

THE LATE MRS. M'LEAN. (L. E. L.)

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 "A star has left the kindling sky,
 A lovely brilliant light ; —
 How many planets are on high,
 But *that* has left the night !"

The last poem of "L. E. L."

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 THE good, the gentle "L. E. L." is dead ! No more will her harp be struck by the fairy fingers which were used to produce from them most exquisite music ; no more will those lips that have breathed impassioned lays of tenderness and love sing of the heart's affections.

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 Letitia Elizabeth Landon was born either in 1801, or 1805, we are not aware of the precise year. She was about sixteen or seventeen when her first poetical effusions appeared in the columns of the *Literary Gazette*, and the verses which then flowed from her pen are, in our opinion, superior to her productions in after years, inasmuch as they possess more originality and truthfulness of feeling. Her later works are things of art. When she was sixteen, she wrote as she felt ; but at twenty-six she wrote as she had learnt. She had made herself mistress of the German language, and studied Goethe, because she was told Goethe was great. So he is ; but how different is his greatness from the greatness of "L. E. L." Goethe gives us a notion of the greatness, the immensity, and grandeur of creation ; "L. E. L." of its calmness and quiet. The writings of Goethe are of the sublime ; the writings of Miss Landon are of the beautiful.

Miss Landon was born in Hans Place, Chelsea, one of the dullest and most unromantic of "genteel" localities in the neighbourhood of the metropolis. She was of the old Herefordshire family of Tedstone Delamere. Her father was, at his outset in life, a midshipman, but afterwards became an army agent ; and died while yet a young man. Her uncle was head of Worcester College and Dean of Exeter, and a notice of his death appeared in the same paper that communicated to the public the loss of "L. E. L." In her childhood she used to compose long stories, and repeat them to her brother, and it was, moreover, her habit to walk about the grounds of Trevor Park, and lay awake half the night reciting her verses aloud. At length some of these verses found their way into the *Literary Gazette*, and they attracted much attention. "The Improvisatrice" was then published, and obtained for her a very high reputation. "The Troubadour," "The Golden Violet," and "The Vow of the Peacock," subsequently appeared.

Miss Landon was small and delicately formed ; her figure was exquisitely moulded, and her countenance was so full of expression that although her features were by no means regular, she was always

considered handsome. Her conversation was brilliant and witty. Like many persons of genius, her spirits were either too high or too low. "I write poetry," was her own remark, "with far more ease than I do prose, and with far greater rapidity. In prose I often stop and hesitate for a word ; in poetry, never. Poetry always carries me out of myself ; I forget everything in the world but the subject which has interested my imagination. It is the most subtle and insinuating of pleasures ; but, like all pleasures, it is dearly bought. It is always succeeded by extreme depression of spirits, and an overpowering sense of bodily fatigue. Mine has been a successful career ; and I hope I am earnestly grateful for the encouragement I have received, and the friends I have made, but my life has convinced me that a public career must be a painful one to a woman. The envy and the notoriety carry with them a bitterness which predominates over the praise." Miss Landon met with fewer enemies, we believe, than any other writer of her time ; even those who thought lightly of her genius, nevertheless respected the delicacy and purity of her character.

Her marriage with Mr. George Maclean, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, took place on the 21st of June, 1833, and a few days after that event she embarked with her husband for that fatal shore, which is the grave of so many valuable lives. After a voyage of much pain and wretchedness to herself, she arrived in safety ; entered immediately upon the discharge of the embarrassing and most difficult duties belonging to her station ; devoted her nights and days subsequently to a dangerous and exhausting attendance upon the sick-bed of her husband ; and on the morning of the 15th of October, died from the effects of poison, which she is conjectured to have swallowed mistakenly, in too large a quantity, while labouring under a paroxysm of pain. Such is, simply, and in the fewest possible words, her tragic and pitiable story. No tale in history or fiction was ever half so touching as her's. Into what gloomy vision of her wild imagination, thronged as it was with melancholy images, were there ever so many sorrows crowded.—*World of Fashion.*

 TRUTH.

I believe that nature herself has constituted truth as the supreme Deity, which is to be adored by mankind, and that she has given it greater force than any of the rest : for, being opposed as she is on all sides, and appearances of truth so often passing for the thing itself, in behalf of plausible falsehoods—yet, by her wonderful operation, she insinuates herself into the minds of men, sometimes exerting her strength immediately, and sometimes lying hid in darkness for a length of time, but at last she struggles through it, and appears triumphant over falsehood.—*Polybius.*