R823 a.9868

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

OPERA.

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

OPERA.

Written in ITALIAN

By COUNT ALGAROTTI,

F. R. S. F. S. A. ETC.

GLASGOW:

Printed for R. URIE. MDCCLXVIII.

To WILLIAM PITT

FRANCESCO ALGAROTTI.

THAT to you, immortal man! who knew how to rekindle, in your nation, her native valor, to provide for her perpetual defence, and cauſed her to triumph, in one year, in the four quarters of the globe, a treatiſe on Poetry, Muſic, and Theatrical Subjects ſhould be addreſſed, will to ſome appear ſtrange

But, theſe, it ſhould ſeeem are not appriz-ed, that the reſtorer of England, the Friend of the Great FREDERIC, knows alſo to invigorate his leiſure with the powers of literature; and that that victorious eloquence, with which he thunders in the ſenate, proceeds no leſs

from the elevation of his mind, than from his ſtudies in Tully and Demoſthenes, his predeceſſors.

May this treatiſe even find place in the leiſure of ſuch a man, and obtain the ſuffrage of one, who, in the higheſt offices of the ſtate, has deſerved the admiration and applauſe of all Europe!

Piſa. Dec. 18. 1762.

CONTENTS.

Introduction.	5
Of the Poem, Argument or Buſineſs of an Opera	14
Of the Muſical Compoſition.	28
Of the Recitative, and Singing.	53
Of the Dances.	68
Of the Scenery, &c.	74
Of the Structure of the Theatres.	92
Concluſion.	109
Æneas in Troy.	115
Iphigenia in Aulis.	125
Gloſſary to the Engliſh tranſlation.	178

AN ESSAY ON OPERAS.

INTRODUCTION.

NO method more effectual hath been imagined by human invention, to afford a delightful entertainment to ingenuous minds, than that all accomplished and harmonious performance, by way of excellence, called OPERA; becauſe in forming it no article was forgotten, no means omitted, no ingredient left unemployed, that could in any ſhape contribute to ſo important an end: and indeed, it may with reaſon be affirmed, that the moſt powerful charms of muſic, of the

mimic art, of dancing, and of painting, are in operatical performances all happily combined, that they may conſpire in a friendly manner to refine our ſentiments, to ſoothe the heart, and ſubdue the ſtubbornneſs of reaſon, that cannot help ſurrendering itſelf a willing captive to ſo pleaſing a faſcination.

But, from the very concurrence of ſo many requiſites, it happens in like manner to the Opera, as it does to the moſt complicated machines, to be thence liable to frequent failures and being out of order. Nor indeed, ſhould it be a cauſe of ſurprize to us, if ſo ingenious a compoſition, and reſulting from the combination of ſo many parts as an Opera does, ſhould not always anſwer the end propoſed; although no care, pains or ſtudy, to attain prefection, had been omitted by thoſe, to whom the preparation of ſuch an entertainment was intruſted.

It muſt however be confeſſed, that the perſons, who now-a-days take upon them the guidance of thoſe public diverſions, do neither enter into a due conſideration of parti-

culars, nor pay a proper attention to the ſeveral neceſſary conſtituents for making an Opera perfect: nay, upon examination, they will be found remiſs in chuſing the ſubject of their dramas, and ſtill more negligent about the words thereof being congenially adapted for the muſic that is to accompany them. Theſe gentlemen appear to be entirely careleſs of veriſimilitude in the ſinging and recitative parts, as well as about the connection that ought to ſubſiſt between the intervening ballets executed by the dancers, and the main buſineſs of the drama. The former ſhould ſeem to ſpring genuinely from the latter. They are equally regardleſs of appropriated decorations in the ſcenery department; and the faulty ſtructure of their theatres, hitherto, hath quite eſcaped their notice. What wonder then, if that ſpecies of dramatic repreſentation, which, from its nature, ought to prove the moſt delightful of all ſcenic entertainments, hath degenerated to ſuch a degree of inſipidity and irkſomneſs to ſpectators in general!

Through a defect of that harmony, which ſhould always prevail among the ſeveral parts of which an Opera is compoſed, there now hardly remains even a faint ſhadow of that true imitation and agreeable illuſion, which can only reſult from a perfect conſonance among them. By ſuch neglects hath the Opera (originally one of the moſt ingenious combinations the human mind could pride itſelf for) dwindled into a languid, badly connected, improbable, groteſque, and monſtrous aggregate; wherefor, it has too juſtly incurred the evil fame that was ſpread againſt it, and the ſtigmatizing cenſures of many reſpectable perſonages, who otherwiſe, very judiciouſly, conſidered innocent amuſements, when taſtefully directed, as matters of no ſmall moment, or indifference, to a well regulated government *.

* Among the many unfavourable opinions againſt OPERAS, which may be cited, is the following from an eminent Engliſh writer, and runs thus.—" As the " waters of a certain fountain of Theſſaly, from " their benumbing quality, could be contained in no- " thing but the hoof of an aſs; ſo can this languid and " disjointed compoſition [the Opera] find no admit-

But, to reſtore the Opera to its priſtine dignity and eſtimation, is, in my ſenſe, an undertaking, now as neceſſary to be attempted, as it may prove difficnlt to be carried into execution. The attempt I propoſe here, is to reduce the muſical province into a proper regulation, and to make the performers learn a due obedience to diſcipline and authority. For how is it to be expected that a drama, although written in ever ſo maſterly a manner, can be exhibited with the requiſite propriety, if the judgment of thoſe, who ought to perſide, ſhould be diſregarded? Nay more, how can we harbour even the leaſt hope of enjoying the laudable compoſition of

" tance, but in ſuch heads as are expreſsly formed to " receive it." The WORLD, No. 156.——A long time prior to this cenſure had the judicious Addiſon applied for motto to the fifth number of the firſt volume of the Spectator, (where he treats of the Italian Opera) this verſe from Horace.

Spectatum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici.

And before him Dryden had ſaid,

For what a ſong, or ſenſeleſs Opera,
Is to the living labour of a play;
Or what a play to Virgil's work would be,
Such is a ſingle piece to hiſtory.

a drama, if thoſe perſons, who by their ſituation ſhould liſten to and obey the direction of their ſuperiors in ſenſe, notwithſtanding their diſqualification, arrogate to themſelves the power of dictating and iſſuing their mandates? In fine, how we can propoſe to ourſelves, that any good effect ſhould reſult from the diſorderlineſs of a mutinous band of people, ſo obſtinately averſe from filling thoſe ſtations in an Opera, to which their nature had beſt adapted them? What frequent acts of ſlight and miſbehaviour are obſervable towards the poet, who, from the right reaſon of things, ought to ſuperintend the whole, and act as chief pilot to ſteer their veſſel to the harbour of ſucceſs.

What frequent jealouſies and wranglings ariſe among the ſingers, on account of one perſon's having more ariettas than another, a loftier plum, a longer and more flowing robe, &c. all which frivolous diſputes are often more perplexing to be ſettled than the ceremonial to be obſerved at a congreſs, or the

precedency of embaſſadors from different courts.

The firſt ſtep then neceſſary to be taken, in order to remove ſuch abuſes, is, that the poet ſhould reſume the reins of power, which have been ſo unjuſtly wreſted from his hands; and that, being reſtored to his rightful authority, he may diffuſe through every department good order and due ſubordination.

What legiſlator would take upon him to give new laws to a people, whirled about in the confuſion of anarchy, until ſuch time as their natural magiſtrates were replaced on their tribunals, and homage paid to their power. What general would march to attack an enemy, if he had not previouſly baniſhed diſorder and licentiouſneſs from his army?

Where ſhall we now find a man qualified to undertake the direction of an Opera? In former times, an edile, or an archon, did not think it beneath his rank to preſide over theatrical exhibitions; and then each article was conducted with a ſuitable decorum; but

more eſpecially whenever the moſt celebrated of the antient republics made a political uſe of ſcenic repreſentations to arouſe their citizens to a ſenſe of glory, or to keep them peaceably diverted for the general quiet of the commonwealth.

But now-a-days, the fallen theatre, alas, groans under the miſmanagement of mercenary and intereſted undertakers, whoſe only object is to raiſe pecuniary contributions on the curioſity and leiſure of their fellow citizens, they being for the moſt part totally unfit for ſuch an employment, through their groſs ignorance of the ſeveral views proper to be conceived, or of the executive means to which they ſhould have recourſe, in order that the deſired effect may be obtained.

It is therefor neceſſary, that an entire change in the manner of proceeding, and a thorough reformation of thoſe habitual errors be made; that a ſalutary doctrine, agreeable to the wiſhes of taſte, may be adopted. Yet ſo praiſe-worthy a revolution can hardly be hoped for, but under the patronage of a ſo-

vereign, whoſe court affords a foſtering aſylum to the muſes; becauſe there no man will dare to offer himſelf to be the director of ſuch an entertainment, but one duly qualified, and whoſe diſpoſition to excel will go hand in hand with the means that ſhall be furniſhed to him. Under ſuch a guidance, and never otherwiſe, ſhall we ſee the performers reduced to proper order and diſcipline; or we, in conſeqeunce, become ſpectators of dramatic compoſitions, not inferior to thoſe exhibited at Athens and Rome, in the times of a Cæſar and a Pericles.

CHAP. I.

Of the poem, argument, or business of an Opera.

AS ſoon as the deſired regulation ſhall have been introduced on the theatre, it will then be incumbent to proceed to the various conſtituent parts of an Opera, in order that thoſe amendments ſhould be made in each, whereof they ſeverally now appear the moſt deficient. The leading object to be maturely conſidered, is the nature of the ſubject to be choſen; an article of much more conſequence, than is commonly imagined; for the ſucceſs or failure of the drama depends, in a great meaſure. on a good or bad choice of the ſubject. It is here of no leſs conſequence, than, in architecture, the plan is to an edifice; or the canvas, in painting, is to a picture; becauſe, thereon the poet draws the outlines of his in-

tended repreſentation, and its colouring is the taſk of the muſical compoſer. It is therefore the poet's duty, as chief engineer of the undertaking, to give directions to the dancers, the machiniſts, the painters; nay, down even to thoſe who are entruſted with the care of the wardrobe, and dreſſing the performers. The poet is to carry in his mind a comprehenſive view of the *whole* of the drama; becauſe thoſe parts, which are not the productions of his pen, ought to flow from the dictates of his actuating judgment which is to give being and movement to the whole.

At the firſt inſtitution of Operas, the poets imagined the heathen mythology to be the beſt ſource from which they could derive ſubjects for their dramas. Hence Daphne, Euridice, Ariana, were made choice of by Octavius Rinuccini, and are looked upon as the eldeſt muſical dramas; having been exhibited about the beginning of the laſt century. There was beſides Poliziano's Orpheus, which alſo had been repreſented with inſtrumental accompaniments; as well as another perfor-

mance that was no more than a medley of dancing and muſic, contrived by Bergonzo Rolla, for the entertainment of a duke of Milan, in the city of Tortona. A particular ſpecies of drama was exhibited at Venice for the amuſement of Henry the Third; it had been ſet to muſic by the famous Zarlino.—Add to theſe, ſome other perſormances, which ought only to be conſidered, as ſo many rough ſketches and preludes to a compleat Opera.

The intent of our poets was to revive the Greek tragedy in all its luſtre, and to introduce Melpomene on our ſtage, attended by muſic, dancing, and all that imperial pomp, with which, at the brilliant periods of a Sophocles and Euripides, ſhe was wont to be eſcorted. And that ſuch ſplendid pageantry might appear to be the genuine right of tragedy, the poets had recourſe for their ſubjects to the heroic ages, and heathen mythology. From that fountain, the bard, according to his inventive pleaſure, introduced on the theatre all the deities of paganiſm; now ſhifting

his ſcene to Olympus, now fixing it in the Elyſian ſhades, now plunging it down to Tartarus, with as much eaſe as if to Argos or to Thebes. And thus by the intervention of ſuperiour beings, he gave an air of probability to moſt ſurprizing and wonderful events. Every circumſtance being thus elevated above the ſphere of mortal exiſtence, it neceſſarily followed, that the ſinging of actors, in an Opera, appeared a true imitation of the language made uſe of by the deities they repreſented.

This then was the original cauſe, why in the firſt dramas that had been exhibited in the courts of ſovereigns, or the palaces of princes, in order to celebrate their nuptials, ſuch expenſive machinery was employed; not an article was omitted that could exite an idea of whatever is moſt wonderful to be ſeen either on earth, or in the heavens.—To ſuperadd a greater diverſity, and thereby give a new animation to the whole, crowded chorus of ſingers were admitted, as well as dances of various contrivance, with a ſpecial attention

that the execution of the ballet ſhould coincide, and be combined with the choral ſong: all which pleaſing effects were made to ſpring naturally from the ſubject of the drama.

No doubt then can remain of the exquiſite delight that ſuch magic repreſentations muſt have given to an enraptured aſſembly; for although it conſiſted but of a ſingle ſubject, it nevertheleſs diſplayed an almoſt infinite variety of entertainment. There is even now frequent opportunity of ſeeing, on the French muſical theatre, a ſpirited likeneſs to what is here advanced; becauſe the Opera was firſt introduced in Paris by cardinal Mazarine, whither it carried the ſame magnificent apparatus with which it had made its appearance at his time in Italy.

Theſe repreſentations muſt, however, have afterwards ſuffered not a little by the intermixture of buffoon characters, which are ſuch ill-ſuited companions of the dignity of heroes and of Gods; for by making the ſpectators laugh out of ſeaſon, they diſconcert the ſolemnity of the piece. Some traces of this theatric

impropriety, are even now obſervable in the eldeſt of the French muſical dramas.

The Opera did not long remain confined in the courts of ſovereigns, and palaces of princes, but emancipating itſelf from ſuch thraldom, diſplayed its charms on public theatres, to which the curious of all ranks were admitted for pay. But in this ſituation, as muſt obviouſly occur to whoever reflects, it was impoſſible that the pomp and ſplendour, which was attendant on this entertainment from its origin, could be continued. The falling off, in that article, was occaſioned principally by the exorbitant ſalaries the ſingers inſiſted on, which had been but inconſiderable at the firſt outſet of the muſical drama; as for inſtance, a certain female ſinger was called *La Centoventi, The Hundred-and Twenty*, for having received ſo many crowns, for her performance during a ſingle carnival. A ſum which hath been amazingly exceeded ſince, almoſt beyond all bounds.

Hence aroſe the neceſſity for opera directors to change their meaſures, and to be as

frugally œconomical on one hand, as they found themſelves unavoidably profuſe on the other. Through ſuch ſaving, the Opera may be ſaid to have fallen from heaven upon the earth, and being divorced from an intercourſe with gods, to have humbly reſigned itſelf to that of mortals.

Thence forward prevailed a general renunciation of all ſubjects to be found in the fabulous accounts of the heathen deities, and none were made choice of, but thoſe derived from the hiſtories of humble mankind, becauſe leſs magnificent in their nature, and therefore leſs liable to large diſburſements for their exhibition.

The directors, obliged to circumſpection, for their own ſafety, were induced to imagine they might ſupply the place of all that coſtly pomp and ſplendid variety of decoration, to which the dazzled ſpectators had been accuſtomed ſo long, by introducing a chaſter regularity into their drama, ſeconded by the auxiliary charms of a more poetical diction, as well as by the concurring powers of a

more exquiſite muſical compoſition. This project gained ground the faſter from the public's obſerving, that one of theſe arts was entirely employed in modelling itſelf on our ancient authors; and the other, ſolely intent on enriching itſelf with new ornaments; which made Operas to be looked upon by many, as having nearly reached the pinnacle of perfection. However, that theſe repreſentations might not appear too naked and uniform, interludes and ballets, to amuſe the audience, were introduced between the acts; and thus, by degrees, the Opera took that form, which is now practiſed on our theatres.

It is an uncontrovertable fact, that ſubjects for an operatical drama, whether taken from pagan mythology or hiſtorians, have inevitable inconveniencies annexed to them. The fabulous ſubjects, on account of the great number of machines, and magnificent apparatus, whtch they require, often diſtreſs the poet into limits too narrow for him, to carry on and unravel his plot with propriety; be-

cauſe he is not allowed either ſufficient time or ſpace to diſplay the paſſions of each character, ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the completing of an opera, which, in the main, is nothing more than a tragic-poem recited to muſical ſounds; and from the inconvenience alluded to here, it has happened that a great number of the French Operas, as well as the firſt of the Italian are nothing better than entertainments for the eyes; having more the appearance of a maſquerade than of a regular dramatic performance: becauſe therein the principal action is whelmed, as it were, under a heap of acceſſaries; and the poetical part being ſo flimſy and wretched, it was, with juſt reaſon, called a ſtring of madrigals.

On the other hand, the ſubjects taken from hiſtory, are liable to the objection of their not being ſo well adapted to muſic, which ſeems to exclude them from all plea of probability. This impleaded error may be obſerved every day upon the Italian ſtage. For who can be brought to think, that the trillings of an air flow ſo juſtifiably from the mouth of

a Julius Cæſar or a Cato, as from the lips of Venus or Apollo? Moreover, hiſtorical ſubjects do not furniſh ſo ſtriking a variety, as thoſe that are fabulous; they are apt to be too auſtere and monotonous. The ſtage, in ſuch repreſentations, would for ever exhibit an almoſt ſolitary ſcene, unleſs we are willing to number among the ranks of actors, the mob of attendants that crowd after ſovereigns, even into their cloſets. Beſides, it is no eaſy matter to contrive ballets or interludes ſuitable to ſubjects taken from hiſtory; becauſe all ſuch entertainments ought to form a kind of ſocial union, and become, as it were, conſtituent parts of the whole. Such, for example, on the French ſtage, is "The Ballet of the Shepherds," that celebrates the marriage of Medoro with Angelica, and makes Orlando acquainted with his accumulated wretchedneſs. But this is far from being the effect of entertainments obtruded into the Italian Operas; in which, although the ſubject be Roman, and the ballet conſiſt of dancers dreſſed like Roman ſoldiers, yet ſo unconnect-

ed is it with the buſineſs of the drama, that the ſcozzeſe or furlana might as well be danced. And this is the reaſon why ſubjects, choſen from hiſtory, are for the moſt part neceſſitated to appear naked, or to make uſe of ſuch alien accoutrements as neither belong, nor are by any means ſuitable to them.

In order to obviate ſuch inconveniencies, the only means left to the poet is, to exert all his judgment and taſte in chuſing the ſubject of his drama, that thereby he may attain his end, which is to delight the eyes and the ears, to rouze up, and to affect the hearts of an audience, without the riſk of ſinning againſt reaſon or common ſenſe: wherefore, the moſt prudent method he can adopt, will be to make choice of an event that has happened either in very remote times, or in countries very diſtant from us, and quite eſtranged from our uſages, which may afford various incidents of the marvellous, notwithſtanding that the ſubject, at the ſame time, be extremely ſimple and not unknown: two deſirable requiſites.

The great diſtance of place, where the action is fixed, will prevent the recital of it to muſical ſounds, from appearing quite ſo improbable to us. The marvelloufneſs of the theme will furniſh the author with an opportunity of interweaving therewith dances, choruſſes, and a variety of ſcenical decorations. The ſimplicity and notoriety of it will exempt his muſe from the perplexing trouble and tedious preparations neceſſary to make perſonages of a drama known, that, ſuitable to his notification, may be diſplayed their paſſions, the main ſpring and actuating ſpirit of the ſtage.

The two Operas of Dido, and of Achilles in Sciros, written by the celebrated Metaſtaſio, come very near to the mark propoſed here. The ſubjects of theſe dramatic poems are ſimple, and taken from very remote antiquity, but without being too far fetched. In the midſt of their moſt impaſſioned ſcenes, there is an opportunity of introducing ſplendid banquets, magnificent embaſſies, embarkations, choruſſes, battles, conflagrations, etc. ſo as to give a farther extenſion to the ſove-

reigny of the muſical drama, and makes its rightfulneſs be more aſcertained than has been hitherto allowed.

The ſame doctrine may be advanced in regard to an Opera on the ſubject of Montezuma, as much on account of the greatneſs, as of the novelty of ſuch an action, as that emperor's cataſtrophe muſt afford. A diſplay of the Mexican and Spaniſh cuſtoms, ſeen for a firſt time together, muſt form a moſt beautiful contraſt; and the barbaric magnificence of America would receive various heightenings by being oppoſed in different views to that of Europe *.

Several ſubjects may likewiſe be taken from Arioſto and Taſſo, equally fitting as Montezuma, for the Opera theatre; for, beſides theſe being ſo univerſally known, they would furniſh not only a fine field for exerciſing the the paſſions, but alſo for introducing all the ſurprizing illuſions of the magic art.

* Montezuma has been choſen for the ſubject of an Opera, performed with the greateſt magnificence at the theatre royal of Berlin.

An Opera of Æneas in Troy, or of Iphigenia in Aulis, would anſwer the ſame purpoſe; and to the great variety for ſcenes and machinery, ſtill greater heigthenings might be derived from the enchanting *poetry* of Virgil and Euripides.

There are many other ſubjects to the full as applicable to the ſtage, and that may be found equally fraught with marvellous incidents. Let then a poet, who is judicious enough, make a prudent collection of the ſubjects truly dramatic, that are to be found in tracing the fabulous accounts of the heathen gods, and do the ſame alſo in regard to more modern times. Such a proceeding, relative to the Opera, would not be unlike to what is oft times found neceſſary in ſtates, which it is impoſſible to preſerve from decay, and in the unimpaired enjoyment of conſtitutional vigour, without making them revert from time to time to their original principles.

CHAP. II.

On the musical composition for Operas.

NO art now appears to ſtand ſo much in need of having the concluſive maxim of the preceeding chapter put in practice, as that of muſic; ſo greatly has it degenerated from its former dignity. For by laying aſide every regard to decorum, and by ſcorning to keep within the bounds prefcribed, it has ſuffered itſelf to be led far, very far aſtray, in a bewildered purſuit of new-fangled whimſies and capricious conceits. Wherefore, it would be now very ſeaſonable to revive the decree made by the Lacedemonians, againſt that man, who, through a diſtempered paſſion for novelty, had ſo ſophiſticated their muſic with his crotchetty innovations, that, from noble and manly, he rendered it effeminate and diſguſting.

Mankind in general, it muſt be owned, are actuated by a love of novelty; and it is as true that without it, muſic, like every other art, could not have received the great improvements it has. What we here implead, is not a chaſte paſſion for novelty, but a too great fondneſs for it; becauſe it was that which reduced muſic to the declining ſtate ſo much lamented by all true connoiſſeurs. While arts are in their infancy, the love of novelty is no doubt eſſential; as it is to that they owe their being; and after, by its kindly influence, are improved, matured, and brought to perfection; but that point being once attained, the indulging this paſſion too far, will, from benign and vivifying, become noxious and fatal. The arts have experienced this viciſſitude, in almoſt every nation where they have appeared; as, among the Italians, hath muſic at this time in a more remarkable manner.

On its revival in Italy, though in very barbarous times, this elegant art ſoon made its power be known throughout Europe; nay more, it was cultivated to ſuch a degree by

the tramontane nations, that it may, without exaggeration, be aſſerted, the Italians themſelves were, for a certain period of time, glad to receive inſtructions from them.

On the return of muſic to Venice, Rome, Bologna, and Naples, as to its native place, ſuch conſiderable improvements were made there in the muſical art, during the two laſt centuries, that foreigners, in their turn, repaired thither for inſtruction: and ſuch would be now the caſe, were they not deterred from ſo doing by the raging phrenzy after novelty, that prevails in all the Italian ſchools. For, as if muſic were yet unrudimented, and in its infancy, the miſtaken profeſſors ſpare no pains to trick out their art with every ſpecies of groteſque imagination and fantaſtical combination, which they think can be executed by ſounds. The public too, as if they were likewiſe in a ſtate of childhood, change almoſt every moment their notions of, and fondneſs for things, rejecting to-day with ſcorn, what yeſterday was ſo paſſionately admired. The taſte in ſinging, which, ſome

years ago, enraptured audiences hung upon with wonder and delight, is now received with a ſupercilious diſapprobation: not becauſe it is ſunk in real merit, but for the very groundleſs reaſon of its being old, and not in frequent uſe. And thus we ſee, that in compoſitions inſtituted for the repreſentation of nature, whoſe mode is ever one, there is the ſame deſire of changing, as in the fluctuating faſhions of the dreſſes we wear.

Another principal reaſon, that can be aſſigned for the preſent degeneracy of muſic, is the authority, power, and ſupreme command uſurped in its name; becauſe the compoſer, in conſequence, acts like a deſpotic ſovereign, contracting all the views of pleaſing to his department alone. It is almoſt impoſſible to perſuade him, that he ought to be in a ſubordinate ſtation; that muſic derives its greateſt merit from being no more than an auxiliary, the handmaid to poetry. His chief buſineſs then is to pre-diſpoſe the minds of the audience for receiving the impreſſion to be excited by the poet's verſe; to infuſe ſuch a ge-

neral tendency in their affections, as to make them analogous with thoſe particular ideas, which the poets mean$ to inſpire. In fine, its genuine office is to communicate a more animating energy to the language of the muſes.

That old and juſt charge, enforced by critics againſt operatical performances, of making their heroes and heroines die *ſinging*, can be aſcribed to no other cauſe but the defect of a proper harmony between the words and the muſic. Were all ridiculous quavering omitted when the the ſerious paſſions are to ſpeak, and were the muſical compoſition judiciouſly adapted to them, then it would not appear more improbable that a perſon ſhould die ſinging, than reciting, verſes.

It is an undeniable fact, that, in the earlieſt ages, the poets were all muſical proficients; the vocal part, then, ranked as it ſhould, which was to render the thoughts of the mind, and affections of the heart, with more forcible, more lively, and more kindling expreſſion. But now that the twin-ſiſters, poetry and muſic, go no longer hand in hand, it is

not at all ſurpriſing, if the buſineſs of the one is to add colouring to what the other has deſigned, that the colouring, ſeparately conſidered, appear beautiful; yet, upon a nice examination of the whole, the contours offend, by not being properly rounded, and by the abſence of a ſocial blending of the parts throughout. Nor can a remedy be applied to ſo great an evil, otherwiſe but by the modeſt diſcretion of a compoſer, who will not think it beneath him to receive from the poet's mouth the purport of his meaning and intention, who will alſo make himſelf a competent maſter of the author's ſenſe, before he writes a note of muſic, and will ever afterwards confer with him concerning the muſic he ſhall have compoſed; and by thus proceeding, keep up ſuch a dependence and friendly intercourſe, as ſubſiſted between Lulli and Quinault, Vinci and Metaſtaſio, which indeed the true regulation of an operatical theatre requires.

Among the errors obſervable in the preſent ſyſtem of muſic, the moſt obvious, and that which firſt ſtrikes the ears, at the very opening of an Opera, is the hackneyed manner of

compoſing overtures, which are always made to conſiſt of two allegros with one grave, and to be as noiſy as poſſible. Thus are they void of variation, and ſo jog on much alike. Yet, what a wide difference ought to be perceived between that, for example, which precedes the death of Dido, and that which is prefixed to the nuptials of Demetrius and Cleonice. The main drift of an overture ſhould be to announce, in a certain manner, the buſineſs of the drama, and conſequently prepare the audience to receive thoſe affecting impreſſions, that are to reſult from the whole of the performance; ſo that from hence a leading view, and preſaging notions of it may be conceived, as is of an oration from the exordium. But our preſent compoſers look upon an overture as an article quite detached and abſolutely different from the poet's drama. They uſe it as an opportunity of playing off a tempeſtuous muſic to ſtun the ears of an audience. If ſome, however, employ it as an exordium, it is of a kindred complexion to thoſe of certain writers, who, with big and pompous words,

repeatedly diſplay before us the loftineſs of the ſubject and the lowneſs of their genius; which preluding would ſuit any other ſubject as well, and might as judiciouſly be prefixed for an exordium to one oration as another.

After the overture, the next article that preſents itſelf to our conſideration is the recitative; and as it is wont to be the moſt noiſy part of an Opera, ſo is it the leaſt attended to, and the moſt neglected. It ſeems as if our muſical compoſers were of opinion, that the recitative is not of conſequence enough to deſerve their attention, they deeming it incapable of exciting any great delight. But the antient maſters thought in a quite different manner. There needs no ſtronger proof than to read what Jacopo Peri, who may be juſtly called the inventor of the recitative, wrote in his preface to Euridice. When he had applied himſelf to an inveſtigation of that ſpecies of muſical imitation, which would the readieſt lend itſelf to theatric exhibitions, he directed his taſteful reſearches to diſcover the manner which had been employed by the an-

tient Greeks on ſimilar occaſions. He carefully obſerved the Italian words, which are capable of intonation, or conſonance, and thoſe which are not. He was very exact in minuting down our ſeveral modes of pronounciation, as well as the different accents of grief, of joy, and of all the other affections incident to the human frame; and that, in order to make the baſe move a timing attendance to them, now with more energy, now with leſs, according to the nature of each. So nicely ſcrupulous was he in his courſe of vocal experiments, that he ſcrutinized intimately the very genius of the Italian language; on which account, in order to be more accurate, he frequently conſulted with ſeveral gentlemen, not leſs remarkable for the delicacy of their ears, than for their being uncommonly ſkilled both in the arts of muſic and poetry.

The final concluſion of his ingenious enquiry was, that the ground-work of all ſuch imitation ſhould be an harmony, chaſtely following nature ſtep by ſtep; a ſomething between common ſpeaking and melody; a well-

combined ſyſtem between that kind of performance which the antients called the *diaſtematica* *, as if held in, and ſuſpended; and the other, called the *continuata* *. Such were the ſtudies of the muſical compoſers in former times. They proceeded in the improvement of their art with the utmoſt care and attention; and the effect proved, that they did not loſe their time in the purſuit of unprofitable ſubtleties.

The recitative in their time was made to vary with the ſubject, and aſſume a complexion ſuitable to the ſpirit of the words. It ſometimes moved with a rapidity equal to that of the text; and at others with an attendant ſlowneſs: but never failed to mark, in a conſpicuous manner, thoſe inflexions and ſallies, which the violence of our paſſions can tranſfuſe into the expreſſion of them. All muſical compoſitions, finiſhed in ſo maſterly a manner, were heard with delight. Numbers now living muſt remember how certain paſſages of

* See the gloſſary of technical terms at the end.

ſimple recitative have affected the minds of an audience, to a degree, that no modern air is able to produce.

However, the recitative, all diſregarded as it may be, has been known to excite emotions in an audience, when it was of the *obligato* kind, as the artiſts term it; that is, when ſtrictly accompanied with inſtruments. Perhaps it would not be improper to employ it oftener than is now the cuſtom. What a kindly warmth might be communicated to the recitative, if, where a paſſion exerts itſelf, it were to be enforced by the united orcheſtra! By ſo doing, the heart and mind at once would be ſtormed, as it were, by all the powers of muſic. A more evincing inſtance of ſuch an effect cannot be quoted, than the greater part of the laſt act of Didone, ſet to muſic by Vinci, which is executed in the taſte recommended here: and no doubt but Virgil's ſelf would be pleaſed to hear a compoſition ſo animating and ſo terrible.

Another good purpoſe, which muſt be derived from ſuch a practice is, that, then,

would not appear to us ſo enormous, the great variety and diſproportion now obſervable in the *andamento* of the recitative, and that of the airs; but, on the contrary, a more friendly agreement among the ſeveral parts of an Opera would be the reſult. The connoiſſeurs have been often diſpleaſed with thoſe ſudden tranſitions, where, from a recitative in the *andantiſſimo* and gentleſt movement, the performers are made to ſkip off and bound away into *ariettas* of the briſkeſt execution; which is to the full as abſurd, as if a perſon, when ſoberly walking, ſhould all on the ſudden fet to leaping and capering.

The ſureſt method to bring about a better underſtanding among the ſeveral conſtituent parts of an Opera, would be not to crowd ſo much art into the airs, and to crub the inſtrumental part more than is now the cuſtom. In every period of the Opera theſe two formed the moſt brilliant parts of it: and, in proportion as the muſical compoſition has been more and more refined, ſo have they received ſtill greater heightenings. They were naked

formerly in compariſon of what we ſee them now, and were in as abſolute a ſtate of ſimplicity, as they had been at their origin; inſomuch that, either in point of melody or accompaniments, they did not riſe above recitative.

Old Scarlatti was the firſt who infuſed life, movement, and ſpirit in them. It was he who cloathed their nakedneſs with the ſplendid attire of noble accompaniments; but they were dealt out by him in a ſober and judicious manner. They were by no means intricate or obſcure, but open and obvious; highly finiſhed, yet free from all the minuteneſs of affectation; and that not ſo much on account of the vaſtneſs of the theatres, by means of which many of the minor excellencies in muſical performances may be loſt, as in regard to the voices to which alone they ſhould be made ſubſervient.

But unwarrantable changes have happened ſince that great maſter's time down to ours, in which all the bounds of diſcretion are wantonly overleapt. The airs now are whelm-

ed under, and disfigured, by crowded ornaments, with which unnatural method the rage of novelty labours to embelliſh them. How tedioufly prolix are thoſe *ritornelli* that precede them; nay, and are often ſuperfluous. For, can any thing be more improbable than that, in an air expreſſive of wrath, an actor ſhould calmly wait with his hand ſtuck in his ſword belt, until the ritornello be over, to give vent to a paſſion that is ſuppoſed to be boiling in his breaſt? and after the ritornello, then comes on the part to be ſung; but the multitude of fiddles, etc. that accompany it in general, produce no better an effect, than to aſtoniſh the faculty of hearing, and to drown the voice of a ſinger. Why is there not more uſe made of the baſes, and why not encreaſe the number of baſſe-viols, which are the ſhades of muſic? Where is the neceſſity for ſo many fiddles, with which our orcheſtras are now thronged? Fewer would do; for they prove in this caſe like too many hands on board of a ſhip, which, inſtead of being aſſiſtant, are a great impediment to its navigation. Why are

not lutes and harps allowed a place? with their light and piercing notes they would give a ſprightlineſs to the *rapicnos*. Why is the *violetta* excluded from our orcheſtras, ſince, from its inſtitution, it was intended to act a middle part between the fiddles and the baſes, in order that harmony might thence enſue?

But one the moſt favourite practices now, and which indeed makes our theatres to reſound with peals of applauſe, is, in an *air*, to form a conteſt between the voice and a haut-boy, or between the voice and a trumpet, ſo as to exhibit, as it were, a kind of muſical tilting-match with the utmoſt exertion on either ſide. But ſuch a ſkirmiſhing of voices and inſtruments are very diſpleaſing to the judicious part of the audience, who, on the contrary, would receive the greateſt delight from the airs being accompanied by inſtruments differently qualified from the preſent in uſe, and perhaps even by the organ, as hath been formerly practiced *. The conſequence then would be, that the reſpective qualities of in-

* In the *orcheſtra* of the theatre in the famous city of Cataio, an organ is now to be ſeen.

ſtruments would be properly adapted to the nature of the words which they are intended to accompany, and that they would aptly glide into thoſe parts, where a due expreſſion of the paſſion ſhould ſtand moſt in need of them. Then the accompaniment would be of ſervice to the ſinger's voice, by enforcing the pathetic affections of the ſong; and would prove not unlike to the numbers of elegant and harmonious proſe, which, according to the maxim of a learned ſage, ought to be like the beating on an anvil by ſmiths, at once both muſical, and ſkilfully laboured.

Theſe faults, however conſiderable, are not the greateſt that have been introduced in the compoſition of airs; we muſt go farther back to inveſtigate the firſt ſource of this evil, which, in the judgment of the moſt able profeſſors, is to be found in the miſconduct of chuſing the ſubject of an air: becauſe rarely any attention is paid to the andamento of the melody being natural, and correſponding to the ſenſe of the words it is to convey; beſides, the extravagant varieties which it is now

made to ſhift and turn about after, cannot be managed to tend to one common centre, or point of unity. For the chief view of our preſent muſical compoſers is to court, flatter and ſurprize the ears, but not at all either to affect the heart, or kindle the imagination of thoſe who hear them; wherefore, to accompliſh their favourite end, they frequently bound over all rules. To be prodigal of ſhining paſſages, to repeat words without end, and muſically to interweave or entangle them as they pleaſe, are the three principal methods by which they carry on their operations.

The firſt of theſe expedients is indeed big with danger, when we attend to the good effect that is to be expected from melody, becauſe through its middle ſituation it poſſeſſes more of the *virtú*. Moreover, muſic delights to make an uſe of acute notes in her compoſitions ſimilar to that which painting does with ſtriking lights in her performances.

In regard to brilliant paſſages, common ſenſe forbids the introduction of them, excepting where the words are expreſſive of paſſion

or movement, otherwiſe they deſerve no milder an appellation, than being ſo many impertinent interruptions of the muſical ſenſe.

The repeating of words, and theſe chiming rencounters that are made for the ſake of ſound merely, and are devoid of meaning, prove intolerable to a judicious ear. Words are to be treated in no other manner but according as the paſſion dictates: and when the ſenſe of an air is finiſhed, the firſt part of it ought never to be ſung over again; which is one of our modern innovations, and quite repugnant to the natural proceſs of our ſpeech and paſſions, that are not accuſtomed to thus turn about, and recoil upon themſelves.

Moſt people, who frequent our Italian theatres, muſt have obſerved, that even when the ſenſe of an air breathes a rouzed and furious tendency, yet if the words Father or Son be in the text, the compoſer never fails to ſlacken his notes, to give them all the ſoftneſs he can, and to ſtop in a moment the impetuoſity of the tune. Moreover he flatters himſelf, on ſuch occaſion, that, beſides having cloathed

the words with ſentimental ſounds ſuitable to them, he hath alſo given to them an additional ſeaſoning of variety.

But in our ſenſe he hath entirely ſpoiled all with ſuch a diſſonance of expreſſion, that will ever be objected to by all who have the leaſt pretenſions to judgment and taſte. The duty of a compoſer is to expreſs the ſenſe, not of this or that particular word, but the comprehenſive meaning of all the words in the air. It is alſo his duty to make variety flow from the ſeveaal modifications the ſubject in itſelf is capable of; and not from adjuncts, that adventitiouſly faſten themſelves thereon, and are foreign from, prepoſterous, or repugnant to, the poet's intention.

It ſeems that our compoſers take the ſame miſtaken pains which ſome writers do; who, regardleſs of connection and order in a diſcourſe, bent all their thoughts to collect and ſtring together a number of finely ſounding words. But, notwithſtanding ſuch words are ever ſo harmonious, a diſcourſe ſo written would prove an uſeleſs, vain, and contemptible performance. The ſame may be ſaid of every

muſical compoſition, which is not calculated either to expreſs ſome ſentiment, or awaken the idea of ſome imagery of the mind *. Like what we have compared it to, it muſt turn out but an uſeleſs and a vain production, which, ſhould it be received with a temporary and ſlight applauſe, muſt ſoon be conſigned to perpetual ſilence and oblivion, notwithſtanding all the art that might have been employed in chuſing the muſical combinations. On the contrary, thoſe airs alone remain for ever engraven on the memory of the public, that paint images to the mind, or expreſs the paſſions, and are for that reaſon called the ſpeaking airs, becauſe more congenial to nature; which can never be juſtly imitated, but

* *Toute muſique qui ne peint rien, n'eſt que du bruit, & ſans l'habitude, qui dénature tout, elle ne feroit gueres plus de plaiſir, qu'une ſuite de mots harmonieux, & ſonores, demuez d'ordre, & de l'iaiſon.*

PRE. DE L'ENCYCLOPEDIE.

All muſic, that paints nothing, is only noiſe; and were it not for cuſtom, that unnatures every thing, it would excite no more pleaſure than a ſequel of harmonious and finely ſounding words, without any order or connection.

by a beautiful ſimplicity, which will always bear away the palm from the moſt laboured refinements of art.

Although poetry and muſic be ſo near a kin to each other, yet they have purſued different views here in Italy. The muſe, preſiding over harmony, was too chaſte in the laſt century to give into thoſe affectations and languiſhing airs, which ſhe is at preſent ſo fond of indulging. She then knew the way to the human heart, and how to ſtamp permanent impreſſions thereon; ſhe poſſeſſed the ſecret of incorporating herſelf, as it were, with the meaning of the words, and that the probability might ſeem the greater, ſhe was to the laſt degree ſimple, yet affecting; though at the ſame time, the poetic muſe had run away from all ſemblance of truth, to make a parade of hyperbolical, far-fetched fantaſtical whimſies. Since that time, by a ſtrange viciſſitude, as ſoon as poetry was made to return into the right path, muſic ran aſtray.

Such excellent maſters as a Ceſti and a Caſſimi, had the hard fate of compoſing muſic

for words, in the ſtyle of the Achillino; men, who were equal to the noble taſk of conveying, in muſical numbers, the ſighs and love-breathings of a Petrarch. But now, alas! the elegant, the terſe, the graceful poems of Metaſtaſio are degraded into muſic by wretched compoſers. It muſt not, however, be hence concluded, that no veſtige of true muſic is to be perceived among us; becauſe, as a proof againſt ſuch an opinion, and that no ſmall one, may be produced our intermezzi, and comic Operas; wherein the firſt of all muſical requiſites, that of expreſſion, takes the lead more than in any other of our compoſitions: which is owing perhaps to the impoſſibility the maſters found of indulging their own fancy in a wanton diſplay of all the ſecrets of their art, and the manifold treaſures of muſical knowlege; from which oſtentatious prodigality, they were luckily prevented by the very limited abilities of their ſingers. Wherefore, in their own deſpite, they found themſelves obliged to cultivate ſimplicity and follow nature. Whatever may have been the

cauſe, this ſtile ſoon obtained the vogue, and triumphed over every other, although called plebeian. Why did it ſucceed? Becauſe it was fraught with truth, that in all parts and ſciences muſt ultimately prevail.

To this kind of performance, we owe the extending of our muſical fame on the other ſide of the Alps among the French, who had been at all times our rivals in every polite art. The emulous contention which had ſo long ſubſiſted between them and us, for a pre eminence in muſic, is univerſally known. No means could be hit on by our artiſts, to make their execution agreeable to Gallic ears; and the Italian melody was abhored by them, as much as had been, in former times, an Italian regency.

But no ſooner was heard upon the theatre of Paris, the natural, yet elegant ſtyle of the Serva Padrona, rich with airs ſo expreſſive, and duets ſo pleaſing, than the far greater part of the French became not only proſelytes to, but even zealous advocates in behalf of the Italian muſic. A revolution ſo ſudden,

was cauſed by an intermezzo and two comic actors. The like had been attempted in vain, in the moſt elaborate pieces of eminent compoſers, through a long ſeries of years, although bedizened over with ſo many brilliant paſſages, ſurprizing ſhakes, etc. Nor did the repeated efforts of our moſt celebrated performers, vocal or inſtrumental, fare better.

Nevertheleſs, all the good muſical compoſition modern Italy can boaſt of, is not abſolutely confined to the intermezzi and comic Operas; for it muſt be confeſſed, that in ſome of our late ſerious pieces, there are parts not unworthy of the beſt maſters, and the moſt applauded æra of muſic. Several inſtances are to be found in the works of Pergoleſi and Vinci, whom death too ſoon ſnatched from us; as well as in thoſe of Gualupi, Jumelli, Saſſone, that are deſerving to be for ever in eſteem.

Through the energy of the compoſition of theſe maſters, muſic makes an audience feel ſometimes from the ſtage, the very ſame effects that were formerly felt in the chapels under the direction of Paleſtrina and Rhodio. We have likewiſe proofs of the like powerful

influence in the ſkilful productions of Benedetto Marcello; a man, ſecond in merit to none among the ancients, and certainly the firſt among the moderns. Who ever was more animated with a divine flame in conceiving, and more judicious in conducting his works, than Marcello? In the cantatas of Timoteo, of Caſſandra, and of the celebrated Opera of Salmi, he hath expreſſed, in a wonderful manner, not only all the different paſſions of the heart, but even the moſt delicate ſentiments of the mind. He has, morover, the art of repreſenting to our fancy, things even inanimate. He found out the ſecret of aſſociating with all the gracefulneſs and charms of the modern, the chaſte correctneſs of ancient muſic, which in him appears like the attractive graces of a beloved and reſpected matron.

CHAP. III.

ON THE RECITATIVE, AND SINGING, IN OPERAS.

IT is not enough for correct musical composition in order to succeed, that it be attentive to what effect it shall produce, because that depends chiefly on the manner in which it is executed by the singers. For it may so happen, that a good musical composer may be a good commander at the head of a bad army, with this difference, that a good commander may make good soldiers, but a skilful composer of music cannot flatter himself to do the like with his singers. It has never entered into the heads of most of them, how necessary above every other article, it is to learn an accurate pronunciation of their own language, to articulate well, to be intelligible, and not to change, as is too often the case, one word for another. Nothing is more ungraceful, than their mincing and frittering a-

way the finales, as well as their clipping and mutilating words, leſt they ſhould offend their own tender palates; by which means, thoſe who have not the books of the drama open before them, do not receive by their ears, any diſtinct impreſſion of what is unmeaningly liſped away. It was glancing at this error, that Salvini humorouſly remarked, " Such acting, which, to be underſtood, labours under the inconvenience of its drama being read, is not unlike to thoſe pictures, under which it is neceſſary to write, this is a dog, and this a horſe." To Italy, much better than to France, might be applied the pleaſant caricature that was made there, of an Opera without words; as if in an Opera, words were quite ſuperfluous *.

The gait of our actors, their adjuſtment, their repreſentative deportment, and their manner of moving on the ſtage, are as ungraceful, as their faulty habit of pronouncing words, or expreſſing ſentiments. Being ſo unqualified, and groſsly defective in the firſt

* The amours of the emperor Caracalla with a veſta, by Le Grand.

principles of their art, it is not at all to be wondered at, that they never make any progreſſive advances towards the attainment of thoſe exquiſite exertions, without which, there can be neither dignity nor truth in an action. Performers, in an Opera, have this advantage over the comic, that their execution is ſettled and reſtrained by the notes, as was the cuſtom in the ancient tragedies; and thus have they marked out for them the path which they are to follow, and therefore they cannot err, in regard to the different inflexions, or duration of the voice upon the words, becauſe all that is carefully directed by the compoſer. Notwithſtanding theſe boundaries preſcribed, an opportunity is always left to an intelligent ſinger, to throw in a great deal of his own; as in a ſimilar manner, coregraphy, or the art of dancing does: for at the ſame time that it points out to its performers the times, the ſteps, and turnings they are to obſerve in conſonance with the notes of the tune they are to be guided by; there is not room for the leaſt heſita-

tion in aſſerting, that it is the dancer himſelf who is to give the finiſhing hand, and to heighten his execution with thoſe in-born graces, which are the very ſoul of art.

It is even ſo with the recitative; for beſides the geſtures, which entirely depend on the actor, there are certain ſuſpenſions of the voice, certain ſhort pauſes, and a certain inſiſting on one place more than another, that cannot be communicated, and are therefore reſigned over to his ſagacity and diſcretion. For it is in ſuch minute refinements, that chiefly conſiſts the delicacy of expreſſion, which impreſſeth the ſenſe of words, not only on the mind, but on the hearts of all who hear them.

Even at this day, among the French, are remembered excellencies of this nature in the unparallelled acting of their Baron, and Le Couvreur, that gave a heightening to the verſes of Corneille and Racine. Their ſuperior ſtrokes of art are ever kept in view, and moſt faithfully imitated, in a nation where the theatre now is, as it was formerly in Athens, no

inconſiderable object of the public's attention. It would have been an advantage to the Italian ſtage, if our performers had alſo ſtudied Nicolini's and Teſi's manner of recitative, that is, when they kept cloſe to the modeſty of nature in expreſſing her ſentiments; but not at all, when, in order to pleaſe too much, they indulged a ranting ſtrain, and bordered upon caricature.—The playing, to what an actor ſays, which may be called the dumb ſhew of a ſcene, is likewiſe another part of dramatic expreſſion that totally depends upon the actor's judgment; and is as conducive to an enforcing of theatrical illuſion, as it is neceſſary that a cauſe ſhould produce an effect. Every body knows, without my entering into a detail of proofs, how careleſs and inſignificant in this article are, generally ſpeaking, each Roſcius that we ſee. Their thoughts are bent on every thing, but on that to which they ſhould ſolely attend.

Inſtead of one actor minding what another ſays to him, and marking, by the different modifications of geſture and features, what im-

preſſion it has made upon him, he does nothing but ſmile to the boxes, and bow to the company there, with ſeveral other ſuch pretty impertinences.

By ſo prepoſterous a conduct, one would think they had come to a reſolution not to impoſe upon any account, or ſuffer the audience to miſtake them for what they really are not: for ſhould one incline to imagine ſuch actors, for a time, to repreſentatively fill the rank of Achilles, Cyrus, &c. on the ſtage; theſe dear undeceiving creatures do all in their power to defeat ſuch a pleaſing error, and declare themſelves, as a wag merrily obſerved, to be no more than the ridiculous ſignor Petricino, the ſilly ſignor Stoppiano, and the zany ſignor Zolfanello.

This remiſſneſs may be aſſigned, perhaps, among the principal cauſes of that extreme diſguſt, that tyranizing irkſomeneſs, ſo prevalent at the repreſentation of our Operas; againſt which, a remedy has been ſought in the perpetual chattering of the company, in viſits being made from one box to another, in ſup-

ping there; and finally, in that other remedy, which is a thouſand times worſe than the diſeaſe complained of, and that is, gaming. All which irregularities will never be removed, until ſuch time, as, what in reality is the firſt foundation of muſical pieces, ſhall no longer be held of no value in the opinion of compoſers, as well as of performers; that is, when the recitative, the moſt eſſential part of the drama, ſhall be no longer ſo disfigured or neglected as at preſent, and when the ſongs too ſhall be well acted: then only will Operas be heard with delight, and force their way to the hearts of an audience.

But in ſpite of all that connoiſſeurs may ſay of acting, the modern performers ſeem determined to attend to ſinging only; yet, even in that, they do not obſerve the reſtrictions they ſhould;

E libito fan licito in lor legge,

Knowing no other law but their own will and pleaſure. Piſtocco, who may be looked

upon as the head of the ſchool, the Marini of modern licence-taking, thus rebuked Bernacchi, "It is very diſagreeable to me, that although I have taught you to ſing, yet you will do the reverſe." It is an old axiom, that he who knows not how to bridle his voice, can never learn to ſing; which, indeed, our gentry are very careleſs about. Though to keep the voice, ſuſtained in a certain key, or to raiſe it to a certain pitch required by the ſubject, is the great ſecret of ſtirring up our affections; yet that they are ſtrangers to, being perſuaded on the contrary, that all their ſkill is to conſiſt in ſtraining and ſplitting the voice, and in deſultory tranſitions from one note to another. Their object is not to make choice of what will produce the beſt effect, but of that which they think the moſt extraordinary and difficult in the execution.

It is not amiſs, to be ſure, that young ſingers apply themſelves to become maſters of the greateſt difficulties in muſical execution; becauſe, by that means the voice is rendered more obdient to their command on every oc-

caſion, and grows habituated to perform what was deemed beyond its reach, and above its owner's faculties. Moreover, it hence follows, that the perſon, who can execute the moſt difficult parts, will be certainly qualified to perform what are leſs ſo; and through that acquired facility, the graces ſuitable to the ſubject, may be the readier joined by ſuch a proficient.

But to be ever on the tiptoes, in ſtraining after difficulties, is againſt the very intention and ſpirit of the muſical art. It is a monſtrous inverſion of things, making that the end, which ſhould only be the means.—It is preſcribed by all the rules of taſte, that the duty of ſingers is to ſing, not to quaver or trill away the ſenſe, but to be intelligible; for by ſo doing, it is no fault of theirs, that a muſical performance, though it be ever ſo chaſte, ſo regular and appoſite, be dwindled into an unnerved and effeminate compoſition.

Whether it be that they have never learned, or that they do not like to follow the true precepts of their art, they apply the ſame

graces to every kind of cantilena; and what with their paſſages, their trillings, and beſides, with their ſplittings and flights of the voice, they over-do, confound, and disfigure every thing: thus putting, as it were, the ſame mask on different compoſitions, they ſo manage matters, that all tunes appear to reſemble each other; in the ſame manner, as all the ladies in France, by means of the paint and patches, appear to be of the ſame family.

There is a great liberty allowed by us to a ſinger, eſpecially in the cantabile ſongs, which are compoſed looſely, and but with a few notes, ſufficient to direct the melody, that he may have an opportunity of filling up from himſelf as he pleaſes, and of throwing in what graces he ſhall think the beſt adapted. If one conſiders the good and the evil, which may reſult from ſuch a practice, the French uſage may appear preferable; it never allows their ſingers ſuch a diſcretionary power, of which, ours, indeed, make ſo bad an uſe. The French bind them down to be the mere

performers of others thoughts, no more. It is true, to hear conſtantly an exact replication of the ſame thing, muſt be diſagreeable; therefore, the moſt reaſonable meaſure, is to leave ſome occaſions for the ſkill, fancy, and feelings of a ſinger to diſplay themſelves: but the miſchief of it is, that a ſinger is rarely to be found; who, whether through ignorance, or through an immoderate luſt of pleaſing, hath either judgment enough, or inclination to be confined to the ſubject, and will not depart from it, forgetful of all decorum and truth. Hundreds of common-place rhapſodiſts, and of ridiculous heads, that thruſt in matter foreign from the ſubject, are to be met for one performer, in whom knowlege is united with taſte, in whom elegance and nature combine, and whoſe fancy is ſubordinate to his judgment.

To the happy few of that ſtamp, on whom Apollo ſmiles, be it allowed to throw in ſupplemental touches of their own; becauſe, they can beſt enter into the ſenſe of the compoſer, and are not liable to diſagree (as we

ſay) with the baſe, and movement of the inſtruments. But, for all others, not thus qualified, let a maſter be provided that ſhall write down every thing they are to do, leading them by the hand in every variation, and in every paſſage. For this very reaſon, it ſhould not be a matter of ſo much indifference as it now is, to abandon to the ſingers their concluſive cadenzas, which they moſt commonly pervert to a quite different meaning and complexion from what was intended by the air: for here the ſinger is fond of crouding in all the graces, all the difficulties, and all the muſical tricks he is maſter of; — ridiculous! They ſhould ariſe naturally from the air, and be, as it were, the peroration or epilogue to it.

If our ſingers were well inſtructed in their mother tongue, were taught the uſe of graceful action, were properly initiated in the knowlege of muſic, and above all, were under due ſubmiſſion to good compoſers; what then ſhould hinder our hopes of having revived among us that manner of ſinging which

penetrates the ſoul? and of ſeeing new Sifacis, new Buzzolenis, and new Cartonas ariſe; the memory of whom is not extinct, altho' their voices be heard no more. If alſo, an expreſſive melody, accompanied with proper inſtruments, and having good poetry for its baſis, were to be executed by fingers free from affectation, and animated by geſtures both fitting and noble, then muſic would be inveſted with the arbitrary power of exciting, or calming our paſſions; and then ſhould we ſee renewed in our times, ſimilar effects to thoſe, which that enrapturing art had cauſed among the ancients, and for this apparent reaſon of her enjoying now the auxiliary concomitants. But it would be folly in us to hope for obtaining, by one ſingle article, what requires the concurrence of many *.

* "We are to conſider, that the muſic with the ancients, was of a larger extent than what we call muſic now-a-days: for poetry and dancing or [comely motion] were then accounted parts of muſic, when muſic arrived to ſome perfection—what we now call muſic, is but what they called harmonic; which was but one part of their muſic, (conſiſting of words, verſe, voice, tune, inſtrument, and acting;) and we are not to expect

It is not to be doubted, that whenever mufic ſhall be reſtored to her priſtine dignity, Operas will be honoured with the attention of the public, and be heard with the greateſt delight from the beginning to the end, becauſe then a grateful ſilence will be impoſed on all ſpectators; whereas, quite the contrary is now obſervable in our theatres; on entering one of which, ſo great a confuſion and uproar is heard, as to reſemble the bellowing of a wood in a ſtorm, or the roaring of the ſea to a tempeſtuous wind *. Even the moſt attentive of our now Opera-frequenters can be ſilent only to hear ſome air of Bravura; but they are all deſire at the dances, which can never begin too ſoon for their impatience, nor laſt too long for their enjoying them; ſo that it may now be aſſerted of the dances,

the ſame effect of one piece as of the whole." —Strange effects reported of muſic in former times examined by Dr. Wallis.—Philoſoph. Tranſact. abridged, v. I. p. 618. 619.

* Garganum mugire putes nomus, aut mare Tuſcum
Tanto cum ſtrepitu, ludi ſpectantur, et artes.
HORAT.

that they have taken poſſeſſion of the ſpectators hearts as well as of their eyes *. It ſeems indeed, as if our theatre had been intended rather for an academy of dancing, than the repreſentation of an Opera; and one would be induced to think, that the Italians have adopted the Frenchman's advice, who ſaid, not unpleaſantly, that, in order to make the theatre flouriſh, the dances ſhould be lengthened, and the women's petticoats made ſhorter.

* Verum equitis quoque jam migravit ab aure voluptas,
Omnis ad incertos oculos, & gaudia vana. HORAT.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE DANCES.

What is the eſſence and nature of Dancing, which people run ſo paſſionately after? It never was a conſtituent part of the drama; is always foreign from the buſineſs, and very often repugnant to it. As ſoon as an act is over, ſeveral dancers ſally forth on the ſtage, who have no matter of affinity with the plan of the piece. For, if the ſcene of action be in Rome, the dance is often made to be in Cuſco, or in Pekin; and if the Opera be ſerious, the dance to be ſure is comic. Nothing can be imagined ſo devoid of a methodical proceeding, of explanatory connection, or that is carried on with ſuch irregular bounds from one appearance to another, or is ſo much a ſtranger to (if it is not profaning the word on ſuch an occaſion) the law of continuity, an inviolable law of nature, and which

it is the duty of all the imitative arts never to tranſgreſs.

But no more on that head; becauſe, in the preſent licentiouſneſs of taſte, it might be rebuked as the ſophiſtry of hypercriticiſm: therefore let us to the point. The dancing, which delights ſome people ſo much, is in itſelf (as now uſed by us) nothing better than irrational caprioling from the beginning to the very end, an illiberal ſkipping about, which ought never to be applauded by perſons of a polite education, being as it were a perpetual monotony of a very few ſteps, and as few figures. The wonted cuſtom now is, that, after the preluding flouriſh of a very diſagreeable tune, a couple of young men are detached on the ſtage from the dancing band, all in readineſs behind the ſcenes; and it is the hackneyed practice, that one of them robs the other of a noſe gay, ſome flowers, &c. or plays him a trick of this ſort; they grow angry with each other; but ſoon become reconciled, although they ſtop not for a moment to ſettle the matter: then one invites the other to

dance, and to it they go, like madę folks, without the laſt moderation. After the firſt two have done their taſk, two of larger ſize come on, who are ſucceeded by the two chief dancers; they likewiſe perform a dance of the ſame complexion; and it is epilogued by the latter part of the tune, which is to the full as bad as its beginning. Whoever knows one dance, knows them all; for, though dancers may change their dreſſers, the characters introduced are ſeldom varied.

Whoever, as far as relates to the art of dancing, would let his judgment be warped by what he ſees in vogue with Italians, and would not raiſe his thoughts higher, muſt be induced to conſider as fabulous relations, many things that are nevertheleſs founded upon truth. Thoſe accounts, for example, which are to be read in authors, of the very tragic effects that had been cauſed in Athens by the dance of the Eumenides, as well as of the powerful energy transfuſed into others by the amazing ſkill and execution of Pylades and Batillus; one of whom could excite

pity or terror by dancing, the other could provoke jollity and laughter. Theſe divided Rome into two parties in the reign of Auguſtus.

It happens but very rarely that, in our Italian dancers, ſtrength of body is united with a gracefulneſs of figure; or a delicate diſplay of the arms with a dextrous activity in the feet; or that a certain eaſe and gentle ſway appear in their movements; without which concomitants, dancing is a fatigue, not only to the performers, but even to the ſpectators. Yet theſe are nothing more, than the rudiments of the art, or, to ſpeak with more propriety, the requiſite materials; but the final accompliſhing of, and taſteful form ſuitable to the ſubject, is another thing, and requires great delicacy of judgment in the contrivance.

The art of dancing ought to be imitative of nature, and of the affections of the mind by the body's moving to muſical numbers. It is her office to ſpeak continually, and paint to the eyes. A dance, moreover, ſhould have its expoſition, its intricacy, and denoument;

it ought to be the quinteſſential abrigement of an action. A brilliant example of what we have here advanced is the dance of *The Gameſter*, compoſed on an admirable air of Jumelli; in which are wonderfully expreſſed all the incidents in the charming intermezzo called by the ſame name.

It is but juſt, however, to own, that in the comic, or rather perhaps the groteſque ſtyle, we have had dances compoſed among us worthy of applauſe; and dancers, of whom it might be ſaid, that they were eloquent both in hands and feet, and whoſe execution was not perhaps inferior to that of Batillus.

But for compoſing and performing both ſerious and heroic dances, not only we Italians, but all the other nations of Europe, muſt ſtrike to the French. For what people, in the modern world, hath applied themſelves ſo ſtudiouſly as they have to excel in the art of dancing, for which indeed they ſeem to be fitted by nature, as Italians are for muſic. Coregraphy, or the art of dancing, took its riſe among them about the end of the fifteenth

century; and in theſe latter times they have produced the ballets of a La Roſe, Ariane, Pygmalion, and many others, that approach very near to the excellence of Pylades, and of the moſt celebrated antient pantomimes.

The French are the acknowleged maſters in this ſchool of the imitative arts, nor ought any other nation to be aſhamed to take leſſons from them in this article of polite accompliſhment. We Italians, in particular, may, without ceremony, receive from the French, wherewith to render our Opera-exhibition leſs imperfect, ſince to us the French are indebted for the very inſtitution of theirs.

CHAP. V.

ON SCENERY, DRESS, &c.

To the many improprieties, with which the dances now abound, may be added thoſe obſervable in the ornaments and dreſſes of the dancers: their dreſſes, as well as thoſe of the ſingers, ought to approach as near as poſſible to the manners of the times and nations which are repreſented; I ſay as near as poſſible, becauſe the ſtage muſt be allowed occaſionally ſome liberties; and in this article, more than in any other, ought it to avoid the imputation of ſtiffneſs, and pedantry. If, on one hand, it is not expected, that our artiſts plan out, hit exactly, and trim up a toga, or chlamys, in ſo accurate a manner as they are deſcribed by the learned Ferrario; yet, on the other, they never ſhould be permitted to put pipes into the mouths, and Dutch breeches on the poſteriors of Æneas's Trojan companions. Bnt, in order that dreſſes ſhould

be appropriated according to the cuſtom of a country, and be well fancied at the ſame time, the aſſiſtance of a Julio Romano, and a Tribolo, would be wanted; becauſe in that article they have given proofs of their ſkill; or at leaſt it would be neceſſary that the perſons who ſuperintend the wardrobe-department, were bleſſed with a kindred genius to thoſe eminent artiſts.

It would have been ſtill more neceſſary for our modern painters to copy after a San Gallo and a Peruzzi, becauſe we conſequently ſhould not ſee in our theatres the temple of Jupiter or Mars bear a reſemblance to the church of Jeſus, nor would the architecture of a piazza in Carthage have a gothic complexion; for, in all ſcene-painting, the coſtume and propriety muſt be united. The ſcenery is the firſt object in a Opera that powerfully attracts the eye, that determines the place of action, and co-operates chiefly to the illuſive enchantment, that makes the ſpectator imagine himſelf to be tranſported either to Egypt, to Greece, to

Troy, to Mexico, to the Elyſian Fields, or even up to Olympus.

Who does not now perceive of what importance it is, that the painter's imagination ſhould be regulated by learning, and guided by a correct judgment? To this will greatly contribute the peruſal of authors, and converſation of learned men well ſkilled in the cuſtoms of antiquity. But the artiſt ſhould have recourſe to no perſon preferably to the poet, the author of the Opera, who, we are to ſuppoſe, has preconceived in his mind every article; and to have omitted nothing that can help to embelliſh, or make the action he has choſen to exhibit, appear probable.

Although the painters of the fifteenth century are, without doubt the moſt excellent, yet the art of ſcene-painting received conſiderable improvements in the laſt age; and the obvious reaſon is, that many theatres, then erected, gave occaſion to that ſpecies of painting to become more common; whence it neceſſarily followed, that a great number of ingenious perſons, applying themſelves to it, have brought it nearer to perfection.

The deviſed contrivances of Giralomo Genga, (extolled ſo much by Serlio) to make, in the theatre of Urbino, trees, &c. of the fineſt ſilk, would now-a days be claſſed among the childiſh baubles that adorn the manger, in the ſhews of Chriſt's nativity. It is farther my opinion, that Serlio, from whoſe treatiſe upon ſcenery there may nevertheleſs ſome good hints be taken, did not ſufficiently conſider how, without the aſſiſtance of relievos in wood, we might conquer all the difficulties of perſpective; and how, in very confined ſituations, we could repreſent the appearance of extenſive ſpace; for to ſuch a pitch the ſcience of deceiving the eye has been improved in our time. The introduction, eſpecially, of accidental points, or rather the invention of viewing ſcenes by the angle, produces the fineſt effects imaginable; but that requires the niceſt judgment to bring properly into practice. FERDINANDO BIBIENA was the inventor of thoſe ſcenes, which, by the novelty of the manner, drew the eyes of all the curious upon him. They ſoon be-

gan to look upon, as unpleasing objects for a stage, those streets, and narrow passages, those galleries that were always made to tend to its center, there at once to limit the spectators imagination and sight.

He had studied the principles of his art in Vignola under good masters: moreover, being endowed with a picturesque and animating fancy, he came to a resolution of giving a meaning to his scenes, after the same manner as had been done before him, by the painters in the fifteenth century, to the figures of Bellini, Perrugi, and Mantegna *.

Ferdinando Bibiena was the Paul Veronese of the theatre; and, like him, he enjoyed the glory of raising his art to the summit, so far as relates to the magnificent, and to a certain degree of the marvellous. He had the luck too, like Veronese, of not establishing it by the pupils reared up under him. They em-

* The writer of this essay hath in his possession a large volume of designs of the same artist, which are a more evincing proof of his superior merit, than those engravings that are carried about in his name, and executéd by Buffagnoti and Abbati.

ployed all their pains in imitating the eaſieſt part of his manner, which was the whimſical; forgetting the fundamentals of the art, by which means only things are rendered probable: therefore, in profeſſing to follow, they went quite aſtray from their maſter.

The moſt new-fangled whims, the moſt out-of-the-way conceits, that could be imagined, were the objects they delighted to repreſent; and, not to mention a certain arbitrary perſpective of their own creation, they beſtowed the name of cabinet on what ought to be called a large ſaloon, or a hall; and the name of priſon on what might ſerve for a portico, or rather for a piazza.

Vitruvius relates the following anecdote of a painter, employed at Tralli to execute a ſcene: He introduced therein ſome things, that, without ſinning againſt veriſimilitude, could have no place there. The citizens, however, were about honouring his performance with their approbation, it being in ſome partes finiſhed in a very maſterly manner. But all on a ſudden, one Licinius, a mathe-

matician, by thus accoſting them, opened their eyes, "Do ye not perceive, my fellow citizens, that, if ye ſhould praiſe in pictures what can neither ſtand the ſcrutiny of the judicious, or be warranted by taſte, your city will run a great riſk of being ranked among thoſe that are not remarkable for a keenneſs of underſtanding *."

What would that mathematician ſay, were he now alive, on hearing ſo much applauſe laviſhed by us on thoſe labyrinths of architecture, thoſe crowded buildings, with which our ſcenes are ſurcharged, and from which all ſemblance of truth is excluded; or thoſe unwieldy fabricks, that appear neither to ſtand upright, nor to have a ſettled foundation; and where the columns, having their architraves topſy-turvey, and jumbled with the roof, loſe themſelves in a ſea of clouding rags, ſuſpended in mid-air. The like blundering is viſible in the volutes, being executed in ſo defective and lame a manner. But even among

* Lib. VII. Cap. V.

us there rifes up now and then a Licinius *. For fomething fimilar to what had happened to the above mentioned painter, was the cafe of father Pozzi, one of the maſters in the modern ſchool. In his picture of a cupola he made the columns to lean upon little props, which was ridiculed by ſeveral architects, declaring that, for any conſideration, they would not have done the like in a real ſtructure. Nevertheleſs, they were made to alter their opinion, as he himſelf relates, by a friend of his, who offered to bind himſelf to pay all expences of an experiment to be made, if, in ſtriking away ſuch props, the columns ſhould fall. However, that is but a poor excuſe; as if architecture were not to be painted according to rule, and as if what offends in a reality, would not offend the imagination in a picture.

* *Utinam Dii immortales feciſſent, ut Licinius reviviſceret, & corrigeret & hanc amentiam.*

Would to the immortal Gods, that Licinius were to riſe up again to correct this madneſs.

To keep their conceptions within the boundaries of prudence, it will be expedient for painting artiſts never to be tired of ſtudying thoſe venerable pieces of ancient architecture that are yet ſtanding. India can furniſh them alſo with ſeveral noble examples, as can likewiſe Greece. To her we are indebted for the revival of correct architecture. Even Egypt, the firſt miſtreſs of all polite inſtitutions, can ſupply many uſeful hints. And in effect, what can be more ſuperb and awful, not to mention the pyramids, than the remains of Memnon's palace, that tower along the banks of the river Nile, or of that ancient city Thebes, with an hundred gates; all which the public can now enjoy by the means of Norden's accurate performance *. They are admirable, not only in their forms, but in the chaſte ornaments which they receive from the coloſſal parts, and the ſphynxes that accompany them, becauſe therein moſt conſpicuouſly appears the Tuſcan manner; and if they were ſometimes, properly intro-

* See his Travels into Egypt.

duced on the ſtage, they would produce amazing effects.

China alſo, that antient nurſery of the arts, peopled, as ſome will have it, by a colony from Egypt, may alſo furniſh very beautiful ſcenes. But, as I have above objected againſt the exhibition of any capricious and fantaſtical combinations, which, to the diſgrace of our national taſte, have got too great a footing among us, and have ſupplanted the learnedly groteſque compoſitions of Gioan da Udine, and of other cotemporary maſters with him; I do not mean here that our painters ſhould imitate either pagods or towers of porcelain, unleſs the ſubject of the Opera be Chineſe.

The objects I purpoſe to recommend to the imitation of our artiſts, from which pleaſing ideas will ariſe and delightful ſcenes may be drawn, are the gardens of that moſt ingenious nation; for the gardeners there are ſo many painters, who do not lay out their ground with the ſame regularity which architects obſerve in building houſes; no, they take nature for their guide, and employ all their efforts to

imitate her noble diſregard of ſymmetric order, and her fondneſs of variety.

Their favourite practice is to make a choice of thoſe objects, which in their ſeveral kinds are moſt entertaining to the eye. Then they arrange them in ſuch a manner, as that the one may be a contraſt to the other, and that from the whole may reſult ſomething new and uncommon. In their little woods there is planted a lively intermixture of thoſe trees, which are of a different appearance, condition, colour, and nature. What a variety of ſituations do they contrive to exhibit in one place! Here we are alarmed on viewing rocks, cut in ſo artificial a manner, as to appear pendulous in air; or caſcades of water, burſting from caverns and grottos, where they know how to make the light play in various ways. In another part we are charmed with the ſight of flowery parterres, limpid canals, lovely iſlands, crowned with pretty edifices, whoſe reflexion is ſeen in the water. Thus, from the moſt horrid proſpects, they waft us in a moment to the moſt enchanting;

and from the marvellous the delightful is never ſeparate; to produce which effect in a garden, coſts them as much application and ſtudy, as an author is ſubject to in compoſing the fable of a poem.

The Engliſh have derived their preſent taſte in gardening from the Chineſe, by which means it is that their Kent and Chambers have ſo far ſurpaſſed Le Nautre, who before their time was eſteemed to be the unrivalled maſter of the art of laying out gardens. The French regularity is now baniſhed from all villas in England. The moſt delightful ſituations there have the complexion of nature. Cultivated ground is intermixed with parts neglected; and a ſeeming irregularity is the effect of conſummate art *.

* On a bad taſte in gardens.

His gardens next our admiration call;
On ev'ry ſide you look, behold the wall.
No pleaſing intricacies intervene,
No artful wildneſs to perplex the ſcene:
Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
And half the plātform juſt reflects the other.

But to return nearer home; what is the reaſon our painters do not ſtudy thoſe objects that are under their eyes? Beſides the antient edifices ſtill ſubſiſting in Italy, the elegant fabrics erected in modern times might often be introduced on the ſcenes without incurring the charge of impropriety. And likewiſe, why do they not ſtudy thoſe plans of architecture that adorn many of Paole's pictures, by which he may be ſaid to have rendered the events of hiſtory theatrical? Why alſo do they not ſtudy the landſkips of Pouſſin, of Titian, Marchetto Ricci, and Claudio, who all poſſeſſed the ſecret of obſerving and collecting from nature her moſt valuable and attractive appearances? Finally, I would ad-

On a good taſte in gardens.

Conſult the genius of the place in all,
That tells the waters or to riſe, or fall,
Or helps the ambitious hill the heav'ns to ſcale,
Or ſcoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches open glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies ſhades from ſhades;
Now breaks, or now directs th' intending lines,
Paints as you plant, and as you work deſigns.

POPE.

vife thofe painters; unendowed with imaginative powers, to betake themfelves to copying the pieces of the before-mentioned maſters; and in ſo doing they would imitate that worthy churchman, who, rather than peſter an audience with his own nonſenſical ſermons, got by heart, and repeated to them thoſe of Segneri.

Another moſt important article, not ſo much attended to as it ſhould, is in the not leaving convenient openings in the ſcenes, particularly of architecture, that the actors may come on, and go off the ſtage, in ſuch a manner, as that their figures may appear, to an obſerver's eye, to be in a juſt proportion with the columns. We often ſee them obliged to advance from the bottom of the ſtage, becauſe it is there that the only entrance is contrived for them, which makes their perſons ſhew very incongruous and offenſive to a diſcerning ſpectator. The apparent magnitude of an object depends on a judicious compariſon made of the exhibited figure, with its diſtance from us. So a figure, being ſuppoſed of ſuch a magnitude, the farther it is diſtant from us,

the greater the object will be eſteemed. And hence may be aſſigned the reaſon why the performers, preſenting themſelves from the bottom of the ſtage, appear like ſo many towering giants, by the artificial magic of the ſcene, through the illuſive power of perſpective, inducing us to fancy them at a prodigious diſtance. Yet theſe imaginary giants dwindle by degrees, as they come forward, and are dwarfed down to their native ſize, as they approach nearer to us.

The ſame remark holds good in regard to attendants, guards, &c. who ſhould never be made to enter at that part of the ſtage, where the capitals of the columns riſe no higher than their ſhoulders, or perhaps their ſword-belts, which defeats all deception intended by the ſcenery. Let this be a general caution :— It requires the greateſt circumſpection in a director, where it is neceſſary to blend falſehood with truth; for if the one give the lie to the other, a diſcovery enſues, and the whole is rejected as an intended impoſition.

There yet remains an article to be mentioned, and of equal importance with the foregoing, though not ſufficiently conſidered, and that erroneouſly; to wit, the illumination of the ſcenes. What wonderful things might not be produced by the light, when not diſpenſed in what equal manner, and by degrees, as is now the cuſtom. Were it to be played off with a maſterly artifice, diſtributing it in a ſtrong maſs on ſome parts of the ſtage, and by depriving others, as it were, at the ſame time; it is hardly credible what effects might be produced thereby; for inſtance, a *chiaro obſcuro*, for ſtrength and vivacity, not inferior to that ſo much admired in the prints of Rembrant.

And pray, why might not a repreſentation of the pleaſing mixturcs of light and ſhade, in the pictures of Giorgione or of Titian, be found practicable on the ſtage? Nay, the more ſo, when we call to mind thoſe little portable theatres, carried about under the names of mathematical optic-views, that repreſent ſea-ports, fleets engaged, &c. Therein the light

is admitted through an oiled paper, that deadens the rays which might prove too ſtriking, and by that means is ſo attempered, that its various rays gently conſociate, and are reflected with the greateſt harmony.

I alſo remember to have ſeen (on the occaſion of ſhewing one of the holy ſepulchres, according to a practice at Bologna) ſome very coarſe pictures upon the walls of the church, and ſome contemptible ſtatues, that ſeemed no better than as if made of bundles of coarſe paper, which nevertheleſs, by receiving the light through ſome oiled papers from lanterns, appeared, although near our eyes, to be finiſhed to the life, and of the pureſt marble.

Whenever a theatre ſhall be illuminated in the manner it ought, then will manifeſtly triumph the great advantage our dramatic repreſentations by night, have over thoſe of the ancients, which were by day; and then no doubt but the ſcenery, diſplayed in ſuch a theatre, being executed by the moſt eminent painters, remarkable too for their propriety and elegance, will not only pleaſe above, but even ſu-

perſede all thoſe capricious ſtage exhibitions, that have ſhamefully been hitherto ſo much in vogue, and are even now ſo much extolled by certain would-be connoiſſeurs, who examine nothing, yet decide upon every thing.

Then ſuch a revolution will happen in the Italian as once happened in the French theatre; when, after the long reign of Spaniſh abſurdities, which were a diſgrace to Thalia, her favourite Moliere's judicious and natural comic pieces appeared. Rapid was the ſucceſs they obtained through that reſiſtleſs power, which truth has upon the minds of mankind, when once they are made acquainted with her. At that glorious epoch, did the learned Menagius exultingly cry out, "at laſt, the time is come to knock down thoſe idols, before whoſe unhallowed ſhrines the miſled natives of France have ſo long burnt incenſe."

CHAP. VI.

On the structure of theatres.

Thus far we have treated of all the constituent parts of an Opera, that want to be corrected, and ſtand greatly in need of a thorough reformation. The deſire of pleaſing too much, was the principal cauſe of each ſtraying beyond its due bounds; by which tranſgreſſions, they have ſpoilt a compoſition, whoſe beauty ſhould reſult from all the parts being properly adjuſted together and amicably co operating with each other.

From the ſame ſource too, another fault has ſprung; and that is, when, in theſe latter times, an opportunity of building a new theatre preſented itſelf, architecture, ſeized by the ſame contagious diſtemper, inſtead of conſidering the uſe and intent for which the ſtructure was propoſed, thought of nothing

but giving a looſe to ornamental atchievings, and all the expenſive pomp of her art; which, indeed, rendered ſuch edifices beautiful to the eyes of common beholders, but to the judicious they appeared culpable, becauſe deviating from their intent.

As many debates upon his head, ſet the curious about enquiring what were the fitteſt materials to build a theatre with, as well as about the dimenſions and form it ought to have, and the diſpoſition of the boxes, and how they ſhould be decorated; it will not be departing from our ſubject, to examine thoſe articles a little. For ſince, as far as in our power lay, the requiſite form of an Opera has been delineated; it is not improper now, to determine the moſt commodious form that can be given to the fabric in which it is to be exhibited, for the joint entertainment of our ſight and hearing.

In regard to the firſt article, the materials, we cannot but very much approve the practice of thoſe, who, in building theatres, contrive

that the galleries and the ſtairs be of brick or ſtone: for beſides the perpetuity ſuch materials give to a building, they are its beſt inſurance againſt fire, to which they are more liable than any other kind of ſtructure *. Why then, whether for the ſake of the fabric's perpetuity, or through a miſtaken notion of magnificience, have not ſome artiſts taken it into their heads to make the boxes, and the interiour parts looking towards the ſtage, of ſtone?—Becauſe, ſuch a proceeding would militate againſt the chief end an architect ſhould propoſe to himſelf in erecting a theatre, to wit, that its ſonoreity ſhould be ſuch, as that the voices of the ſingers may be heard as diſtinct as poſſible, and rendered, at the ſame time, both melodious and pleaſing to the ears of an audience.

Daily experience teacheth us, that in a box, whoſe walls are naked, the ſinger's voice is reverberated in a particular manner; it founds crude and harſh, and by no means flattering to the ear. The accents are quite

* In Italy.

loſt, if the box be hung with tapeſtry; whereas, they are reflected full, ſonorous, and agreeable to the ear, when the boxes are only boarded; which is an obvious proof, and confirmed by experience, that the beſt lining for the interior part of a theatre is wood. and, preferably, that ſpecies of which muſical inſtruments are made, on account of its being more apt than any other, when ſtruck by ſound, to be agitated by the kind of vibrations, that are the moſt analogous with the organ of hearing.

The ancients, it is true, had vaſes made of bronze, fixed in certain places of their theatres, in order to encreaſe the ſound of the actor's voice; but ſuch edifices, among them, were made of ſolid materials, viz. ſtone, cement, or marble, which, are by no means reſounding: while, on the contrary, ſuch reſources were unneceſſary, in thoſe made of wood; whoſe gift it is, as Vitruvius aſſerts, to reflect ſounds *. And thus this great ma-

* *Itaque ex his indagationibus mathematicis rationibus fiunt vaſa ærea, pro ratione magnitudinis theatri.— Dicet*

ſter, among the ancients, comes now, as it were, by the rebound, to teach us moderns, what are the proper materials for conſtructing a theatre. Be it however remembered, that wood, ſo employed, ought to be properly ſeaſoned, and to be made throughout equally ſmooth and even; by which expedient, the vibrations will not come riding, as one may ſay, one upon the other; and that wood will reverberate the ſonorous rays in the moſt regular manner, whoſe every fibre is vibrated alike.

Many perſons think, that the vaſtneſs of a theatre contributes much to its beauty. It is certain, that large edifices have wherewithal to ſurprize, and pleaſe the human mind; but it is neceſſary, that in this articie, as well as in every other, certain regulations and boundaries ſhould be obſerved.

aliquis forte multa theatra Romæ quotanius facta eſſe, neque ullam rationem earum rerum in his fuiſſe; ſed erravit in eo, quod omnia, publica ligneа theatra tabulationes habent complures, quas neceſſe eſt ſonare.—Cum autem ex ſolidis rebus theatra conſtituuntur, id eſt, ex ſtructura cœmentorum, lapide, marmore, quæ ſonare non poſſunt, tunc ex his hæc ratione ſunt explicanda. Vitr. lib. v. c. 5.

The extent of a place, Vitruvius declares, ſhould always be in proportion to the multitude of the inhabitants; ſo that on the one hand, the ſpace allotted ſhould not be too narrow for conveniency and uſe, and on the other, through the fewneſs of the people, the forum ſhould not appear ſolitary and unfrequented *. Now, without inſiſting upon the abſurdity of a large theatre being built for a ſmall diſtrict, let us conſider, that the meaſure of the length of the parterre or pit, and ſize of a theatre, is the performers reach of voice and none other. For it would be equally ridiculous in any perſon, to have a theatre built ſo large, as that people could not hear in it, as in an engineer, to make the works of a fortreſs in ſuch a manner, as that they could not be defended; which will always be the caſe when the line of defence, or the length of the curtain that ought to be the module for all the parts of a fortification, are not

* *Magnitudines autem ad copias hominum oportet fieri, ne parvum ſpatium ſit ad uſum, aut ne propter inopiam populi vaſtum forum videatur.* Lib. v. c. 5.

made in a due reference to the reach of the muſketry.

That the ancients had theatres much larger than ours, is not to be doubted; wherefore, beſides the vaſes of bronze which they made uſe of to ſtrengthen the voice, the mouth of the maſks which the actors wore, were contrived ſo as to ſpread themſelves outwards like a ſpeaking trumpet: by ſuch devices, the natural power of the voice was greatly encreaſed. But we, being deprived of ſuch aſſiſtance, muſt confine ourſelves to narrower bounds; ſince who would be deſirous of hearing the voice raiſed like to that of a crier? in other words, who would be deſirous of truth disfigured by a miſrepreſentation of nature?

As moſt people are captivated with what appears grand and magnificent, ſome were induced to reſolve on having a theatre built of an exceſſive extent, and out of all reaſon, where, however, they ſhould hear commodiouſly; which to effect, they made the ſtage whereon the actors perform, to be advanced

into the parterre ſeveral feet; by that expedient, the actors were brought forward into the middle of the audience, and there was no danger then of their not being heard. But ſuch a contrivance can only pleaſe thoſe, who are very eaſily to be ſatisfied. For who that reflects, does not ſee that ſuch a proceeding is ſubverſive of all good order and prudent regulation.

The actors, inſtead of being ſo brought forwards, ought to be thrown back at a certain diſtance from the ſpectator's eye, and ſtand within the ſcenery of the ſtage, in order to make a part of that pleaſing illuſion for which all dramatic exhibitions are calculated. But by ſuch prepoſterous inverſion of things, the very intent of theatric repreſentation is deſtroyed; and the propoſed effect defeated, by thus detaching actors from the precincts of the decoration, and dragging them forth from the ſcenes into the midſt of the parterre; which cannot be done by them without ſhewing their ſides, or turning their ſhoulders to a great part of the audience, beſides many o-

ther inconveniencies; ſo that what was conceived would prove a remedy, became a very great evil.

Some were of opinion, that notwithſtanding the largeneſs of a theatre, its interior formation might greatly contribute to render it commodious for hearing. They tortured their brains not a little to demonſtrate ſuch problematic doctrine; but without applying much to geometry for her aſſiſtance in their puzzled ſituation. For the better elucidation of their meaning, they made choice of the figure of a bell preferably to all others, and to which they were pleaſed to give the epithet of phonic.

According to thoſe wiſeacres, the mouth of the bell anſwers to the opening of the ſtage, and the middle box is placed where the clapper of a bell is ſuſpended from. It is not difficult to diſcover, how ſuch a notion could be received; it was, from the ſimilitude or analogy which unphiloſophical heads thought they diſcovered, between the figure of a bell and the ſound it gave. But how groundleſs

ſuch reaſoning is, will readily appear; the concave figure of a bell, with its out-ſpreading lips are extremely well fitted for the ſpreading abroad on every ſide, the ſound which the clapper excites by ſtriking on the lips; the bell, being ſuſpended on high, ſoon throws into agitation the ocean of air that ſurrounds it. What can be thence inferred? Is it to be expected that the voice of a ſinger, who is placed, as it were, in the mouth of the bell of the ſtage, can cauſe the like effect in the internal parts of it.

An abſurdity of this ſort can only be adopted by ſuch underſtandings as believe, that the perſon, who is born under the ſign of Aquarius, will undergo great perils upon ſea; or by thoſe, who, againſt the bite of a ſerpent, preſcribe, as a ſovereign ſpecific, the ſerpentine wood, becauſe it reſembles a ſerpent; with many other inferences equally ridiculous, yet have been eſteemed as the legitimate childern of analogy, when the ſyllogiſtic ſophiſtry of the ſchools had diſgraced the name of philoſophy. Beſides the inconveniencies

already recited, there are others annexed to the figure of a bell, in the ſenſe thoſe pſeudo-connoiſſeurs would apply it; as the narrowing, in the manner of a bell towards its upper part, the area of the parterre, and thereby ſcreening ſeveral boxes from a view of the ſtage, &c.

Should we perchance be asked, What then is the moſt commodious ſhape, that can be given to the interior part of a theatre, and which of the curve lines is the moſt eligible for diſpoſing the boxes in the beſt manner? Our anſwer is; the ſame that the ancients made uſe of in their theatres, the ſemi circular.

It is well known, that of all the figures of an equal perimeter, the circle is that which contains the greateſt ſpace. Therefor, the ſpectators placed in a ſemi-circle, are all preſented in a like manner towards the ſtage, of which they have a full view, their hearing and ſeeing being alike uninterrupted. So true it is, that, after all the wanderings from art, in curious reſearches, we are often obliged to return to the ſimple and plain inſtructions ſhe

had delivered to our forefathers. There is one inconveniency which the ſemi-circle, as employed in modern theatres, hath, and which proceeds from our ſtage, being built in a different manner from that of the antients, whereby the opening of it is too large for the ſide parts of the audience to ſee well. But the cauſe of this complaint might be very ſoon removed. There needs no more than to change the ſemi circular into a ſemi-eliptic form, which comprehends almoſt the ſame advantages; and then its minor axis might be the opening of the ſtage, and its larger allotted for the ſpectators.

There is yet a better manner of arranging the boxes; and for which invention we are indebted to Andrea Sighizzi, the ſcholar of Brizio and Dentone: he was the predeceſſor of Bibiena; his method though had been approved, and made uſe of even by them. The plan he followed was, that the boxes, according as they were to be removed from the ſtage towards the bottom of the theatre, ſhould continue gradually riſing by ſome inches one

above the other, and gradually receding to the ſides by ſome inches; by which means, every box would have a more commodious view of the ſtage; and the ſight of one could not be intercepted by the other, eſpecially if the partition that ſeparates them were made pervious, in a rack-like form, as may be ſeen in the Formagliari theatre at Bologna, finiſhed in this manner, under the direction of Sighizzi.

The boxes, be they ever ſo well arranged, have yet one faſhionable vice to get rid of, viz. thoſe ornamental parts that have too much relievo, too many ſwellings and ſinuous cavities; becauſe the voice, by ſuch inequalities, is reverberated irregularly, and in part loſt. For ever be baniſhed from the interior part of a theatre, that kind of ornamenting which repreſents the orders of architecture; a pedantic affectation devolved to us from the fifteenth century; at which period no ſcrivener's office, or even a family-cupboard, was made without being ridiculouſly adorned with all the orders of the Coliſeum;

but ſuch miſplaced decorations are not ſuitable to a theatre.

The pilaſters and columns that are made to the boxes, as their elevation can be but of a few feet, preſent a bad appearance; they ſeem dwindled into pygmies, by loſing ſo much of that loftineſs and dignity which is their natural right. The ornaments above, although the cornices be architraved, are too high for the ſize of ſimple boxes; beſides, their purpoſe is nothing more than to ſeparate one range of boxes from another —But this is not all that is exceptionable here; for as to act conformably to the laws of architecture, it is neceſſary to give to the upper ranges, a greater air of lightneſs, what the Italians call *Sveltezza*, than to the inferior; conſequently the boxes muſt be different in height, whence the internal part of the theatre is made like a ſemi zone or tower; and thus, without any neceſſity, the ſpectators in the uppermoſt range of boxes are quite thrown out from the point of view, which is ſettled by the middle box in the firſt range; or elſe, there will be

but few ranges of boxes made, and thereby a great ſpace will be loſt.

Let the architect, whoſe province it is to ornament the interior parts of a theatre in a proper manner, condeſcend to take for model, a certain ſpecies of the groteſque, which is yet to be ſeen in ancient pictures; and alſo of the gothic, they being nearly a-kin; this propoſal, we are well aware, will offend over-nice modern ears.

My meaning is, that I would have the props of the boxes to be made very ſlender, having but a ſmall weight to ſupport. Let the ornaments above be narrow and confined; but in all the parts, of a light and delicate workmanſhip. In fine, the architect's principal care ſhould be to leave no article unremedied that might any way tend to impede the view: and at the ſame time, to let no gaping chaſm appear, by any ſpace remaining unoccupied, aud loſt to every ſerviceable purpoſe. Let him alſo contrive, that the audience may appear to form a part of the ſpectacle to each other; ranged as books are in a library.

For producing ſuch an effect, no better example can be propoſed, than the theatre of Faunus, admirably deſigned by Jacobo Torelli; who, in the laſt century, having paſſed many years of his life in France, was afterwards ennobled by his country.

An architect will find opportunities of diſplaying his talents and judgment in directing the workmanſhip, as well as the ornamental part of the boxes, and of the reſt of the theatre. That artiſt will juſtly merit our praiſe, who will order the carving in wood to be light, but with taſte at the ſame time; and he will be indulged in diſplaying all the pomp and magnificence of his art on the outſide, in galleries, niches, balconies, &c. I have ſeen two plans in Italy, wherein no article was wanting, even for modern dramatic repreſentations, yet all the majeſty of the Grecian theatre was preſerved.

One of them was the performance of Tomaſo Temanza, a man of extraordinary merit; and who, by his writings, has given new life to Sauſovino and Palladio: the other was

the production of the Conte Giralomo dal Pozzo; who, by his works, has revived in Verona, his native country, the grateful memory of Samnichele. The theatre, which was dedicated fome years ago in Berlin to Apollo and the muſes, does not fall far ſhort of their idea, and is ranked among the firſt-rate ornaments of that imperial city.

CONCLUSION.

THERE yet remain ſeveral articles that might be added to a ſubject of this nature, which is the reſult of ſo many different arts, each in itſelf important, copious, and not ignoble. Let it however ſuffice for me to have pointed out the way thus far, having propoſed to myſelf no other view, than to ſhew the intimate connection that ought to be kept up among the ſeveral conſtituent parts of the muſical drama or opera; by which means, the effect will be one regular and harmonious *whole*. The doctrine here laid down will be found ſufficient, whenever it ſhall be ſo lucky as to be honoured by the countenance of a ſovereign, bleſſed with a refined underſtanding and delicacy of taſte; becauſe, thro' ſuch a wiſhed-for protection, may be reſtored to its antient rank in the public's eſteem, a ſpecies of ſcenical exhibition, to whoſe accompliſhment and final embelliſhing, all the

polite arts emulouſly concur. Therefore, for many other reaſons that might be aſſigned, it is an object not unworthy of a place in the attention even of thoſe who govern kingdoms.

At ſo happy an epoch as that hinted here, we ſhould behold the theatres no longer as a place deſtined for the reception of a tumultuous aſſembly, but as the meeting of a ſolemn audience; where an Addiſon, Dryden, a Dacier, a Muratori, a Gravina, a Marcelli, might be ſpectators, without the leaſt diſparagement to their judgments.

Then would the Opera be no longer called an irrational, monſtrous, and groteſque compoſition: on the contrary, it would diſplay a lively image of the Grecian tragedy, in which, architecture, poetry, muſic, dancing, and every kind of theatrical apparatus united their efforts to create an illuſion of ſuch reſiſtleſs power over the human mind, that from the combination of a thouſand pleaſures, formed ſo extraordinary a one, as in our world has nothing to equal it.

But ſince, agreeably to what I have advanc-

ed in the beginning of this eſſay, the drama or poem of an Opera is to contain in it every part, the ground work of every beauty; it is upon the well conducting of that, the ſucceſs of the whole muſt depend *—— I therefor thought it not unneceſſary to give two examples of a drama, according to the manner I have deviſed. One of them ÆNEAS IN TROY; the other, IPHIGENIA IN AULIS †.

The former is but the embrio of a drama, the latter is a finiſhed one.

Æneas in Troy, is little more than the ſecond book of the Æneid of Virgil, put into action, with ſome few alterations, in order to make every incident, as it ſhould, refer to

* *Il faut ſe rendre a ce palais magique,*
Ou les beaux vers, la danſe, la muſique,
L'art de tromper les yeux par les couleurs,
De ceux plaiſirs font un plaiſir unique.

Let us repair to that gay magic temple, where the power of verſe, of dancing, and of muſic, joined to the ſweet embelliſhments of painting, can make ſuch various charms combine to form one bliſsful ſcene.

VOLTAIRE.

† An Iphigenia in Aulus, has been repreſented at the theatre royal in Berlin, with the greateſt applauſe.

Æneas, who is the principal actor in the piece.

The other drama, Iphigenia in Aulis, is the subject Euripides represented on the Athenian stage; and which, in modern times, has been transferred from the Grecian to the French theatre, by the affecting muse of the tender Racine.

In some parts of the fable I have followed the ancient poet, in others the modern: assuming to myself the liberty, among other things, of departing occasionally from the one, where necessary to render the action quite simple; and from the other, to exhibit Iphigenia with a consistency of character suitable to the *costume* of her age and country. For though she hath a fondness for life, through that natural sensation common to all; yet, as a Grecian princess, and daughter of Agamemnon, she meets her fate with a becoming fortitude. In my sketch, she is not made a timid supplicant from the beginning, and by a sudden change at the end, entirely the reverse, as Euripides hath drawn her; for which in-

regular deviation in point of character, and palpable violation of the *coſtume*, he was juſtly cenſured by Ariſtotle in his Art of Poetry *.

Where I have copied Racine, I have made uſe of his diction as far as my abilities would permit. Where I have followed Euripides's plan, Brumoy's tranſlation anſwered my purpoſe, and the more ſo, as I am confident that the Grecian poet himſelf, had it been his lot to write in French, could not have cloathed his ſentiments with a happier diction.

What I have added of my own, hath been executed in the beſt manner I could, in order to make the whole wear a congenial ſemblance of ſtyle, in order that it ſhould not appear like a piece of moſaic work, made partly of ſtones, and partly of glaſs. My intent, in theſe eſſays, is to enforce by example, the doctrine I have delivered, and to preſent it to the reader's eye in a more ſtriking point of light;

* Ἐστι δὲ παράδειγμα πονηρίας μὲν ἦθος . . . . τοῦ δὲ ἀνωμάλου ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένια, οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑστέρᾳ.

that he, in conſequence, may have clearer ideas, and form to himſelf a ſounder judgment whether the rules communicated be practicable or not; although at the ſame time I may, perhaps, be conſidered not unlike to that individual, who having compoſed the beſt rules imaginable for tactics, yet could not command twenty grenadiers to wheel about to the right.

ÆNEAS IN TROY.

—Quæque ipſa miſerrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui.

THE perſonages to be repreſented are Æneas, Priam, Paris, Anchiſes, Iulus, Sinon, Pyrrhus, Calchas, Caſſandra, Hecuba, Creuſa. The choruſſes are to conſiſt of Trojan men and women, as well as of the deities, both adverſe, and friendly to Troy.

The ſcene of the firſt act, exhibits the country adjacent to Troy; the wooden horſe on one ſide. Priam advances from the city, at the head of the principal Trojans; celebrates the flight of the Greeks, and the deliverance of his kingdom. The old king enjoys a rapturous triumph, on beholding the ſhore cleared of his enemies, and their ſhips; obſerving—Here

the Dolopian camp was pitched; in this place many a battle fought,

——— *hic ſævus tendebat Achilles,*

and here the fierce Achilles looſed his venge. ful ire. Hecuba, at theſe words, calls to mind her ſon Hector, whom Achilles had ſlain, and afterwards dragged his body round the walls of Troy. The chorus comfort her, joining at the ſame time with Priam, to celebrate the flight of the Greeks; of which ſhameful de. parture, the Horſe, conſecrated to Minerva, will prove a perpetual monument.

In the midſt of their ſong and dance of joy, enters Caſſandra,

Verace ſempre, e non creduta mai,

Announcing always truth, yet ne'er believed. She propheſies that day to be Troy's laſt, and counſels them to plunge the wooden horſe into the ſea; adding,

———*timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,*

I dread the Greeks, eſpecially when they offer preſents. Æneas accoſts her, and is of opinion, that the horſe ſhould be examined, whether any ambuſh were therein concealed by the Greeks; but he is oppoſed by many. Priam invokes the tutelary gods of Troy to inſpire him for the beſt; while the reſt ſacrifice to the river Xanthus, and to the nymphs of mount Ida, inviting them to deſcend, and join with Venus, to partake of a feſtive ſong and choral dance, upon the ſpot where lately Mars enjoyed the cruel ſport of war.

In the ſecond act, Sinon is brought a priſoner before the king, and utters to him that ſpeech, in which Virgil, by his harmonious numbers, hath tranſmitted to us a noble and energetic ſpecimen of Grecian eloquence. In vain doth Æneas make every effort to oppoſe the horſe's being admitted within the walls of Troy. The art of Sinon finally prevails, and vanquiſhes a people,

Quos neque Tydides, nec Lariſſæus Achilles,
Non anni domuere decem, non mille carinæ;

Whom neither Diomed, nor Lariſſa's chief, nor ten years conflict, nor a thouſand ſhips, could e'er ſubdue. Paris, with an inſtrument of muſic in his hand, commences an hymn to Venus and Minerva, now reconciled: at the ſame time, part of the city wall is broken down, for the eaſier introduction of the horſe, which is drawn within its precincts, amidſt ſongs of joy and feſtive dances, by the infatuated Trojans;

——*pueri circum innuptæque puellæ*
Sacra canunt, funemque manû contingere
gaudent;

Their blooming youths and lovely maids ſing votive ſtrains around, rejoicing to touch, with eager hands, the cords that pull it on.

The third act is begun by Æneas, who, rowſed in the early part of the night from his ſleep, by a terrifying viſion of Hector, repairs to his tomb with preſents and offerings; there commiſerates the deſtiny of his country, and calls upon the immortal gods to witneſs, that

he had done all that was in his power, to prevent the fatal horſe from being brought within the city. He farther entreats the Gods, to endow him with a courage like to that of Hector, when he ſet fire to the Grecian ſhips; in order, that if his country be doomed to fall, it may not fall unrevenged. He then ſhapes his courſe to Priam's palace.

The ſcene changes to an ample area before the temple of Pallas, where the horſe is lodged as a ſacred depoſit. Sinon relates to Calchas and Pyrrhus (come from within the horſe) how his fine-laid ſcheme had like to have miſcarried through the oppoſition of Æneas: when he remonſtrates, that one of the firſt and moſt neceſſary articles to be done for the inſuring ſucceſs, is to diſpatch Æneas, being, ſince Hector's death, the braveſt warrior Troy can boaſt of. During this ſpeech, the Grecians are ſeen to deſcend from the horſe.

Calchas animates them in a few words to deſtroy the hoſtile city; then commences a cantata in a low voice, to which the Greeks anſwer alſo in the ſame way. About the end

of the chorus, a battle is begun at the bottom of the ſtage, between the guards of the citadel, and ſome Grecians deſcended from the horſe, who want to make themſelves maſters of the fort. The tumult encreaſes by the arrival of the Grecian troops from without the city. Calchas and Sinon, at the front of the ſtage, pray in a loud voice. And, at certain intervals, the cries, the groans, and lamentations, of people wounded and expiring, are made to concert with their ſongs.

The ſcene of the fourth act is in the court-yard of Priam's palace.

Ædibus in mediis, nudoque ſub ætheris axe
Ingens ara fuit, juxtaque veterrima laurus,
Incumbens aræ, atque umbrâ complexa Penates:

In the midſt of the imperial edifice, and under the open air, ſtands a great altar; near to it a laurel tree leaning upon the ſhrine, and with its foliage, hoſpitably embracing the houſhold gods. There afflicted Hecuba is ſeen with ſome Trojan dames, who, all fearful

and ſuppliant, claſp the ſtatues of the gods. Old Priam comes on at one ſide of the ſtage, ſcarce able to walk, being whelmed under an unwieldly weight of armour, which, vainly, he would put on. Hecuba no ſooner ſees, than ſhe haſtes to place him in the conſecrated ſeat near the altar, and thus addreſſes him;

——*Quæ mens tam dira, miſerrime conjux,*
Impulit his cingi telis? aut quo ruis?——
Non tali auxilio, nec defenſoribus iſtis;
Tempus eget;

Unhappy huſband, what fatal reſolution hath impelled you to be thus clothed in armour; or whether do you ruſh? Alas, the preſent calamity requires not ſuch aſſiſtance as thine, nor ſo unavailing a defence. For if Troy can yet be ſaved, it muſt be by Æneas's valour only; who now defends the tower of the palace, and by the ſlaughter of ſo many Greeks, hath in part avenged the havock of his country.

One of the principal Trojan dames remarks,

how much more advantageous it might have proved, to pay a proper attention to the advice of Æneas, and the prophecy of Caſſandra. On the inſtant, a tremendous noiſe is heard of the tower falling to the ground. Hecuba begins a prayer to the gods, in which ſhe beſeeches them to preſerve from captivity the concubines of Priam, and his queen.—The other women have hardly time to reaſſume the votive ſtrain, when Pyrrhus enters, purſuing Polites, who falls dead at his father's feet. Next follows, the ſpeech of Priam, ſtrongly accompanied. Then the diſtreſt old king

Telum imbelle ſine ictu
Conjicit,

lets fly a weak and ineffectual arrow at Pyrrhus; who replies, according to the words in Virgil, and kills the aged monarch. The women fill the air with ſhrieks; Pyrrhus orders them to be conducted to the ſhips of Greece, and goes off in queſt of Æneas. The Trojan prince enters from the oppoſite ſide

of the ſtage, and deſcrying Priam ſlain, makes a ſhort lamentation over him,

Hæc finis Priami fatorum——

ſuch is the end of Priam's fate. And ſtraight bethinks him of his own aged ſire, Anchiſes; and his young ſon Iulus. But having formed a reſolutiou to periſh with his country, and to wreak ſome ſhare of vengeance either on Helen, or on Sinon; his mother Venus appears, and ſhews to him the adverſe deities to Troy, all zealouſly confederated in its overthrow.--Æneas being gone off the ſtage, a chorus ſucceeds by thoſe deities, and a ballet by furies.

In the fifth act is introduced, in the reſidence of Æneas, that noble contention, ſo maſterly expreſſed by Virgil, between Anchiſes determined to expire with Troy, and his ſon Æneas, reſolved to ſnatch him from falling into the hands of the Grecian ſpoilers. Not being able to prevail, he reſumes his arms, to ſally out again among the Greeks; but as Creuſa and Iulus lay hold on Æneas to ſtop him, a ſudden miraculous flame deſcends from

heaven, and plays inoffenſively round the head of little Iulus. Thunder is heard on the left ſide! Stricken with ſuch admonitions from above, Anchiſes conſents at laſt to depart.

The ſcene changes, and preſents the horrible view of a diſmantled city, half of it a prey to flames;

——*Humi fumat Neptunia Troja,*

Troy, which Neptune built, now ſmokes upon the ground. The chorus here, is to conſiſt of Trojans deploring their calamity; and of Grecians inſulting them as they march; the Coryphæus is cruel Calchas

As ſoon as the ſtage is cleared, Æneas enters, ſeeking for, and calling Creuſa, who, in the flight, had loſt her way. Her ghoſt appears to him, and foretels, firſt, his deſtined wanderings on the ſea; and next, his founding a new empire: at that word, through the ſmoke of Troy, muſt be ſeen to blaze forth, with reſplended glory, the capitol. Immediately follows a chorus of deities; and a ballet by Rome's protecting genii.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

AN

OPERA.

Quot victimæ in unâ !

The PERSONAGES.

AGAMEMNON
ACHILLES
ULYSSES
CLYTEMNESTRA, wife of Agamemnon
IPHIGENIA, daughter of Agamemnon
CALCHAS, high prieſt
ARCAS, one of Agamemnon's houſhold officers
A BAND of ſoldiers belonging to Agamemnon
A BAND of Grecian nymphs
A BAND of virgins conſecrated to Diana
A BAND of prieſts
A BAND of ſlaves, and ſoldiers belonging to Achilles.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

ACT I.

The theatre repreſents the Grecian camp, near the city of Aulis. A fleet of ſhips is ſeen at the bottom of the ſtage. On the front part of it is the entrance to the royal tent of Agamemnon. The theatre, dark at firſt, becomes gradually enlightened.

SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON, ARCAS.

AGAMEMNON.

Come, Arcas; haſte: obey your ſov'reign's call.

ARCAS.

Why thus great king fore-run the morning's dawn?
No eyes but yours in Aulis do yet wake;
The birds, the winds, the Euripus is ſtill,
An univerſal ſilence reigns o'er all.

AGAMEMNON.

Happy who, far from glory and renown,
Nor know their ſplendor, nor the cares annex'd.

ARCAS.

Can Agamemnon, ſprung from thund'ring Jove,
Chief of our army, firſt of twenty kings,
Supreme commander of a thouſand ſhips,
By leagued Greece 'gainſt Aſia's ſhore employed,
Speak ſuch deſponding words as thoſe I've heard?
Fair Iphigenia is your lovely daughter,
And her Achilles (of a goddeſs born,
The foremoſt hero of our Grecian bands,
By fate appointed Ilion to deſtroy)
Woo's for his wife, and hopes for your conſent.
What other boon have you from heaven to wiſh?
'Tis true; that long ſuſpended by a calm——
But ha! what tears guſh from your royal eyes!
Weep you for the loſs of young Oreſtes?
Your queen expir'd, or Iphigenia dead?

AGAMEMNON.

Thou ſhall not die; I never will conſent.

ARCAS

Dread ſir——

AGAMEMNON.

——————Thou know'ſt three moons are now
elaps'd
Since by this calm, which ſtill detains us here,
We were impeded in our courſe to Troy.
Struck at the portent, I ſummon'd Calchas
To learn the cauſe. He to Diana's ſhrine
(The goddeſs here ador'd) devote repair'd.
But o! what racking agonies I felt,
When he brought anſwer back, that the pure
blood
Of Iphigenia ſacrific'd—(my child!)
Was the price deſtin'd for the fall of Troy.

ARCAS.

To ſacrifice your child!——

AGAMEMNON.

Ev'n ſo, good Arcas.
Urg'd by ambition, and Ulyſſes' wiles,
'Gainſt nature's voice I did indeed conſent.—
But then what ſcheme, what artifice to uſe,
To draw the daughter from the mother's arms!
All would prove vain; 'till in Achilles' name
To wed the princeſs hither, ſhe's invited,
With Clytemneſtra to behold the rites.

ARCAS.

Think you, ſir, the haughty proud Achilles

Will tamely bear to have his name abus'd.

AGAMEMNON.

He then was far from Aulis and from me,
His father Peleus' realm from hoſtile troops
To guard; we b'liev'd ſo glorious an exploit
Would fill up all his ſoul; nor let him think
Of us, till that were over; which ſome time
Muſt keep him occupied: but his dread ſword
What power can long reſiſt? At his approach
Far fled the foe.—He march'd, he ſaw, he vanquiſh'd;
And to our camp did yeſterday return.
Gueſs my confuſion;—but that is not all.—
A father's feelings for a fav'rite child
Harrow my heart, nor can my eyes know reſt.
Sure heav'n can't countenance a crime like this.
'Tis only meant, to try how I ſhould bear,
Submiſſive to its will, ſo dire a blow,
But thou chos'n confident of what I feel,
Fly with this letter, intercept their coming;
On that depends my Iphigenia's life—
Join with the contents I have written;
Tell 'em Achilles, lukewarm in his love,
Defers to wed 'till Troy be overthrown.——
If ſhe to Aulis come, ſhe dies.—Ulyſſes,
Calchas, and the aſſembled Greeks, will all

Demand her virgin blood.—Speed, Arcas, ſpeed,
Save her from them; and from a father's weak-
neſs.

ARCAS.

With wings of zeal, I'll execute your will.
[Exit.

AGAMEMNON.

AIR.

Say, Diana, goddeſs bright,
Can you ſuch an act endure,
As to ſhock your heavenly ſight
With blood, royal, chaſte and pure.

But hark!—a noiſe, as of approaching feet.—
Achilles, Gods!—with him fell Ulyſſes.

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, ULYSSES.

AGAMEMNON.

Amazing, ſir, the conqueſt you have made!
With victory you march'd againſt the foe,
And (fame your herald) now return to Aulis.
Leſbos, the ſtrongeſt city that's allied
To perjur'd Troy, you vanquiſh'd in your way.

To ſave your native Theſſaly from havoc.
Exploits like theſe, to you are but amuſements.

ACHILLES.

May heav'n, great monarch, friendly to our wiſhes,
Soon open to my ſword a nobler field
For glorious deeds —But firſt let me expreſs
The joy with which my raptur'd boſom glows,
On hearing a report, which glads my ſoul,
That I'm to wed your daughter, and that ſoon,
Ev'n here in Aulis Hymen will unite us,
And render me the happieſt of men.

AGAMEMNON.

Who told you, prince, that Iphigenia comes?

ACHILLES.

Why thus alarm'd? Can ſuch news then bode ill?

AGAMEMNON.

[aſide to Ulyſſes.]
Think you he knows the ſtratagem we've us'd?

ULYSSES.

Not without reaſon Agamemnon wonders
Illuſtrious hero, that while adverſe heav'n
Oppoſes our intent, and th' angry gods
Are, by th' effuſion of moſt precious blood,
To be prevail'd on to eſpouſe our cauſe;

You think of nothing but the joys of love,
And claſping Iphigenia in your arms.

ACHILLES.

My deeds among Troy's ſons ſhall ſoon declare,
Who pants for glory more, or thou, or I;
I born of Thetis, thou Laertes' ſon.
I leave to you political intrigues,
Or taſk inglorious of conſulting entrails,
And ſlaughter'd victims, why the winds are dumb.
But think not, ſir, [to Agam.] the nuptials I ſolicit,
Will in the leaſt abate my thirſt of fame.
No—the few hours I may here give to love,
Troy ſhall repay with meaſure of revenge.

AGAMEMNON.

Why, cruel heav n, debar our way to Troy?
Have I then ſeen ſo many heroes met,
But to lament their diſappointed hopes,
And all, with ſhame oppreſs'd, return to Greece,

ULYSSES.

What have I heard our ſov'reign ſay!

AGHILLES.

Great king,
You mean not ſure as you have ſpoke!

AGAMEMNON.

Too true:
Heav'n's partial favour has for Troy declar'd,
By various preſages in its behalf.

ACHILLES.

What various preſages? I've heard of none!

AGAMEMNON.

Remember, ſir, concerning thy own life,
What in clear terms the oracle foretold.

ACHILLES.

I do remember well the fates' decree,
As by the anſwer to my mother given,
That I enjoy a ſhort, but glorious life,
Or without fame drag on a chain of years.
The choice I've made ſhall now be crown'd
with love;
And then from Troy new laurels ſhall I reap,
Or, if there fall, my fame will ever flouriſh.

AIR.

The Trojan dames, with plaintive cries,
Shall oft repeat my name;
While, from their wounded, groans ariſe,
And give me deathleſs fame.

SCENE III.

AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES.

O, what a cruel conflict tears my breaſt!

ULYSSES.

Is it Achilles can have wrought this change?

AGAMEMNON

Nor he, nor Ajax, Diomed, nor all
The kings, combined in this war 'gainſt Troy,
Could Agamemnon force to change reſolves.

ULYSSES.

What muſt I now conclude theſe ſmother'd
ſighs,
And ſpeech ambiguous, can protend? has then
One night o'erturn'd the work of many days?

AGAMEMNON.

Not ſo, Ulyſſes; but my heart can't b'lieve,
That gracious heaven commands to ſlay a child.

ULYSSES.

I know not Agamemnon, in theſe words.
Has not th' avow'd interpreter of Gods,
Calchas, to whom the will of heav'n is known,
Declar'd in terms, that leave no room to doubt?

AGAMEMNON.

Perplex'd and intricate are heav'nly mandates,

And oft ſuperior to the reach of mortals.

ULYSSES.

Remember, ſir, you owe your child to Greece.
Your word is giv'n —Why did I ſay to Greece?
To your own houſe's fame, you owe her blood.
Is't not t' avenge the inſult it receiv'd.
The Grecian kings aſſemble on this ſhore.
Who call'd us hither? You, now rais'd above
Your fellow ſovereigns, their chief elect
Shall it be ſaid our gen'ral's firſt command
Was to diſmiſs ſo great a league inglorious,
And ſhrink ſupinely from the taſk of honour;
Turning our backs on victory, that wooes
To certain conqueſt and immortal fame.

AGAMEMNON.

You talk it nobly, ſir; but were your ſon,
Telemachus, like Iphigenia, doom'd;
Were you to ſee him at the altar plac'd,
The ſacred fillet round his temples bound,
His boſom bar'd for th' executive blow,
Like me you'd doubt the oracle's decree,
And, to protect, ruſh between him and Calchas.

DUETTO.

AGAMEMNON.

Behold my child, breathleſs lying,
What plaints, what tears, what groans!
View a wretched mother ſighing;
Such precious blood a people moans.
Let a father's feelings move you.

ULYSSES.

Behold proud Troy, vanquiſh'd lying,
What plaints, what tears, what groans!
View a proſtrate people ſighing,
There's martial muſic in their moans.
Let a hero's feelings prove you.

AGAMEMNON.

Be't ſo, our royal promiſe to devote
My child is giv'n; let unrelenting fate
Have the completion of its dire decree,
But if my Iphigenia's better ſtars
Prevent her coming to unhallow'd Aulis,
Then be it conſtru'd in the princeſs' favour
That heaven has chang'd, and thirſts not for
her blood.
What ſprightly ſounds invade my ſtartled ear?

[A warlike ſymphony is heard at a diſtance; Clytemneſtra and Iphigenia are drawn forward in a triumphal car, attended by Grecian women, and the guards, who receive them on their entrance to the camp.]

My queen and daughter in the camp arriv'd!
Gods, 'tis too much: I cannot bear their ſight,
And fly with horrour from an interview.

SCENE IV.

ULYSSES, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, and the CHORUS.

CHORUS

Not the fam'd Helen, won by Paris,
As beauteous Iphigenia fair is.
And now ſhe comes to wed Achilles;
Of gods conſenting ſuch the will is.

[While the chorus ſing, Clytemneſtra and Iphigenia deſcend from the car, aſſiſted by the Grecian women.

ULYSSES.

Advance, bright dames; let not the pomp of war,
Or ſight unuſual of an army fright ye.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My eyes in vain for Agamemnon ſeek;
He ſhould be firſt to meet us on arriving.

IPHIGENIA

Some luckleſs accident detains him from us.

ULYSSES.

The weighty cares attendant on his rank,
May for ſome moments keep him from your
ſight.
Mean while do you fair Iphigenia come,
And ſhew your beauty to the Grecian troops,
As a kind ſtar, propitious to our league.

CHORUS.

Not the fam'd Helen, won by Paris,
As beauteous Iphigenia fair is.
And now ſhe comes to wed Achilles;
Of gods conſenting ſuch the will is.

One of the CHORUS.

As the bright morning ſtar pervades,
Of leafy groves, the verdant ſhades;
So, in the midſt of Grecian arms,
Beam kindly Iphigenia's charms.

[The ſongs are intermixed with dances, conſiſting of Grecian women and ſoldiers.

Another of the CHORUS.

Hail, happy mother, happy ſire,
Still bleſt be that auſpicious morn;
The princeſs ſmil'd as ſhe was born;
For her our zealous vows conſpire.

Two of the CHORUS.

Achilles, firſt of human race,
What a ſweet treaſure you'll embrace!
While all her beauties veil'd by night,
She yields you rapturous delight.

Not the fam'd Helen, won by Paris,
As beauteous Iphigenia fair is
And now ſhe comes to wed Achilles;
Of gods conſenting ſuch the will is.

A DANCE.

ACT. II.

The theatre repreſents a colonade, through which gardens are ſeen.

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON alone.

What ſtroke of adverſe fortune has contriv'd
That faithful Arcas ſhould miſtake his way?
In what have I deſerv'd the wrath of heav'n?
To me this day is big with miſery.
I hear Ulyſſes, Calchas, Menelaus
Demand, both in the name of Greece and heav'n,
My child for victim—She comes—What a meeting!
Hold, heart—I fain would ſhun her, but I can't.

SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON, IPHIGENIA.

Why, ſir, avoid the preſence of your child?
There was a time you would not ſlight me thus.
What mighty cares have from me wean'd your heart?

As duty urg'd, I yielded to the queen,
The firſt occaſion of embracing you;
Now, in my turn, I hope to ſhare that favour.

AGAMEMNON.

Come to your father's arms, never more fond.

IPHIGENIA.

Tranſporting news!—My boſom bounds with joy!
What extacy, to ſee you now ſupreme,
O'er all the Grecian ſovereigns here aſſembled!

AGAMEMNON.

Your innocence deſerves a better father.

IPHIGENIA.

A better cannot be; for which, kind heaven
Receives my conſtant and moſt grateful thanks.

AGAMEMNON. [aſide]

How! let her know the ſecret of her fate.

IPHIGENIA

There's ſomething lab'ring in your breaſt: thoſe ſighs
You fain would ſmother, but confirm it more.
'Tis with anxiety you look on me.
Are we from Argos come without your order?

AGAMEMNON.

Alas! miſtake me not. Your father's eyes
With the ſame wonted tenderneſs behold you.

But ſuch eventful changes have ta'en place,
The joy of ſeeing you is daſh'd with ſorrow.

IPHIGENIA.

Forget a moment your ſuperior rank
In a child's preſence—be my father ſtill,
Nor bluſh to ſee me happy in your kindneſs.
'Tis ſaid, ſir, that a ſolemn ſacrifice
By Calchas, to the heavenly powers, anon
Is to be made.

AGAMEMNON.

Heart rending queſtion!

IPHIGENIA.

Will you indulge me to be preſent, ſir,
And join the gen'ral pray'r for your ſucceſs?
The Greeks would wonder not to ſee me there.

AGAMEMNON.

Good heaven!

IPHIGENIA.

You ſpeak not, ſir!

AGAMEMNON.

Child, you'll be there.

DUETTO.

IPHIGENIA

Periſh the Trojan cauſe of all your grief.

AGAMEMNON.

Conqueſt, to pain like mine, brings no relife.

IPHIGENIA.

Why not? explain to me this hidden woe.

AGAMEMNON.

For your lov'd ſake, I cannot more relate.

IPHIGENIA.

Ye guardian powe'rs of Greece! protect my ſire.

AGAMEMNON.

Now, cruel Gods, relent in her behalf.

[Both together.]

Periſh the Trojan cauſe of all our grief.

SCENE III.

IPHIGENIA [alone.]

This cold reception of a father chills me.
What can I gather from thoſe low'ring looks,
Thoſe half-form'd words, deep ſighs, and ſtarting tears?
Alas! how different from what I hop'd,
Has our cold meeting been? Leaving Argos,
I fancied I ſhould ſee my father haſte
To joyfully embrace us as we came;
And with him, as th' attendants on his greatneſs,
Ajax, and Diomed, and Menelaus,
And Thetis' ſon, the braveſt of them all,

Achilles, my betroth'd,—by all neglected:
I'm left alone; my father even ſhuns me.
What can have caus'd ſuch conſternation?
Say, virgin goddeſs, in this clime rever'd,
If e'er diſpleaſing hath my worſhip prov'd;
Or if impure, the ſacrifice I made.

SCENE IV.

IPHIGENIA, CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah daughter under what unhappy ſtar
Came we from Argos to ill-boding Aulis?
With what indiff'rence has the king receiv'd
us!

IPHIGENIA.

The cares of ſtate weigh heavy on his mind,
His anxious thoughts, to carry on the war
For cruſhing Troy, uſurp his whole regard;
And for awhile make tenderneſs ſubſide.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No;—'tis ſome other cauſe, to me unknown,
But which, ere long, I'll learn; I'll draw't
from Arcas:
That faithful ſlave, by Tyndarus, my father,
To me was giv'n, whom I to Agamemnon
Have reſign'd—But what delays Achilles?
Invited in his name, we're hither come.
No intervening conqueſt can detain him.
From Hector, Priam, and from Troy's proud
walls,
We're by the ſea divided—the prince aſks
Your hand in marriage as a juſt reward

Of all the Trojan warriors he ſhall ſlay;
And yet he comes not—it is wond'rous all.

IPHIGENIA

Our hapleſs race is doom'd to new diſaſters.

AIR.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Though hemm'd in by troops, and a woman,
I'll know
T'efface an affront by a moſt vengeful blow.
Nor ſov'reign, nor prince, ſhall unpuniſh'd remain,
If to our high ſtation they offer a ſtain.

IPHIGENIA.

Here comes Achilles—wrongly he's accus'd.

SCENE V.

IPHIGENIA CLYTEMNESTRA. ACHILLES.

[Achilles is followed by ſoldiers crowned with laurel; Leſbian ſlaves, of both ſexes, carrying trophies, vaſes, and other ſpoils taken from the enemy.]

ACHILLES.

Hail, princeſs! Agamemnon's beauteous child;
On thee alone my happineſs depends.

And may th' exploits, which I am doom'd t'atchieve
Againſt Troy's chiefs, inſure me all your love.
[turns to Clytemneſtra.]
Nor will my mother, Thetis, tho' divine,
Bluſh, Clytemneſtra's ſiſter to be call'd,
The queen and conſort to the king of kings.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Your words inſpire me with the pureſt joy;
And may my daughter crown your love with heirs,
That will riſe equal to their father's fame.

IPHIGENIA.

Whatever be the lot fate has prepar'd
For Iphigenia, 'tis her pride, her boaſt,
T'have rivall'd glory in Achilles' heart.

ACHILLES.

Deign t' accept theſe ſpoils obtain'd at Leſbos,
The firſt my valour has acquir'd. Captives,
[to the Leſ-bians]
Pay homage to your miſtreſs, and mine.

CHORUS of captives.

Leſbos, to bold Achilles yields,
He ſometimes will ſweet thraldom porve;
The princeſs' arms prefer'd to ſhields.
Be ever ſung the pow'r of love.

CHORUS of Greeks.

This happy hero ſoon will twine
With Mars's laurel, Hymen's wreath,
Around his helmet known to ſhine,
In the reſiſtleſs ſcene of death.

One of the CHORUS of captives.

How, from their banks, the ſhepherd's joy,
Where flocks no more their care employ,
Will Xanthus, and Simois' flood,
Be by Achilles dy'd in blood?
While adverſe gods rage on the plain,
And ſlaughter with her horrid train.

One of the CHORUS of Greeks.

Thus the kind hoſpitable pow'r,
Will juſt and ample vengeance take
On the vile ſwain of Ida's bow'r,
Who broke all laws for Helen's ſake.

ALL TOGETHER.

Leſbos, to bold Achilles yields,
He ſometimes will ſweet thraldom prove;
His princeſs' arms preter'd to ſhields.
Be ever ſung the pow'r of love.

ACT III.

An apartment in the palace.

SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON.

AIR.

Sweet hope, beſt gift of heav'n to cheer
Deſponding mortals in their woe,
Or gild the gloomy ſhades of fear,
And black deſpair to overthrow.
You raiſe the peaſant to a throne;
Do not my pious vow diſown.

Let the fell monſters who delight in blood,
Aſcribe their ſavage nature to the gods.
I can't think heav'n commands atrocious crimes;
Nay, I'm determin'd to conſult its will,
No more impos'd on by deſigning prieſts.
Too long the ear of Greece hath been deceiv'd
By ſuch, who're like ourſelves to error prone.
A mob implicit raiſes them to pow'r:——
And yet, why thus reluctant to proceed?
If th' oracle demands my child—ſhe dies.

Ulyſſes comes; I tremble leſt he chide,

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES.

ULYSSES.

Now learn the friendly effort I have made,
To win ſtern Calchas to approve your wiſh;
Who, firſt, indignant at my offer mild,
Exclaim'd — Is our religion ſcorn'd? By whom?
Our chief, who ſhould the firſt example give,
Of due obedience to the gods decree;
Elſe, muſt we never hope to conquer Troy.

AGAMEMNON

Imperious haughty, prieſt, whoſe tow'ring pride
Would fain uſurp ſupreme authority;
And lord it over all the kings of Greece,
By his falſe prophecies and juggling dreams.
His tongue, ill-omen'd to Atreus' houſe,
Ne'er yet aught pleaſing to our ears foretold;
Nor hath he done a deed good men would praiſe.

ULYSSES

I thought, as ſoon I ſhould from Paris gain,
Helen to be return'd to Menelaus,
As your admiſſion to the ſacred temple.

But I ſuch pow'rful arguments have urg'd
For ſire, for daughter, for your patriot cares,
And homage to the gods (their will made known)
That forc'd him to relent—let's thither now,
And the ſame gods, who fir'd me in your cauſe,
Will to yourſelf declare th'award of heav'n.

SCENE III.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Stop, ſir, unfold what myſtery contriv'd,

AGAMEMNON.

'Tis now no time to aſk; I muſt be gone
To learn what deſtiny the gods intend us.

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Alas, my child! your father flies our ſight,
He's gone to haſten ſome diſaſtrous act:
Hence, fault'ring words, and ſo much grief.

IPHIGENIA.

Ah, me!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

You know not all your ſorrows yet.

IPHIGENIA.

What means the queen?

CLYTEMNESTRA

This note by Arcas giv'n,
But now, into my hand, imparts, the king
Had ſent us orders to return to Argos.

IPHIGENIA.

How! not to haſten our arrival here?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And the pretext was that Achilles' will
Was to defer his nuptials, till fall'n Troy
Should yield to you its conqueror renown'd.
Alas! the purport was to ſacrifice thee.

IPHIGENIA.

Good heav'n!——

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Arcas miſtook his way—Ruin!

IPHIGENIA.

Have I been born for ſuch an hapleſs end?
In public, ſacrific'd before the Greeks!
Cruel deceivers! how they lur'd my hopes
On a triumphal car, thro' Aulis' ſtreets,
To light the torches for the rites of hymen.

I was intended for Achilles' bride,
Now I'm devoted to untimely death.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It ſhall not be, your mother will oppoſe,
And ſnatch you from th' aſſaſſinating hands
Of parent — Brave Achilles, cruel too,
Shall join in my reſentment, to chaſtiſe
A plot, thus varniſh'd in that prince's name.
It makes him ſharer in the monſtrous crime;
A crime, which he'll not eaſily forgive.

IPHIGENIA.

Ah! be not ſo incens'd againſt my ſire.
The letter proves he meant to ſave my life,
By his commanding our return to Argos.
Perhaps, he yet may ſome expedient find,
To ſave me from impending deſtiny:
He's here all-pow'rful, and he loves his daughter.
But with what eyes can I reviſit Argos?
I, who thence parted 'midſt acclaiming crowds,
'Midſt feſtive muſic, and a dance of joy;
I, that was going to eſpouſe Achilles,
To be acknowleg'd queen of Pthia's realm;
That there made happy in Achilles' love,
I ſhould a race of heroes give to Greece,
Who would not prove unworthy of their ſire.

But ſuch vain thoughts adieu—now welcome
fate!
I will reſign; and without murm'ring die,
Since ſo my father and the gods reſolve,
Nor ſhall there be a cauſe to blame my conduct.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Helen, how fatal to the race of Atreus?
Shame of thy ſex, and a reproach to Greece,
Thy baneful beauty proves thus kindling war,
Between the pow'rs of Europe and Aſia.—
What tears you make me ſhed? Was't not e-
nough
To have diſhonour'd the chaſte nuptial bed
Of Menelaus, but a brother's child
Muſt for your wantonneſs be ſacrific'd!

IPHIGENIA.

Unleſs you can command your ſorrow more,
I well foreſee, more miſchiefs will enſue;
Should you attempt to interpoſe, twere vain:
Such diſobedience to a husband's will,
E'en could you gain on him, would nought a-
vail,
Becauſe, he'd, too, rebel againſt the gods:
But if Achilles' ſword ſhould interfere
To reſcue Iphigenia from ſuch woe,

Diſcord among the Grecian chiefs would rage,
Order muſt fly the camp, and heav'n alone
Can tell, how ſuch a mutiny would end.

AIR.

Now let me end the cares of life,
Nor be expos'd to longer ſtrife;
But let my death prevent the woe,
That ready ſeems on Greece to flow.

SCENE V.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So good, ſo mild, ſo excellent a child,
Can heav'n command a father to deſtroy?
No - fell ambition, nature's ſureſt foe,
That prompts, and not the gods, to ſuch a crime.

AIR.

I cannot yet diſcern
That the decree is truth,
The whole I'll ſtrive to learn,
And thereby ſave her youth.

[The theatre repreſents the interiour view of the temple of Diana.]

AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, CHALCHAS,
CHORUS of prieſts.

CHORUS of prieſts.

'Twere a vain proof of mortal pride,
To think heav'n's will to put aſide.

One of the CHORUS.

The orders which from gods emane,
Engrav'd on adamant remain.

Two of the CHORUS.

Th' eternal tables of their will,
Neither by time nor human ſkill,
Can ſhew the leaſt impreſſion made,
Nor years, nor force can them invade.

[A part of the prieſts dance ſolemnly around the altar of the goddeſs.

One the CHORUS.

They rule th'events of night and day,
Shepherds and kings alike they ſway.

All the CHORUS.

Behold Jove gives th' almighty nod,
Olympus trembles 'fore its god;
Our low world is to ſilence huſh'd,
Leſt in his anger it be cruſh'd.

CHALCHAS.

Thro' ſpecial favour, Agamemnon, learn,

The goddeſs here ador'd, a ſecond time
Now deigns, that you interrogate her ſhrine.

HALF-AIR.

Thou, goddeſs, ſprung from mighty Jove,
Who pleaſant hills, ſweet vales below,
And bloomy woods, delight'ſt to rove,
O, pity a fond father's woe!

If all my pray'rs for Greece's good,
And duteous immolations made
You like—O! be not now withſtood,
But have your oracle obey'd.

Speak, goddeſs, claim your victim now,—
While incredulity exiſts,
Who, henceforth, at your ſhrine will bow;
Speak, goddeſs, ſpeak, revenge your prieſts

AGAMEMNON.

O! let her beauty, innocence, and youth,
Her piety to heav'n, and chief to you,
Chaſte goddeſs, object of my worſhip too,
Plead ſtrong in Iphigenia's behalf.

[While Agamemnon ſpeaks, a noiſe, as of diſtant thunder, is heard, gradually encreaſing.

CALCHAS.

Mortals attend; the goddeſs means to ſpeak.

The ORACLE.

If, Grecians, ye expect to land at Troy,
The blood of Iphigenia muſt be ſhed.

AGAMEMNON.

What cruel ſounds to a fond father's ear.

CHORUS.

High heav'n's decrees ne'er know decay,
Shepherds and kings alike they ſway.

Two of the CHORUS.

Where now the thouſand ſhips combin'd,
That ſhadow'd all yon ſtretching ſhore;
And warlike chariots, fleet as wind,
That cover'd plains? they're ſeen no more.

All the CHORUS.

To puniſh the reluctant mind
Of Agamemnon, has loud fate
Excited a tempeſtous wind,
They're now all in a ſhatter'd ſtate.

CALCHAS.

Sir, be advis'd, provoke not by delay:
Obey the oracle, leſt ills enſue.

The CHORUS.

The orders which from gods emane
Engrav'd on adamant remain.

CALCHAS.

Who'll profit moſt by ſuch a ſacrifice?
Yourſelf;—opens it not your road to glory?
Victory beckons from the Trojan ſhore,
And bids you haſte to reap a laurell'd harveſt.
The Helleſpont again will gladly foam
Beneath your ſhips, chear'd by the ſailors ſhouts!
Ere long, will they return ſurcharg'd with
ſpoils—
Think, as you land in Greece, how crowds on
crowds
Beholding you from far, with peals of joy
Will welcome your approach, and ſing your
triumph.
Theſe, ſure, are motives to command reſpect
To that decree you've in the temple heard.

AGAMEMNON.

My heart's ſo full, words cannot find a way.

The CHORUS.

The orders which from gods emane,
Engrav'd on adamant remain.
High heav'n's decrees ne'er known decay,
Shepherds and kings alike they ſway.
Behold, Jove gives th' almighty nod,
Olympus trembles 'fore its god;
Our low world is to ſilence huſh'd,
Left in his anger it be cruſh'd.

ACT IV.

A gallery in the palace.

SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON. alone.

[The ſcene opens to pathetic muſic.]

Too plain I heard the oracle's decree.
" Grecians, if you expect to land at Troy,
" The blood of Iphigenia muſt be ſhed."

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGEINA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now, ſir, we're met, tho' midſt the din of arms,
And crowding cares of your ſupreme command,
Let, ſir, your queen's, a mother's voice be heard.
My child and I have been ſeduc'd from Argos,
Hither to haſte, that ſhe might wed Achilles.
Then we are told, the prince has chang'd his mind,
Nor will in marriage join, 'till Troy's o'er-thrown;

Yet he in perſon urges the eſpouſal,
And will not hence depart on other terms.

AGAMEMNON.

The right's in me to rule my daughter's fate.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I know it is, thou barb'rous, cruel father.
Why now diſſemble? I have learn'd your plot.

AGAMEMNON.

Then the falſe Arcas has betray'd ym ſecret.

IPHICENIA,

No, royal ſir, you have not been betray'd—
When you'll command, I'm ready to obey.
My life is yours; you'll take but what you gave:
And you ſhall find I'll die a hero's daughter,
Nor will my boſom ſhrink from Calcha's knife.
However, if obedient innocence,
And full ſubmiſſion to the will of heav'n,
Were worthy of a better fate, my lot
Is hard indeed, from ſuch inviting joys,
To be thus prematurely torn, in life's [ber,
Gay bloom;—and, O ſir! deign now to remem-
That the once lov'd, but now loſt Iphigenia,
Firſt call'd you by the tender name of father;
And in return you call'd her that of child.
How many fond embraces have I felt!
Me you've long deſtin'd for Achilles' bride,

Becauſe a hero worthy your alliance.
And with what joy us'd I to hear recounted
The various kingdoms ye were both to conquer.
I did not think the auſpice of your triumphs
Was to be fought in Iphigenia's blood.

AGAMEMNON.

'Tis but too true; nor can I yet conceive
By what crime I've deſerv'd the ire of heav'n.
But you are nam'd, nor is't in mortal pow'r
T' elude its high beheſt: the murm'ring Greeks,
By Calchas' tongue infatiate for your blood,
Will mutiny, and execute by force
What better were ſubmitted to with mildneſs.
Long did I force myſelf to doubt, but now
The oracle a ſecond time has ſpoke. —
Unlucky Arcas was diſpatch'd to meet you,
And interdict your coming to the camp.
By that intent what dangers I provok'd,
Both to our rank and realm, to Greece combin'd.
But heav'n thought otherwiſe, and from the path
He ſhould have ta'en, made faithful Arcas ſtray.
Vain then, on my ſide, would prove all attempts.
The fatal hour is come; when dying, ſhew
The oracle's unjuſt, and you're my daughter.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou doſt not, monſter, now bely thy race;
Of the ſame blood with Atreus and Thyeſtes.
Barbarian, canſt thou thus condemn a child?—
Next ſend her breathleſs corſe for me to feaſt on?
Have I then brought her hither to be butcher'd,
And muſt I childleſs now return to Argos,
By the ſame roads where flow'rs were ſtrew'd before her?

AIR.

Miſled Greeks, touch not my child:
The raſh attempt you'll ſurely rue.
Vain on oracles you build.
With her kill her mother too.

SCENE III.

ACHILLES, AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, and IPHIGENIA.

ACHILLES.

Sir, I'm alarm'd at the report I've heard,
And ſcarce can think it true; that in thy name,
From Argos hither Iphigenia call'd,
Is in the temple to be ſacrific'd.

Have I then, ſir, your inſtrument been made,
To lure the princeſs from her native home,
For an intent ſo horrid, and 'gainſt nature?

AGAMEMNON

Thoſe of my rank, for what they pleaſe to do,
Are not accountable to inferiors.
But, when the proper moment is arriv'd,
You and all Greece ſhall learn my daughter's
fate.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Execrable tyrant!

ACHILLES.

Evaſive king,
Too well I know the fate which you intend.

AGAMEMNON.

Why aſk of me, what you already know?

ACHILLES.

Patience, ye gods! — Why aſk? — Can your
heart own
So black, ſo impious a reſolution.
But if it does — then think not that Achilles
Will be a tame ſpectator of thy crime.
His love, his honour, urge him to protect her.

IPHIGENIA.

Good heav'n, what miſchiefs am I like to cauſe!

Fatal diſſenſion 'twixt my honour'd ſire,
And the lov'd hero, I once hop'd to wed.
No, let me die, and put an end to all
The riſing obſtacles to certain glory:
Since 'tis decreed ye cannot land at Troy,
But thro' th' effuſion of my hapleſs blood.
There let your valiant deeds make Trojan dames,
In their loſt ſons and huſbands rue my fall.
Tho' 'tis forbid that I ſhall be your bride,
Yet will our names be join'd thro' ages down,
And my death deem'd the ſource of all your glory.

ACHILLES.

Talk not of dying while Achilles lives,
And that my eyes behold yon radiant ſun.
With this good executive ſword of mine,
The foremoſt of them all ſhall bite the ground,
Who'd arrogantly dare diſpute my right.

AGAMEMNON.

Such menaces, and in our preſence too,
Become thee not; nor will I ſuffer, prince.

ACHILLES.

Become me not! when Agamemnon dares
To wrong me in the tend'reſt part, my love.
If thou'rt a king o'er kings, know I'm Achilles,

And that I've ſworn your daughter ſhall not die.

AGAMEMNON.

And will you, prince, diſpute a father's pow'r?

ACHILLES.

Your pow'r of father is no more; ſhe's mine
By love, by promiſe mine; was't not to wed
With Peleus' ſon, that ſhe from Argos came?

AGAMEMNON.

Implead the gods, who've otherwiſe ordain'd;
Blame the whole camp, Ulyſſes, Menelaus,
Calchas, who're not ſo culpable as thou.

ACHILLES.

I culpable!

AGAMEMNON.

Yes thou, whoſe wild ambition
Was ever railing 'gainſt th' oppoſing gods,
That here detain'd us. I the means propos'd
By which ſhe might be ſav'd, but you rejected;
And that was to decline the war with Troy;
You'd hear of nought but Ilion overturn'd—
Now thither haſte, her blood inſures its fall.

ACHILLES

Barbarian,—mercileſs, and bloody king,
What had Troy done to draw on my reſent-
ment?

Thence no ſhips ever ſail'd for Theſſaly,
With hoſtile troops, our ſubjects to invade;
Nor Phrygian raviſhers have ever dar'd
To carry off their wives in haughty triumph.
Is't not for you that I've 'gainſt Priam leagu'd,
And fain would haſten his deſtruction, ſir,
That the foul ſtain of your illuſtrious line
Might ſoon be waſh'd away with Trojan blood?
For Helen's crime muſt your chaſte daughter periſh?
And ſhe the only change for an adultreſs!
Your daughter's mine, or I'll not move tow'rd Troy;
Try then without me what your arms can do,

QUARTETTO.

AGAMEMNON.

Hence, part, be gone, we want thee not,
Yet Troy ſhall tumble to the ground;
To live inglorious be thy lot,
'Mongſt cowards will thy name be found.

ACHILLES.

Thou faithleſs king, provoke me not,
Leſt my ſword fell thee to the ground;
To be her ſire's thy happy lot,
Elſe 'mongſt the ſlain thou now wert found.

IPHIGENIA.

O, prince! if me you ever lov'd,
Be not thus with anger mov'd.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Mercileſs fate, muſt ſhe expire?
Oh! yet more mercileſs her ſire!

ALL.

By ſo barbarous a decree,
Immortal gods how wretched we!

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Your father's gone, and gives you up to fate.
O, my poor child, and are we thus to part!

IPHIGENIA.

O, ſun! thou chearing light to mortal eyes,
Soon Iphigenia will behold no more
Thy friendly beams.—I take my farewel view

CLYTEMNESTRA

Do not deſpond, Achilles' love will ſave thee,
And ſnatch thee from a tyrant father's pow'r.

IPHIGENIA,

O madam! in the name of all the gods,
Perſuade him not to riſk his life for mine.
Of what avail to feed illuſive hopes?

Diana is determin'd on her victim,
And to oppose her will would fruitless prove.—
No, for my country's good, I die resign'd.—
O, why thus silent, and why flow these tears!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Have I not cause to weep, my child? My tongue,
By grief oppress, denies its wonted use.

IPHIGENIA.

Instead of adding to, support my weakness.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah me! must I return alone to Argos,
Without my child; and when I'm there arriv'd,
In vain, to chear my solitary walks,
Shall I in fancy seek for Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA.

Madam, once more have pity on your child,
Nor with such tender plaints unnerve me.—
There's one request I hope you'll not refuse.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

If in my pow'r, I can refuse thee nothing.

IPHIGENIA.

Then do not, on account of my disaster,
Or by rent veil, torn, or dishevell'd locks,
Betray the least regret that I'm no more.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Your death must draw down vengeance on his head.

IPHIGENIA.

My death's no crime of his; 'tis heav'n's com-
mand;
The welfare of the Greeks forc'd his aſſent.

CHORUS of women.

As when cut down, the lilly fair,
Declined, lies with fading charms,
So with her boſom wounded, bare,
Will that bright nymph in death's cold arms.

Two of the CHORUS.

Ah! if ſo ſweet a princeſs die,
There's no compaſſion from on high.

IPHIGENIA.

I ſhall be ever fam'd in ſtory;
The Greeks to me owe their glory.

One of the CHORUS.

Deſerving of a longer date,
She came to wed, but meets her fate.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

If any gods befriend our cauſe,
Oh! rouze Achilles to take arms.
Now the deſtructive ſword he draws,
And ſhields young Iphigenia's charms.

One of the CHORUS.

Deserving of a longer date,
She came to wed, but meets her fate.

IPHIGENIA.

I shall be ever fam'd in story;
To me the Greeks will owe their glory.

CHORUS.

As when cut down, the lilly fair,
Declined, lies with fading charms,
So with her bosom wounded, bare,
Will that bright nymph in death's cold arms.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Tent of Achilles.

ACHILLES.

What urgent cauſe brings Clytemneſtra hither?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I bluſh not, prince, to throw me at your feet,
And beg your help for Iphigenia's life,
Your lately promis'd bride; to death condemn'd,
Unleſs you ſnatch her from the preſſing woe.

ACHILLES.

And is it thus you know Achilles' ſpirit,
That you can now my ſacred promiſe doubt?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The horrid ſacrifice they now prepare.

ACHILLES.

Let's waſte no time in words ſuperfluous.

AIR.

By my chaſte love, and thirſt of fame,
This ſword ſhall reek with Grecian blood.
For ever die Achilles' name,
If in her cauſe I be withſtood.

SCENE II.

[The theatre repreſents, on one ſide, a wood, and the temple of Diana; on the oppoſite ſide is ſeen a part of the Grecian camp, the port of Aulis, and the fleet. Iphigenia, Agamemnon, Calchas, Ulyſſes, Arcas, firſt appear; then Clytemneſtra, prieſts, virgins conſecrated to Diana, and attendant ſoldiers. They all advance from the bottom of the theatre to melancholy muſic.

CALCHAS.

Goddeſs, who gild the ſolemn night,
While from thy orb mild beams do flow,
May Greece find favour in thy ſight,
Let looſe the winds, and bid them blow.

CHORUS.

The victim take our vows do owe;
Let looſe the winds, and bid them blow.

Part of the CHORUS.

Now Trojans, with the guilty pair,
Mock at our fleet from their high tow'rs,
But ſoon ſhall yield to black deſpair,
All cruſh'd by Grecian pow'rs.

The CHORUS.

Goddeſs, the victim take we owe;
Let looſe the winds, and bid them blow.

IPHIGENIA. [to Agam.]

I'm ready, ſir, and ſhall, without a groan,
My life reſign, your glory to inſure,
And make Greece triumph o'er the perjur'd foe.
Let none dare offer to lay hands on me;
I'll to the knife, unmov'd, my boſom bare.
I mean to die a voluntary victim,
In death triumphant, and the bane of Troy.

AGAMEMNON.

Alas, my child! my eyes can ne'er behold.
[throws his cloak around his head.

Part of the CHORUS.

Such beauty, ſuch undaunted ſpirit,
Should a more happy fortune merit.

Another part of the CHORUS.

Soon ſhall we land on Ilion's ſhore,
In ſpite of gods whom they adore.

The CHORUS.

Goddeſs, the victim take we owe,
Let looſe the winds, and bid them blow.

CALCHAS.

Attend, ye Greeks, hence hope a lucky omen.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Achilles not yet come, and Calchas' knife
Is ready drawn 'gainſt Iphigenia's breaſt. [aſide.

[Calchas, having put his drawn knife in a golden vaſe, crowns the victim; and, with a cup of conſecrated water in his hand, advances towards the altar.

CALCHAS.

Thou goddeſs, daughter of immortal Jove,
Deign to accept young Iphigenia's blood.
For ſhedding it, be Pergamus our prey.

[The moment he is going to ſtrike, a claſh of arms is heard, towards which all turn.]

CALCHAS continuing.

What ſacrilegious mortals hither come,
And interrupt our ſacrifice to heav'n?

The Laſt SCENE.

Enter ACHILLES. DIANA at the ſame time is ſeen in the air.

ACHILLES.

Behold Achilles, who demands his right.

DIANA.

Suſpend your ire, O valiant ſon of Thetis!
And turn it tenfold 'gainſt perfidious Troy.
May the great fire of all celeſtial pow'rs!
Forbid Achilles' wrath againſt the Greeks
Should rage, and ſo prevent the fall of Troy.
Now Iphigenia, as my prize, I claim.

Diana diſappears, and in the room of Iphigenia is ſeen a doe painting and bloody; Achilles raiſes his hands to heaven.

CALCHAS.

A miracle!

CHORUS.

A miracle indeed!

CALCHAS.

The princeſs' blood appear'd of too much worth,
To be effus'd in this our cauſe. The goddeſs

Takes her to herſelf, and henceforth to us
Indulgent, ſhe will favour all our wiſhes.
Ye Grecian warriors, now for Troy prepare
Your hoſtile arms; the obſtacle's remov'd.

[The noiſe of a riſing wind is heard, the ſea thrown into agitation, and the ſhips are all in motion.]

A CHORUS of ſailors in the ſhips, is heard from a diſtance.

The ſea is rouz'd, the billows riſe,
The winds invite, and Troy's our prize.

CHORUS of ſoldiers on the fore part of the theatre.

The winds invite, and Troy's our prize.

[After the two choruſes, ſeveral times alternately ſung, then

The full CHORUS of both.

Paris ſhan't long his crime enjoy;
The winds invite; now, now we ſteer
To puniſh him, and conquer Troy.
To injur'd Greece revenge is dear

A DANCE of ſailors.

A ſhort GLOSSARY of certain TERMS uſed in this WORK.

ADAGIO, a ſlow tune.

AFFETTO, AFFETTUOSO, means that kind of muſic, which is tender and moving.

ALLEGRO, a briſk, lively, gay, and pleaſant ſtyle of muſic.

ARIA, a ſong, air, or tune.

ARIETTA, a little ſhort ſong, a ſonnet, or catch.

ANDAMENTO, ANDANTE, ANDANTISSIMO, Theſe are derived from the Italian word *andare*, to go, and ſignify that the notes (eſpecially in the thorough baſſes) are to be played diſtinctly and ſlow, from a leſs to the greateſt degree.

BALET, is of French origin, and ſignifies a ſucceſſion of airs in all ſorts of movements, whether briſk or ſlow, with which the dances agree, and are carried on as the ſtrains or motions differ.

BRAVURA, is applied to what-ever performance, inſtrumental or vocal, requires a ſpirited, lively, and impaſſioned execution.

CADENZA. Cadence, in modern muſic, is a certain concluſion of a ſong, or of the piece; which is divided as is were into ſo many numbers or periods. The cadence is when the parts fall, or terminate on a chord or note, the ear ſeeming naturally to expect it; and is much the ſame in a ſong, as a period that cloſes the ſenſe in a paragraph of diſcourſe.

CANTABILE, CANTILENA, ſignify, the firſt, a piece of melody well compoſed; and the ſecond, a ſong.

CONTINUATA, in vocal muſic, means to continue or hold on a ſound with an equal ſtrength or manner, or to continue a movement in an equal degree of time all the way.

DESANT, is to run a diviſion or variety upon one, two, or more given notes, with an inſtrument or voice.

DIASTEMATIC, implies, according to the ſenſe of the antients, a ſimple interval, in op-

position to a compound one, by them called a ſyſtem.

FINALE, is the end or laſt note of a piece of muſic; but it more particularly means the cloſe or laſt note of a tone or mode, by which it is diſtinguiſhed from all others; ſometimes the ends of airs.

HARMONY, is the agreeable effect of ſounds, differing in acuteneſs, produced together.

MELODY, is the effect of ſounds ranged and diſpoſed in ſucceſſion: ſo that melody is the effect of a ſingle voice or inſtrument: which diſtinguiſhes it from harmony, though they are often confounded.

OBLIGATO, ſignifies *for*, on purpoſe *for*, or neceſſary, as *duoi violini*, on purpoſe *for* two violins, and ſo of other inſtruments.

ORCHESTRA, is that part of a theatre where the muſicians are placed.

PHONIC, comes from the Greek word φωνη, ſignifying voice or ſound, and implies the doctrine or ſcience of ſound, called likewiſe *acouſtics*.

PIANO, ſoft or ſweet, or gently ſlow.

PRESTO, quick or faſt; and gaily, without being rapid.

RIPIENO, ſignifies full; and is uſed in pieces of muſic in parts, to diſtinguiſh thoſe parts that are played but now and then, from what fill up thoſe that are played thro' out the piece.

RITORNELLO, the burden, or the repetition of the verſes of a ſong at the end of each ſtanza. It means alſo, thoſe ſymphonies played before the voices begin, by way of an introduction or prelude.

SVEGLIATO, a gay, briſk, lively manner of playing or ſinging.

SYMPHONY, ſignifies in muſic, a concert or conſonance of ſeveral ſounds agreeable to the ear, be they inſtrumental, or vocal, or both, and may be called harmony in general; yet ſome there are who confine the meaning of ſymphony to inſtrumental muſic alone, and therefor ſay, that the *ſymphonies* of ſuch an Opera were excellent, although the *recitatives* were abominable.

VIOLETTA, this term ſignifies the *triple viol.*

VIRTU, ſignifies a ſuperiority of genius and talents; and by *virtuoſo* is meant a perſon thus eminently endowed by nature and due cultivation; wherefore an excellent painter, able architect, &c. are called *virtuoſi*. But this denomination ſeems to be appropriated by the Italians in a more eſpecial manner to eminent muſicians; and among them, rather to thoſe who apply themſelves to the theory than to the practice of that art. The term *virtuoſo* is underſtood in a very different ſenſe by the Engliſh.

FINIS.

ROYAL MUSIC LIBRARY