Classic Poetry Series

Sir Charles Sedley

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Love still has something of the sea

Love still has something of the sea,
From whence his Mother rose;
No time his slaves from doubt can free,
Nor give their thoughts repose.

They are becalm'd in clearest days,
And in rough weather tost;
They wither under cold delays,
Or are in tempests lost.

One while they seem to touch the port,
Then straight into the main
Some angry wind in cruel sport
Their vessel drives again.

At first disdain and pride they fear,
Which, if they chance to 'scape,
Rivals and falsehood soon appear
In a more dreadful shape.

By such degrees to joy they come,
And are so long withstood,
So slowly they receive the sum,
It hardly does them good.

'Tis cruel to prolong a pain;
And to defer a joy,
Believe me, gentle Celemene,
Offends the winged boy.

An hundred thousand oaths your fears
Perhaps would not remove,
And if I gaz'd a thousand years,
I could no deeper love.

Sir Charles Sedley

Phyllis Is My Only Joy

Phyllis is my only joy,
    Faithless as the winds or seas;
Sometimes coming, sometimes coy,
    Yet she never fails to please;
If with a frown
I am cast down,
Phyllis smiling,
And beguiling,
Makes me happier than before.

Though, alas! too late I find
    Nothing can her fancy fix,
Yet the moment she is kind
    I forgive her all her tricks;
Which, though I see,
I can't get free;
She deceiving,
I believing;
What need lovers wish for more?

Sir Charles Sedley

Song

Ah, Chloris, that I now could sit
As unconcerned as when
Your infant beauty could beget
No pleasure, nor no pain.

When I the dawn used to admire,
And praised the coming day,
I little thought the growing fire
Must take my rest away.

Your charms in harmless childhood lay
Like metals in the mine:
Age from no face took more away
Than youth concealed in thine.

But as your charms insensibly
To your perfection pressed,
Fond Love, as unperceived, did fly,
And in my bosom rest.

My passion with your beauty grew,
And Cupid at my heart,
Still as his mother favored you,
Threw a new flaming dart.

Each gloried in their wanton part:
To make a lover, he
Employed the utmost of his art;
To make a beauty, she.

Though now I slowly bend to love,
Uncertain of my fate,
If your fair self my chains approve,
I shall my freedom hate.

Lovers, like dying men, may well
At first disordered be,
Since none alive can truly tell
What fortune they must see.

Sir Charles Sedley

The Knotting Song

"Hears not my Phyllis how the birds
Their feathered mates salute?
They tell their passion in their words:
Must I alone be mute?"
Phyllis, without frown or smile,
Sat and knotted all the while.

"The god of love in thy bright eyes
Does like a tyrant reign;
But in thy heart a child he lies,
Without his dart of flame."
Phyllis, without frown or smile,
Sat and knotted all the while.

"So many months in silence past,
And yet in raging love,
Might well deserve one word at last
My passion should approve."
Phyllis, without frown or smile,
Sat and knotted all the while.

"Must then your faithful swain expire,
And not one look obtain,
Which he, to soothe his fond desire,
Might pleasingly explain?"
Phyllis, without frown or smile,
Sat and knotted all the while.

Sir Charles Sedley

To Celia

NOT, Celia, that I juster am
   Or better than the rest!
For I would change each hour, like them,
   Were not my heart at rest.

But I am tied to very thee
   By every thought I have;
Thy face I only care to see,
   Thy heart I only crave.

All that in woman is adored
   In thy dear self I find--
For the whole sex can but afford
   The handsome and the kind.

Why then should I seek further store,
   And still make love anew?
When change itself can give no more,
   'Tis easy to be true!

Sir Charles Sedley

To Chloris

AH, Chloris! that I now could sit
  As unconcern'd as when
Your infant beauty could beget
  No pleasure, nor no pain!
When I the dawn used to admire,
  And praised the coming day,
I little thought the growing fire
  Must take my rest away.

Your charms in harmless childhood lay
  Like metals in the mine;
Age from no face took more away
  Than youth conceal'd in thine.
But as your charms insensibly
  To their perfection prest,
Fond love as unperceived did fly,
  And in my bosom rest.

My passion with your beauty grew,
  And Cupid at my heart,
Still as his mother favour'd you,
  Threw a new flaming dart:
Each gloried in their wanton part;
  To make a lover, he
Employ'd the utmost of his art--
  To make a beauty, she.

Sir Charles Sedley

To Cloris

Cloris, I cannot say your eyes
Did my unwary heart surprise;
Nor will I swear it was your face,
Your shape, or any nameless grace:
For you are so entirely fair,
To love a part, injustice were;
No drowning man can know which drop
Of water his last breath did stop;
So when the stars in heaven appear,
And join to make the night look clear;
The light we no one's bounty call,
But the obliging gift of all.
He that does lips or hands adore,
Deserves them only, and no more;
But I love all, and every part,
And nothing less can ease my heart.
Cupid, that lover, weakly strikes,
Who can express what 'tis he likes.

Sir Charles Sedley