or near thou canst discover ;

He will say his happiest hour
Was but as a fairy dower,—
Gold that for a moment shone,
Charmed the sight, and then was gone.
And albeit thy blind caprice
Gave the wearied one release,
'Twas to leave him like the pyre
Where the deadly flames expire ;
Not till they have fed on all
Of odour, gem, or coronal,
Leaving smouldering waste behind,
Withered hope, and ruined mind ;
Heart it were relief to break ;
Oh, Love, thine is a fearful stake !—

What sweet picture may this seem ?
Were it aught but painter's dream,
There were all in young Love's reign
Maidens hope for, minstrels feign ;—
Leans he by his dear one's side,
From his eyes the veil untied ;
Gentle as the gentlest rays
Of the dove's on which they gaze ;
He has left his bow unbent,
Hung aside his shafts, content
But to trust his soft caress,
And his passing loveliness.

Oh, Love! couldst thou be like this,
Mirror thus of heaven's own bliss,
Then wouldst thou have hopes that might
Trust themselves to their delight ;
Confidence, whose sweet repose
Weaves a pillow of the rose ;—
Peace like that on ocean's breast,
When the halcyon builds her nest ;—
Faith like that the martyrs feel
In their high and holy zeal.
Then the pleasures thou wouldst know
To immortal ones would grow.
Go, Love, like this couldst thou be,
Paradise were home for thee!

L. E. L.