

ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

BY THE SAME.

I.

FROM your lyre enchanted towers,
 Ye musically mystic Powers,
 Ye, that inform the tuneful spheres,
 Inaudible to mortal ears,
 While each orb in ether swims
 Accordant to th' inspiring hymns ;
 Hither Paradise remove,
 Spirits of Harmony and Love !
 Thou too, divine Urania, deign to appear,
 And with thy sweetly-solemn lute
 To the grand argument the numbers suit ;
 Such as sublime and clear,
 Replete with heavenly love,
 Charm th' inraptur'd souls above.
 Disdainful of fantastic play,
 Mix on your ambrosial tongue
 Weight of sense with sound of song,
 And be angelically gay.

II. And

II.

And you, ye sons of Harmony below,
 How little less than angels, when ye sing!
 With Emulation's kindling warmth shall glow,
 And from your mellow-modulating throats
 The tribute of your grateful notes
 In union of piety shall bring.

Shall Echo from her vocal cave
 Repay each note the shepherd gave,
 And shall not we our mistress praise,
 And give her back the borrow'd lays?
 But farther still our praises we pursue;
 For ev'n Cecilia, mighty maid,
 Confess'd she had superior aid—
 She did—and other rites to greater Powers are due:
 Higher swell the sound and higher:
 Let the winged numbers climb:
 To the heaven of heavens aspire,
 Solemn, sacred, and sublime:
 From heaven Music took its rise,
 Return it to its native skies.

III.

Music's a celestial art;
 Cease to wonder at its power,
 Tho' lifeless rocks to motion start,
 Tho' trees dance lightly from the bower,
 Tho' rolling floods in sweet suspense
 Are held, and listen into sense.

In Penshurst's plains, when Waller, sick with love,
Has found some silent, solitary grove;
Where the vague moon-beams pour a silver flood
Of tremulous light athwart th' unshaven wood,

Within an hoary moss-grown cell,
He lays his careless limbs without reserve,
And strikes, impetuous strikes each querulous nerve
Of his resounding shell.

In all the woods, in all the plains,
Around a lively stillness reigns ;
The deer approach the secret scene,
And weave their way thro' labyrinths green ;
While Philomela learns the lay,
And answers from the neighbouring bay.

But Medway, melancholy mute,

Gently on his urn reclines,
And all-attentive to the lute,
In uncomplaining anguish pines :

The crystal waters weep away,
And bear the tidings to the sea :

Neptune in the boisterous seas
Spreads the placid bed of peace,

While each blast,
Or breathes its last,
Or just does sigh a symphony and cease.

IV.

Behold Arion—on the stern he stands,
Pall'd in theatrical attire,

To the mute strings he moves th' enlivening hands,
 Great in distress, and wakes the golden lyre :
 While in a tender Orthian strain

He thus accosts the mistress of the main :

By the bright beams of Cynthia's eyes,
 Thro' which your waves attracted rise,
 And actuate the hoary deep ;

By the secret coral cell,
 Where Love, and Joy, and Neptune dwell,
 And peaceful floods in silence sleep ;

By the sea-flowers, that immerge
 Their heads around the grotto's verge,
 Dependent from the stooping stem ;

By each roof-suspended drop,
 That lightly lingers on the top,
 And hesitates into a gem ;

By thy kindred watery gods,
 The lakes, the rivulets, founts and floods,
 And all the Powers that live unseen
 Underneath the liquid green ;

Great Amphitrite (for thou canst bind
 The storm, and regulate the wind)

Hence waft me, fair Goddess, oh waft me away,
 Secure from the men, and the monsters of prey !

V.

He sung—The winds are charm'd to sleep,
 Soft stillness steals along the deep,

The Tritons and the Nereids sigh
 In soul-reflecting sympathy,
 And all the audience of waters weep.
 But Amphitrite her dolphin sends—the fame,
 Which erst to Neptune brought the nobly perjurd dame. —
 Pleas'd to obey, the beauteous monster flies,
 And on his scales as the gilt sun-beams play,
 Ten thousand variegated dyes
 In copious streams of lustre rise,
 Rise o'er the level main, and signify his way. —
 And now the joyous Bard, in triumph bore,
 Rides the voluminous wave, and makes the wish'd-for shore.
 Come, ye festive, social throng,
 Who sweep the lyre, or pour the song,
 Your noblest melody employ,
 Such as becomes the mouth of Joy ;
 Bring the sky-aspiring thought,
 With bright expression richly wrought ;
 And hail the Muse ascending on her throne,
 The main at length subdu'd, and all the world her own.

VI.

But o'er th' affections too she claims the sway,
 Pierces the human heart, and steals the soul away ;
 And as attractive sounds move high or low,
 Th' obedient ductile passions ebb and flow.
 Has any nymph her faithful lover lost,
 And in the visions of the night,
 And all the day-dreams of the light,
 In Sorrow's tempest turbulently tost—

From

From her cheeks the roses die,
 The radiations vanish from her sun-bright eye,
 And her breast, the throne of love,
 Can hardly, hardly, hardly move,
 To send th' ambrosial sigh.

But let the skilful Bard appear,
 And pour the sounds medicinal in her ear :
 Sing some sad, some plaintive ditty,
 Steept in tears that endless flow,
 Melancholy notes of pity,
 Notes that mean a world of woe ;
 She too shall sympathize, she too shall moan,
 And pitying others sorrows sigh away her own.

VII.

Wake, wake the kettle-drum, prolong
 The swelling trumpet's silver song,
 And let the kindred accents pass
 Thro' the horn's meandering brass.
 Arise—The patriot Muse invites to war,
 And mounts Bellona's brazen car ;
 While Harmony, terrific maid !
 Appears in martial pomp array'd :
 The sword, the target, and the lance
 She wields, and as she moves, exalts the Pyrrhic dance.
 Trembles the earth, resound the skies—
 Swift o'er the fleet, the camp she flies
 With thunder in her voice, and lightning in her eyes.

The gallant warriors engage
 With inextinguishable rage,
 And hearts unchill'd with fear;
 Fame numbers all the chosen bands,
 Full in the front fair Victory stands,
 And Triumph crowns the rear.

VIII.

But hark the temple's hollow'd roof reounds,
 And Purcell lives along the solemn sounds.—

Mellifluous, yet manly too,

He pours his strains along,
 As from the lion Sampson flew,

Comes sweetness from the strong.

Not like the soft Italian swains,

He trills the weak enervate strains,

Where Sense and Music are at strife;

His vigorous notes with meaning teem,

With fire, with force explain the theme,

And sing the subject into life.

Attend—he sings Cecilia—matchless dame!

'Tis she—'tis she,—fond to extend her fame,

On the loud chords the notes conspire to stay,

And sweetly swell into a long delay,

And dwell delighted on her name.

Blow on, ye sacred organs, blow,

In tones magnificently flow;

Such is the music, such the lays

Which suit your fair inventress' praise:

While

While round religious silence reigns,
And loitering winds expect the strains.

Hail majestic mournful measure,

Source of many a pensive pleasure!

Blest pledge of love to mortals given,

As pattern of the rest of heaven!

And thou, chief honor of the veil,

Hail, harmonious virgin, hail!

When Death shall blot out every name,

And Time shall break the trump of Fame,

Angels may listen to thy lute:

Thy power shall last, thy bays shall bloom,

When tongues shall cease, and worlds consume,

And all the tuneful spheres be mute.

