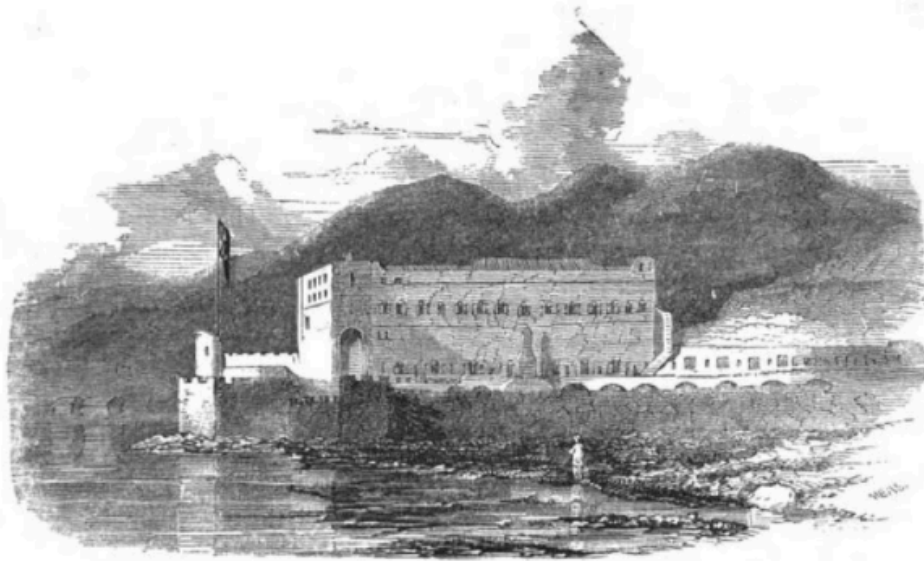


From
Homes and Haunts
Of the
Most Eminent British Poets.

by William Howitt

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L. E. L.
(LETTIE ELIZABETH LONDON)



L. E. L.

THERE is not much to be said about the homes and haunts of Mrs. Maclean, or, as I shall call her in this article, by her poetical cognomen, L. E. L. She was a creature of town and social life. The bulk of her existence was spent in Hans-place, Sloane-street, Chelsea. Like Charles Lamb, she was so moulded to London habits and tastes, that that was the world to her. The country was not to her what it is to those who have passed a happy youth there, and learned to sympathise with its spirit, and enjoy its calm. In one respect she was right. Those who look for society alone in the country, are not likely to be much pleased with the change from London, where every species of intelligence concentrates,—where the rust of intellectual sloth is pretty briskly rubbed off, and old prejudices, which often lie like fogs in low still nooks of the country, are blown away by the lively winds of discussion. Though descended from a country family, and spending some time, as a child, in the country, she was not there long enough to cultivate those associations with places and things which cling to the heart in after-life. Her mind, naturally quick, and all her tastes, were developed in the city. City life was part and parcel of her being; and as she was one of the most brilliant and attractive of its children, we must be thankful to take her as she was. It robs us of nothing but of certain attributes of the picturesque in the account of her abodes.

Her ancestors, it seems, from Mr. Blanchard's memoir of her, were, about the commencement of the eighteenth century, settled at Crednall, in Herefordshire, where they enjoyed some landed property. A Sir William Landon was a successful participator in the

South Sea Bubble, but afterwards contrived to lose the whole patrimonial estates. A descendant of Sir William was the great grandfather of L. E. L. He was rector of Nursted and Ilsted, in Kent, and a zealous antagonist of all Dissent. His son was rector of Tedstone Delamere, near Bromyard, Herefordshire. At his death, the property of the family being exhausted, his children, eight in number, were left to make their way through the world as they could. Miss Landon's father, John Landon, was the eldest of these children. He went to sea, and made two voyages, one to the coast of Africa, and one to Jamaica. His friend and patron, Admiral Bowyer, dying, his career in the naval service was stopped. In the meantime, the next of his brothers, Whittington Landon, had acquired promotion in the Church, and eventually became Dean of Exeter. By his influence the father of the poetess was established as a partner in the prosperous house of Adair, army agents in Pall Mall. On this he married Catharine Jane Bishop, a lady of Welsh extraction, and settled at No. 25, in Hans-place. Here Miss Landon was born on the 14th of August, 1802. Besides her, the only other surviving child was a brother, the present Rev. Whittington Henry Landon.

In her sixth year she was sent to school to Miss Rowden, at No. 22, Hans-place, the house in which she was destined to pass the greater part of her life. This lady, herself a poetess, afterwards became Countess St. Quentin, and died near Paris. In this school Miss Mitford was educated, and here Lady Caroline Lamb was for a time an inmate. At this period, however, Miss Landon was here only a few months. She had occasionally been taken into the country to a farm in which her father was deeply interested, called Coventry Farm, in Hertfordshire. She now went with her family to reside at Trevor Park, East Barnet, where her education was conducted by her cousin, Miss Landon. She was now about seven years old, and here the family continued to live about six years. Here she read a great deal of romance and poetry, and began to show the operation of her fancy, by relating long stories to her parents, and indulging in long meditative walks in the lime-walk in the garden. Her brother was her companion, and, spite of her nascent authorship, they seem to have played, and romped, and enjoyed themselves as children should do. They read Plutarch, and had a great ambition of being Spartans. An anecdote is related of their taking vengeance on the gardener for some affront, by shooting at him with arrows with nails stuck in them for piles, and of his tossing them upon a quickset hedge for punishment,—most probably one of the old-fashioned square-cut ones, where they would be rather prisoners than sufferers. This man, whose name was Chambers, Miss Landon taught to read; and he afterwards saved money, and retired to keep an inn at Barnet.

Now she read the Arabian Nights, Scott's Metrical Romances, and Robinson Crusoe, besides a book called Silvester Trampe. This last professed to be a narrative of travels in Africa, and seems especially to have fascinated her imagination. No doubt that the united effects of this book, of other African travels, and of the fact of her father and one of her cousins having made voyages to that continent,

had no little influence in deciding the fatal step of marrying to go out to Cape Coast. To the happy days spent at Trevor Park, and the reading of books like these, always a period of elysium to a child, Miss Landon makes many references, both in her poems and her prose sketches, called *Traits and Trials of Early Life*. Some lines addressed to her brother commemorate these imaginative pleasures very graphically:—

“ It was an August evening, with sunset in the trees,
When home you brought his voyages, who found the fair South Seas.
For weeks he was our idol, we sailed with him at sea,
And the pond, amid the willows, our ocean seemed to be;
The water-lilies growing beneath the morning smile,
We called the South Sea Islands, each flower a different isle.
Within that lovely garden what happy hours went by,
While we fancied that around us spread a foreign sea and sky.”

From this place the family removed to Lower-place, Fulham, where they continued about a year, and then removed again to Old Brompton. Miss Landon now gave continually-increasing signs of a propensity to poetry. Mr. Jerdan, the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, was a neighbour of her father's, and from time to time her compositions were shown to him, who at once saw and acknowledged their great promise. It does not appear very clear whether Miss Landon continued at home during this period—that is, from the time the family came to live here, when she was about fourteen, till the death of her father, when she was about twenty—but it is probable that she was for part of this time at the school, No. 22, Hans-place, which was now in the hands of the Misses Lance, as she says of herself,—“ I have lived all my life since childhood with the same people. The Misses Lance,” &c. However, it was at about the age of eighteen that her contributions appeared in the *Literary Gazette*, which excited universal attention. These had been preceded by a little volume now forgotten, *The Fate of Adelaide*, a Swiss romantic tale; and was speedily followed by the *Improvvisatrice*. It was during the writing of this her first volume of successful poetry that her father died, leaving the family in narrow circumstances.

The history of her life from this time is chiefly the history of her works. The *Improvvisatrice* was published in 1824; the *Troubadour* in 1825; the *Golden Violet* in 1826; the *Venetian Bracelet*, 1829. In 1830 she produced her first prose work, *Romance and Reality*. In 1831 she commenced the editorship of *Fisher's Drawing-room Scrap Book*, which she continued yearly till the time of her marriage—eight successive volumes. In 1835 she published *Francesca Carrara*; the *Vow of the Peacock*, 1835; *Traits and Trials of Early Life*, 1836; and in the same year, *Ethel Churchill*. Besides these works, she wrote largely in the annuals and periodicals, and edited various volumes of illustrated works for the publishers.

None of the laborious tribe of authors ever toiled more incessantly or more cheerfully than Miss Landon—none with a more devotedly generous spirit. She had the proud satisfaction of contributing to the support of her family, and to the end of her life

this great object was uppermost in her mind. On her marriage, she proposed to herself to go on writing still, with the prospect of being thus enabled to devote the whole of her literary profits to the comfort of her mother and the promotion of the fortunes of her brother. In all social and domestic relations no one was ever more amiable or more beloved.

With occasional visits to different parts of the kingdom, and once to Paris, Miss Landon continued living in Hans-place till 1837. The Misses Lance had given up the school, I believe, about 1830, but she continued still to reside there with Mrs. Sheldon, their successor. In 1837 Mrs. Sheldon quitted Hans-place, for 28, Upper Berkeley-street West, whither Miss Landon accompanied her. Here she resided only a few months, when, at the request of some much attached friends, she took up her abode with them in Hyde Park-street. On the 7th of June, 1838, she was married to Mr. Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, and almost immediately left this country, never to return.

Of the abode where the greater part of Miss Landon's life was spent, and where almost every one of her works was written, the reader will naturally wish to have some description. The following particulars are given by Laman Blanchard, as from the pen of a female friend. "Genius," says our accomplished informant, "hallows every place where it pours forth its inspirations. Yet how strongly contrasted, sometimes, is the outward reality around the poet with the visions of his inward being. Is it not D'Israeli, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, referring to this frequent incongruity, who mentions, among other facts, that Moore composed his *Lalla Rookh* in a large barn? L. E. L. remarks on this subject, 'A history of the *how* and *where* works of imagination have been produced, would often be more extraordinary than the works themselves.' Her own case was, in some degree, an illustration of independence of mind over all external circumstances. Perhaps to the L. E. L. of whom so many nonsensical things were said—as 'that she should write with a crystal pen, dipped in dew, upon silver paper, and use for pounce the dust of a butterfly's wing;' a *dilettante* of literature would assign, for the scene of her authorship, a fairy-like boudoir, with rose-coloured and silver hangings, fitted with all the luxuries of a fastidious taste. How did the reality agree with this fairy sketch? Miss Landon's drawing-room, indeed, was prettily furnished, but it was her invariable habit to write in her bed-room. I see it now, that homely-looking, almost uncomfortable room, fronting the street, and barely furnished; with a simple white bed, at the foot of which was a small, old, oblong-shaped sort of dressing-table, quite covered with a common, worn writing-desk, heaped with papers, while some strewed the ground, the table being too small for aught beside the desk; a high-backed cane chair, which gave you any idea rather than that of comfort. A few books scattered about completed the author's paraphernalia."

Certainly one would have imagined a girl's school in London just the last place that a poet would have fixed upon to live and work in.

But as London was the city of cities to Miss Landon, so, no doubt, Hans-place, from early associations, was to her the place of places ; and, when she was shut in her little bedroom, was just as poetical as any other place in the world. I recollect there was a little garden behind the house, which, if I remember right, you saw into through a glass door from the hall. At all events, a person full of poetic admiration once calling upon her, saw a young girl skipping very actively in this court or garden, and was no little astonished to see the servant go up to her, and announce the caller, whereupon she left her skipping, and turned out to be no other than Miss Landon herself.

Of her person, Mr. Blanchard gives this description :—"Nobody who might happen to see her for the first time, enjoying the little quiet dance, of which she was fond, or the snug corner of the room where the little lively discussion, which she liked still better, was going on, could possibly have traced in her one feature of the sentimentalist which popular error reported her to be. The listener might only hear her running on from subject to subject, and lighting up each with a wit never ill-natured, and often brilliant ; scattering quotations as thick as hail, opinions as wild as the winds ; defying fair argument to keep pace with her, and fairly talking herself out of breath. He would most probably hear from her lips many a pointed and sparkling aphorism, the wittiest things of the night, let who might be around her,—he would be surprised, pleased ; but his heroine of song, as painted by anticipation, he would be unable to discover. He would see her looking younger than she really was ; and perhaps, struck by her animated air, her expressive face, her slight but elegant figure, his impression would at once find utterance in the exclamation which escaped from the lips of the Ettrick Shepherd on being presented to her, whose romantic fancies had often charmed him in the wild mountains, 'Hey ! but I did not think ye'd bin sae bonnie !'

"Without attempting an elaborate description of the person of L. E. L., we cite this expression of surprise as some indication that she was far prettier than report allowed her to be, at the period we are speaking of. Her easy carriage and careless movements would seem to imply an insensibility to the feminine passion for dress ; yet she had a proper sense of it, and never disdained the foreign aid of ornament, always provided it was simple, quiet, and becoming. Her hair was darkly brown, very soft and beautiful, and always tastefully arranged ; her figure, as before remarked, slight, but well-formed and graceful ; her feet small, but her hands especially so, and faultlessly white, and finely shaped ; her fingers were fairy fingers ; her ears also were observably little. Her face, though not regular in any feature, became beautiful by expression ; every flash of thought, every change and colour of feeling, lightened over it as she spoke, when she spoke earnestly. The forehead was not high, but broad and full ; the eyes had no overpowering brilliancy, but their clear intellectual light penetrated by its exquisite softness ; her mouth was not less marked by character ; and, besides the glorious faculty

of uttering the pearls and diamonds of fancy and wit, knew how to express scorn, or anger, or pride, as well as it knew how to smile winningly, or to pour forth those short, quick, ringing laughs, which, not even excepting her *bon-mots* and aphorisms, were the most delightful things that issued from it."

This may be considered a very fair portrait of Miss Landon. Your first impressions of her were,—what a little, light, simple, merry-looking girl. If you had not been aware of her being a popular poetess, you would have suspected her of being nothing more than an agreeable, bright, and joyous young lady. This impression in her own house, or amongst a few congenial people, was quickly followed by a feeling of the kind-heartedness and goodness about her. You felt that you could not be long with her without loving her. There was a frankness and a generosity in her nature that won extremely upon you. On the other hand, in mixed companies, witty and conversant as she was, you had a feeling that she was playing an assumed part. Her manner and conversation were not only the very reverse of the tone and sentiment of her poems, but she seemed to say things for the sake of astonishing you with the very contrast. You felt not only no confidence in the truth of what she was asserting, but a strong assurance that it was said merely for the sake of saying what her hearers would least expect to hear her say. I recollect once meeting her in company, at a time when there was a strong report that she was actually though secretly married. Mrs. Hofland, on her entering the room, went up to her in her plain, straightforward way, and said, "Ah! my dear, what must I call you?—Miss Landon, or who?" After a well-feigned surprise at the question, Miss Landon began to talk in a tone of merry ridicule of this report, and ended by declaring that, as to love or marriage, they were things that she never thought of.

"What, then, have you been doing with yourself this last month?"

"Oh, I have been puzzling my brain to invent a new sleeve; pray how do you like it?" showing her arm.

"You never think of such a thing as love!" exclaimed a young sentimental man, "you, who have written so many volumes of poetry upon it?"

"Oh! that's all professional, you know;" exclaimed she, with an air of merry scorn.

"Professional!" exclaimed a grave Quaker, who stood near—"Why, dost thou make a difference between what is professional and what is real? Dost thou write one thing and think another? Does not that look very much like hypocrisy?"

To this the astonished poetess made no reply, but by a look of genuine amazement. It was a mode of putting the matter to which she had evidently never been accustomed.

And, in fact, there can be no question that much of her writing was professional. She had to win a golden harvest for the comfort of others as dear to her as herself; and she felt, like all authors who have to cater for the public, that she must provide, not so much what she would of her free-will choice, but what they expected from

her. Still, working for profit, and for the age, the peculiar idiosyncrasy of her mind showed itself through all. Before we advance to the last melancholy home of L. E. L., let us take a review of her literary career; rapid, yet sufficiently full to point out some particulars in her writings, which I think too peculiar not to interest strongly the reader.

The subject of L. E. L.'s first volume was love; a subject which, we might have supposed, in one so young, would have been clothed in all the gay and radiant colours of hope and happiness; but, on the contrary, it was exhibited as the most fatal and melancholy of human passions. With the strange, wayward delight of the young heart, ere it has known actual sorrow, she seemed to riot and to revel amid death and woe; laying prostrate life, hope, and affection. Of all the episodical tales introduced into the general design of the principal poem, not one but terminated fatally or sorrowfully; the heroine herself was the fading victim of crossed and wasted affections. The shorter poems which filled up the volume, and which were mostly of extreme beauty, were still based on the wrecks and agonies of humanity.

It might be imagined that this morbid indulgence of so strong an appetite for grief, was but the first dipping of the playful foot in the sunny shallows of that flood of mortal experience through which all have to pass; and but the dallying, yet desperate pleasure afforded by the mingled chill and glittering eddies of the waters, which might hereafter swallow up the passer through; and the first real pang of actual pain would scare her youthful fancy into the bosom of those hopes and fascinations with which the young mind is commonly only too much delighted to surround itself. But it is a singular fact, that, spite of her own really cheerful disposition, and spite of all the advice of her most influential friends, she persisted in this tone from the first to the last of her works, from that time to the time of her death. Her poems, though laid in scenes and times capable of any course of events, and though filled to overflowing with the splendours and high-toned sentiments of chivalry; though enriched with all the colours and ornaments of a most fertile and sportive fancy,—were still but the heralds and delineations of melancholy, misfortune, and death. Let the reader turn to any, or all, of her poetical volumes, and say whether this be not so, with few, and in most of them, no exceptions. The very words of her first heroine might have literally been uttered as her own:—

“Sad were my shades; methinks they had
Almost a tone of prophecy—
I ever had, from earliest youth,
A feeling what my fate would be.”—*The Improvisatrice*, p. 3.

This is one singular peculiarity of the poetry of L. E. L., and her poetry must be confessed to be peculiar. It was entirely her own. It had one prominent and fixed character, and that character belonged wholly to itself. The rhythm, the feeling, the style, and phraseology of L. E. L.'s poetry were such, that you could immediately recognise it, though the writer's name was not mentioned. Love was still the

great theme, and misfortune the great doctrine. It was not the less remarkable, that, in almost all other respects, she retained to the last the poetical tastes of her very earliest years. The heroes of chivalry and romance, feudal pageants, and Eastern splendour, delighted her imagination as much in the full growth, as in the budding of her genius.

I should say, that it is the young and ardent who must always be the warmest admirers of the larger poems of L. E. L. They are filled with the faith and the fancies of the young. The very scenery and ornaments are of that rich and showy kind which belongs to the youthful taste ;—the white rose, the jasmine, the summer garniture of deep grass and glades of greenest foliage ; festal gardens with lamps and bowers ; gay cavaliers, and jewelled dames, and all that glitters in young eyes and love-haunted fancies. But amongst these, numbers of her smaller poems from the first dealt with subjects and sympathies of a more general kind, and gave glimpses of a nobility of sentiment, and a bold expression of her feeling of the unequal lot of humanity, of a far higher character. Such, in the *Improvisatrice*, are *The Guerilla Chief*, *St. George's Hospital*, *The Deserter*, *Gladesmure*, *The Covenanters*, *The Female Convict*, *The Soldier's Grave*, &c. Such are many that might be pointed out in every succeeding volume. But it was in her few last years that her heart and mind seemed every day to develop more strength, and to gather a wider range of humanity into their embrace. In the latter volumes of the *Drawing-room Scrap Book*, many of the best poems of which have been reprinted with the *Zenana*, nothing was more striking than the steady development of growing intellectual power, and of deep, generous, and truly philosophical sentiments, tone of thought, and serious experience.

But when L. E. L. had fixed her character as a poet, and the public looked only for poetical productions from her, she suddenly came forth as a prose writer, and with still added proofs of intellectual vigour. Her prose stories have the leading characteristics of her poetry. Their theme is love, and their demonstration that all love is fraught with destruction and desolation. But there are other qualities manifested in the tales. The prose page was for her a wider tablet, on which she could, with more freedom and ampler display, record her views of society. Of these, *Francesca Carrara*, and *Ethel Churchill*, are unquestionably the best works, the latter preeminently so. In these she has shown, under the characters of *Guido* and *Walter Maynard*, her admiration of genius, and her opinion of its fate ; under those of *Francesca* and *Ethel Churchill*, the adverse destiny of pure and high-souled woman.

These volumes abound with proofs of a shrewd observation of society, with masterly sketches of character, and the most beautiful snatches of scenery. But what surprise and delight more than all, are the sound and true estimates of humanity, and the honest boldness with which her opinions are expressed. The clear perception of the fearful social condition of this country, and the fervent advocacy of the poor, scattered through these works, but especially the last

do honour to her woman's heart. These portions of L. E. L.'s writings require to be yet more truly appreciated.

There is another characteristic of her prose writings which is peculiar. Never were the feelings and experiences of authorship so cordially and accurately described. She tells us freely all that she has learned. She puts words into the mouth of Walter Maynard, of which all who have known anything of literary life must instantly acknowledge the correctness. The author's heart never was more completely laid open, with all its hopes, fears, fatigues, and enjoyments, its bitter and its glorious experiences. In the last hours of Walter Maynard, she makes him utter what must at that period have been daily more and more her own conviction. "I am far cleverer than I was. I have felt, have thought so much! Talk of the mind exhausting itself!—never! Think of the mass of materials which every day accumulates! Then experience, with its calm, clear light, corrects so many youthful fallacies; every day we feel our higher moral responsibility, and our greater power."

They are the convictions of "higher moral responsibilities and greater power," which strike us so forcibly in the later writings of L. E. L.

But what shall we say to the preparation of prussic-acid, and its preservation by Lady Marchmont? What of the perpetual creed of L. E. L., that all affection brings woe and death?

Whether this melancholy belief in the tendency of the great theme of her writings, both in prose and poetry,—this irresistible annunciation, like another Cassandra, of woe and desolation,—this evolution of scenes and characters in her last work, bearing such dark resemblance to those of her own after experience,—this tendency, in all her plots, to a tragic catastrophe, and this final tragedy itself,—whether these be all mere coincidences or not, they are still but parts of an unsolved mystery. Whatever they are, they are more than strange, and are enough to make us superstitious; for surely, if ever

"Coming events cast their shadows before,"

they did so in the foreboding tone of this gifted spirit.

The painful part of Miss Landon's history is, that almost from the first outbreak of her reputation, she became the mark of the most atrocious calumnies. How far any girlish thoughtlessness had given a shadow of ground on which the base things said of her might rest, is not for me, who only saw her occasionally, to say. But my own impressions, when I saw and conversed with her, were, that no guilty spirit could live in that bright, clear, and generous person, nor could look forth through those candid, playful, and transparent eyes. It was a presence which gave you the utmost confidence in the virtuous and innocent heart of the poetess, however much you might regret the circumstances which had diverted her mind from the cultivation of its very highest powers. In after years, and when I had not seen her for a long time, rumours of a like kind, but with a show of foundation more startling, were spread far and wide. That

they were equally untrue in fact, we may reasonably infer from the circumstance, that they who knew her best still continued her firm and unflinching friends. Dr. and Mrs. Todd Thomson, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mr. Blanchard, General Fagan and his family, and many others; amongst them, Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, Miss Jane Porter, Miss Strickland, Miss Costello, and Mrs. and Miss Sheldon, whose inmate she had been for so many years; who began with prejudice against her, and who soon became, and continued to the last, with the very best means of observation, her sincere friends.

These calumnies, however, must for years have been a source of anguish to her, haunting, but, happily, not disabling her in the midst of her incessant exertions for the holiest of purposes. They put an end to one engagement of marriage: they very probably threw their weight into the decision which conducted her into the fatal one she ultimately formed.

The circumstances connected with her marriage and death are too well known to require narrating here. Time has thrown no clear light on the mystery. Mr. Laman Blanchard, in his memoir of her, has laboured hard to prove that she did not die by the poison of prussic-acid. His reasoning will not bear examination. That she died with a bottle in her hand, which contained it, he confesses is proved by other evidence than that of Mrs. Bailey, who first found her dead.

But the question still remains, whether she took it purposely; and it may be very strongly doubted that she did. From all that has transpired, it is more probable that she had taken it by mistake.

That she was likely to take this poison purposely, there is no ground to imagine. On the contrary, to the very last, her letters to England were full of a cheerfulness that has all the air of thorough reality. It is true, there are many circumstances that we could wish otherwise: that her husband had, it is believed, a family by a native Fantee woman; that he insisted on the marriage with Miss Landon in England remaining a secret till just before sailing, as if fearful of the news preceding him home; that he went on shore in the night, through the surf, and at great risk, as if to remove this woman from the spot, or to see that she was not on it; that the last two letters written to her family in England were detained by her husband; that the Mrs. Bailey, who attended on Mrs. Maclean, and was about to sail the next day with her husband for England, not only gave up these letters, but stayed there a year longer; and that she turned out to be anything but truthful in her statements. Besides these, there are other facts which surprise us. We are told that Mrs. Maclean married under the impression that she was not to go out to Cape Coast at all: that on discovering it, it was stipulated that she was to stay only three years. Mr. Maclean knew the position L. E. L. had held here—that she had been occupied with writing, and not with cooking. He must have been sensible that a woman who had been, for the greater part of her life, the cherished and caressed favourite of the most intelligent society of London, could not make, for the man of her choice, a more entire

sacrifice than to go out to a distant barbarous coast and settlement, in which was no single Englishwoman, except the wife of a missionary; and we might, therefore, reasonably expect that he should make every arrangement possible for her comfort; that he should not object to her taking an English maid; that he should, at least, have pots and pans in his house, where his celebrated wife was to become housekeeper, and almost cook; that he should not lie in bed all day, and leave her to entertain strange governors and their suites. There are these and other things, which we must always wish had been much otherwise; but all these will not induce us to let go the belief to which we cling, that L. E. L., though she unquestionably died by her own hand, died so through accident, and not through resolve or cause for it.

The circumstances connected with this last home of the young poetess are strange enough in themselves, independent of the closing tragedy. That she who was educated in, and for, London; who could hardly bear the country; who says she worshipped the very pavement of London; who was the idolized object of the ever moving and thronging social circles of the metropolis,—should go voluntarily out to the desert of an African coast, to a climate generally fatal to Englishwomen, and to the year-long solitude of that government fort, was a circumstance which astonished every one. The picture of this home of exile, and of herself and her duties in it, is drawn livingly by her own pen. Before giving this, we may here simply state that Cape Coast Castle is one of the eight British settlements on the Gold Coast. The castle stands on a rock of gneiss and mixed slate, about twenty feet above the level of the sea, in $5^{\circ} 6' N.$ lat., and $1^{\circ} 10' W.$ long. Outside there is a native town; and the adjacent country, to a considerable distance, has been cleared, and rendered fit for cultivation. The ruling natives are the Fantees, a clever, stirring, turbulent race.

In one of her letters, she gives this account of the situation and scenery of the castle:—"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, then 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 been once out of the fort by daylight, and then was delighted. The salt lakes were first dyed a deep crimson by the setting sun, and as we returned they seemed a faint violet by the twilight, just broken by a thousand stars; while before us was the red beacon-light."

We may complete the view, exterior and interior, by other extracts. "I must say in itself the place is infinitely superior to all that 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*. We had also a visit from Colonel Bosch, the Dutch governor, a most gentleman-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.”

“The native huts I first took for ricks of hay ; but those of the better sort are pretty white houses, with green blinds. The English gentlemen resident here have very large houses, quite mansions, with galleries running round them. Generally speaking, the vegetation is so thick, that the growth of the shrubs rather resembles a wall. The solitude here is Robinson Crusoeish. The hills are covered to the top with what we should call calf-weed, but here is called bush : on two of these hills are small forts, built by Mr. Maclean. The natives seem obliging and intelligent, and look very picturesque, with their fine dark figures, with pieces of the country cloth flung round them : they seem to have an excellent ear for music. The band seems to play from morning to night.

“The castle is a fine building, a sort of double square, shaped like an H, of which we occupy the middle. A large flight of steps leads to the hall, on either side of which is a suite of rooms. The one in which I am writing would be pretty in England. It is of a pale blue, and hung with some beautiful prints, for which Mr. Maclean has a passion.

“You cannot imagine how different everything is here to England. I hope, however, in time to get on pretty well. There is, nevertheless, a deal to do. I have never been accustomed to house-keeping, and here everything must be seen to by yourself ; it matters not what it is, it must be kept under lock and key. I get up at seven, breakfast at eight, and give out flour, butter, sugar, all from the store. I have found the bag you gave me so useful to hold the keys, of which I have a little army. We live almost entirely on chickens and ducks, for if a sheep be killed it must be all eaten that day. The bread is very good : they use palm oil for yeast. Yams are a capital substitute for potatoes ; pies and puddings are scarce thought of, unless there is a party. The washing has been a terrible trouble, but I am getting on better. I have found a woman to wash some of the things, but the men do all the starching and ironing. Never did people require so much looking after. Till Mr. Maclean comes in from court at seven, I never see a living creature but the servants. * * * The weather is now very warm ; the nights so hot that you can only bear the lightest sheet over you. As to the beds, the mattresses are so hard, they are like iron. The damp is very destructive : the dew is like rain, and there are no fire-places : you

would not believe it, but a grate would be the first of luxuries. Keys, scissors, everything rusts. * * * I find the servants civil, and not wanting in intelligence, but industry. Each has servants to wait on him, whom they call sense boys, *i. e.* they wait on them to be taught. Scouring is done by the prisoners. Fancy three men employed to clean a room, which, in England, an old woman could do in an hour, while a soldier stands over them with a drawn bayonet."

Such was the last, strange, solitary home of L. E. L. ; such the strange life of one who had been before employed only in diffusing her beautiful fancies amid her countrymen. Here she was rising at seven, giving out flour, sugar, &c., from the stores, seeing what room she would have cleaned, and then sitting down to write. In the midst of this new species of existence, she is suddenly plunged into the grave, leaving the wherefore a wonder. The land which was the attraction of her childhood, singularly enough, thus became her sepulchre. A marble slab, with a Latin inscription, is said to be erected there by her husband.

We may now add that Captain Maclean himself died at Cape Coast on the 22d of May, 1846.