

605724



FLOWERS OF LOVELINESS;

TWELVE GROUPS
OF FEMALE FIGURES,
EMBLEMATIC OF FLOWERS:

DESIGNED BY VARIOUS
ARTISTS
WITH POETICAL ILLUSTRATIONS
BY L. E. L.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY ACKERMANN AND COMPANY,
STRAND.

1838.

TO VICTORIA.



VIOLET, GRACE OF THE VERNAL YEAR,
OFFER'D BE THOU TO THIS SPRING-LIKE REIGN !
IS NOT THY TINT TO THAT LADYE DEAR,
WHOSE BANNER OF BLUE IS THE LORD OF THE MAIN ?



IVY WE TWINE OF CHANGELESS GREEN,
CONSTANT FOR EVER IN LEAF AND BOUGH ;
SO MAY THE HEART OF OUR MAIDEN QUEEN
BE ALWAYS VERDANT AND FRESH AS NOW.



PARNATION, LACED WITH MANY A STREAK
OF BLOOMING RED ON ITS LEAFLETS BRIGHT,
MAY BE A TYPE OF HER MANTLING CHEEK,
BLENT WITH A BROW OF PEARLY WHITE.



ANSY, THOUGH HUMBLE AN HERB IT BE,
LOOK NOT UPON IT WITH SCORNFUL EYE :
ON VIRTUE, THAT LURKS IN LOW DEGREE,
A GLANCE SHOULD FALL KIND FROM THOSE ON HIGH.



LIVE, THY BRANCH, DOVE-BORNE O'ER THE FOAM,
WAS A SIGN FOR THE SURGES OF DEATH TO CEASE ;
SO, FROM THE LIPS OF OUR DOVE SHOULD COME
THE SOFT BUT THE SURE COMMAND OF PEACE.



ROSES OF ENGLAND, CEASING FROM FIGHT,
TWINE ROUND HER BROW IN WHOSE VEINS ARE MET
THE PRINCELY BLOOD THOSE ROSES UNITE
“IN THE VEINS OF THE NOBLEST PLANTAGENET.”



HIS, TO THEE, THE MAID OF THE BOW,
THAT PROMISES HOPE, HER NAME HAS GIVEN,
JOIN, THEN, THE WREATH AT HER FEET WE THROW,
WHO BEAMS AS A SYMBOL OF HOPE FROM HEAVEN.



ANEMONE, FLOWER OF THE WIND ! IS THE LAST
WE CULL, —AND OUR GARLAND IS NOW COMPLETE :
GENTLE THE CURRENT, AND SOFT BE THE BLAST,
WHICH VICTORIA, THE QUEEN OF THE OCEAN, SHALL MEET !



CLEMATIS.

AROUND the cross the flower is winding,
Around the old and ruined wall ;
And, with its fragile flowers, binding
The arch with which it soon must fall.
And two before that cross are praying,—
One, with her earnest eyes above ;
The other, as the heart delaying,
Blent heavenly with some earthly love.

St. Marie's shrine is now laid lowly,
Shivered its windows' rainbow panes ;
Silent its hymn ;—that pale flower solely,
Of all its former pride remains.
Hushed is the ancient anthem, keeping
The vigil of the silent night ;
Gone is the censer's silver sweeping ;
Dim is the sacred taper's light.

True, the rapt soul's divine emotion
The desert wind to heaven may bear ;
'Tis not the shrine that makes devotion,
The place that sanctifies the prayer ;
But yet I grieve that, thus departed,
The faith has left the fallen cell ;
How many, lorn and broken-hearted,
Were thankful in their shade to dwell !

Not on the young mind, filled with fancies
And hopes, whose gloss is not yet gone :
Not on the early world's romances,
Should the cell close its funeral stone !
Still is the quiet cloister wanted,
For those who wear a weary eye :
Whose life has long been disenchanted,
Who have one only wish—to die.

How oft the heart of woman, yearning
For love it dreams but never meets,
From the world, worn and weary, turning,
Could shelter in these dim retreats !
There were that solemn quiet given,
That life's harsh, feverish, hours deny !
There might the last prayer rise to heaven,
“ My God! I pray thee, let me die !”



THE HYACINTH.

WHERE is the bee its sweetest music bringing,—
The music living in its busy wings,
Like the small fountain's low perpetual singing,
Counting the quiet hours that noontide brings ?

It is the Hyacinth, whose sweet bells stooping,
Bend with the odours heavy in their cells ;
Amid the shadows of their fragrant drooping,
Memory, that is itself a shadow, dwells.

Ah ! do not wreathe it mid the golden tresses
That mock the sunshine on that childish head ;
Bind there the meadow flowers the wind caresses ;
Around a thousand careless blossoms shed.

But not the Hyacinth, whose purple sadness
To an old world long since gone by appeals :
What hath the child's one hour of eager gladness
To do with all that haunted flower reveals ?

Life gave its first deep colour to that blossom ;
Life, in an evil hour untimely shed ;
Down to the earth inclines its fragrant bosom,
As heavy with the memory of the dead.

Deep in the twilight depths of those dark flowers,
Are mystic characters amid them furled :
Are they the language of ancestral hours,—
The records of a younger, lovelier world ?

What is the secret written in their numbers,
 Strange as the figures on Egyptian shrines ?
What marvel of the ancient earth now slumbers
 In the obscurity of those dim lines ?

Little we know the secrets that surround us,
 And much has vanished from our later day ;
Nature with many a mystery has bound us,
 And much of our old love has past away.

No ancient voices in the dim woods crying,
 Reveal the hidden world ; no prophet's eye
Asks the foreseeing stars for their replying,
 And reads the future in the midnight sky.

Many the lovely things that now are banished
 From our harsh path—the actual and the cold
The angel and the spirit, each are vanished !
 Where are the beautiful that were of old ?

Vain, tho' so lovely, was this old believing ;
 But not thus vain the faith that gave it birth ;
It was the beauty of the far off—leaving
 The presence of the spiritual on earth.



THE HEATH.

Ah, gentle flower ! on which the wind
 Delays, as if it loved delay ;
I ask of thee no wreath to bind,
 I take no blossom from thy spray :
I only breathe upon thy bloom,
 And ask it, for my sake, to bear
A message on its faint perfume,
 Afar amid its native air.

Slight are the links that waken thought,
 And slight are those I trust to now ;
Yet by that soft flower may be brought
 The memory of a broken vow !
E'en as thy soft hues fade away,
 So fadeth love ! so doth the heart
See, in a single hour, decay
 All that was once its loveliest part.

Ah ! fairy blossoms ! tell my love,—
 Or he who once was love of mine, —
How can the conscious heaven above
 Upon such utter falsehood shine.
Tell him, that since he left my fears,
 To bear with all that absence bears,
I have but thought of him with tears ;
 I have but breathed of him in prayers.

I loved him, like an eager child,
 That knows not how it loves, or why !
My spirits brightened when he smiled ;
 I never gave him cause to sigh,—
Yet loved with woman's fondness too,
 That knows it is her life she gives ;
Deep, earnest, passionate, and true,
 The love that in the spirit lives.

Thou fragile flower ! if thou hast brought
His image, too beloved ! to me ;
It is because I link his thought
With every object that I see !
I watch the morning's rosy light
Redden amid the dewy air ;
I watch the silent stars at night ;
But only meet his image there.

Yet he is false ! he loves me not !
He leaves me lone and wretched here ;
Ye Heavens ! how can they be forgot, --
Vows that he called on ye to hear !
And yet, I never asked a vow ;
Doubts, fears, were utterly unknown :
The faith that is so worthless now,
I then believed in by my own.

I read his heart by mine ! and deemed
Its truth was clear, its choice was made
The happiness I only dreamed,
How bitterly has it been paid !
Breathe, ye soft flowers, my long despair !
But tell him, now, return is vain :
My heart has had too much to bear,
Ever to be his own again.



•

•

THE WATER-LILY.

NOR 'mid the soil and the shadow of earth,
Have we our home, or take we our birth ;
Keep ye your valleys that breathe of the rose,
Where bendeth the myrtle : we reck not of those.

Low in the waters our palace we make,
Where sweepeth the river, or spreadeth the lake ;
And the willow, that bends with its green hair above,
Like a lady in grief, is the tree that we love.

At noon-tide we sleep to the music of shells,
That we bring from the depths of the sea to our cells ;
Our cells that are roofed with the crystal, whose light
Is like the young moon's, on her first summer night.

Strange plants are around us, whose delicate leaves
No hue from the sunshine or moonlight receives ;
Yet, rich are the colours, as those that are given
When the first hours of April are azure in heaven.

There branches the coral, as red as the lip
Of the earliest rose that the honey-bees sip ;
And above are encrusted a myriad of spars,
With the hues of the rainbow, the light of the stars.

Our streams are like mirrors, reflecting the ranks
Of the wild flowers that blossom and bend on our banks ;
We give back their beauty—the face is as fair
Of the rose in the wave, as it is on the air.

But the flower that we choose in our tresses to bind,—
How long are those tresses when flung on the wind!—
Is the Lily, that floats on the shadowy tide,
With a white cup that treasures its gold dust inside.

The pearls that lie under the ocean are white,
Like a bride's sunny weeping, whose tears are half light,
And pure as the fall of the snow's early showers;
But they are not more fair nor more pure than these flowers.

We float down the wave when the waters are red
With the blushes that morning around her hath shed;
And we wring from our long hair the damps of the night,
The dew-drops that shine on the grass are less bright.

But alone, in the night, with the planets above,
Or the silvery moon, is the hour that we love;
Cold, pale is the light, and it suits with our doom,
For our heart has no warmth, and our cheek has no bloom.

The night wind then bears our sad singing along:
Ah! woe unto him who shall listen the song!
There is love in the music that floats on the air;
But the mortal who seeks us, seeks death and despair.



THE NIGHT-BLOWING CONVULVULUS.

Nor to the sunny hours
That waken other flowers,
Dost thou fling forth the odour on thy sighing ;
But in the time of gloom,
Is yielded thy perfume,
Like Love, that lives when all beside is dying.

Mournful the chamber where
Thou dost embalm the air !
Familiar long with watching and with weeping,
An anxious circle gaze
Upon the moonlit rays,
Amid the tranquil waves of ocean sleeping.

Far on the waters wild ;
Far from his wife and child,
For his sake, restless on their quiet pillow ;
More restless than his own,
He who is careless thrown,
Where sweeps the southern wind, where swells the billow.

Long have they watched and wept,
And bitter reckoning kept
Of days, alas ! that seem to have no ending ;
The hourly prayer unwon,
They see the setting sun
Upon the same unbroken sea descending.

To every passing cloud
A fancy is allowed ;
It is the fair ship, thro' the water springing !
Ah, no ! not yet the gale
Expands her homeward sail !
Him whom they have so long expected bringing.

He would not know his child !
It was an infant smiled,
Unconscious of his sorrowful caressing ;
From the red lip was heard
No small familiar word ;
Now, the fair boy can ask his father's blessing.

The mother wears no more
The smile and blush she wore
In the glad days when they were last together :
Her brow is wan with fears ;
Her eyes are dim with tears ;
Her cheek has changed with every change of weather.

Alas ! her love has grown
Too anxious, and too prone
To tremble with its passionate emotion !
Upon her dreams, at night,
Come visions of affright—
All the tumultuous perils of the ocean.

When these dark thoughts prevail,
What hope can then avail,
But that which riseth amid prayer to heaven ?
Upon the gloomy hour,
Like thy soft breath, sweet flower,
Whose odours are alone to midnight given.



THE POPPY.

PALE are her enchanted slumbers ;
Pale is she with many dreams ;
That white brow the turban cumpers ;
Wan, yet feverish she seems.
Not the fountain's silvery flowing
Lulls that haunted sleep ;
Round her are wild visions growing,
Such as wake and weep.

Drugg'd is that impassioned sleeping,
Sleep that is like life ;
By the unquiet pillow keeping
Hope, and fear, and strife.
Fast the fatal flower has bound her
In its heavy spell ;
Strange wild phantasms surround her,
But she knows them well.

First, there comes an hour Elysian,
Would it might remain !
Bringing back Love's early vision,
But without its pain.
Soft the myrtles of the wild wood,
Round her path-way part ;
Happy, like a guileless childhood,
With a woman's heart.

But a deeper shadow closes
On those lovely hours, •
And the opening sky discloses
Old ancestral towers :
There they stand—white, stately, solemn
While she looks, they fall ;
Round her lies the broken column,
And the ruined wall.

Then amid a forest lonely
Does she seem to stray ;
One huge serpent, and one only,
Seems to mark her way.
Then begins her hour of terror :
Strange shapes know their time—
Struggling with some nameless error,
With some unknown crime.

Phantoms crowd around, repeating
Words that are of death ;
Loud her startled heart is beating,
Louder than her breath.
But a rosy lip has kissed her,
With that kiss she wakes ;
Pale she gazes on the sister,
Who her slumber breaks.

Mighty must have been the sorrow,
Passionate the grief,
Which can thus a solace borrow,
From that haunted leaf.
Scarcely does the broken-hearted
Draw a living breath ;
Better it were quite departed,
Than this life in death.



THE CANTERBURY BELL.

“ I SEE it grow beneath my hand,
I see it day by day,
I measure on its purple wand
How long he is away.

“ The seed was sleeping in the earth,
The snow was on the ground,
And Christmas gathered in its mirth
The friends now scattered round.

“ It was the time of thy farewell,
Cold, wintry, dead,—and now
The violets are in the dell,
The May upon the bough.

“ We sowed its seed when winds were chill,
The plant now grown so fair ;
We placed it on the window-sill,
To catch the sun and air !

“ You said you would return again
Before it was in bloom,
Alas ! it sheds its light in vain
Around our altered room.

“ My heart is sick with hope deferred,
Days—weeks pass slowly o’er ;
Alas ! one voice is still unheard,
One step returns no more !

“ I’m weary of these watching hours,
That fret my life away ;
I do not love my favourite flowers ;
I loathe the sunny day.

“ Is not the heart a sacred thing ?
Is it not Love that gives
The shadow of an angel’s wing,
Where’er its presence lives ?

“ I gave my heart, I thought, for thine ;
Mine was the gift alone ;
Why have the false no outward sign
By which they may be known ?

“ Fair flower, that I have wept to see
Day after day arise,
I little thought that thou wouldst be
Welcomed with tearful eyes !

“ Why should there be divided truth ?
Ah ! why should one love on ?
I’m weary—weary of my youth,
Whose happiness is gone !”

A light step makes her start the while,
She sees her Sister stand
Beside the gate, with eager smile,
A letter in her hand.

Poor girl ! she might have spared the blush,
That with the letter came ;
She took the scroll—pale grew the flush,—
It did not bear his name !



THE PANSY.

“ ————— A little purple flower,
And maidens call it Love in idleness.”

SHAKSPEARE.

His name is on the haunted flower,
Linked with those dreams that came
In inspiration's lovely hour,
Whose memory is fame.
He saw that flower when he was young,
Alike in life and heart,
And round it those sweet fancies flung
That never more depart.

A thousand blossoms bloom and die
Upon their mother earth,
Unnoticed in their transient sigh,
Forgotten in their birth :
But when the poet's heart has cast
Its own deep beauty there,
The shadow of the charmed past
Makes every leaf more fair.

The poet and the flower repay
What each the other yields ;
He loiters on his twilight way,
Amid the summer fields ;
Delighting in the lovely things
That round his pathway gleam,
While over them his spirit flings
A music and a dream.

He of the Avon's gentle wave
Was conscious of his power :
Was he not happy, when he gave
His fancy to that flower,
And left a vision of delight
Amid its folded leaves ?
A vision delicate and bright,
Which every heart receives.

His lot was what the poet's lot
Has ever been on earth,
Yet toil and trouble were forgot
In one enchanted birth ;
That little purple flower imparts
A pleasure deep and true ;
Then he bequeaths to other hearts
The joy that first he knew.



THE MARVEL OF PERU.

A RADIANT beauty of the lovely south,
As languid as her valleys' scented gale ;
The rose hath only place on that sweet mouth,
A rose it is; but the soft cheek is pale.

Her large dark eyes are like a summer night,
Before the moon's soft crescent shines above ;
Filled with a tender, yet a shadowy light,
Whose silence is the eloquence of Love.

She dwelleth like a lone and fairy flower,
That hath its home in some enchanted soil ;
What knoweth she of life's more troubled hour,
Our northern lot of hurry, care, and toil ?

Half-slave, half-idol, she is kept apart ;
Her palace prison is a veiled shrine ;
Enough for her, the sweet world of the heart,
Ah ! little hath the ladye to resign !

Listless she dreams the sultry noon away,
The painted fan just stirs her raven hair ;
The silken curtains yield a shadowy day,
That makes the pale fair beauty seem more fair.

Faint are the colours in that darkened room,
When the wind lifts the curtain's crimson fold ;
Amid a rich obscurity of gloom
Are seen the rainbow gems, the carved gold ;

And on a table near, a little flower
Droops in a vase as white as sculptured snow ;
It was the favourite in her childhood's bower,
The Marvel of Peru,—she loves it now.

The perfumed atmosphere around is filled
With many odours—summer's scented spoil ;
The fragrant waters from sweet woods distilled,
Spices, and cinnamon, and precious oil.

Oh ! life of pleasant languor and repose !
Like some frail plant that languishes at noon ;
The dark-eyed beauty need not envy those,
To whom such charmed lot were earth's best boon.

What is the world we live in, but a strife
Of vanity and envy, hate and fear ?
That which we so miscall our social life,
Is one great error,—sullen, vast and drear.

A happier lot is woman's, thus confined
To one deep love, and one sweet solitude ;
Oh ! what availeth to awake the mind,
Whose higher struggles are so soon subdued !



THE LAUREL.

Fling down the Laurel from her golden hair ;
A woman's brow ! what doth the Laurel there ?

Not to the silent bitterness of tears
Do I commit, oh, false one ! thy requiting ;
My measured moments shall be paid by years
Of long avenging on thy faithless slighting.

I call upon the boon that Nature gave,
Ere my young spirit knew its own possessing ;
And, from the fire that has consumed me, crave
The cold stern power that knows its own redressing.

Love was my element ! e'en as the bird
Knows the soft air that swells around its pinion,
Sweet thoughts and eager ones my spirit stirred,
Whose only influence was the heart's dominion.

They were but shadows of a deeper power,
For life is ominous, itself revealing
By the faint likeness of the coming hour,
Felt ere it vivify to actual feeling.

But from that fated hour is no return :
Life has grown actual, we have done with dreaming ;
It is a bitter truth at last to learn,
That all we once believed was only seeming.

Thou—who hast taught me this, upon thy head
Be all the evils thou hast round thee scattered ;
Thro' thee the light that led me on is dead,
My wreath is in the dust—my lute is shattered.

I could forgive each miserable night
When I have waked, for that I dreaded sleeping,
I knew that I should dream—my fevered sight
Would bring the image I afar was keeping.

Alas ! the weary hours ! when I have asked
The faint cold stars, amid the darkness shining,
Why is mortality so over-tasked,
Why am I grown familiar with repining ?—

Then comes the weary day, that would but bring
Impatient wishes that it were to-morrow ;
While every new and every usual thing,
Seemed but to irritate the hidden sorrow.

And this I owe to thee, to whom I brought
A love that was half fondness, half devotion.
Alas ! the glorious triumphs of high thought
Are now subdued by passionate emotion.

Upon my silent lute there is no song ;
I sit and grieve above my power departed ;
To others let the Laurel wreath belong,
I only know that I am broken-hearted.

Enough yet lingers of the broken spell,
To show that once it was a thing enchanted ;
I leave my spirit to the low sweet shell,
By whose far music shall thy soul be haunted.

A thousand songs of mine are on the air,
And they shall breathe my memory, and mine only ;
Startling thy soul with hopes no longer fair,
And love that will but rise to leave thee lonely.

Immortal is the gift that I inherit ;
Eternal is the loveliness of verse ;
My heart thou may'st destroy, but not my spirit,
And that shall linger round thee like a curse.

Farewell the lute, that I no more shall waken !
Its music will be murmured after me ;
Farewell the Laurel that I have forsaken !
And last, farewell ! oh, my false love, to thee !



THE IRIS.

It boots not keeping back the scroll,
I know the tender words,
("My life, my idol, and my soul!")
Its scented page affords.
There—give it me, that I may fling
Its fragments on the wind,
A faithless and a worthless thing
For such a fate designed.

What tho' the Iris in my room
Bids Hope's sweet promise live,
I take no lesson from its bloom,
I have no hope to give.
Soon, with the summer sun's control,
Those azure leaves decay;
And yet the words on yonder scroll
Are more short-lived than they.

I care not for a love that springs
Where other fancies dwell,
The rainbow's hue upon its wings,
The rainbow's date as well;
By Vanity and Folly nurst:
Of happiness it dies:
It springeth from a fancy first,
And with a fancy flies.

Ay! let them prettily complain,
With graceful sorrow strive;
They should be glad of my disdain.
It keeps their love alive.
I give the ribbon from my hair,
The blossom from my hand,
But I have not a thought to spare
For any of their band.

The love that haunts my midnight hour,
A dream—and yet, how true !
Belongs to a diviner power,
Than vanity e'er knew :
It giveth, like the pale pure star,
A loveliness to night,
And winneth from the world afar
Its own eternal light.

It bringeth to our earth again
The heavens it dwells among :—
Not to the worldly and the vain
Can such a love belong :
High, holy as the heaven above,
Yet sharing life's worst part,
Until I meet with such a love
I cannot give my heart.



MIGNONETTE

And such thou art to me :
Thou bringest back old fancies,
And I am like a child ;
Alas, alas ! my childhood !
Where art thou now exiled ?

Art thou amid these blossoms,
Lull'd with their breathings sweet :
Too much of unmarked beauty
Lies hidden at our feet :
We hurry on, too careless
Of many lovely things ;
'Tis accident that often
The dearest pleasure brings.

Sweet flowers ! are ye from childhood,
Or fairy land, or both ?
So fresh are still the fancies
That linger round your growth.
With what an eager fondness
I leant your leaves above !
Oh ! in our life's beginning,
The heart is full of love !

We have a world within
Unwasted and unchilled ;
And we long to share the gladness,
With which ourselves are filled .
'Tis life's most bitter lesson,
That we must leave behind
Each warm and generous impulse,
That lighted once the mind.

grow too cold and careless,
As after years come on;
The fanciful is vanished,
The beautiful is gone.
Where are the old affections,
That once appeared so true,
And if we would, we cannot,
Their once sweet life renew

It is a mournful memory,
The memory of the past;
Each year a deeper darkness
Is on our pathway cast.
Ah! ye darling flowers of summer
Would ye could bid depart
The shadow on my spirit,
The coldness at my heart!

