

Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
Death's Doings

compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

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DEATH'S DOINGS :
CONSISTING OF NUMEROUS
ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS,
IN
Prose and Verse,
THE
FRIENDLY CONTRIBUTIONS OF VARIOUS WRITERS ;
PRINCIPALLY INTENDED AS
ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
THIRTY COPPER-PLATES,
DESIGNED AND ETCHED
BY R. DAGLEY,
AUTHOR OF " SELECT GEMS FROM THE ANTIQUE," &c.

SECOND EDITION,
WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

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1827.

See also Letitia Landon's Sketches from Drawings by Mr Dagley
in The Literary Gazette, 27th July 1822 onwards.



THE PILGRIM.

THE PILGRIM.

AND Palmer, grey Palmer, by Galilee's wave,
Oh! saw you Count Albert, the gentle and brave,
When the crescent waxed faint, and the red cross
rushed on,
Oh! saw you him foremost on Mount Lebanon.

* * * * *

The ladye sat in her lonely tower,—
She woke not her lute, she touched not a flower ;
Though the lute wooed her hand with its silver string,
And the roses were rich with the wealth of spring :
But she thought not of them, for her heart was afar,
It was with her knight in the Holy war.

She look'd in the west ;—it was not to see
The crimson and gold of the sky and sea,
Lighted alike by the setting sun,
As rather that day than night were begun ;

But it was that a star was rising there,
Like a diamond set in the purple air,
The natal star of her own true knight—
No marvel the maiden watched its light :
At their parting hour they bade it be
Their watch and sign of fidelity.

Amid the rich and purple crowd
That throng the west, is a single cloud,
Differing from all around, it sails,
The cradle of far other gales
Than the soft and southern airs, which bring
But the dew and the flower-sigh on their wing ;
Like some dark spirit's shadowy car,
It floats on and hides that lovely star,
While the rest of the sky is bright and clear,
The sole dark thing in the hemisphere.

But the maiden had turned from sea and sky,
To gaze on the winding path, where her eye
A pilgrim's distant form had scann'd :
He is surely one of the sacred band
Who seek their heavenly heritage
By prayer and toil and pilgrimage !
She staid not to braid her raven hair,—
Loose it flow'd on the summer air ;

She took no heed of her silvery veil,—
Her cheek might be kiss'd by the sun or the gale :
She saw but the scroll in the pilgrim's hand,
And the palm-branch that told of the Holy Land.

L. E. L.



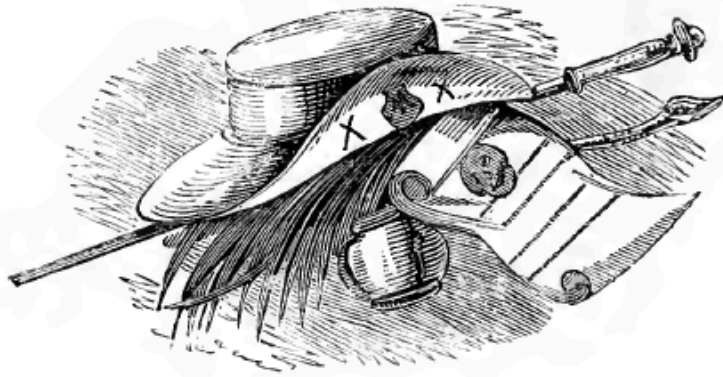
THE SCROLL.

“THE SCROLL.”

THE maiden's cheek blush'd ruby bright,
And her heart beat quick with its own delight;
Again she should dwell on those vows so dear,
Almost as if her lover were near.
Little deemed she that letter would tell
How that true lover fought and fell.
The maiden read till her cheek grew pale—
Yon drooping eye tells all the tale :
She sees her own knight's last fond prayer,
And she reads in that scroll her heart's despair.
Oh ! grave, how terrible art thou
To young hearts bound in one fond vow.
Oh ! human love, how vain is thy trust ;
Hope ! how soon art thou laid in dust.

Thou fatal pilgrim, who art thou,
As thou fling'st the black veil from thy shadowy brow?
I know thee now, dark lord of the tomb,
By the pale maiden's withering bloom :
The light is gone from her glassy eye,
And her cheek is struck by mortality ;
From her parted lip there comes no breath,
For that scroll was fate—its bearer—Death.

L. E. L.





THE SERENADE

THE SERENADE.

'Tis midnight, and there is a world of stars
Hanging in the blue heaven, bright and clear,
And shining, as if they were only made
To sparkle in the mirror of the lake,
And light up flower-gardens and green groves.
By yonder lattice, where the thick vine-leaves
Are canopy and curtain, set with gems
Rich in the autumn's gift of ruby grapes,
A maiden leans :—it is a lovely night,
But, lovely as it is, the hour is late
For beauty's vigil, and to that pale cheek
Sleep might give back the roses watching steals.
Slumber, and happy slumber, such as waits
On youth, and hope, and innocence, was made
To close those soft blue eyes. What can they know
Of this world's sorrow, strife, and anxiousness?
What can Wealth be to the young mind that has
A mine of treasure in its own fresh feelings?
And Fame, oh woman! has no part in it; and Hate,
Those sweet lips cannot know it; and Remorse,
That waits on guilt,—and Guilt has set no sign

On that pure brow : 'tis none of these that keep
Her head from its down pillow, but there is
A visitant in that pale maiden's breast
Restless as Avarice, anxious as Fame,—
Cruel as Hate, and pining as Remorse,—
Secret as Guilt ; a passion and a power
That has from every sorrow taken a sting,—
A flower from every pleasure, and distilled
An essence where is blent delight and pain ;
And deep has she drained the bewildering cup,
For Isadore watches and wakes with Love.

Hence is it that of the fair scene below
She sees one only spot ; in vain the lake
Spreads like a liquid sky, o'er which the swans
Wander, fleece-clouds around the one small isle,
Where lilies glance like a white marble floor,
In the tent made by pink acacia boughs ;
In vain the garden spreads, with its gay banks
Of flowers, o'er which the summer has just pass'd,
The bride-like rose,—the rich anemone,—
The treasurer of June's gold ; the hyacinth,
A turret of sweet colours ; and, o'er all,
The silver fountains playing :—but in vain !
Isadore's eye rests on that cypress grove :
A bright warm crimson is upon her cheek,
And her red lip is opened as to catch

The air that brought the sound upon the gale.
There is a sweet low tone of voice and lute,
And, oh! Love's eyes are lightening,—she has caught
A shadow, and the wave of a white plume
Amid those trees, and, with her hair flung back,
She listens to the song :—

Lady sweet, this is the hour
Time's loveliest to me ;
For now my lute may breathe of love,
And it may breathe to thee.

All day I sought some trace of thine,
But never likeness found ;
But still to be where thou hast been
Is treading fairy ground.

I watched the blushing evening fling
Her crimson o'er the skies,—
I saw it gradual fade, and saw,
At length, the young moon rise.

And very long it seemed to me
Before her zenith hour,
When sleep and shade conspire to hide
My passage to thy bower.

I will not say—wake not, dear love,—
I know thou wilt not sleep ;
Wilt thou not from thy casement lean,
And one lone vigil keep ?

Ah ! only thus to see thee, love,
And watch thy bright hair play
Like gold around thine ivory arm,
Is worth a world of day.

Gradual he had drawn nearer and more near,
And now he stood so that his graceful shape
Was visible, and his flashing eyes were raised
With all the eloquence of love to her's :
She took an azure flower from her hair,
And flung it to him.—Flowers are funeral gifts,—
And, ere his hand could place upon his heart
The fragile leaves, another hand was there—
The hand of Death.

Alas for her proud kinsmen !
'Tis their work ! the gallant and the young
Lies with the dagger in his faithful breast,—
The destiny of love.

L. E. L.



THE WARRIOR.

THE WARRIOR.

It came upon the morning wind
One loud and thrilling tone,
And distant hills sent forth their voice,—
The trumpet-call was blown.

And sterner grew each stately brow
As that war-blast pass'd by,
And redder grew each warrior cheek,
Brighter each warrior eye.

But other cheeks grew pale to hear,
And other eyes grew dim;
Woman shares not man's battle joy,—
That joy is all for him.

The same blast lights the glance of flame,
Darkens the martial frown;
At which a woman's rose-lip fades,—
At which her heart sinks down.

Proudly that trumpet sweeps thy hills,
Land of the sword and shrine,
It calls the soldier of the cross
To fight for Palestine.

It roused one tent, which stood apart
Within the barrier made
By many a green and creeping shrub
And one tall palm-tree's shade.

It roused a warrior and his bride—
His bride! What doth she there?
Oh, rather ask, when led by love,
What will not woman dare?

Said I, her timid nature was
Like her cheek's timid hue;
But fearful though that nature be,
She hath her courage too.

Go ask the fever couch, the cell
Of guilt; she hath no part
In courage of the head and hand,
She hath that of the heart.

'Tis this has brought that gentle one
From her fair Provence bower,
Where in her husband's halls she dwelt,
Nurs'd like a lovely flower.

That trumpet-call, it roused them both
From a sweet dream of home,
Roused him to hopes that with such sound
To gallant spirits come.

And she,—at least she hid the fears
That clouded her fair brow,—
Her prayers had guarded him in fight,
Might they not guard him now?

She armed him, though her trembling hand
Shook like a leaf the while;—
The battle had his onward glance,
But she his lingering smile.

She brought the blue and broidered scarf,
Her colours for his breast;
But what dark dreary shape has brought
His helm and plumed crest?

Fell Shade ! they see, they heed thee not,
Thou of the noiseless wing,
The viewless shaft, the sudden call—
O Death, here is thy sting.

The lips would close in pious hope,
The eyes in willing sleep,
But for the tears, the bitter tears,
That love is left to weep.

'Tis evening—and the blood-red west
Has not so deep a red,
As hath that slaughter-field where lie
The dying and the dead.

'Tis midnight—and the clang of steel,
The human shout and cry,
Are silent as if sleep and peace
Were upon earth and sky.

The strife is past like other storms,
Soldier and chief are gone,
Yet lightly falls a woman's step—
What doth she there alone ?

'Tis she! the Provence Rose; oh, well
Such name beseems her now,
The pale and stony dead around
Wear not more ghastly brow.

Woe for her search—too soon she finds
Her valiant knight laid low;
Thou fatal helm, thou hast betrayed
His head to the life-blow.

One blasting gaze—one loud wild shriek,—
She sinks upon his breast:
O Death! thou hast been merciful,—
For both, both are at rest.

L. E. L.

