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ALEXANDER'S FEAST ;
OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC.

A SONG IN HONOUR OF ST. CECILIA :
1697.

I

T WAS at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son :
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne ;
His valiant peers were placed around ;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound :
(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair !
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS.

Happy, happy, happy pair !
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

TIMOTHEUS, placed on high
 Amid the tuneful quire,
 With flying fingers touched the lyre :
 The trembling notes ascend the sky,
 And heavenly joys inspire.
 The song began from Jove,
 Who left his blissful seats above,
 (Such is the power of mighty love.)
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god :
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
 When he to fair Olympia pressed :
 And while he sought her snowy breast,
 Then round her slender waist he curled,
 And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign
 of the world.
 The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
 A present deity, they shout around ;
 A present deity, the vaulted roofs rebound :
 With ravished ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod,
 And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS.

With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

3

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

5

CHORUS.

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure ;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

4

SOOTHED with the sound the king
grew vain ;
Fought all his battles o'er again ;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he
slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes ;
And while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft pity to infuse ;
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood ;
Deserted at his utmost need

By those his former bounty fed ;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below ;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS.

Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below ;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

5

THE mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree ;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble ;
Honour but an empty bubble ;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying :
If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, O think it worth enjoying :
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.
The many rend the skies with loud applause ;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again ;
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again ;
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

6

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

8

Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has raised up his head ;
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arise ;
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes !
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand !
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were
slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain :
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
The princes applaud with a furious joy ;
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy ;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

CHORUS.

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy ;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

THUS long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft
desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame ;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown
before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown :
He raised a mortal to the skies ;
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS.

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Inventress of the vocal frame ;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
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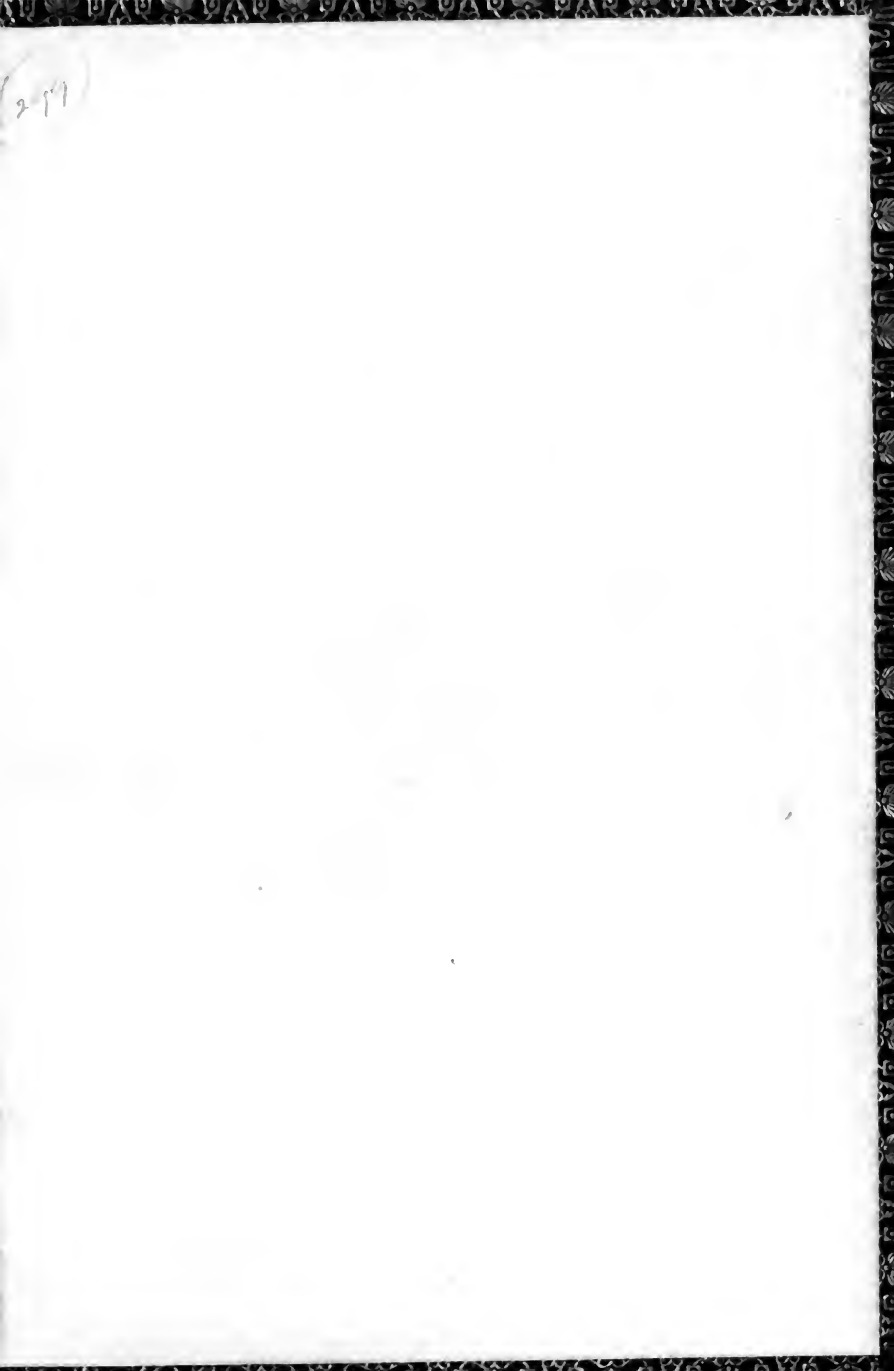
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