

A Poem of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
Findens' Tableaux, 1837

compiled
by
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Arabia. The Arab Maid



Arabia

Painted by F. Corbaux Engraved by E. Finden

ARABIA.

THE ARAB MAID.

While sad suspense and chill delay
Bereave my wounded soul of rest ;
New hopes, new fears, from day to day,
By turns assail my lab'ring breast.
My heart, which ardent love consumes,
Throbs with each agonising thought ;
So flutters, with entangled plumes,
The lark, in wily meshes caught.

SIR W. JONES, *from the Arabic.*

FROM the dark and sunless caverns,
Where earth's waters dwell ;
By the palm-trees of the desert,
Springeth forth a well.
Still the shadow of its birth-place
Rests upon the wave,
Haunted with ancestral darkness,
From its central cave.

Never does it know the sunshine,
Dark it is and deep ;
In its silent depths at noontide
Do the planets sleep.
Round it lies the sculptured marble
Of some ancient town,
Long since, with its towers and temples,
To the dust gone down.

Yet it shareth with the present ;
For the winds that pass,
Catch its freshness, and around it
Grows the pleasant grass.

THE ARAB MAID.

Over it the fragrant tamarind
Sheds its early leaves ;
And the pelican's white bosom
From it life receives.

Not alone to the far planets,
When the sun is bright,
Does it serve a clear, dark mirror,
For their haunting light :
But a dream of human beauty
Lingers on its tide ;
Never yet were stars so lovely
As the eyes beside.

Lovely is the Arab maiden,
Leaning thoughtful there ;
While the languid gale of evening
Lifts not her black hair.
Purple is her brodered caftan ;
And the golden band
Tells she is a chieftain's daughter
In that eastern land.

Scarcely has she left her childhood,
Yet a deeper trace,
Than our first and careless summers,
Is upon her face.
On that youthful cheek is paleness ;
For the heart's repose
Is disturbed by dreams and fancies,
That deny the rose.

Touched with tender melancholy
Is the youth of love,
Haunted by unconscious knowledge
Of its clouds above.
Doth her heart call up one image,
Unavowed how dear ?
For acknowledged hope too timid,
Yet too fond for fear ?

Will the stately dark-eyed warrior
Bear her to his tent ?
Yet, with dreaming of her lover,
What sad thoughts are blent !
When they fling the veil, rose coloured,
O'er the parting bride ;
Not alone does it hide blushes —
It has tears to hide.

She must leave an aged mother ; —
Leave — no more to see ;
She must leave her ancient dwelling —
Sad her home may be.
She must leave her young companions,
With their tale and song ;
With the bride across the threshold,
Goes not youth along.

Never to the heart of woman
Cometh love alone ;
One sad, pale companion, knowledge,
Ever is his own.
Many are the things he teacheth —
Hope, and fear, and pain ;
For it is the mind's awaking —
His impassioned reign.

Never more will careless childhood
Lie around her path ;
Every flower that now she weareth,
Some deep moral hath.
She could weep to see them fading,
Fading while so fair ;
For some inward whisper tells her,
Such all pleasures are.

Love hath bade her leave her pillow,
For the moon's sweet light ;
And her young heart has been troubled
By the solemn night.

In the presence of its wonders
She hath held her breath ;
For the first time she hath blended
Thoughts of love and death.

But there comes a dream more tender
To the maiden's brow,
All the lip in rosy silence
Never may avow.
Does she think how first when watching
For her lover's feet ?
Did the tent's loose canvass waving
Bid that young heart beat ?

Time will still that quick, sweet beating ; —
Cold and cruel power !
Nothing life can bring us after
Will be like that hour.
Soon, thou beautiful Arabian,
Will such dream be done ;
Other hopes have many moments —
Love has only one.

L. E. L.