

POEMS

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Poems by Charles Lloyd

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CHARLES LLOYD

POEMS

ADDRESS TO A VIRGINIAN CREEPER ;
OR
THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY FROM ASSOCIATIONS WITH
VISIBLE OBJECTS.

Paradise, and groves
Elysian. Fortunate fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic main, why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was ?—
For the discerning intellect of man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple product of the common day.

Wordsworth's Excursion.

I.

FAIR plant, I see thee with a yearning spirit,
For thou remind'st me of another place ;—
And this spot, though it cannot boast a merit
Beyond retirement's unobtrusive grace,
From thy pervading influence doth inherit
One feature, whence the curious mind may trace
A likeness 'twixt it, and a scene elysian,*
Such as might bless some favoured poet's vision !

* See the description of the Author's residence in the North of England, in the third book of "Desultory Thoughts in London ;" particularly that part of it where the parasitical plants are mentioned with which it was embowered.

2.

As mind of plastic mould we often view,
 Of swift mobility of temperament,
 In opposite extremes its course pursue!—
 Yet in this giddy whirl of sentiment
 (Fine as the film, whose being the dropped dew
 Alone revealed, its surface which besprent)
 A vestige dwells, unseen of human eye
 Inly betraying its identity.

3.

In such mind, absent friends, and absent things,
 Having forgotten, as a hue, a scent,
 A sound, may touch upon those finer strings
 Which call these objects from their banishment;
 So thou, fair plant, when towards thee mine eye flings
 Its sudden glance (thought all things else prevent
 Feelings, whence this scene might the past restore)
 Canst call up visions dear to me of yore.

4.

Oh, never say to him who has a heart;—
 Oh, never say to him who has a sense,
 Imagination, of the joys which dart,
 From unseen source, beneath thy influence;—

Oh, never say to him who has the art
 To waken that deep feeling and intense,
 Whence is with curious speculation viewed
 Similitude in dissimilitude;—

5.

Oh, never say to these, that there can be,
 In this wide world, one vacant dwelling place:
 A place, which he, who is with phantasy
 Endowed, may not with richest treasures grace!—
 Say not to him, who has of poesy
 The lofty gift, that he's bereft of space
 For soaring thought, since his allotted home,
 Monotonous, forbids his eyes to roam.

6.

No! In the eye that sees, the heart that feels,
 And in th' imagination which controuls
 All forms, *that* is there which profusion steals
 From what were *penury* to meagre souls!—
 And add to this, that contrast* oft reveals
 A source of inspiration, and unrolls
 Oft through the sense which a drear blank surrounds,
 Glories which pass reality's scant bounds.

* See motto (from Rousseau's Confessions) to "Desultory Thoughts in London," and stanza 39, p. 62, of the Poem on the Language and Subjects most fit for Poetry.

7.

This is a sensuous age ! We scarce can tell
 Whether most pitiful it is, and poor,
 When wood, rocks, lakes, and mountains weave a
 spell

The heart to melt, the fancy to allure,
 With blank indifference on the whole to dwell :—
 Or not to know, that, when high thoughts obscure
 Man's lower impulses, he well may scorn
 The circumscribing sway of forms earth-born.

8.

As there no time is, so there is no place,
 For him uplifted by imagination !—
 He soars o'er all the little bounds of space :—
 And his *own world* is of his own creation !—
 'Tis poor to think, the noble mind to raise,
 That need should be of objects of sensation :—
 'Tis poor to think, that, e'en the prison's gloom,
 Must be his mind's, since 'tis his body's tomb.

9.

I thank thee, beauteous plant, because that thou
 Remindest me of far more gorgeous scene !*—

* A residence which the Author possessed near the Lake of Windermere: for a description of which see "Desultory Thoughts in Lon-

But far, far more for this, my grateful vow
 To thee I raise,—(when, as from freshest green,
 To delicate vermeil, and to crimson, now,
 I see thee changing)—since the thought serene,—
 (Inspired by thee, familiar to my glance),
 Comes o'er my spirit, as with rapturous trance,

10.

That thou a link art of a mighty chain!—
 A living presence art, a fiery tress,*
 Conspicuous to my sight, and dost a train
 Of fair experience outwardly express!—
 E'en as I still my former self retain!
 Although I inly feel, that, not the less,
 In some things I am changed, thou, like a thread
 Of fairy woof, dost past to present wed!—

11.

As in long voyage on the perilous ocean,
 Though not a trace on any side be seen

den," third book, p. 189, stanza 22, beginning "I had a cottage in a paradise." His dwelling on this spot was overgrown with the plant here celebrated.

* To the leaves of the Virginia Creeper may be well applied the lines of Mr. Coleridge—

"The hanging woods which, touched by autumn, seem
 As they were blossoming hues of fire and gold,"

as in the decline of the year, they are of the richest crimson, orange, and yellow.

Of land, though all around the feared commotion
 Of winds, waves, clouds, and darkening mists,
 between

The eye, and the mind's hope, perplex all notion ;
 Yet still the little loadstone, with serene,
 And superintendant constancy, doth keep
 Its delicate guidance o'er the yawning deep.

12.

So in the tempest of life's blackest hours,
 Forms such as we have seen in happiest days,
 Not by association's mystic powers,
 Consolatory feelings *only* raise,
 But oft from thence (mild as the scent of flowers
 When on their dewy buds fall morn's first rays)
 An intertwining with the days gone by
 Pledges assurance of futurity.

13.

These so recurring forms, from time to time,
 From place to place, thus opportunely met,—
 Like beacons to the mariner ;—in clime
 Distant and perilous, like land-marks set ;—
 So, with a sense of what is real, chime
 With all those yearnings which would not forget

The past, that each of them appears to be
Propitious herald of futurity.

14.

Who has not felt in mental wretchedness ;—
Or when portentously disease has wrought
O'er all the being with so rude a stress,
That it has almost choked the stream of thought,—
Who, when some big calamity did press
On life's progressiveness, till it has brought
A sudden check to purpose ;—that a *toy*,
Raised from the past, could blackest spells destroy ?

15.

Once by a conflict of deep suffering wrong,
As by St. Patrick's* awful lake I strayed ;—
(E'en as the fatal robe Alcides flung
Around his form which poison did pervade,
So closely to his mighty members clung
That he to rend it off vain efforts made ;
Thus was the pest of agony to me,
And so invincible its agency).

* Ulswater. In the vale at the head of Ulswater, there is a well which was formerly dedicated to St. Patrick, whence, the Author believes, this vale is called Patterdale, a corruption of Patrick's dale.—Cumberland, the Poet, styles Ulswater "Imperial Lake of Patrick's dale."