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RECORDS OF PASSING THOUGHT.

A SERIES OF SONNETS, BY MRS. HEMANS.

X.

A REMEMBRANCE OF GRASMERE.

O VALK and lake, within your mountain-urn
Smiling so tranquilly, and set so deep,
ON doth your dreamy loveliness return,
Colouring the tender shadows of my sleep
With light Elysian:—for the hues that steep
Your shores in melting lustre seem to float
On golden clouds from spirit-lands remote,
Isles of the blest; and in our memory keep
Their place with holiest harmonies. Fair scene,
Most loved by evening and the dewy star,
Oh! ne'er may man, with touch unhallowed, jar
The perfect music of thy charm serene!
Still, still unchanged may *one* sweet region wear
Smiles that subdue the soul to love, and tears, and prayer!

XI.

THOUGHTS CONNECTED WITH TREES.

Trees, gracious trees ! how rich a gift ye are,
Crown of the earth ! to human hearts and eyes !
How doth the thought of home, in lands afar,
Linked with your forms and kindly whisperings rise ?
How the whole picture of a childhood lies
Oft 'midst your boughs forgotten, buried deep,
Till gazing through them up the summer skies,
As hushed we stand, a breeze perchance may creep,
And old sweet leaf-sounds reach the inner world
Where memory coils ; and lo ! at once unfurled
The past, a glowing scroll, before our sight
Spreads clear ! while gushing from their long-sealed urn
Young thoughts, pure dreams, undoubling prayers return,
And a lost mother's eye gives back its holy light.

XII.

THE SAME

And ye are strong to shelter ! all meek things,
All that need home and covert, love your shade :
Birds of shy song, and low-voiced quiet springs,
And stealthy violets, by the winds betrayed.
Childhood beneath your fresh green tents hath played
With his first primrose-wealth ; there Love hath sought
A veiling gloom for his unuttered thought,
And silent grief, of day's keen glance afraid,
A refuge for his tears ; and oft-times there
Hath lone devotion found a place of prayer,
A native temple, solemn, hushed, and dim ;
For wheresoe'er your murmuring tremors thrill
The woody twilight, *there* man's heart hath still
Confessed a spirit's breath, and heard a ceaseless hymn.

XIII.

READING "PAUL AND VIRGINIA" IN CHILDHOOD.

O gentle story of the Indian Isle !
I loved thee in my lonely childhood well,
On the sea-shore, when day's last purple smile
Slept on the waters, and their hollow swell
And dying cadence lent a deeper spell
Unto thine ocean-pictures. 'Midst thy palms,
And strange bright birds, my fancy joyed to dwell,
And watch the Southern Cross through midnight calms,
And track the spicy woods. Yet more I blessed
Thy vision of sweet love, kind, trustful, true,
Lighting the citron groves—a heavenly guest—
With such pure smiles as Paradise once knew.
Even then my young heart wept o'er this world's power
To reach and blight that holiest Eden flower.

XIV.

A THOUGHT AT SUNSET.

Still that last look is solemn—though thy rays,
O Sun! to-morrow will give back, we know,
The joy to Nature's heart. Yet through the glow
Of clouds that mantle thy decline, our gaze
Tracks thee with love half fearful: and in days
When Earth too much adored thee, what a swell
Of mournful passion, deepening mighty lays,
Told how the dying bade thy light farewell;
O Sun of Greece! O glorious festal sun!
Lost, lost! for them thy golden hours were done,
And darkness lay before them. Happier far
Are we, not *thus* to thy bright wheels enchained,
Not *thus* for thy last parting unsustained,
Heirs of a purer day, with its unsetting star.

XV.

IMAGES OF PATRIARCHAL LIFE.

Calm scenes of patriarch life! how long a power -
Your unworn pastoral images retain
O'er the true heart, which, in its childhood's hour,
Drank their pure freshness deep! The camel's train,
Winding in patience o'er the desert-plain,
The tent, the palm-tree, the reposing flock,
The gleaming fount, the shadow of the rock.
Oh! by how subtle, yet how strong a chain,
And in the influence of its touch how blest,
Are these things linked, for many a thoughtful breast,
With household memories, through all change endeared!
The matin-bird, the ripple of a stream,
Beside our native porch, the hearth-light's gleam,
The voices earliest by the soul revered!

XVI.

ATTRACTION OF THE EAST.

What secret current of man's nature turns
Unto the golden East, with ceaseless flow?
Still, where the sunbeam at its fountain burns,
The pilgrim-spirit would adore and glow.
Rapt in high thought, though weary, faint, and slow,
Still doth the traveller through the deserts wind,
Led by those old Chaldean stars, which know
Where passed the shepherd-fathers of mankind.
Is it some quenchless instinct, which from far
Still points to where our alienated home
Lay in bright peace? O thou, true Eastern Star!
Saviour, atoning Lord! where'er we roam,
Draw still our *hearts* to thee; else, else how vain
Their hope the fair lost birthright to regain!

XVII.

TO AN AGED FRIEND.

Not long thy voice amongst us may be heard,
Servant of God ! thy day is almost done ;
The charm now lingering in thy look and word
Is that which hangs about the setting sun,
That which the meekness of decay hath won
Still from revering love.—Yet doth the sense
Of Life immortal—progress but begun—
Pervade thy mien with such clear eloquence,
That hope, not sadness breathes from thy decline ;
And the loved flowers which round thee smile farewell
Of more than vernal glory seem to tell,
By thy pure spirit touched with light divine ;
While we, to whom its parting gleams are given,
Forget the grave in trustful thoughts of Heaven.

XVIII.

A HAPPY HOUR.

Oh! what a joy to feel that in my breast
The founts of childhood's vernal fancies lay
Still pure, though heavily and long repress'd
By early-blighted leaves, which o'er their way
Dark summer-storms had heaped! But free, glad play
Once more was given them;—to the sunshine's glow,
And the sweet wood-song's penetrating flow,
And to the wandering primrose-breath of May,
And the rich hawthorn odours, forth they sprung,
Oh! not less freshly bright, that *now* a thought
Of spiritual presence o'er them hung,
And of immortal life!—a germ, unwrought
In childhood's soul to power, *now* strong, serene,
And full of love and light, colouring the whole blest scene!