

## She walks in Beauty

George Gordon Byron, Lord Byron

SHE walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
Thus mellow'd to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impair'd the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

This is by far, the most quoted poem of Lord Byron's. It was inspired by Mrs. Wilmot, Byron's cousin, when he saw her wearing a spangled dress at Lady Sitwell's party in June, 1814.

Byron's friend, James W. Webster, had written about the event . . . .

"I *did* take him to Lady Sitwell's party in Seymour Road. He there for the first time saw his cousin, the Beautiful Mrs. Wilmot. When we returned to his rooms in Albany, he said little, but desired Fletcher to give him a tumbler of Brandy, which he drank at once to Mrs. Wilmot's health, then retired to rest, and was, I heard afterwards, in a sad state all night. The next day he wrote those charming lines upon her --*She walks in Beauty like the Night....*"\*

\* Quote from: *Byron's Letters and Journals* edited by Leslie Marchand

