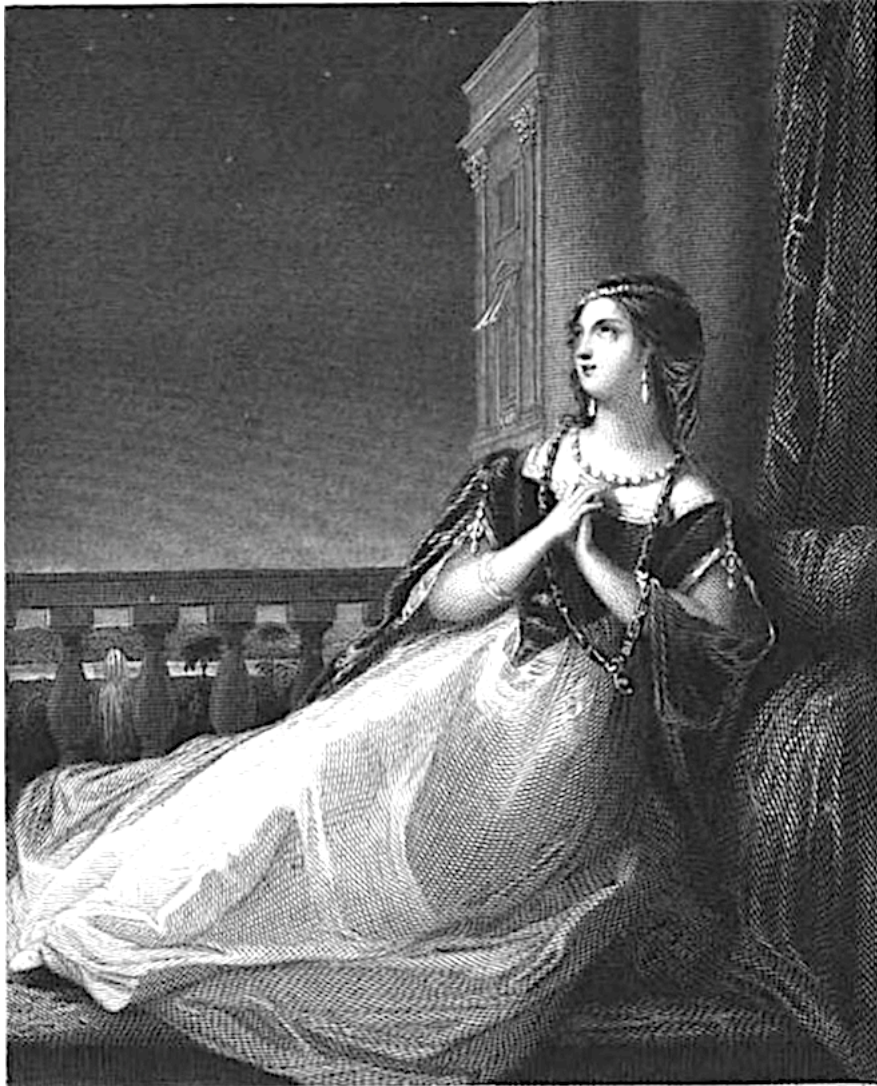


Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
The Literary Souvenir, 1831

compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

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THE MAIDEN ASTROLOGER

Painted by W. Boxall Engraved by E. Finden

THE MAIDEN ASTROLOGER.

Her thoughts were not like girlhood's; bird nor flower
Gave her affection room; and when her face
Assumed its perfect beauty, never blush
Nor smile spoke vanity or love; her hours were passed
In some old window-seat, whose coloured panes
Shed a mysterious light upon the scroll,
On whose strange characters she pored; the night
Still found her on the terrace, her dark eyes
Filled with the wild light of the stars she watched,—
They say, she read their language.

OVER the terrace the bright stars shine,
Who is there but must feel them divine?
Softly the night wind stirs the air,
The breath of the orange and rose they bear;
And the branches in music swing to and fro,
Each leaf like a lute-note, sweet and low.

This is a night for the maiden to dream
Of the love which will colour her life's pure stream;—
This is a night for the maiden to pray,
Whose heart has been given, whose love is away!
Young is the maiden that watches the sky,
There is no love on her cheek, or her eye.—

Love doth colour the young cheek with rose,
Like the tide in the moonshine, it ebbs and flows.—
Now passionate pale—now fain to hide
The sudden rush of its crimson tide;
But the lady's cheek is calm and pale,
It wears no blushes, it needs no veil.—

Love doth teach the young eye to seek
The shade of the lash, downcast on the cheek,—
Its darkness is brightened by gentle tears,
Its splendour is softened by tender fears ;
But the lady's eye is stedfast and bright,
And its depths are solemn as those of the night.

Her beauty is that of a statue's face,
A calm, serene, and spiritual grace ;
The mind on her lofty brow is bright
With a power that speaks not of earthly light ;
And her raven locks o'er her white neck flow ;
No throbbing pulse ever warmed its snow.

From an ancient line was the maiden sprung,
Haughty in deed, and daring in tongue,
She was as proud and as bold as the rest,
Though her spirit was turned to a higher quest,
Still the pride of her race was the only tie
That came between her soul and the sky.

She raised her voice, it was low and sweet,
Yet the wind sank down, as hushed at her feet ;—
She drew around her a mystic line,
She named a name, and she signed a sign ;—
At once to her charmed vision was given
The secrets the bright stars write upon heaven.

On her curved red lip was no sign of fear,
Though the phantom of future days drew near :
She watched, and saw a glorious band,
Spurs on the heel and swords in the hand ;

And a 'broidered banner swept the space,—
She saw it was wrought with the crest of her race!
She saw a noble city arise—
Tower and temple darkened the skies :
Then gallant and stately warriors passed,
Till throne and coronet rose at last.
One chieftain stepped his comrades before,—
He was of her race,— she asked no more.
Calmly she folded her arms on her breast,
As if disdaining the pride she repressed ;
Perhaps 't was the mournful midnight that stole
In sadness unwonted over her soul.
Dark the clouds gathered upon the gale,
Whose sound was less of triumph than wail.
Next day, her kinsmen in counsel met—
Deep was the cast on that council set—
And they paused till the lady came to the board,
And her words like the red wine their spirit poured.
“ On! on!” she said, “ with a dauntless brow,
The star of the Medici's dominant now.”
Her spirit passed in its earnest words,
As the harp that breaks from its over-wrought chords.
Her kinsmen went forth in pride and power,
Florence was theirs ere the evening hour;
But the day of triumph was that of doom,
And their war-trumpets rang o'er their Sybil's tomb.

L. E. L.



ROBERT BURNS AND HIS HIGHLAND MARY

Painted by R. Edmonstone Engraved by J. Mitchell

ROBERT BURNS AND HIS HIGHLAND MARY.

After a pretty long trial of the most ardent reciprocal affection, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr, where we spent a day in taking a farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands.

Burns' Letters.

A Highland girl, a peasant he,
To whom the present made
Within itself eternity,
And the whole world *that* shade

Beneath the trees which gently stirred
With music on each bough,
The waving leaf, the singing-bird,
And whispers fairy low,—

A long, a bright long summer's day
Passed, like the stream beside,
Which ran in shine and song away,
Though scarcely seen to glide.

They parted — she to early rest,
 And he to earn a name
 A nation ranks amid her best,
 And gives, what they gave, fame :

Let no one deem, that vain regret
 Is in the peevish lays
 Which say, too high a price is set
 Upon such hard-won praise.

Look on the wrong and littleness,
 The sorrow and the strife,
 The hope, that every day makes less,
 Of literary life ;

Look on the consciousness of power,
 The presence of despair,
 The vision of the loftier hour,
 Broken by real care ;

Even as the Jewish monarch fared,
 Who walked in joy or pain
 Alternate, as sweet music shared
 The evil spirit's reign.

But what have we to do with this ?
 Ours is that earlier time,
 Ere the heart fevered for vain bliss,
 Or the lip spoke in rhyme.

The power within him only gave
 New beauty to the scene ;
 Linked love-thoughts with the gentle wave,
 And with the forest green ;

And gave the sweet and simple face
 On which he gazed, a charm ;—
 A grace beyond all other grace,
 Beyond all time to harm.

The influence of that hour appears,
 When it could only seem
 'Mid other loves, and hopes, and fears,
 To memory, like a dream.

Still it rose beautiful and young ;
 A thought alone — apart —
 A first creed, to which faith still clung,—
 An Eden of the heart !

Ah! early love! ah! only love!
 Yes, only!—what can be
 Our flower below, our star above,
 In after life, like thee?

Affection lingers to the last,
 And we may love once more ;
 Morn's freshness is with morning past—
 We love not as of yore.

We have grown selfish, and we know
The strength of chance and change ;
For many a voice is altered now,
And many an eye grown strange.

Where is the early confidence,
Whose kindly trust depends,
Drawn from itself its inference,
On future hours and friends ?

Gone, gone ! so soon !—yet not in vain
Has been their sojourn here ;
A fountain in the desert plain
Of memory, pure and dear.

A well of sympathy for those,
The loving and the young,
Letting not that harsh circle close
By interest round us flung.

If thus with them—the stern, the cold,
What must its charm have been
To one cast in the poet's mould,—
He of this fairy scene ?

A spirit from that hour was shed,
His spell of song to be ;
And if in other hearts he read,
His own heart was the key !

L. E. L.

THE VIOLET.

WHY better than the lady rose
Love I this little flower?
Because its fragrant leaves are those
I loved in childhood's hour.

Tho' many a flower may win my praise,
The violet has my love;
I did not pass my childish days
In garden or in grove:

My garden was the window-seat,
Upon whose edge was set
A little vase,—the fair, the sweet,—
It was the violet."

It was my pleasure and my pride;—
How I did watch its growth!
For health and bloom, what plans I tried,
And often injured both.

I placed it in the summer shower,
I placed it in the sun;
And ever, at the evening hour,
My work seemed half undone.

The broad leaves spread, the small buds grew,
How slow they seemed to be;
At last there came a tinge of blue,—
’T was worth the world to me!

At length the perfume filled the room,
Shed from their purple wreath;
No flower has now so rich a bloom,
Has now so sweet a breath.

I gathered two or three,— they seemed
Such rich gifts to bestow;
So precious in my sight, I deemed
That all must think them so.

Ah! who is there but would be fain
To be a child once more;
If future years could bring again
All that they brought before.

My heart’s world has been long o’erthrown,
It is no more of flowers;
Their bloom is past, their breath is flown,
Yet I recal those hours.

Let nature spread her loveliest,
By spring or summer nurst;
Yet still I love the violet best,
Because I loved it first.

L. E. L.

