



Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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

Two Chorus's to the Tragedy of Brutus

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54366](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54366)

T W O
C H O R U S ' S
T O T H E
Tragedy of BRUTUS^a.

CHORUS of ATHENIANS.

STROPHE I.

YE shades, where sacred truth is sought ;
Groves, where immortal Sages taught :
Where heav'nly visions Plato fir'd,
And Epicurus lay inspir'd !
In vain your guiltless laurels stood 5
Unspotted long with human blood.
War, horrid war, your thoughtful walks invades,
And steel now glitters in the Muses shades.

REMARKS.

THESE two Chorus's were compos'd to enrich a very poor Play ; but they had the usual effect of ill-adjusted Ornaments, to make its meanness but the more conspicuous.

^a Altered from Shakespear by the Duke of Buckingham, at whose desire these two Chorus's were compos'd to supply as many, wanting in his play. They were set many years afterwards by the famous Bononcini, and performed at Buckingham-house. P.

VER. 3. *Where heav'nly visions Plato fir'd, And Epicurus lay inspir'd!*] The propriety of these lines arises from hence, that *Brutus*, one of the Heroes of this Play, was of the Old Academy ; and *Cassius*, the other, was an Epicurean ; but this had not been enough to justify the Poet's choice, had not Plato's system of *Divinity*, and Epicurus's system of *Morals*, been the most rational amongst the various sects of Greek Philosophy.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Oh heav'n-born sisters! source of art!
 Who charm the sense, or mend the heart;
 Who lead fair Virtue's train along,
 Moral Truth, and mystic Song!
 To what new clime, what distant sky,
 Forsaken, friendless, shall ye fly?
 Say, will ye bless the bleak Atlantic shore? 15
 Or bid the furious Gaul be rude no more?

STROPHE II.

When Athens sinks by fates unjust,
 When wild Barbarians spurn her dust;
 Perhaps ev'n Britain's utmost shore
 Shall cease to blush with stranger's gore, 20
 See Arts her savage sons controul,
 And Athens rising near the pole!
 'Till some new Tyrant lifts his purple hand,
 And civil madness tears them from the land.

REMARKS.

VER. 12. *Moral truth AND mystic song.*] He had expressed himself better had he said,

“Moral truth IN mystic song!

In the Antistrophe he turns from *Philosophy* to *Mythology*; and *Mythology* is nothing but *moral truth in mystic song.*

ANTISTROPHE II.

Ye Gods! what justice rules the ball? 25
 Freedom and Arts together fall;
 Fools grant whate'er Ambition craves,
 And men, once ignorant, are slaves.
 Oh curs'd effects of civil hate,
 In ev'ry age, in ev'ry state! 30
 Still, when the lust of tyrant power succeeds,
 Some Athens perishes, some Tully bleeds.

CHORUS of *Youths* and *Virgins*.

SEMICHORUS.

O H Tyrant Love! hast thou possess'd
The prudent, learn'd, and virtuous breast?

Wisdom and wit in vain reclaim,
And Arts but soften us to feel thy flame.

Love, soft intruder, enters here, 5

But entering learns to be sincere.

Marcus with blushes owns he loves,

And Brutus tenderly reproveth.

Why, Virtue, dost thou blame desire,
Which Nature has impress'd? 10

Why, Nature, dost thou soonest fire

The mild and gen'rous breast?

CHORUS.

Love's purer flames the Gods approve;

The Gods and Brutus bend to love:

Brutus for absent Portia sighs, 15

And sterner Cassius melts at Junia's eyes.

REMARKS.

VER. 9. *Why, Virtue, etc.*] In allusion to that famous conceit of Guarini,

“Se il peccare è sì dolce, etc.”

† 1

What is loose love? a tranſient guſt,
Spent in a ſudden ſtorm of luſt,
A vapour fed from wild deſire,
A wand'ring, ſelf-conſuming fire. 20

But Hymen's kinder flames unite;
And burn for ever one;
Chafte as cold Cynthia's virgin light,
Productive as the Sun.

SEMICHORUS.

Oh ſource of ev'ry ſocial tye, 25
United wiſh, and mutual joy!
What various joys on one attend,
As ſon, as father, brother, huſband, friend?
Whether his hoary fire he ſpies,
While thouſand grateful thoughts ariſe; 30
Or meets his ſpouſe's fonder eye;
Or views his ſmiling progeny;
What tender paſſions take their turns,
What home-felt raptures move?
His heart now melts, now leaps, now burns,
With rev'rence, hope, and love. 36

CHORUS.

Hence guilty joys, diſtaſtes, ſurmizes,
Hence falſe tears, deceits, diſguiſes,

Dangers, doubts, delays, surprizes;

Fires that scorch, yet dare not shine: 40

Purest love's unwasting treasure,

Constant faith, fair hope, long leisure,

Days of ease, and nights of pleasure;

Sacred Hymen! these are thine^a.

R E M A R K S.

^a These two Chorus's are enough to shew us his great talents for this species of Poetry, and to make us lament he did not prosecute his purpose in executing some plans he had chalked out; but the Character of the Managers of Playhouses was what (he said) soon determined him to lay aside all thoughts of this nature.