

THE LITERARY GARLAND.

VOL. III.

AUGUST, 1845.

No. 8.

DRAMATIC SKETCH.

THE INTERCEPTED LETTER.

BY E. L. C.

[WITH AN ENGRAVING.]

SCENE.—A harvest field—Reapers busy at work—Two young girls apart from the rest, talking in a low tone as they bind their sheaves.

SUSANNE, (*spraking gaily.*)

How bright this morn!

Methinks the cloudless sky

Ne'er wore so rich a blue, nor laughed the sun
So joyously before: I ken not why;

Hut in her gala dress, Nature seems clad,
And every sound, from the wild throistle
Whistling in the brake, to the quick stroke
Of the sharp sickle 'mid the golden wheat,
Is full of mirth, and as it greets mine ear,
My heart with rapture dances in my breast.

FLORINE.

It hath no care, Susanne, no anxious thought
To cloud its joy, and cast a dark'ning shade
O'er its bright hopes. He, whom thou fondly lov'st,
Oft by thy side, partakes thy rustic toil,
And cheers thee with his smile; and when at eve,
On the green lawn the merry dance begins,
His hand it is that softly clasps thine own,
As with light foot thou tread'st its mazy rings,
Or wearied sit'st, led by his tender care,
On the cool turf to rest.

SUSANNE.

Thou too art loved.

FLORINE.

But dost not love again! And on this day
When light thy heart lies in thy gladsome breast,
Mine hath a double grief to weigh it down;
For twelve months since, aye, twelve this very morn,
I sat with Leon 'neath the spreading trees,
On yon green knoll, and heard his low breathed tale
Of tender love; heard it with downcast eye
And blushing cheek, that told my heart's deep joy.
'Twas such a morn as this—so bright the sky,
So soft the breeze, so musical the birds,

So sweetly flowed the clear brook's murmuring wave,
So richly lay the shadows on the field,
Checkered with golden sunshine, quivering bright
Among the ripened grain!

SUSANNE.

He left thee soon!

FLORINE.

Too soon, alas! Ere time with certainty
Had stamped our bliss, he followed to the wars
Our noble lord, and bravely fighting, fell!
Woe's me! that I a widow's name should bear,
Ere yet the bridal garland bound my brow
With blossoms white! withered those blossoms lie,
Like the bright hopes, whose transient beauty, they
In token flowers expressed. Flowers now, and hopes
Are perished all! strewing with faded leaves
His cold and silent grave! (*Weeps.*)

SUSANNE.

Nay, nurture not

This deep and cankerous grief, nor mourn with tears
The loved and lost, since thou hast pledged anew
Thy virgin truth to one who long hath wooed
With steadfast heart, and now rejoices
To have won thy love.

FLORINE.

That hath he not!

Full well he knows my love is with the dead,
Ne'er to be wakened into life again,
By pleading eye or tongue. This hand he craves,
And this alone I give—*not* even this
But for my mother's sake; her earnest eye,
Filled with imporing tears, that silent asks
If I, her pallid cheek, her wasting frame
Can calmly see, pining with want and care,
Yet selfishly withhold one little word,
Whose easy utterance, so to her it seems,
Shall change our state from poverty to ease,
And gild with peace, her life's declining day.