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The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Juvenile Poems - with his last corrections, additions, and improvements, as they were delivered to the editor a little before his death

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Ode on St. Cecilia's Day

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O D E
O N
ST. CECILIA'S DAY,
M DCC VIII.
A N D O T H E R
P I E C E S for M U S I C.

† H 3

ODE IN MUSIC

SOLUBLE

SPECIAL DAY

ODE for MUSIC

O N

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

5

Let the warbling lute complain:

Let the loud trumpet sound,

'Till the roofs all around

The shrill echos rebound:

REMARKS.

Ode for Music.] This is one of the most artful as well as sublime of our Poet's smaller compositions. The *first* stanza is a description of the various tones and measures in music. The *second* relates their power over the several passions in general. The *third*, their use in inspiring the Heroic passions in particular. The *fourth*, *fifth*, and *sixth*, their power over all nature in the fable of Orpheus's expedition to hell; which subject of illustration arose naturally out of the preceding mention of the Argo-

† H 4

While in more lengthen'd notes and flow, 10
The deep, majestic, solemn organs blow.

Hark! the number soft and clear,

Gently steal upon the ear;

Now louder, and yet louder rise

And fill with spreading sounds the skies; 15

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, 20

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; 25

REMARKS.

nautic expedition, where Orpheus gives an example of the use of Music to inspire the heroic passions. The *seventh* and last concludes in praise of Music, and the advantages of the sacred above the prophane.

VER. 7. *Let the loud trumpet sound, etc.*] Our Author in his rules for good writing had said, that *the sound should be an echo to the sense.* The graces it adds to the harmony are obvious. But we should never have seen all the advantages arising from it had this ode not been written. In which, one may venture to say, is found all the harmony that sound, when it comes in aid of sense, is capable of producing.

Or when the soul is press'd with cares,
 Exalts her in enlivening airs,
 Warriors she fires with animated sounds;
 Pours balm into the bleeding lover's wounds:
 Melancholy lifts her head, 30
 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 hear away their rage. 35

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 40
 Descend from Pelion to the main.
 Transported demi-gods stood round,
 And men grew heroes at the sound,
 Enflam'd with glory's charms:
 Each chief his sev'nfold shield display'd, 45
 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 Phlegeton surrounds, 50
 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! 55
 Dreadful gleams,
 Dismal screams,
 Fires that glow,
 Shrieks of woe,
 Sullen moans, 60
 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! 65
 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, 70
 By the fragrant winds that blow
 O'er th' Elyfian flow'rs;
 By thofe happy fouls who dwell
 In yellow meads of Afphodel,
 Or Amaranthine bow'rs; 75
 By the hero's armed fhades,
 Glitt'ring thro' the gloomy glades;
 By the youths that dy'd for love,
 Wand'ring in the myrtle grove,
 Reftore, reftore Eurydice to life: 80
 Oh take the husband, or return the wife!

He fung, and hell confented
 To hear the Poet's prayer:
 Stern Proferpine relented,
 And gave him back the fair. 85
 Thus fong could prevail
 O'er death, and o'er hell,
 A conqueft how hard and how glorious?
 Tho' fate had faft bound her
 With Styx nine times round her, 90
 Yet mufic 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. 95

Now under hanging mountains,
 Beside the falls of fountains,
 Or where Hebrus wanders,
 Rolling in Mæanders,
 All alone, 100

Unheard, unknown,
 He makes his moan ;
 And calls her ghost,
 For ever, ever, ever lost !

Now with Furies surrounded, 105
 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, 115
 Eurydice the rocks, and hollow mountains rung.

VII.

Mufic the fiercest grief can charm,
 And fate's fevereft rage difarm :
 Mufic can foften pain to eafe, 120
 And make defpair and madnefs pleafe :
 Our joys below it can improve,
 And antedate the blifs above.

This the divine Cecilia found,
 And to her Maker's praife confin'd the found. 125
 When the full organ joins the tuneful quire,
 Th' immortal pow'rs incline their ear ;
 Borne on the fwelling notes our fouls aspire,
 While folemn airs improve the facred fire ;
 And Angels lean from heav'n to hear. 130
 Of Orpheus now no more let Poets tell,
 To bright Cecilia greater power is giv'n ;
 His numbers rais'd a fhade from hell,
 Hers lift the foul to heav'n.

