THE ODES OF

QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS

BOOK I

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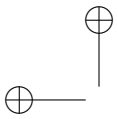
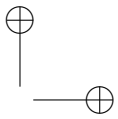
Translated by

Patrick Branwell Brontë

Introduction by

John Drinkwater

IWP

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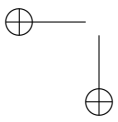
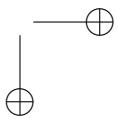



INTRODUCTION

I

Patrick Branwell Brontë died in 1848, at the age of thirty-one. Little celebrated for any achievement of his own, he is a not unfamiliar figure to students of the ever-increasing volume of Brontë literature. Through the life story of his more famous sisters, already sufficiently tragic in itself, his failure of character sounds, perhaps, the most unhappy note of all. The scourge of disease that destroyed the family, and the incessant problem of ways and means, could be faced with a greater fortitude than the constant betrayal of the hopes that were centred in a brother at once highly gifted, beloved, and incurably weak in fibre. Most of the biographers and critics have been agreed upon the matter, and the evidence is plain enough. Branwell made a mess of his life, and he was a cause of great suffering to three brave and devoted women. When drink and opium made an end – or hastened it, since, by the letter, he died of consumption like the others – natural affection can but have been conscious of a deep anxiety gone. But, while bad remains bad, there are aspects of the badness in this case that have, perhaps, been overlooked by Branwell's detractors.

Formal acknowledgment has generally been made of his gifts; they have even been allowed to have been brilliant. Mrs. Gaskell tells us how among the children, all pretty much of an age, busily writing their poems and romances, it was the brother who by common consent was to bring fame to the family; she adds, on her own account, "he was very clever, no doubt; perhaps, to begin with, the greatest genius in this rare family." We are told that his wit and talent were sought for the entertainment of strangers by the landlord of the "Black Bull" at Haworth,

in return for a share in the bottle. Other writers, speaking in censure, have nevertheless allowed that the disaster of Branwell's life was the more miserable because of the promise betrayed. What this promise actually was we are not so clearly told. Mrs. Gaskell quotes only one fragment of his juvenile verse. It is not notable, but the poor opinion that the biographer expresses of it would be more convincing if she had not already given an equally indifferent specimen of Charlotte's writing as showing "remarkable poetical talent." When the sisters published their book of poems in 1846, Branwell's work was not included, though it almost certainly must have been known to them, and was, in flashes, better than anything that the book contained with the exception of Emily's best poems.* Francis A. Leyland, in *The Brontë Family*†, gave several examples of his work, which did not reappear in book form until Mr. A. C. Benson included a very clumsily edited selection in his Brontë Poems of 1915. Mr. Benson's introduction pays a qualified tribute to Branwell's "instinct for poetry," and a yet more qualified one to his expression. This was, perhaps, all that could be asked, it was, in any case, nearer justice than the merely uncritical petulance of Mary F. Robinson and some other writers. The poems recovered, carelessly enough, by Mr. Benson, had no more than traces of genius. But they had that. *Noah's Warning over Methuselah's Grave*, and some twenty lines scattered among the other poems, were not enough to call up more than the

*The reason may well have been that the sisters, in their desire for pseudonymity, could not trust Branwell with the secret.

† *The Brontë Family, with Special Reference to Patrick Branwell Brontë, Two Volumes* by Francis A. Leyland. Hurst & Blackett, 1886. Leyland's book is the most important plea that has been made for Branwell. Mr. Shorter, than whom the sisters have had no more faithful and generous student, but who shares the common inability to see any good in Branwell, dismisses the book as merely dull. I don't find it that. It's loosely put together, and it must be allowed that Leyland was no oracle upon literature. But I find it a very readable and informing book. It is also an extremely inconvenient one for the prosecution.

ghost of a reputation for Branwell. But they are very good in themselves, and they have this interest: they are tokens of the something in him that gave rise to the tradition of his rare gifts that survives from the family records.

The cherished hope for Branwell, however, was not as a poet, but as a painter. When he was eighteen he was to be sent to the Royal Academy school, but the scheme came to nothing. Yet here, again, we hear of great promise, but when an occasional reference to performance is made, it is disparaging. And, again, the evidence, slight though it is, is against disparagement. I have in my possession one of the touching little Haworth manuscripts, a play called *Caractacus*, written by Branwell in 1830, when he was thirteen. It has the charming colophon, "Begun June 26, Ended June 28, A.D. 1830. Therefore, I have Finished It in 2 days Sunday wich happened between being left out, P. B. Brontë." The play has unusual constructive power for a child, otherwise it is what we should look for in expression. But it is embellished with two or three marginal sketches that show a decided talent for drawing, and the pages themselves are set out with a quite attractive sense of design. But of much greater importance is the portrait that Branwell painted of his three sisters, when he was older, but still well under twenty. Mr. Benson uses it as a frontispiece to his edition, as an interesting record, but in speaking only of its roughness and "unskilled handling," he follows Mrs. Gaskell, who thinks that the likenesses are admirable, but that it was "not much better than sign-painting (there are signs and signs) as to manipulation," and again refers to the "good likenesses, however badly executed." Loving Charlotte as she did, it is not surprising that Mrs. Gaskell did not like what she knew of Branwell – she never met him – but her affections at least did not sharpen what was perhaps no great natural acumen as an art critic. The painting is in the National Portrait Gallery, and a moment's inspection of it

shows it to be, as the production of an almost untutored boy,* remarkable in more than promise. It has charming qualities of colour, design and characterisation, immature but unmistakable. When, however, we pass from this to Branwell's later portrait of Emily, painted some ten years afterwards, immaturity has gone, and we are in the presence of startling achievement. Mr. Milner, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, tells me that he and his predecessor, Sir Charles Holmes, have always looked upon the picture, since it was bought in 1914, as one of the most beautiful things in the collection. It has the simple tenderness of a Primitive in tone and colour, and is admirably designed and drawn. As a revelation of Emily's character, moreover, it is astonishing. The stormy power of *Wuthering Heights* blends with the premonitions of approaching death. The portrait, the small Medici reproduction of which is used as a frontispiece to the present volume, gives Branwell a modest place among the little masters. And yet even in this connection his assailants have refused to admit plain evidence. They merely betray an ignorance of what painting is, but it is amusing to speculate as to what they would have said if this could have been shown to be Charlotte's work instead of Branwell's.†

This, then, is the figure hitherto presented of the "contemptible caitiff" pilloried by Swinburne, whose moral indignations were sometimes the least impressive things about a great poet and a great gentleman. We find a sensitive and affectionate child, growing with charm into boyhood, talented by report

*About this time Charlotte and Branwell were receiving lessons from William Robinson, an artist, of Leeds.

†An interesting point arises on looking at these portraits, as Mr. Milner suggests. Following Mrs. Gaskell's description of the group, it has been accepted always that Charlotte is on the right of the picture as we look at it, Emily in the centre, Anne on the left. But on comparing it with the later single portrait of Emily, the authenticity of which was vouched for by Mr. Nicholls, Charlotte's husband, there seems to be little doubt that Emily is the figure on the left, with Anne in the centre. Mrs. Gaskell had never seen either Emily or Anne.

rather than by admitted evidence, drifting into a dissolute young manhood, a drunkard, a sponge, "culpably negligent" in his employment, acquiring "all the cunning of the opium-eater," and wasting himself into a miserable and early death. That is the story as we have it, and, so far as it goes, it is clear. On the whole, Charlotte's letters must be allowed to outweigh even Leyland's testimony. But is there, perhaps, another side of the story that has not been very carefully considered? We have been told, and rightly, that Branwell was a disaster to his family. He cannot be absolved from the lamentable indecision of soul that makes love a bitterness. But even the worst case is never quite so simple as it seems. Is there not something to be said for considering also the disaster that he was to himself and how it came about?

Of Branwell's misused talent more is to be said later, in dealing with the immediate occasion of this little book. For the moment I wish to think a little more closely of the failure of character, but in order to do this I must take it for granted, in advance, that he had a real strain of the poet in him, that the family tradition was well founded, as I hope to show clearly it was. We remember, then, that he was the one boy in a bleak north country vicarage, with no mother, and a father who seems to have been fond but uncertain of temper and not very effective;* the brother of three sisters whose rare moral sureness

*The Reverend Patrick Brontë, too, made verses, sometimes wonderfully –

O! when shall we see our dear Jesus,
His presence from poverty frees us...

His *Cottage Poems* (1811) breathe an atmosphere of devastating piousness, but there lingers in them something of the eighteenth century deportment, and in one or two, for example *The Winter-Night Meditations* (published by Longman separately and anonymously in 1810 as *Winter Evening Thoughts*), there is a real touch of Crabbe's power.

The prostitute with faithless smiles,
Remorseless plays her tricks and wiles

of touch was uncertain just in the one matter of looking upon any incipient weakness in him as a sign of budding manliness. It is no excuse for him to say that he was spoilt as a child, but it is to begin to understand something about him. Charlotte and Anne were not poets, Emily and Branwell were. These two had the wildness, the sense of loneliness, the ache for some indefinable thing called freedom, that mark the poet from infancy. The Haworth parsonage was bad lodging for such spirits. Emily found her escape from it on the moors, Branwell his in the "Black Bull." His was a bad choice as it happened. He had not the resistance that thrives in taverns, and he was at once on easy terms with temptation. But it is not difficult to see why he was so early ripe for temptation when it came his way.

He spent hours over a map of London until he knew every street and byway in the city, and was able to tell a stranger at the inn of short cuts from Charing Cross, say, to Holborn. "My aim, sir," he wrote when he was nineteen to Wordsworth, "is to push out into the open world." He had been assured by all the opinion that he knew, at home and in the village, that he was to make a great name. Nobody seems to have gone beyond this to stiffen resolution in himself to make it, and consumption was at work upon his vitality. He loved literature, and he was no poor scholar, as will be shown. It was this boy, sensitive,

> Her gesture bold, and ogling eye,
> Obtrusive speech, and pert reply,
> And brazen front, and stubborn tone,
> Shew all her native virtue's flown.
> And, now, she practices the art,
> Which snared her unsuspecting heart,
>
> Averse to good, and prone to ill,
> And dexterous in seducing skill,
> To look, as if her eyes would melt,
> T' affect a love, she never felt...

The preface, however, must be a unique monument of self-satisfaction, and Mr. Brontë was doubtless rather a discouraging person to live with.

ambitious, flattered, diseased in a household of disease, who suddenly had placed before him the romantic adventure of going to London to study art. Mrs. Gaskell, wantonly as it seems to me, suggests that part of the attraction was that "he would have a license of action only to be found in crowded cities." Here at least he might have had the benefit of the doubt. A temperament like Branwell's in youth is on the whole more likely to save itself in the release and preoccupations of London than in the restrictions of Haworth. London was the El Dorado of his imagination, not necessarily a vicious one, and he cared very much about a career in one or another of the arts. The enchanting project fell through. He did not go to the Royal Academy, and, save for a short and hopeless effort to make a living in Bradford in competition with the established artists, he did not become a painter by profession. He became, instead, in turn an usher, a private tutor, and a clerk on the Leeds and Manchester Railway.

It might have been expected to pacify Branwell's critics to reflect, from all the available evidence, that if for the short ten years of his manhood he was a great trial to his sisters, he was desperately unhappy himself. It was his own fault, no doubt, but the adage serves. His ambitions were defeated; his hunger for intellectual society was satisfied only by a stray acquaintance on his few visits to Manchester or Liverpool; he chafed in his routine employments as sorely as has many a young man of more effective spirit and determination. He was often at home without the society of his sisters, who were now spending much of their time away as school-teachers, and even when he had not to be alone in what must have been a cheerless home, we may be allowed to wonder whether the companionship of Charlotte, at least, for all her affection, was a very happy one for him. She bore touch, and heroically, but there is a grim little story in Leyland of an occasion when Branwell, by a small errand of mercy, made an attempted return to grace. He had done his best, but had failed in his mission, and was miserable about

it. He told Charlotte. "She looked at me with a look I shall never forget.... It was not like her at all.... It was a dubious look. It ran over me, questioning, and examining, as if I had been a wild beast.... It said, 'I wonder if that's true?' But, as she left the room, she seemed to accuse herself of having wronged me, (and) smiled kindly upon me.... When she was gone I came over here to the 'Black Bull,' and made a note of it in sheer disgust and desperation. Why could they not give me some credit when I was trying to be good?" It is not a pleasing picture that Branwell gives of himself, but there is a touch of tragic colour in the story that does not come wholly from his own frailties.

He further became involved in a wretched love affair, that had neither health nor hope in it, and so the unhappy tale went on, today perhaps with a "sheriff's officer at the door on a visit to B. inviting him either to pay his debts or to take a trip to York," to-morrow finding consolation in reading of the latest pugilistic heroes in Bell's *Life* at the "Black Bull." And all the time the aspirations of the young poet were smouldering, the care for things of good report persisting. "He possessed then a familiar and extensive acquaintance with the Greek and Latin authors. He knew well the history and condition of Europe, and of this country, in past and present times," says Leyland. It was not common stuff that was drifting to ruin. And he knew with a sad bitterness what was happening. "My heartfelt thanks to you," he writes at the conclusion of one of his letters, "for your consideration for one who has none for himself." At the end, according to the account given by Mrs. Gaskell, which, although it is disputed by Leyland, I hope is true, a moment of his beloved Emily's stubborn courage came to him out of some recess of his nature. "I have heard, from one who attended Branwell in his last illness, that he resolved on standing up to die. He had repeatedly said that as long as there was life there was strength of will to do what it chose; and when the last agony began, he insisted on assuming the position just

mentioned." Branwell was a tragedy to his sisters, but in his heart there may have been an even deeper tragedy than theirs.

II

The extant poems of Branwell Brontë, with three exceptions,* are to be found in Leyland, and in various manuscripts. Of the last the most considerable is that now printed for the first time. It consists of a complete translation written out entirely in Branwell's own hand, of the First Book of Horace's Odes, omitting the last, of which he says, "This Ode I have no heart to attempt, after having heard Mr. H. Coleridge's translation, on May-day, at Ambleside."† The manuscript is signed at the end, "P. B. Brontë," and dated "Haworth Nr Bradford Yorks June 27, 1840." On New Year's Day of that year he had gone to Broughton-in-Furness, on the edge of the Lake District, as tutor in the family of a Mr. Postlethwaite, and he returned to Haworth in June, so that most of the translations were presumably made while he held that appointment. He was twenty-three years of age at the time. Just as the portrait of Emily is the most convincing proof of his gifts as a painter, so these translations seem to me to be his best achievement, so far as we can judge,

*Printed in Mrs. Oliphant's *William Blackwood and His Sons*, 1897.

†Hartley Coleridge's translation of Book I, Ode XXXVIII, is as follows –

Nay, nay, my boy – 'tis not for me,
This studious pomp of eastern luxury:
Give me no various garlands – fine
With linden twine,
Nor seek, where latest lingering blows
The solitary rose.
Earnest I beg – add not, with toilsome pain,
One far-sought blossom to the myrtle plain,
For sure, the fragrant myrtle bough
Looks seemliest on thy brow;
Nor me mis-seems, while, underneath the vine,
Close interweaved, I quaff the rosy wine.

as a poet. They are unequal, and they have many of the bad tricks of writing that come out of some deeply rooted defect of character. But they also have a great many passages of clear lyrical beauty, and they have something of the style that comes from a spiritual understanding, as apart from merely formal knowledge, of great models.

Horace has been a favourite mark for English translators, including many of our more considerable poets. Jonson, Cowley, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Prior, Congreve, Calverley, these and others have done occasionally what less famous writers have done systematically, and it cannot be said that on the whole they have done it any better. Cowley may bring off a line like –

> And trusts the faithless April of thy May,

or Dryden –

> The half unwilling willing kiss,

but they are no surer of making a good poem in translation than the Creeches and the Sewells. And that is the only test. If you know Latin, you don't want an English translation of Horace unless into the bargain you get a good English poem; if you don't know Latin (as I don't) still you want the translation only on the same terms. Horace has been responsible for some good English poems, and a great many dull ones. Even Ben Jonson, in his translation of The Art of Poetry (1640), in spite of a few splendid phrases, such as "The deeds of Kings, great Captains, and sad wars," strangely demonstrates for the most part what poetry is not, and, as a later translator, Henry Ames, protests in 1727, "has trod so close upon the Heels of Horace, that he has not only crampt, but made him halt in (almost) every line." The Earl of Roscommon's translation (1680) in blank verse, gives the sense, but little else. And so also it is generally with the Odes. Among the more or less complete translations are those of Sir Thomas Hawkins (1625, with later

enlarged editions), Thomas Creech (1684), and miscellanies such as Alexander Brome's (1666) and Jacob Tomson's (1715) containing translations by various hands. In later days we have W. Sewell (1850), John Conington (1863–1869), and Sir Theodore Martin (1860). Scattered about these volumes are several beautiful versions of different poems, reasonably faithful to the original,* and many more striking passages or stanzas. Now we get Hawkins with –

> no lot shall gaine
> Thee a King's Title in a Taverne-raigne;

and then Richard Fanshawe with –

> What stripling now thee discomposes
> In Woodbine Rooms, on Beds of Roses,

and again Creech, mildly, with –

> But now I do repent the wrong
> And now compose a softer song
> To make thee just amends.
> Recant the errors of my Youth
> And sweat those scandals were not Truth;
> So You and I be friends.

Conington is, perhaps, the most consistently attractive of them all, and he does make many of the Odes into charming English verse. He often strikes the note as surely as in –

> O lovelier than the lovely dame
> That bore you, sentence as you please
> Those scurril verses, be it lame
> Your vengeance craves, or Hadrian seas. . . .

and no less an authority than Mr. A. E. Housman tells me that he considers Conington's to be the best English translations that

*There were the fashionable "Imitations" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Prior's Ode to Colonel George Villiers, which were freely topical adaptations.

he knows of Horace, and as among the best verse translations in the language.

Branwell Brontë's translations of the First Book of Odes need at their best fear comparison with none. They are not so uniformly good as Conington's, and there are the ugly blemishes here and there of which I have spoken. "Than thee" (XXIV) is a lapse of a less unpleasant kind than "gushing gore" (II), "swells my liver," and "boisterous bite" (XIII). Also I think he occasionally mistranslates, as in XIX and XX, in the one of which he seems to be confused as to the women and in the other as to the wines. Sometimes, too, he chooses a bad measure, as in XII and XXXII, sometimes he is unexpectedly halting, as in XXXI, and again flat or dull or heavy as in XXVI, XXIX, XXXV, and XXXVII. Then there are other cases where he just manages good average verse, making it more interesting on the whole than most of his competitors; XXVIII is an instance. There remain more than half the Odes, of which it may be said that they are excellent in themselves, and as good as any English versions that I know, including Conington's. In a few instances I should say that they are decidedly the best of all. It is not only in frequent passages that Branwell sings with the right lyric ease, as in –

> Yet – shuddering too at poverty
> Again he seeks that very sea –

and –

> If but Euterpe yield to me
> Her thrilling pipe of melody,
> If Polyhymnia but inspire
> My spirit with her Lesbian lyre.
> Oh! give thy friend a poet's name
> And heaven shall hardly bound his fame.

and –

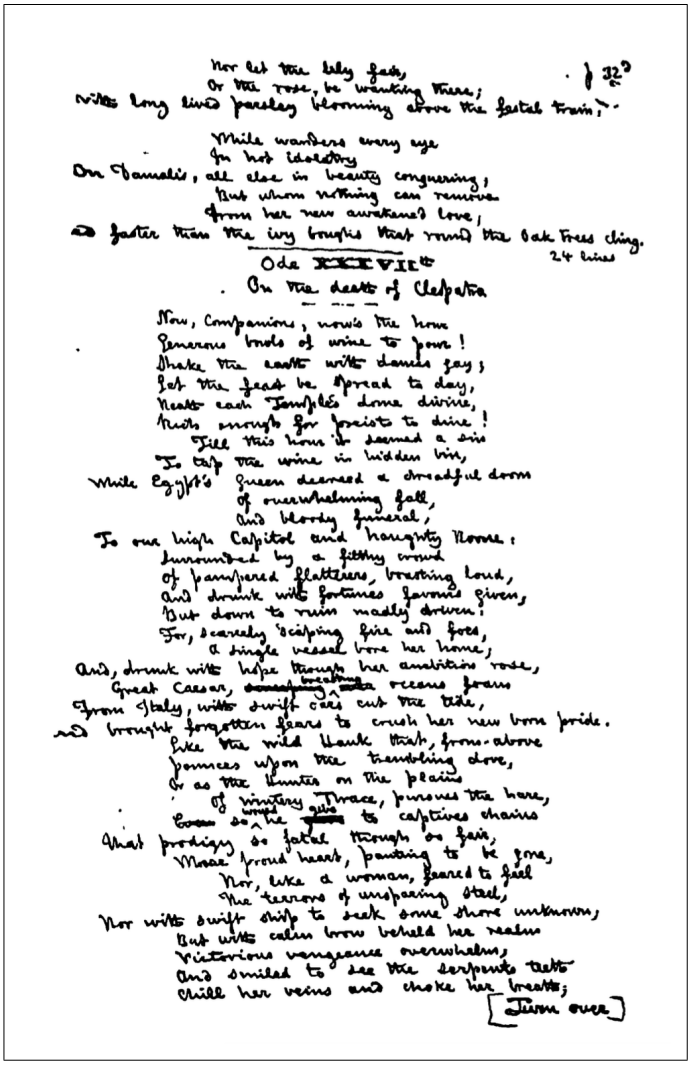
> O! brightest of his phalanx bright!
> With shining shoulders veiled from sight,
> Descend, Apollo Thou!

and many others (*e.g.*, the opening lines of the last stanza of IV), but in some whole poems, as in the lovely rendering of XXI, there is hardly a flaw from beginning to end. At his best he has melody, and phrase, and he builds his stanzas well. Further, he was happier in verse with Horace's subject matter than he generally was with the experience of his own confused and frustrated life. I do not wish to advance any extravagant claim for this little book, but I think that it adds appreciably to the evidence that Branwell Brontë was the second poet in his family, and a very good second at that, and that it leaves no justification for anyone again to say that he "composed nothing which gives him the slightest claim to the most inconsiderable niche in the temple of literature."

I have corrected obvious spelling mistakes in the poems, Branwell being very uncertain, for example, about his vowels in such words as friend and field. Otherwise the text here given is that of the original.

JOHN DRINKWATER

London, January, 1923.



Nor let the lily fade,
Or the rose, be wanting there;
With long lived parsley blooming above the fated train.

While wanders every eye
In hot idolatry
On Damalis, all else in beauty conquering,
But whom nothing can remove
From her new awakened love,
Faster than the ivy knights that round the Oak Trees cling.

24 lines

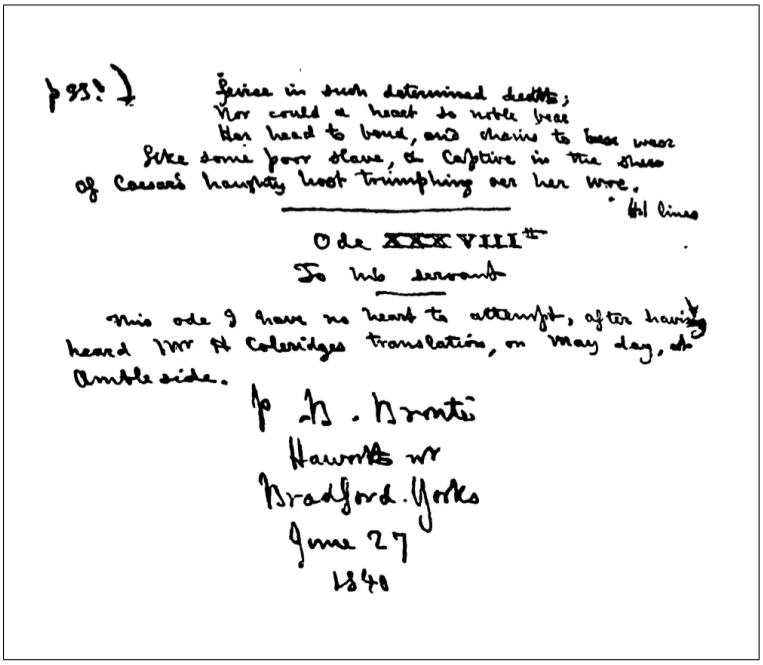
Ode XXXVII^th

On the death of Cleopatra

Now, Companions, now's the hour
Generous bowls of wine to pour!
Shake the earth with dances gay;
Let the feast be spread to day,
Neath each Temple's dome divine,
With enough for Jocists to dine!
Till this hour it seemed a sin
To tap the wine in hidden bin,
While Egypt's Queen deemed a dreadful doom
Of overwhelming fall,
And bloody funeral,
To our high Capitol and haughty Rome:
Surrounded by a filthy crowd
Of pampered flatterers, boasting loud,
And drunk with fortunes favours given,
But drawn to ruin madly driven!
For, scarcely 'scaping fire and flood,
A single vessel bore her home,
And, drunk with hope through her ambitious rose,
Great Caesar, breathing ^ vengeance from
From Italy, with swift oars cut the tide,
And brought forgotten fears to crush her new born pride.
Like the wild Hawk that, from above
Pounces upon the trembling dove,
Or as the Hunter on the plains
Of wintery Thrace, pursues the hare,
So he ^ to captives chains
What prodigy so fated though so fair,
Whose proud heart, panting to be free,
Nor, like a woman, feared to feel
The terrors of unsparing steel,
Nor with swift ship to seek some shore unknown,
But with calm brow beheld her realm
Victorious vengeance overwhelm;
And smiled to see the serpents dart
Chill her veins and choke her heart;

[Turn over]

(Page from the Manuscript of P. B. B.)



(Page from the Manuscript of P. B. B.)

BOOK I

ODE I

TO MÆCENAS

Mæcenas, sprung of kingly line,
My guardian and my guide divine;
Many there are whose pleasure lies
In striving for the victor's prize,
Whom dust clouds, drifting o'er the throng
As whirls the Olympic car along,
And kindling wheels, and close shunned goal
Amid the highest gods enrole.

One man perhaps his pleasure draws
From the inconstant crowd's applause;
Another seeks more solid gain
From granaries of Lybian grain;
The peaceful Farmer labours o'er
The Land his fathers ploughed before;
Nor these, from forum or from farm,
The wealth of Attalus could charm
To leave their homes, and seek a grave
Beneath the deep Ægean wave.

The Merchant, when "at home at ease"
May shudder at tempestuous seas,
And, scarce escaped from ocean's roar,
May praise the pleasures of the shore;
Yet – shuddering too at poverty,
Again he seeks that very sea.

The son of pleasure, careless laid
Beside a fountain, 'neath the shade,
Will sometimes wish to wile away
With mellowed wine, a summer day;

Though others mother-hated war
With fife's and trumpet's mingled jar
To camps and combats calls afar.
    The Hunter, 'neath a freezing sky,
Can banish from his memory
The tender wife he left at home,
O'er pathless wilds at will to roam;
If but his fleet hounds chase the deer;
Or Marsian boat his toils uptear.
    But, Ivy garlands me adorn,
By them to heavenly honours born;
Yes, me swift nymphs and satyrs bear
To woods, apart from worldly care;
If but Euterpe yield to me
Her thrilling pipe of melody;
If Polyhymnia but inspire
My spirit with her Lesbian lyre.
    Oh! give thy friend a poet's name,
And heaven shall hardly bound his fame!

ODE II

TO AUGUSTUS CÆSAR

Oh now enough of hail and snow
The Site of heaven on men below
Has sent, in sign of doom;
Has scattered from his red right hand
Enough of vengeance o'er our land;
And stricken dread through Rome;

And forced a guilty world to fear
Lest Phyrrha's times should reappear,
When Proteus led his flock
O'er mountain tops his path to follow,
And sport in every shady hollow,
And bask on every rock;

When fishes glided through the groves
Where nestled erst the turtle doves
Amid their native trees;
When o'er those woods the trembling deer
Swam, vainly struggling in their fear
With over-whelming seas.

We saw the Tyber spread its reign
O'er Numa's walls and Vesta's fane,
Rolled from the Etruscan shore;
As, roused by sorrowing Ilia's wrong,
It broke in billows broad and strong,
With hoarse avenging roar.

The youth their fathers' crimes have spared,
Will long remember to have heard

The civil strife that rose
When Rome itself unsheathed 'gainst Rome
Those swords, that should have given that doom
To their proud Persian foes.

What God can stay with sacred hand
The fortunes of a falling land?
With how sincere a prayer,
To Vesta's fane shall Virgins go,
Whose songs were silenced long ago
Amid the howl of war?

Say – whom, around his throne sublime,
With power to appease his wrath for crime
Will angry Jove endow?
O! brightest of his phalanx bright!
With shining shoulders veiled from sight,
Descend, Apollo Thou!

Or Thou, the fairest of the sky,
Round whom thy loves and graces fly,
My smiling Venus come:
Or, Mars, our father, from thy throne
Thy outcast children look upon,
And call thy terrors home!

Thou joyest in the battle's roar,
The gleaming arms, the gushing gore,
The soldiers iron frame;
But thou hast seen the savage foe,
And made us beat his bitterest blow,
Till wearied of the game.

Or, Maias son of heavenly birth,
Descending like a child of earth,
Incline thy gracious head,
Recoil not from our sinking state,

Thou, whose strong arm has deigned so late
To avenge the mighty dead.

Long mayst thou hold a happy throne
O'er lands that trust in thee alone,
And late mayst thou return;
Nor, wearied with the crimes of men,
To thine own heaven from us again
By rapid winds be borne:

But here, where triumphs wait on thee,
As prince and father, love to be
By thousand sons adored;
Nor let the Median dare to ride
Triumphant, o'er a land defied,
While Cæsar is our lord!

ODE III

TO THE SHIP THAT BORE VIRGIL TO ATHENS

Safe may Cyprian Venus guide thee;
Clear may Oceans twin stars glow,
Nor may Æolus provide thee
Aught but winds that eastward blow,
So, O Ship! my Virgil dear,
Thou to Greece unharmed mayest bear.

Oak or brass, with triple lining
Surely fenced his fearless mind,
Who, to sea a bark consigning
First 'mongst men dared face the wind;
Heedless of the Southern breeze,
Or the rainy Hyades,

Or of Notus' mad commotion,
Howsoe'er its wrath might grow;
And, o'er Adria's changeful ocean,
Not a wind can wilder blow,
Wakener of the wrecking wave,
Maker of the sailors grave!

What approach of death could daunt him,
Who, with steady eyes, could see
All around, huge monsters haunt him
In his passage through the sea,
Waves his vessel surging under;
Stern Epirus' hills of thunder.

All in vain has God divided
Solid earth from shifting main;

Seas between their shores have glided
Deep and treacherous, all in vain,
I, with canvas spreading wide,
Ships can cross the unfathomed tide.

Heedless, though the voice of heaven
Call their daring steps away,
Mortal men have ever striven
Those commands to disobey.
'Twas with such an impious soul,
Fire from heaven Prometheus stole.

Whence disease round mortals thickened
All its troops, in ghastly shew;
Whence grim death his footsteps quickened;
Now so swift, though once so slow.
Thus did wings to man ungiven
Waft bold Dædalus through heaven;

Thus did stern Alcides venture
Hell's dark depths to wander through;
Thus we Heaven itself would enter,
Naught too mad for man to do!
Nor can God, so much we sin,
Call his angry lightnings in.

ODE IV

TO SESTIUS

Rough winter melts beneath the breeze of spring,
Nor shun refitted ships the silenced sea,
Nor man nor beasts to folds or firesides cling,
Nor hoar frosts whiten over field and tree;
But rising moons each balmy evening, see
Fair Venus with her Nymphs and Graces join,
In merry dances tripping o'er the lea;
While Vulcan makes his roaring furnace shine,
And bids his Cyclops arms in sinewy strength combine.

Now let us, cheerful, crown our heads with flowers,
Spring's first fruits, offered to the newborn year,
And sacrifice beneath the budding bowers,
A lamb, or kid as Faunus may prefer:
But – pallid Death, an equal visitor,
Knocks at the poor man's hut, the monarch's tower;
And the few years we have to linger here
Forbid vain dreams of happiness and power,
Beyond what man can crowd into life's fleeting hour.

Soon shall the night that knows no morning come,
And the dim shades that haunt the eternal shore;
And Pluto's shadowy kingdom of the tomb,
Where Thee the well thrown dice may never more
Make monarch, while thy friends the wine cup pour;
Where never thou mayest woo fair Lycidas,
Whose loveliness our ardent youth adore;
Whose faultless limbs all other forms surpass,
And, lost amid whose beams, unseen all others pass.

ODE V

TO PYRRHA

Tell me Pyrrha, who is he
That, with scented locks,
In thy rose bower kisses thee
'Neath the shady rocks?
For whom is bound thy golden hair
Sweetly wreathing, void of care?

Oft, alas! shall he deplore
Vows unkept by thee;
Oft, the Gods he would adore
Frowning, he shall see;
Oft, astonished, see the main
All afoam with wind and rain,

Who believes thou'lt constant prove,
With thy beauty blind;
Heedless, while he lives in love,
Of the faithless wind!
Ah how wretched, all on whom
Unaware, thy beauties bloom!

As for me, experienced well,
Rescued from the main,
And mindful of the tempest's swell,
I'll hang in Neptunes fane
A picture of that stormy sea,
And garments drenched in ocean spray.

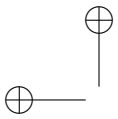
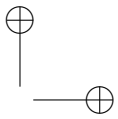
ODE VI

TO AGRIPPA

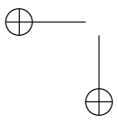
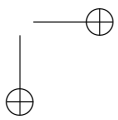
On Homer's wing let Varius sing
Agrippa, good and brave;
With what his warriors, conquering,
Have done by land or wave:
But nor to strains like these aspire
Our warblings, nor Pelides ire
Can we sublimely tell,
Nor how across old ocean's roar
His course the wise Ulysses bore,
Not how, defiled with kindred gore,
The house of Pelops fell;

Nor may our Muse, unwarlike, mar
With coldly creeping line
The praise of Cæsar famed so far,
Or, great Agrippa, thine!
And who *can* sing the God of war
With bright arms blazing from afar;
Or Merion famed in fight,
With blackened front and bloody blade;
Or Diomede, by Pallas' aid
Equal to Gods in might?

No, feasts and frolics be our theme,
And brimming bowls of wine,
And pleasure's laugh, and beauty's beam,
And dance and song divine:
We'll sing of virgins' wanton wiles,
Who fight with rage disclosed in smiles,

And *tempt* the foe to try;
Ourself, as wont, of careless frame,
Whether we feel the general flame,
Or coldly smile it by.

ODE VII

TO MUNATIUS PLANCUS

Let others Rhodes or Mytilene praise,
Or Cornith built between contending seas,
Or Ephesus, or Thebes, by Bacchus' name,
Or Delphi, by Apollo known to fame,
Or Tempe's shady vale. – There are who sing
The City Virgin Pallas worshipping,
And think her Olive garlands fame can bring;
Others whose harps would white armed Juno praise,
Sing Argos famed for steeds of noble race,
Or rich Mycenæ – But nor Sparta, me –
Nor Low Larissa, wakes to poesy
Like the far fount whence loud Albuna roves,
Or Anio's headlong leap, or Tybur's groves,
Or the moist orchards through whose meads he moves.
As South winds sometimes clear a threatening sky,
Not always sweep in storms and darkness by,
So thou, my Plancus, with a manly mind
Sometimes leave melancholy thoughts behind;
And whether arms and ensigns round thee shine,
Or forest's shade, life's labours drown in wine.
So Teucer, when from Salamis he fled,
With poplar crowned his wine besprinkled head,
And his sad friends addressed – "Come let us go
Where fortune, kinder than my Sire, shall shew!
Never despair whatever may betide,
While Teucer lives, your guardian and your guide!
And Phœbus tells me, that, beyond the main
Another Salamis shall rise again;

So you, who sterner scenes have borne with me,
To-day in wine forget your misery,
To-morrow rise to cross once more the mighty seal."

ODE VIII

TO LYDIA

Why, by Heaven, my Lydia, tell –
Wilt thou labour to destroy
Even with love – he loves so well –
Sybaris, thy favourite boy?

Wherefore does he hate the plain –
Careless once of dust or sun?
Wherefore not his charger rein,
Mid his warriors dashing on?

Wherefore dread the Tybur's flood?
Wherefore hate the wrestler's oil
Worse than venomed viper's blood,
While his strength can bear the toil?

Wherefore shun his front to shew
Marked with no ignoble wounds,
When with Discus, dart, or bow
Victor, he might pass the bounds?

Thus did sea born Thetis' son,
Ere the stormy scenes of Troy
Had their mournful march begun,
Lurk like this bewildered boy;

Shrinking from the call to fight,
Lest the manly garb again
Should impel him on the flight
Of the trembling Lycian train.

ODE IX

TO THALIARCHUS

See'st thou not amid the skies,
White with snow, Soracte rise?
While the forests on the plain
Scarce their hoary weight sustain,
And congealed the waters stand
'Neath the frost's arresting hand.
Drive away the winter wild;
On the hearth be fuel piled;
And, from out its inmost cell
Kept in Sabine vase so well,
Generous, bring thy four years wine;
Brightest source of song divine!
Wisely leave the rest to heaven,
Who, when warring winds have striven
With the forests or the main,
Bids their ragings rest again.
Be not ever pondering
Over what the morn may bring;
Whether it be joy or pain
Wisely count it all as gain;
And, while age forbears to shed
Snows, or sorrows o'er thy head,
Do not scorn the dancers' feet,
Nor thy lovers dear retreat.
Hasten to the plain or square;
List the voice that whispers where,
While the calm night rules above,
Thou may'st meet thy constant love;

While the laugh round corner sly
May instruct thee where to spy;
While the wanton's feigned retreating
Still may leave some pledge of meeting;
Perhaps a ring or bracelet bright
Snatched from arm or finger white.

ODE X

TO MERCURY

Merry God of Atlas' strain,
Whose eloquence taught mortal men
In times remotest age,
To lay their savage wildness by,
And but in friendly rivalry
Their skill or strength to engage;

Hail, Herald of thy heavenly Sire!
Hail, parent of the crooked lyre!
To praise thee be my pride;
Thou God endowed, with matchless skill
Whate'er, in wanton jest, at will
Thy hand may steal – to hide!

For, long ago, when, young and gay
From him whose glory guides the day
His cattle thou didst wile,
Although the thief he frowned upon,
Yet, when his quiver too was gone
He could not choose but smile.

'Twas Thou that led rich Priam on
When, to redeem his slaughtered son,
He left sad Troy behind,
And safe escaped Atrides ire,
And foemen, round each Argive fire
Against that Troy combined.

'Tis Thou that guidest good men home;
Our spirits urging to the tomb

Before thy golden rod;
Grateful alike to him who reigns
O'er Hell's dim, desolate domains,
And to heaven's highest God.

ODE XI

TO LEUCONOE

Leuconoe, strive no more
By impious arts to explore
How long a life our God has given to thee or me;
If we've winters yet in store,
Or if this whose tempests' roar
Across the Tyrrhene deep, is the *last* that we shall see.

Be cheerful wisdom thine;
Thy Goblet fill with wine,
And shape thy hopes to suit the hour that hastes away;
For, while we speak, that hour
Is past beyond our power,
So do not trust to-morrow but seize upon to-day.

ODE XII

TO AUGUSTUS

Clio, what man or what Hero to sing,
Wilt thou tune thy shrill pipe or awaken thy string?
Or what God? – while afar from thy mountains rebounding
Echo an answer may give to his name;
Haemus and Pindus and Helicon sounding
Vocal at once to the voice of his fame;
For on Haemus it was that the forests, obeying
The might of the Thracian, bowed down to his skill,
Who, with art like his mother's, even torrents delaying,
And winds on the mountains in mid career staying,
Made the deep rooted oak forests dance at his will.

First let us honour the Father of heaven
Who governs the fortunes of gods and of men;
Who each change of the seasons has graciously given,
Winter summer returning again,
Born at his bidding o'er mountain and main;
First and alone in the power of his pride,
While Pallas, his daughter, sits next at his side.
Nor of thee be we silent, who dauntlessly warrest,
Bacchus the father of life giving wine;
Nor of thee, Virgin huntress, the dread of the forest;
Nor of thee the far shooting God – Phœbus divine!
Alcides we'll sing, and the Brothers twin born,
Strong on the stadium or swift with the steed;
Whose stars when they rise on the storm darkened skies
Seamen can save in the hour of their need;
From the wave beaten rock can whirl backward the spray,
The loud wind can hush, and the storm drive away,
And calm as they will it the billowy sea.

Next after these, tell me, whom shall we praise?
Romulus founder and Father of Rome?
Or Numa's unwarlike but prosperous days?
Or the fasces of Tarquin, the ensigns of doom?
Or, Cato the last of our citizens, Thee,
Who fought for our freedom, and died to be free!

Say, shall we sing in a loftier strain,
The Scaurii, or Regulus true to his word?
Or Paulus, who yielded his hearts blood like water*
Where Rome, for one hour, bowed down 'neath the slaughter
Of Annibal's conquering sword?
Or Fabricius, and Curius with locks wildly waving;
And noble Camillus whom poverty nurst,
The hunger and toil of obscurity braving
Till they rose over mullions – the noblest and first?
Or thy glory, Marcellus, that, secretly growing,
Like a tree shall shoot forth into branches afar,
While bright as the moon mid heavens lesser lights glowing
Shall shine upon mortals the Julian star!

Sire of Creation! Thine be the care
O Cæsar our sovereign – assigned Thee by fate;
While Thou rulest highest, Cæsar the nighest
Under Thy guidance shall govern our state:
And whether the Parthian who threatened so late
Bow to the power of his conquering throne,
Or whether his hand the doom shall command
Of China, or India, or Kingdoms unknown,
May he submit to Thy glory alone;

*Alternative lines:

Or Paulus who died where the war shaken plain
With his country's best heartsblood was drenched as with rain
'Neath Annibal's conquering sword.

And place 'neath none other our Sovereign's throne.
While shaking Olympus, and darkening the sky,
Thy heavy wheeled chariot rolls thundering by,
While over earth's temples dishonoured so long,
Thou wreakest thy lightnings in vengeance for wrong.

ODE XIII

TO LYDIA

When thy youthful lovers charms,
His rosy neck – his waxen arms
I so often hear thee praise,
How thy words my passions raise!
Swells my liver – dies my heart;
Calmness – colour, both depart;
While my tearful cheeks proclaim
Swift and sure the inward flame.
How I burn when, drunkenly –
He disports himself with thee –
Stains with wine thy shoulders white –
Hurts thy lip with boisterous bite.
Oh! if thou wilt listen to me,
Let not such a lover woo thee!
Ne'er will love keep ever warm
That can lips so lovely, harm!
Lips that Venus doth embue
With her own nectarian dew!
Thrice happy those – whose mutual mind
Lasting links of love can bind!
Love unbroke by fear or fray –
Lasting till life's latest day!

ODE XIV

TO THE STATE OF ROME

O Ship what waves shall bear thee now?
What course – what waters wilt thou plough?
Haste to thy haven, from the tide,
For, see'st thou not thy oarless side –
Thy shattered mast – thy shivered sail –
The wrecks of many a stormy gale!
And hardly may a vessel brave
With broken ropes, the winter wave:
Thou hast not one untattered sail,
Nor God to trust when man shall fail!
Oh! Though thou claim'st a race divine
As fashioned from the Pontic Pine,
The noblest daughter of the wood!
The stateliest floater on the flood!
All vain thy boasting – sailors now
Trust nothing to a painted prow.
Beware! – unless thou long'st to be
To the wild winds a mockery!
And though, within my mind thy name
Has only wakened fear and shame
Yet – when thy danger draws so near –
My fond heart tells me – still thou'rt dear!
So shun – oh! Shun those treacherous seas
Among the shining Cyclades!

ODE XV

THE PROPHESY OF NEREUS

'Twas when the treacherous shepherd bore
His royal prize away
In Phrygian ship – from Spartan shore,
Across the Ægean sea,

That Nereus raised his awful brow,
And hushed each favouring breeze,
Till not a ship its path could plough
Across the slumbering seas;

And thus did that old Seagod sing
His prophesy of doom –
"Vain man! Ill omened dost thou bring
Thy Helen to thy home,

Whom Greece shall seek, with mighty host
Conjured to overwhelm
Thy pleasure bought at such a cost,
And thy ancestral realm.

Alas! what strife, round Xanthus' wave,
Thy treachery shall bring!
What fiery funerals o'er the grave
Of Ilion and her King!

See! Pallas lays her olive by,
And grasps her shield and spear,
And mounts her chariot in the sky,
And wakes her rage for war.

In vain thy guardian Goddess' care
Thy spirits may inspire;
In vain thou combst thy curling hair,
Or wakest thy wanton lyre;

In vain the shouts – the lances thrust –
Or Ajax, thou may'st fly;
For, with thy long locks trailed in dust,
Adulterer! Thou shalt die!

Ulysses see – and Nestor grave –
Thy hapless peoples scourge –
And Sthenelus, and Teucer brave
Thy flying footsteps urge:

'Tis Sthenelus the reins can guide,
While noble Diomede
Greater than Tydeus, at his side,
Hunts for the Adulterer's head,

Whom thou shalt fly, as flys the hind
In vale or woodland lone
From the deep deathbark, heard behind,
Of wild wolf hasting on,

With beating heart, and bated breath
O'er mountain and through grove:
Was this the glory – this the death –
Thou promisedst thy love?

Pelides' ships – Pelides' arm
O'er Phrygia's fated shore,
For these thy deeds, the avenging storm
Resistlessly shall pour;

And, after years of weary wars,
Shall wrap in funeral flame –
Unquenched by all her blood and tears,
Thy Ilion's very name!"

ODE XVI

O Lovely girl, whose bloom outshines
Thy lovely Mother's fame,
To ocean give my angry lines,
Or cast them in the flame;

But know, that neither wrapt Apollo,
Nor he who rules the bowl,
Nor Ceres priests with tymbals hollow,
Like Wrath can shake the soul;

Whose direful might, nor sword can fright,
Nor floods, nor fires, nor Jove
Descending on our blasted sight
In thunder from above.

When man Prometheus made from clay,
In fashioning each part,
The Lion's rage he stole away
And fixed it in his heart.

'Twas wrath that hurled Thyestes down
With heavy overthrow;
'Tis wrath, o'er many a mighty town,
That drives the foeman's plough;

And me, while young, that wrath beguiled
In furious rhymes to range,
But Satires wild to songs more mild
My melting muse shall change;

While Thou – thy passion laid aside
With vows of amity –

Shall hush the urgings of thy pride,
And back return to me!

ODE XVII

TO TYNDARIS

Faunus from Lucretile
Often shifts, to visit me,
And when my goats to shelter run
Shields them from the showers or sun.
'Neath his guidance, through the grove
They may, safe, at random rove;
Browzing, mid the summer scene,
On the herbage fresh and green;
Fearing not a wolf to meet,
Or rouse the serpent 'neath their feet,
While they hear his shrill pipe play
Through the valleys far away,
And polished rocks of Ustica.
Heaven my head from harm defends;
Heaven my life and lyre commends;
And to thee my farm shall yield
All the riches of its field;
Here thou mayest, in long drawn vale,
Fly the sun and court the gale;
Here with old Anacreon's string,
Faith or frailty thou mayst sing:
Here beneath the shade recline,
Quaffing cups of sober wine,
Far from scenes where furious Mars
With the jovial wine god wars;
Nor suspicious Cyrus fear,
Lest his boisterous passion tear
From thy head the festal crown,
And tend thy unoffending gown.

ODE XVII

TO QUINTILIUS VARUS

Round Catilus or Tibur's walls – O be the ditty thine
Before all other trees, My Friend, to plant the sacred vine;
Since God unto abstemious men the cares of life has given
Nor can those cares from heart and home by aught but wine be driven:
Who, o'er his wine cup, dreads the toil of war or poverty?
Nor rather seeks Thee – Joyous God! or, Lovely Venus – Thee!
But, lest the glass too oft thou pass – Oh ever keep in mind
That o'er a bowl the Centaurs 'gainst the Lapithæ combined;
That o'er a bowl the Thracian's soul, while bent on wanton pleasure,
'Twixt good and evil sees no bound, in riot knows no measure
Yet – Honest God, I would not dare thy mysteries to explore,
So Thou wouldst hush thy Phrygian horn and drums discordant roar
Whose savage sounds blind self esteem in mazy dances lead;
And Vanity that over all exalts his empty head;
And Faith that makes each secret known committed to its care,
Its inmost thoughts as clear as glass, its promise light as air.

ODE XIX

ON GLYCERA

The Mother of Love, and the Father of Wine,
And passion, resuming its throne,
Backward command me my mind to incline,
And kindle the flame that was gone;
For Glycera warms
My heart with her charms,
Whiter than Parian Stone.

Her artfulness fires me; Her countenance beams
Too bright to be gazed upon;
Till Venus, forsaking her Cyprus, seems
To rush upon me alone;
And no longer my verse
The deeds can rehearse
By Scythian or Parthian done.

Raise me an Altar of living sod,
And crown it with flowers, and bear
Wine without mixture – fit for a god,
That Glycera, heating my prayer,
May know I adore,
And be cruel no more,
But an answering passion declare.

ODE XX

TO MÆCENAS

Plain Sabine wine, a beverage poor –
If Thou, my friend, my table grace,
I'll draw from out its Grecian vase;
Stored up since Father Tyber's shore,
And yonder hill's tower crested face
Re-echoed back the applauding roar
That bade the Gods Mæcenas bless.
Simple cæcubian shalt thou pour,
Or juice of the Calenan press;
For offers not a poet's store
The noble Formian or Falernian glass.

ODE XXI

TO APOLLO AND DIANA

Virgins, sing the Virgin Huntress;
Youths, the youthful Phœbus, sing;
Sing Latona, she who bore them
Dearest to the eternal King:
Sing the heavenly maid who roves
Joyous, through the mountain groves;
She who winding waters loves;
Let her haunts her praises ring!

Sing the vale of Peneus' river;
Sing the Delian deity;
The shoulder glorious with its quiver;
And the Lyre of Mercury.
From our country, at our prayer –
Famine, plague, and tearful war
These, benign, shall drive afar
To Persia's plains or Britain's sea.

ODE XXII

TO ARISTIUS FUSCUS

The man, my Friend, of fearless brow,
And life of honest deeds,
Nor Moorish dart, nor martial bow,
Nor poisoned arrow needs:

Whether he walk through burning sands;
Or Scythia's savage shores;
Or, where its waves through unknown lands
The famed Hydaspes pours:

For while a pathway, through the grove
My careless footsteps led,
As, far from home, I sang my love,
A Wolf, that saw me, fled:

Sure, such a beast Apulia's wood
Had never nursed before;
Nor, – famous for its Lion brood –
Wild Afric's burning shore.

But, place me 'mid a sterile wild
Where tree could never grow;
Where stormy clouds are ever piled,
And tempests ever blow;

Or place me 'mid the burning heat
Of far unpeopled isles;
I still will sing Lalage – sweet,
Whene'er she speaks or smiles!

ODE XXIII

TO CHLOE

Why, whenever she can spy me,
Like a fawn will Chloe fly me?
Like a fawn, its mother seeking
O'er the hills, through brambles breaking;
Frightened if the breezes move
But a leaflet in the grove;
Or a branch the Zephyr tosses;
Or its path a Lizard crosses;
Nothing can its fear dissemble –
Heart and knees together tremble.

Stop my love; Thou needst not fear me,
For I follow not to tear thee
Like the Lion, prowling o'er
Far Letulia's savage shore:
Stop – Thy budding charms discover
'Tis thy time to choose a lover.

ODE XXIV

THE DEATH OF QUINTILIUS VARUS

Oh! what shall check our sorrowing
    Above the grave of one so dear?
Melpomene! descend, and bring
Thy Godgiven lyre, whose solemn string
    Alone, 'tis meet for us to hear.

Why does the eternal sleep of death
    Compose Quintilius in its reign?
And Truth, and modesty, and faith
Unstained by taint of earthly breath –
    When shall they see his like again!

With tears his ashes good men mourn,
    And none – my Virgil more than Thee!
Who weariest heaven for their return
From the dread darkness of their urn;
    A joy – alas! Forbidden to be!

Though Thou couldest move a Thracian wood
    With song more sweet than Orpheus strain,
Thou couldst not bid the frozen blood
Through the cold veins to pour its flood;
    Or call the buried back again:

For Mercury, in a shadowy train
    Impells them downward – deaf to prayer
'Tis hard – but know, when we complain –
That, which to strive against were vain,
    Patience will make us bear!

ODE XXV

TO LYDIA

Seldom now the drunken rake
Lydia, will thy windows shake.
To its lintel clings thy door;
So, unnoticed, sleep and snore.
Less and less thou hearest the cry –
"Oh my Lydia! here am I
Ceaseless sighing – almost dying,
While in slumber thou art lying!"
In thy turn, decayed and old,
Thou shalt lurk in alleys cold,
While across the moonless sky
Winter winds are wailing by;
And the scoff, shalt weeping, hear,
Of the proud Adulterer;
Yet infuriate – in despair
With such Lust as fires a Mare:
In our youth, their former love;
Mourning that they rather wear
Ivy garlands in their hair,
Than the Myrtle's funeral wreath;
Like thyself the sign of death:
Unto Hebrus such, devoting,
Down his stream they send them floating.

ODE XXVI

IN PRAISE OF ÆLIUS LAMIA

To the wave and the wind, while the muses are kind,
My cares and my sorrows I'll fling;
Nor e'er with the question will trouble my mind
Of the snow covered north, who is King:
Or what is the dread, o'er the Parthian's head –
That the shades of misfortune may bring.

O, Goddess divine, the first of the Nine,
Who lovest the fountain clear,
A garland of springs sweetest offerings twine
For the brows of my Lamia dear;
Since oh! without Thee honour to me
Nor pleasure nor profit can bear!

Thou and thy sisters, his praises to sing,
Once more awaken the Lesbian string!

ODE XXVII

TO HIS FRIENDS

My friends, across the joyous bowl
'Tis barbarous to fight;
Expel such customs from the soul,
Nor shame with such a sight
Of mutual brawling blows and blood,
The presence of the modest God.

The flashing cup and lighted hall
With arms but ill agree;
So cease at once that impious brawl,
And sit content with me.
Say – would you have me drain to night
The heady cup that shines so bright?

And let Megilla's brother tell
From whence the arrow flew,
And struck by whose bright eyes he fell,
Come, let him tell me true:
Does he from such confession shrink? –
Nay – on no other terms I'll drink.

Whatever heart thine own inspire, –
Thou needst not blush to me –
I know thou ownst a noble fire,
And lovest generously:
So what thou feelest – Hopes, or fears,
Disclose them all to faithful ears.

Ah! hapless youth! I feel thy state;
If *there* thy passions rove;

Ah, worthy of a happier fate –
A more requited love!
In what a wild Charybdis tossed
Blindly loving! early lost!

What skilful witch can free thine heart
From deadlier witchery?
What Wizard with Thessalian art –
What God can rescue thee?
For thee scarce Pegasus could bear
From such a dire Chimera's snare.

ODE XXVIII

THE GHOST OF ARCHYTAS TO THE SAILOR

Archytas, Thou, whose spirit, Sea and Land
With unbeclouded gaze hast wandered o'er,
Liest, mouldering 'neath a scanty heap of sand
In unknown burial, on Apulia's shore.

Nor aught avails if now that thou couldst trace
With master mind the mansions of the sky;
Nor that thy thoughts explored all natures face,
Since – fashioned mortal – thou wert doomed to die

So fell the man who shared the feasts of heaven;
So passed Tithonus from our world below;
So perished Minos, unto whom 'twas given
The secret counsels of heaven's king to know;

So deeps of Tattarus Euphorbus, hold,
Though teaching nought but body bows to death
By the famed shield, that, Trojan warfare told,
Yet *He himself* twice o'er resigned his breath:

No mean explorer – He, of moral lore,
Not lightly learned in the ways of God:
But – One dread midnight looms out sight before;
One path of death must once by all be trod.

Some shed their life blood on the battle plain;
Some sleep, unwaking, 'neath the ocean swell;
Thickens, of old and young, the funeral train;
No head can scape the cruel queen of hell.

Me, too, tempestuous winds that oversweep
Illyria's waters, whelmed beneath the main;
So, Sailor, Stop! a little sand to heap
O'er my poor relics, beat by wind and rain:

That so may heaven, whenever storms o'erblow
Venusia's forests, or Hesperia's sea,
Preserve, and bid unbounded riches flow
By Jove, and guardian Neptune showered on thee.

But if, neglectingly, thou'lt pass me by,
Thy guiltless children for thy guilt shall pay,
Nor all the pomp of future piety
Avail to wash their fathers' fault away:
I would not stay thee – I would only pray
That thrice, a little sand thou'dst scatter o'er my clay.

ODE XXIX

TO ICCIUS

Iccius, shall Arabian treasures
Tempt thee with their charms?
Wilt thou fly from peaceful pleasures,
And arouse to arms?
Chains and slavery wilt thou bring
To the East's unconquered King;
Or the Mede whom, combating,
Danger only warms?
  Who's the Maid thou'lt snatch, lamenting
O'et her lover gone;
Soft relenting – soon consenting
To be thine alone?
Who shall be the bright haired boy
Waiting with thy cup of joy,
And, like his father, skilled to employ
The arms to China known?
  Who'll deny that torrents, rushing,
To their fountains flow;
Tyber's waters upward gushing
From the plains below,
When – designed for nobler pride, –
Thou thy learning layest aside,
Books exchanging, to provide
War's untutored shew?

ODE XXX

TO VENUS

Queen divine
Of Paphian shrine,
Leave those lovely haunts of thine:
Come away
Where Glycera
Calls Thee to her temple gay.

Bring with Thee
Loves deity:
The blooming Nymphs, the Graces three;
The God endued
With merry mood;
And youth, without thee wild and rude.

ODE XXXI

TO APOLLO

For what does the poet to Phœbus pray –
New wine from his goblet flowing –?
Not for the flocks o'er Calabria that stray;
Nor the corn in Sardinia growing;

Neither for ivory, nor gold, nor land
Which the Liris, gently gliding,
Would crumble away into fugitive sand
Down its quiet waters sliding:

Let him gather the grape who has planted the vine;
Let the Merchant, whom Jupiter favours,
His Syrian treasures exchange for wine
Which a golden goblet flavours.

Thrice in a season o'erpassing the sea,
Nor by waters or winds prevented;
But olives and mallows shall satisfy me;
With the goods fortune gives me, contented.

Son of Latona! grant health to taste
The food Thou hast placed before me;
And a Mind undimmed; and an age undisgraced;
And a Harp, with whose strains to adore thee.

ODE XXXII

TO HIS LYRE

If, resting 'neath the shade
With thee I've ever played
Such strains as those who hear shall treasure long –
Sweet Harp! the while I sing –
Attune the silver string,
That, once awakening,
Swelled old Alcaeus' Song;

Who, warlike, mid the sound
Of battle thundering round;
Or, his tossed vessel anchoring from the tide;
Still sang the God of wine;
Or Venus – Queen divine;
Or his beloved Nine,
With Cupid, at her side;

Or Lycus, blooming bright,
With eyes as dark as night,
While darker still his long locks seemed to fall:
Haul! Harp to Phœbus dear!
My charm from every fear;
My comforter in care;
Attend thy poet's call!

ODE XXXIII

TO ALBIUS TIBULLUS

Come – Dear Tibullus, and no more
Of Glycera complain,
But Sorrow breathing Songs give o'er,
For vows adjured in vain.

For Cyrus' love burns Lycoris
Of forehead fair and free,
While Cyrus wastes each careless kiss
On haughty Pholoë;

But sooner shall the timid goat
With rabid wolves combine,
Than Pholoë her soul devote
To lecherous fires, like Thine!

So Venus, who out hearts controls,
Will oft, with wicked joke,
Jon differing forms and differing souls
Beneath one brazen yoke.

Myself, who higher should have aimed,
A low born maid have ta'en,
Whose haughty temper might have shamed
Calabria's stormy main.

ODE XXXIV

My God, each hour, less turned to Thee,
My mind man's wisdom led astray;
But back across that treacherous sea
My wandering vessel tracks its way:

For, thundering through an angry heaven
While, rent with lightning, blazed the sky,
Thou, Thy swift car hast lately driven
With windborn coursers whirling by;

The Heavens' Atlantean pillars shaking,
And solid earth, and fleeting sea;
And Hell's tremendous confines quaking
When, in that moment, moved by Thee.

Thou God canst hurl the lofty down,
And lift the lowly head on high;
While Fortune shifts the glittering crown,
With changing choice, and clamourous cry.

ODE XXXV

TO FORTUNE

Goddess of Antium, mighty to raise
The lowly aloft, or the high to abase;
Mighty the pomp of a Triumph to turn
To the darkness and dust of the funeral urn;
Mighty to govern the land or the sea;
Alike the poor husbandman prays unto thee,
And the sailor, whose vessel afar from home,
Drives through the dangers of ocean's foam:
The Dacian and Scythian, the city and plain,
Rome the victorious, and Monarchs who reign;
O'er hordes of barbarians – and Tyrants of pride,
To thee would do reverence – with thee would abide!
The column still standing – Oh! do not o'erwhelm;
Nor waken to war with a weary realm
The nations, whose swords are scarce cold in their sheath,
Lest they threaten our Empire with danger and death.
Before Thee stalks Fate to obey thy command,
With the engines of death in her brazen hand –
Wedges and hooks for torments dread,
And the iron spike, and the molten lead.
Hope and faith, rarely seen, clothed in white, hover near thee
And cheerfully follow, and steadfast revere thee,
When, altered in aspect, thou hastest away
From the Halls of the great, to the haunts of decay:
But the perjured wanton, and faithless crowd
Fly from the friendship they recently vowed;
And the friends, when the gold and the goblet are gone,
Leave the dregs to their host, from his poverty own.

Fortune! be watchful in Britain, afar,
Over Cæsar, departed again to war;
And shine on our soldiers, a terrible band
To the far off east, and the Red sea strand.
Alas how disgraceful! when brother 'gainst brother
Deals blows that his arm should have dealt on another!
What crimes have we shunned in this iron time?
Forborne from what Sacrilege? fled from what crime?
From what blood, for what God did our people refrain?
Or shrink from polluting what altar or fane?
Great Goddess! our blunted swords sharpen once more
Not in *our own* but our *Foemen's* gore!

ODE XXXVI

NUMIDA'S RETURN

Incense hither bring,
And tune the joyful string,
And with offerings please the powers who Numida defend,
For his safe return again
From western wilds of Spain,
To greet and to be greeted by each long dissevered friend.

And he'll none more gladly see
Than, dearest Lamia! thee!
Whose life with his – together taught – from infancy did twine:
So mark this day with white;
And whirl in dances light;
Nor a brimming glass forget to pass of soul awakening wine!

Nor let jovial Bassus yield
To Damalis, the field,
Though seasoned well and skilled the Thracian cup to drain;
Nor let the lily fair,
Or the rose, be wanting there;
With long lived parsley blooming above the festal train:

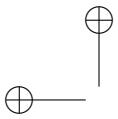
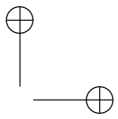
While wanders every eye
In hot idolatry
On Damalis, all else in beauty conquering;
But whom nothing can remove
From her new awakened love;
Fixed faster than the ivy boughs that round the Oak trees cling.

ODE XXXVII

ON THE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA

Now, Companions, now's the hour
Generous bowls of wine to pour!
Shake the earth with dances gay;
Let the feast be spread to day,
'Neath each Temple's dome divine,
Rich enough for priests to dine!
Till this hour it seemed a sin
To tap the wine in hidden bin,
While Egypt's Queen decreed a dreadful doom
Of overwhelming fall,
And bloody funeral,
To our high Capitol and haughty Rome:
Surrounded by a filthy crowd
Of Pampered flatterers, boasting loud,
And drunk with fortunes favours given;
But down to ruin madly driven.
For, scarcely 'scaping fire and foes,
A single vessel bore her home;
And, drunk with hope though her ambition rose,
Great Cæsar, breathing ocean's foam
From Italy, with swift oars cut the tide,
And brought forgotten feats to crush her new born pride.
Like the wild Hawk that, from above
Pounces upon the trembling dove,
Or as the Hunter on the plains
Of wintery Thrace, pursues the hare,
So would he give to captives chains
That prodigy so fatal though so fair;

Whose proud heart, panting to be gone,
Nor, like a woman, feared to feel
The terrors of unsparing steel,
Not with swift ship to seek some shore unknown;
But with calm brow beheld her realm
Victorious vengeance overwhelm;
And smiled to see the serpent's teeth
Chill her veins and choke her breath;
Fierce in such determined death;
Nor could a heart so noble bear
Her head to bend, and chains to wear
Like some poor slave, a captive in the shew
Of Cæsar's haughty host triumphing o'er her woe.

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