

Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
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compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

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THE BOON.

BY L. E. L.

COME tell me, love, if I had power
 As I have will to waste on thee, —
 Not waste— for never fairy's dower
 Could seem too precious thine to be :

If I had power to give thee all
 The earth, the ocean, or the air
 E'er girdled in their mighty thrall,
 What wouldst thou, Maiden, for thy share ?

What wilt thou have ? Shall time restore
 The wonders of those fallen walls,
 Palmyra's giant domes of yore ?
 Wilt dwell a queen in marble halls ?

Must shining columns rear thy dome
 To rival midnight's starry sky ?
 The quarry yields too mean a home, —
 The golden mine shall thine supply.

Kings shall lay down their diadems
 To glitter on thy meanest slave ;
 Thy lightest step shall be on gems,
 Or pearls yet dewy from the wave.

Old Egypt's valleys of the rose
Shall feed thy lamps with fragrant oil ;
Thy ivory caskets shall enclose
The sweet Manilla's fragrant spoil.

The East shall send its spice and gold,
The West, its labour and its skill,
To raise for thee a fairy hold,
To win thy smile, and work thy will.

There never shall the winter lower,
But summer soften into spring ;
There shall no branch mourn faded flower,
There shall no bird forget to sing.

Thou dost love flowers — the glorious dyes
That paint the eastern world shall dwell
By those that catch our April skies,—
The violet thou lovest so well.

Down dropped the wreath she bound the while,
When ceased the voice on which she hung ;
She gave him one sweet serious smile,
And spoke as if a lute were strung.

“ Ah !” said the maid, “ an easy task,
From the wide world to choose my part ;
What of thine empire could I ask,
But what is now mine own — thy heart ?”



THE FESTIVAL

Drawn by W. Purser Engraved by E. Finden

THE FESTIVAL.

BY L. E. L.

It is a festal meeting,
For flask and fruit are there ;
The wind, in its retreating,
Brings music through the air.
It is an hour for gladness,
So golden is the day,
If there are signs of sadness,
Their gloom is done away.

Tho' the past has many a token
That destruction has been here ;
Tho' the column lieth broken,
And the ruined shrine be near ;
The acanthus twines above them,
The wild flowers know their place ;
And we only feel we love them
For their beauty and their grace.

We think not of their splendour, —
They are lovelier in decline ;
And a dream, the fair and tender,
Floats o'er the fallen shrine.
If haunted by the beauty
Of Oreades long past by,
We turn with sweeter duty
To the soft eyes shining nigh.

Now God be praised that flowers
In the summer days have birth ;
And for the lovely hours
He sendeth to the earth.
That ilex, whose dark sweeping
Flings down so sweet a shade,
Seems as if for its sole keeping
A fairy world were made.

Amid the wild flowers lying
There is a graceful band ;
The green leaves round them sighing,
And the lute is in their hand.
They are singing sweetest singing,
It riseth on the air ;
Its way to heaven winging
As if its home were there.

Such hours are more than pleasure ;
 When the song itself is o'er,
It lingers like a treasure
 In the heart it cheered before ;
And still its memory cheereth,
 And keepeth its sweet hold,
When the weary world appeareth
 Too absolute and cold.

Two apart are standing lonely,
 Watching each other's eyes,
As if the world held only
 The space that in them lies.
You can see her graceful stooping,
 As if she feared to speak ;
You can see the long lash drooping
 Upon her rose-red cheek.

The heaven now shining over,
 Has entered in each heart :
That maiden and her lover !
 How little earth has part
In the young and earnest feeling
 Which, like a star, hath shone,
'Mid the spirit's depths revealing
 A world as yet unknown.

This hour will pass — all passes,
On this life's fleeting scene ;
But still the future glasses
All that the past has been.
This hour will pass, not perish,
From the heart which now it stirs ;
For memory will cherish
The sweetest which was hers.

When silence has been broken
By a joy hope could not reach,
And words of love have spoken
Their first and softest speech.
Forgotten! — never — never —
They will soothe all after pain,
And life's loveliest things will ever
Bring back that hour again.



THE BLACK SEAL

Painted by J. Wood *Engraved by F. Bacon*

THE BLACK SEAL.

BY L. E. L.

FAR, far across the sunny sea,
The gallant vessel goes ;
Her white wings like a sea-bird's spread
That hovers o'er its foes.

Her decks are armed, the battle flag
Floats red around the mast ;
And other ships have lowered theirs
Where'er that flag has past.

Her course has been amid those isles,
Those western isles which first,
Like some sweet dream of Paradise,
Upon the Spaniard burst.

With scarlet flowers that light their hills
And valleys that are bright,
With golden creepers — and with birds,
That sparkle in their flight.

Yet danger haunts those lovely isles,
The fever and the foe —
The brighter that the sun-beams fall,
The deeper shade they throw.

But that fair ship has 'scaped them all,
The battle and the wreck ;
The fever has not touched a man
Upon her crowded deck.

Now home to England, home again,
Across the waves they go —
With triumph in her swelling sails,
And treasure down below.

Ah ! many a hearth is happy now,
And those who feared before,
Now the good ship is homeward bound,
Believe in hope once more.

Two orphans — lovely sisters they —
Had worn the winter through ;
The elder, for the younger's sake,
Watched the wild waters blue.

But now they looked, with eager eyes,
Towards the setting sun ;
Rejoicing, as the evening came,
Another day was done.

For they began to count the hours,
When, from the salt sea foam,
Back, to his long betrothed bride,
Their sailor would come home.

But human hope is vanity,
And human trust is vain ;
Oh pity for them ! — could their eyes
Have looked across the main,

They would have seen a youthful step
Grow weaker day by day ;
They would have seen the hues of health
Waste gradual away.

One only, of the hardy crew,
That stately vessel bore,
Was doomed to see his native land
And his true love no more.

One mournful eve — a sullen plunge
Was heard below the wave —
The cannon pealed, the wild wind swept
O'er the young sailor's grave.

Days passed, they knew not of his death —
They looked for his return —
No more for him their porch shall bloom,
No more their hearth shall burn.

A letter comes, 'tis sealed with black,
What doth such letter here ?
She takes it — scarce her trembling hand
Can break that seal — for fear.

She drops the scroll — her sister's arm
Supports the sinking head ;
What of the loved one far away ?
It tells her — he is dead.
