

ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

AN ODE.

BY DRYDEN.

II.

ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

BY POPE.

III.

THE BARD.

BY GRAY.

GLASGOW:

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ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

By Phillip's warlike son :
Aloft in awful state,
The godlike hero sat
On his imperial throne :
His valiant peers were plac'd around ;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound ;
(So should desert in arms be crown'd,)
The lovely Thais by his side
Sat like a blooming eastern bride,
In flow'r of youth, and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair !
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserve the fair,

II.

Timotheus plac'd on high,
Amid the tuneful choir
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre :

And trembling notes ascend the sky ;
 And heavenly joys inspire .

The song began from Jove,
 Who left his blissful seats above ;
 (Such is the pow'r of mighty *Love* ;)
 A dragon's fiery form bely'd the god ;
 Sublime, on radiant spheres he rode,
 When he to fair Olympia prefs'd,
 And while he fought her snowy breast :
 Then round her slender waist he curl'd,
 And stamp'd an image of himself, a sov'reign of the world.
 The list'ning crowd admire the lofty sound ;
 A present deity ; they shout around ;
 A present deity ! the vaulted roofs rebound.

With ravish'd ears
 The monarch hears ;
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod ;
 And seems to shake the spheres.

III.

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung ;
 Of Bacchus, ever fair, and ever young :
 The jolly god in triumph comes ;
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums ;
 Flush'd with a purple grace,
 He shews his honest face,
 Now give the hautboys breath ; he comes } he comes.
 Bacchus, ever fair, and young,
 Drinking joys did first ordain ;
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure ;
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,

Sweet is pleasure after pain.
 Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew vain
 Fought all his battles o'er again ;
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain:
 The master saw the madness rise
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes ;
 And while he Heav'n and earth defy'd,
 Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride
 He chose a mournful muse,
 Soft pity to infuse.
 He sung Darius great and good,
 By too severe a fate,
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
 Fallen from his high estate,
 And welt'ring in his blood.
 Deserted at his utmost need,
 By those his former bounty fed,
 On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
 With not a friend to close his eyes.
 With downcast looks the joyless victor sat,
 Revolving in his alter'd soul
 The various turns of chance below ;
 And, now and then, a sigh he stole ;
 And tears began to flow.

IV.

The mighty master smil'd to see,
 That love was in the next degree ;
 'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
 For pity melts the mind to love.
 Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
 Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures,
 War he sung is toil and trouble,
 Honour but an empty bubble :

Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying :
 If the world be worth thy winning,
 Think, O think it worth enjoying.

Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
 Take the good the gods provide thee.
 The many rend the skies with loud applause ;
 So love was crown'd, but music won the cause.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gaz'd on the fair,
 Who caus'd his care :

And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again.

At length with love and wine at once oppress'd,
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

V

Now strike the golden lyre again ;
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain :
 Break his bands of sleep asunder,
 And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.

Hark, hark !——The horrid sound

Has rais'd up his head,
 As awak'd from the dead :

And amaz'd he stares around.

Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,

See the furies arise,

See the snakes that they rear,

How they hiss in their hair,

And the sparkles that flash from their eyes !

Behold a ghastly band,

Each a torch in his hand !

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,

And unbury'd remain
Inglorious on the plain.

Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.

Behold how they toss their torches on high ;

How they point to the Persian abodes,

And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods !

The princes applaud with a furious joy ;

And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy.

Thais led the way,

To light him to his prey ;

And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

VI.

Thus long ago,

Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,

While organs yet were mute,

Timotheus, to his breathing flute,

And sounding lyre,

Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.

At last divine Cecilia came,

Inventress of the vocal frame ;

The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store,

Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,

And added length to solemn sounds,

With nature's mother wit, and arts unknown before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,

Or both divide the crown ;

He rais'd a mortal to the skies ;

She drew an angel down.

ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

I.

DESCEND, ye Nine! descend and sing,
The breathing instruments inspire ;
Wake into voice each silent string,
And sweep the sounding lyre !
In a sadly-pleasing strain
Let the warbling lute complain ;
Let the loud trumpet sound
Till the roofs all around
The shrill echoes rebound ;
While in more lengthen'd notes and slow
The deep, majestic, solemn, organs blow.
Hark ! the numbers soft and clear
Gently steal upon the ear ;
Now louder, and yet louder rise,
And fill with spreading sounds the skies.
Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,
In broken air trembling the wild music floats ;
Till by degrees, remote and small,
The strains decay,
And melt away
In a dying, dying fall.

II.

By Music minds an equal temper know,
Nor swell too high nor sink too low.

If in the breast tumultuous joys arise,
Music her soft assuasive voice applies ;
Or when the soul is press'd with cares
Exalts her in enliv'ning airs.

Warriors the fires with animated sounds,
Pours balm into the bleeding lover's wounds ;
Melancholy lifts her head,
Morpheus rouses from his bed,
Sloth unfolds her arms and wakes,
Lift'ning Envy drops her snakes ;
Intestine war no more our passions wage,
And giddy factions bear away their rage.

III.

But when our country's cause provokes to arms,
How martial music ev'ry bosom warms !
So when the first bold vessel dar'd the seas,
High on the stern the Thracian rais'd his strain,
While Argo saw her kindred trees
Descend from Pelion to the main :
Transported demigods stood round,
And men grew heroes at the sound,
Inflam'd with Glory's charms :
Each chief his sev'nfold shield display'd,
And half unsheath'd the shining blade ;
And seas, and rocks, and skies, rebound,
To arms, to arms, to arms !

IV.

But when thro' all th' infernal bounds,
Which flaming Phlegethon surrounds,

Love, strong as Death, the Poet led
 To the pale nations of the dead,
 What sounds were heard,
 What scenes appear'd,
 O'er all the dreary coasts !
 Dreadful gleams,
 Dismal screams,
 Fires that glow,
 Shrieks of woe,
 Sullen means,
 Hollow groans,
 And cries of tortur'd ghosts !
 But, hark ! he strikes the golden lyre,
 And, see ! the tortur'd ghosts respire ;
 See shady forms advance !
 Thy stone, O Sisyphus ! stands still,
 Ixion rests upon his wheel,
 And the pale spectres dance ;
 The Furies sink upon their iron beds,
 And snakes uncurl'd hang list'ning round their heads.

V.

By the streams that ever flow,
 By the fragrant winds that blow
 O'er th' Elysian flow'rs ;
 By those happy souls who dwell
 In yellow meads of asphodel,
 Or amaranthine bow'rs ;
 By the heroes' armed shades
 Glitt'ring thro' the gloomy glades ;
 By the youths that dy'd for love,
 Wand'ring in the myrtle grove,
 Restore, restore Eurydice to life ;
 Oh, take the husband, or return the wife !

He sung, and Hell consented
 To hear the poet's pray'r ;
 Stern Proserpine relented,
 And gave him back the fair.
 Thus song could prevail
 O'er death and o'er hell,
 A conquest how hard and how glorious !
 Tho' Fate had fast bound her,
 With Styx nine times round her,
 Yet music and love were victorious.

VI.

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes ;
 Again she falls, again she dies, she dies !
 How wilt thou now the Fatal Sisters move ?
 No crime was thine, if 'tis no crime to love.
 Now under hanging mountains,
 Beside the falls of fountains,
 Or where Hebrus wanders,
 Rolling in meanders,
 All alone,
 Unheard, unknown,
 He makes his moan ;
 And calls her ghost,
 For ever, ever, ever lost !
 Now with Furies surrounded,
 Despairing, confounded,
 He trembles, he glows,
 Amidst Rhodope's snows :
 See, wild as the winds o'er the desert he flies ;
 Hark ! Hæmus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries—
 Ah see, he dies !
 Yet ev'n in death Eurydice he sung,
 Eurydice still trembled on his tongue ;

Eurydice the woods,
 Eurydice the floods,
 Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains, rung.

VII.

Music the fiercest grief can charm,
 And Fate's severest rage disarm :
 Music can soften pain to ease,
 And make despair and madness please :
 Our joys below it can improve,
 And antedate the bliss above.
 This the divine Cecilia found,
 And to her Maker's praise confin'd the sound.
 When the full organ joins the tuneful quire,
 Th' immortal pow'rs incline their ear ;
 Borne on the swelling notes our souls aspire,
 While solemn airs improve the sacred fire,
 And angels lean from heav'n to hear.
 Of Orpheus now no more let poets tell ;
 To bright Cecilia greater pow'r is giv'n :
 His numbers rais'd a shade from hell,
 Her's lift the soul to heav'n.

THE BARD.

PINDARIC.

THE following Ode is founded on a Tradition current in Wales, that Edward I. when he completed the Conquest of that Country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hands to be put to Death.

I. 1.

‘RUIN seize thee, ruthless King !
‘ Confusion on thy banners wait ;
‘ Tho’ fann’d by Conquest’s crimson wing,
‘ They mock the air with idle state.
‘ Helm nor hauberk’s twilled mail,
‘ Nor e’en thy virtues, tyrant ! shall avail
‘ To save thy secret soul from nightly fears ;
‘ From Cambria’s curse, from Cambria’s tears !
Such were the sounds that o’er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scatter’d wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon’s shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array :
Stout Glo’ster stood aghast in speechless trance :
To arms ! cry’d Mortimer, and couch’d his quiv’ring lance.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o’er old Conway’s foaming flood,
Rob’d in the fable garb of Woe,
With haggard eyes the poet stood ;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Stream’d like a meteor to the troubled air,)
And with a master’s hand and proph’et’s fire
Struck the deep sorrows of his eye.

' Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave
 ' Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath !
 ' O'er thee, oh King ! their hundred arms they wave,
 ' Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe ;
 ' Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 ' To highborn Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

' Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
 ' That hush'd the stormy main :
 ' Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed :
 ' Mountains ! ye mourn in vain
 ' Modred, whose magic song
 ' Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head.
 ' On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
 ' Smear'd with gore and ghastly pale ;
 ' Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail,
 ' The famish'd eagle screams and passes by.
 ' Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
 ' Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
 ' Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
 ' Ye dy'd amidst your dying country's cries——
 ' No more I weep. They do not sleep :
 ' On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
 ' I see them them sit ; they linger yet,
 ' Avengers of their native land ;
 ' With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 ' And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.'

II. 1.

" Weave the warp and weave the woof,
 " The winding sheet of Edward's race ;
 " Give ample room and verge enough
 " The characters of hell to trace.

“ Mark the year and mark the night
 “ When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 “ The shrieks of death thro’ Berkley’s roofs that ring,
 “ Shrieks of an agonizing king !
 “ She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs
 “ That tear’st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
 “ From thee be born who o’er thy country hangs
 “ The scourge of Heav’n. What terrors round him wait !
 “ Amazement in his van, with Flight combin’d,
 “ And Sorrow’s faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2.

“ Mighty victor, mighty lord,
 “ Low on his fun’ral couch he lies !
 “ No pitying heart, no eye, afford
 “ A tear to grace his obsequies !
 “ Is the sable warrior fled ?
 “ Thy son, is gone : he rests among the dead.
 “ The swarm that in thy noontide beam were born,
 “ Gone to salute the rising morn :
 “ Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephir blows,
 “ While proudly riding o’er the azure realm,
 “ In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
 “ Youth on the prow and Pleasure at the helm,
 “ Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind’s sway,
 “ That hush’d in grim repose expects his ev’ning prey.

II. 3.

“ Fill high the sparkling bowl,
 “ The rich repast prepare ;
 “ Rest of a crown, he yet may share the feast.
 “ Close by the regal chair
 “ Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
 “ A baleful smile upon the baffled guest.

" Heard ye the din of battle bray,
 " Lance to lance and horse to horse?
 " Long years of havock urge their destin'd course,
 " And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.
 " Ye Tow'rs of Julius! London's lasting shame,
 " With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
 " Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
 " And spare the meek usurper's holy head.
 " Above, below, the Rose of snow,
 " Twin'd with her blushing foe, we spread;
 " The bristled Boar in infant gore
 " Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
 " Now, Brothers! bending o'er th' accursed loom,
 " Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

" Edward, lo! to sudden fate
 " (Weave we the woof; the thread is spun)
 " Half of thy heart we consecrate;
 " (The web is wove; the work is done.)
 " Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
 " Leave me unblest'd, unpity'd, here to mourn.
 " In yon' bright track, that fires the western skies,
 " They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
 " But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height,
 " Descending slow, their glitt'ring skirts unroll!
 " Visions of glory! spare my aching sight,
 " Ye unborn ages crowd not on my soul!
 " No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail:
 " All hail, ye genuine Kings; Britannia's issue, hail!

III. 2.

" Girt with many a baron bold
 " Sublime their starry fronts they rear,
 " And gorgeous dames and statesmen old
 " In bearded majesty appear;

* In the midst a form divine,
 * Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line,
 * Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
 * Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
 * What strings symphonious tremble in the air !
 * What strains of vocal transport round her play !
 * Hear from the grave, great Talieffin ! hear !
 * They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 * Bright Rapture calls, and, foaring as she sings,
 * Waves in the eye of heaven her many-colour'd wings.

III. 3.

* The verse adorn again
 * Fierce War, and faithful Love,
 * And Truth severe, by Fairy Fiction drest.
 * In buskin'd measures move
 * Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
 * With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
 * A voice as of the cherub-choir
 * Gales from blooming Eden bear,
 * And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
 * That lost in long futurity expire.
 * Fond impious man ! think'st thou yon' fanguine cloud,
 * Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day ?
 * To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
 * And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
 * Enough for me : with joy I see
 * The diff'rent doom our Fates assign :
 * Be thine despair and sceptred care ;
 * To triumph and to die are mine.
 He spoke, and, headlong from the mountain's height,
 Deep in the roaring tide, he plung'd to endless night.