

POEMS

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Poems by Christopher Pearse Cranch

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CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH

POEMS

P O E M S

BY

CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH.

Pres. P. C.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY AND HART.

1844.

(C-4)5

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TO

RALPH WALDO EMERSON,

AS

AN IMPERFECT TESTIMONY OF REGARD

AND GRATEFUL ADMIRATION,

This little Volume is Dedicated,

BY THE AUTHOR.

7



College Lyfe.

They go to scole to lern logyk and lawe, and eke contemplacion.
PIERS PLOWMAN.

THERE stands upon a hille, al verdantlie
Yclad with trees, and grasse, and waving graine,
An edifice, ne very haught and highe,
Ne lowe ; of bricks ybuilt, joli and plaine ;
Besee meth such an house there to remaine.
A spire decks the roofe, which to the eyne
Of wandering wighte, who there his course hath ta'en,
Beneathe Dan Sol doth often glitteryng shine :
And al beyonde the walles are groves and meadowes fine.

There often have I whilom conned my taske,
Intent on booke with no huge pleasaunce fraughte,
Withouten hope of drinke from luscious flaske,
To speed upon his waye one labouringe thoughte :
A booke as drye, perdie, was never boughte !
Ofte have I nodded, filled with drowsie sleepe,
Which Morpheus from his sombre land hath broughte,
And oft would starte, and vighl fain would keepe,
Yet that same sleepe god still o'er my braine dyd
creepe.

Then, ere I could againe my booke resume,
 O fatale finisher of al my joye !
 The glib-tongd bel would tingle through the roome,
 O cursed bel, my peace thus to destroye !
 No elfin sprite me then mote so annoye,
 Ne goblyn ghoste with hellish puissance,
 Ne byrchen swytch, ydrad by idle boye,
 Ne to the hen-peckt wighte hys wyfe's keen glance,
 More troublous seemes than this, my miserie to enhance.

For who that bel hath hearde, must strait him move,
 To roome where syts in state professour grave,
 With booke in hande, that booke he well dothe love,
 Greeke, Latin, Algeb, (Lord me from them save !)
 Eache lucklesse youthe must wel his lesson have,
 Or he eftsoons to lecture vyle is ledde,
 To answer for his sad idlesse, or brave
 The puissance of wordes he needes must dred,
 Words scattered eke like hayl on hys devoted hedde.

Yet in those walls there hearde hath been ful ofte
 By nyghte or daie the sounde of jollitie ;
 But if in studie-houres, ah ! then righte softe
 Some tutor ryseth up ere wighte can see,
 And stoppeth noyse of mirthe or minstrelsie,
 And sendeth eache to hys own habitance ;
 Thus endeth often manye a youthful spree.
 Helps not that they complayn of this usauce,
 For lawes must be enforced ; ne left to ydle chance.

Ne noyse alone of merriment was hearde.
 There met the eare oftymes straunge mingled soundes,
 Not like the liquid notes of woodlande byrde ;
 More like a packe, methinks, of hungrye houndes,
 Yelping a chorus ere they slippe their boundes ;
 Fyddels ycrackt and huskie flutes were there,
 Such discorde as the very aire astoundes !
 That man must praye for deafnesse who would beare
 The chaos straunge and loude that filleth al the aire.

But who can saye with what unfeigned glee
 Eache hearte beate loude when dinner-houre dyd come,
 Then like the rysinge billowes of the sea
 Those younkens burste from everye tedious roome.
 Not sweeter to the peasaunt is hys home,
 Hys wyfe and chyldren after travel longe,
 Ne to the Rabbi is hys sacred tome,
 Ne to the babblyng foole hys own deare tonge,
 Than is this dinner-bel to these same lerners yonge.

Anon they eate and callen out for more,
 Which to their nosethyrles, smels with savoure sweete,
 Whyle servaunts brynges them through the kytchen-door
 Potatoes hotte, and sauce, and sodden meate,
 Which, as they lickens ofte their chappes, they eate,
 Then loudlie call againe for thys or that :
 I wot not why they dye not of surfeite,
 So much they gobbel up, both leane and fatte ;
 So faste their jawes do goe, small tyme is there for
 chatte.

O, then to lounge beneath the spreading trees,
 Where al daie long the blythe byrds singen sweete,
 There lysten to the syghing of the breeze,
 There byd the echoes manie a note repeate,
 Whyles al arounde the skie waxe warme with heate,
 And lyttel flies dyd hum a drowsie song.
 And some, *mosquitoes* highte, dyd byte our feete,
 Suckyng the bloode, with tube instead of tong,
 Whenas we brushed them off, so much the more they
 stung.

Sometymes we wandered by a sylvan streame,
 That made soft murmurings on a summer's daie,
 Along its bankes how often dyd we dreame,
 And see its darke greene waters glyde awaye,
 Kysing the flowers which to their brinke dyd strae.
 There, too, huge scarped rockes dyd hie appeare,
 And from the sunne dyd shelter it alwaie ;
 Here as we sometymes strayed, wel mote we heare
 Sweet sounde of distant bel, or mil-wheel plashyng neare.

Alack, to change this scene it grieves me sore ;
 To tel of fences clombe and plundered trees,
 How one devoured fruits enow for four,
 And each dyd such purloyn as dyd him please.
 Al this was done, perdie, with impish ease ;
 Smal grypes dyd conscience give, those tymes I trow.
 But ah ! how harde when much replete with these,
 To bend againe o'er bookes with clouded browe.
 No tyme was that for us to lern the Why and Howe.