

The Anacreontea

Anacreon



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THE ODES OF ANACREON.

“Nec, si quid olim lusit Anacreon Delevit ætas.” Hor.

AMONGST THE INNUMERABLE translators of Anacreon, there was one; a Frenchman by birth; who was both an illustrious painter and a literary enthusiast. Girodet de Roussy, inspired by a genius altogether Greek in its character, has translated Anacreon better by his pencil than he could have been translated by words. One might fancy that his designs had been executed under Anacreon’s own eye by some Greek artist, who had himself witnessed that soft and voluptuous existence, where song and pleasure are one.

Seldom indeed have chasteness of execution and voluptuousness of character been so curiously and indissolubly blended. Seldom has a modern artist so happily caught the spirit of an ancient poet. We seem to be transported, as in a dream, to the vines, and orange-groves, and cloudless skies of Greece, and the wearied spirit abandons itself for a while to the soft influences of the azure heaven, the countless luxuriance of roses, the undulating forms of the fair girls dancing in the shade, while youthful attendants brim the beaker with wine. Under such influences we remember that youth, and love, and mirth are immortal, and we say with Horace,

“Nec, si quid olim lusit Anacreon Delevit ætas.” Hor.[A]

In that close wrestle of the genius that imitates with the genius that creates, Girodet alone came out from the trial successfully. He has shown himself the rival of Anacreon in grace, in abandon, in naïveté. He has succeeded in depicting his poet’s theme with equal elegance and delicacy. Loving with a real love those old Greek songs, he has displayed them in living beauty before our eyes in fifty-four exquisite drawings. To attempt such a masterpiece required a poet’s as well as a painter’s skill; and Girodet was both a painter and a poet.

In examining these compositions, one cannot abstain from a certain kind of surprise: all the odes of Anacreon revolve upon two or three central ideas, expressed in a manner full of grace, unquestionably, but still always the same ideas. The artist, while not deviating from the narrow circle traced for him by the poet, shows a fecundity and variety that are truly marvellous; that astonish and enchant us at the same time. The nobility, elegance, and wealth of accessories that prevail throughout the whole series might, as we have already hinted, lead us to suppose that we owed them to one of the famous artists that Greece produced: the painter and the poet seem to have been born under one heaven, and informed with one soul.

The manners of the time in which Anacreon lived permitted him to say many things which, in their crudity, might offend our modern taste. Girodet is not less voluptuous than Anacreon; but he always maintains that grace and delicacy which add so great a charm to the voluptuous: nowhere in his animated panorama is sight or sense shocked.

These designs originally accompanied a translation of the Odes of Anacreon, made by the painter himself and published shortly after his death. Some small photographs of them on a greatly reduced scale appeared in 1864, in an exquisite little edition of the original Greek, from the press of Firmin Didot, at the almost prohibitive price of Two Pounds. The present reproductions are on a scale more proportionate with the originals, and constitute the first appearance of Girodet's designs in England, where, we feel assured, they will be appreciated as they deserve by all true lovers of classical art.

The English verse-translation of Moore has been chosen to accompany them, because, though it has often been objected to by the learned for its imperfect scholarship, it seemed to us to be most in harmony with the real spirit of the great French painter, and of the old Greek poet himself.

Oct. 25, 1869.

ODE I.

I often wish this languid lyre,
This warbler of my soul's desire,
Could raise the breath of song sublime,
To men of fame in former time.

But when the soaring theme I try,
Along the chords my numbers die,
And whisper, with dissolving tone,
‘Our sighs are given to love alone!’
Indignant at the feeble lay,
I tore the panting chords away,
Attuned them to a nobler swell,
And struck again the breathing shell;
In all the glow of epic fire,
To Hercules I wake the lyre!
But still its fainting sighs repeat,
‘The tale of love alone is sweet!’
Then fare thee well, seductive dream,
That madest me follow Glory’s theme;
For thou my lyre, and thou my heart,
Shall never more in spirit part;
And thou the flame shalt feel as well
As thou the flame shalt sweetly tell.

ODE II.

TO all that breathe the airs of heaven,
Some boon of strength has Nature given.
When the majestic bull was born,
She fenced his brow with wreathèd horn.
She arm’d the courser’s foot of air,
And wing’d with speed the panting hare.
She gave the lion fangs of terror,
And, on the ocean’s crystal mirror,
Taught the unnumber’d scaly throng
To trace their liquid path along;
While for the umbrage of the grove,
She plumed the warbling bird of love.
To man she gave the flame refined,

The spark of heaven — a thinking mind!
And had she no surpassing treasure,
For thee, oh woman! child of pleasure?
She gave thee beauty — shaft of eyes,
That every shaft of war outflies!
She gave thee beauty — blush of fire,
That bids the flames of war retire!
Woman! be fair, we must adore thee;
Smile, and a world is weak before thee!

ODE III.

‘TWAS noon of night, when round the pole
The sullen Bear is seen to roll;
And mortals, wearied with the day,
Are slumbering all their cares away;
An infant, at that dreary hour,
Came weeping to my silent bower,
And waked me with a piteous prayer,
To save him from the midnight air!
‘And who art thou,’ I waking cry,
‘That bidd’st my blissful visions fly?’
‘O gentle sire!’ the infant said,
‘In pity take me to thy shed;
Nor fear deceit: a lonely child
I wander o’er the gloomy wild.
Chill drops the rain, and not a ray
Illumes the drear and misty way!’
I hear the baby’s tale of woe;
I hear the bitter night-winds blow;
And sighing for his piteous fate,
I trimm’d my lamp and oped the gate.
’Twas Love! the little wandering sprite,
His pinion sparkled through the night!

I knew him by his bow and dart;
I knew him by my fluttering heart!
I take him in, and fondly raise
The dying embers' cheering blaze;
Press from his dank and clinging hair
The crystals of the freezing air,
And in my hand and bosom hold
His little fingers thrilling cold.
And now the embers' genial ray
Had warmed his anxious fears away:
'I pray thee,' said the wanton child,
(My bosom trembled as he smiled,)
'I pray thee let me try my bow,
For through the rain I've wandered so,
That much I fear the ceaseless shower
Has injured its elastic power.'
The fatal bow the urchin drew;
Swift from the string the arrow flew;
Oh! swift it flew as glancing flame
And to my very soul it came!
'Fare thee well,' I heard him say,
As laughing wild he winged away:
'Fare thee well, for now I know
The rain has not relaxed my bow;
It still can send a maddening dart,
As thou shalt own with all thy heart!'

ODE IV.

STREW me a breathing bed of leaves,
Where lotos with the myrtle weaves;
And while in luxury's dream I sink,
Let me the balm of Bacchus drink!
In this delicious hour of joy,

Young Love shall be my goblet-boy;
Folding his little golden vest,
With cinctures, round his snowy breast,
Himself shall hover by my side,
And minister the racy tide!
Swift as the wheels that kindling roll,
Our life is hurrying to the goal:
A scanty dust, to feed the wind,
Is all the trace 'twill leave behind.
Why do we shed the rose's bloom
Upon the cold insensate tomb?
Can flowery breeze, or odour's breath,
Affect the slumbering chill of death?
No, no; I ask no balm to steep
With fragrant tears my bed of sleep:
But now, while every pulse is glowing,
Now let me breathe the balsam flowing;
Now let the rose, with blush of fire,
Upon my brow its scent expire;
And bring the nymph with floating eye, —
Oh! she will teach me how to die!
Yes, Cupid! ere my soul retire,
To join the blest elysian choir,
With wine, and love, and blisses dear,
'I'll make my own elysium here!

ODE V.

BUDS of roses, virgin flowers,
Cull'd from Cupid's balmy bowers,
In the bowl of Bacchus steep,
Till with crimson drops they weep!
Twine the rose, the garland twine,
Every leaf distilling wine;
Drink and smile, and learn to think

That we were born to smile and drink.
Rose! thou art the sweetest flower
That ever drank the amber shower;
Rose! thou art the fondest child
Of dimpled Spring, the wood-nymph wild!
Even the gods, who walk the sky,
Are amorous of thy scented sigh.
Cupid too, in Paphian shades,
His hair with rosy fillet braids,
When with the blushing naked Graces,
The wanton winding dance he traces.
Then bring me showers of roses, bring,
And shed them round me while I sing:
Great Bacchus! in thy hallow'd shade,
With some celestial, glowing maid,
While gales of roses round me rise,
In perfume, sweeten'd by her sighs,
I'll bill and twine in airy dance,

ODE VI.

WHILE our rosy fillets shed
Blushes o'er each fervid head,
With many a cup and many a smile
The festal moments we beguile.
And while the harp, impassion'd, flings
Tuneful rapture from the strings,
Some airy nymph, with fluent limbs,
Through the dance luxuriant swims,
Waving, in her snowy hand,
The leafy Bacchanalian wand,
Which, as the tripping wanton flies,
Shakes its tresses to her sighs;
A youth the while, with loosen'd hair,
Floating on the listless air,

Sings to the wild harp's tender tone,
A tale of woes, alas! his own;
And then what nectar in his sigh,
As o'er his lip the murmurs die!
Surely never yet has been
So divine, so blest a scene!
Has Cupid left the starry sphere,
To wave his golden tresses here?
Oh yes! and Venus, queen of wiles,
And Bacchus, shedding rosy smiles,
All, all are here, to hail with me
The genius of festivity!

ODE VII.

ARM'D with hyacinthine rod,
(Arms enough for such a god,)
Cupid bade me wing my pace,
And try with him the rapid race.
O'er the wild torrent, rude and deep.
By tangled brake and pendent steep,
With weary foot I panting flew,
My brow was chill with drops of dew.
And now my soul, exhausted, dying,
To my lip was faintly flying;
And now I thought the spark had fled,
When Cupid hover'd o'er my head,
And fanning light his breezy plume,
Recall'd me from my languid gloom;
Then said, in accents half-reproving,
'Why hast thou been a foe to loving?'

ODE VIII.

'Twas night, and many a circling bowl
 Had deeply warmed my swimming soul;
 As lull'd in slumber I was laid,
 Bright visions o'er my fancy play'd!
 With virgins blooming as the dawn,
 I seem'd to trace the opening lawn;
 Light, on tiptoe bathed in dew,
 We flew, and sported as we flew!
 Some ruddy striplings, young and sleek,
 With blush of Bacchus on their cheek,
 Saw me trip the flowery wild
 With dimpled girls, and slily smiled;
 Smiled indeed with wanton glee,
 But, ah! 'twas plain they envied me.
 And still I flew; and now I caught
 The panting nymphs, and fondly thought
 To kiss; when all my dream of joys,
 Dimpled girls and ruddy boys,
 All were gone! "Alas!" I said,
 Sighing for the illusions fled,
 "Sleep! again my joys restore,
 Oh! let me dream them o'er and o'er!"

ODE IX.

TELL me, why, my sweetest dove,
 Thus your humid pinions move,
 Shedding through the air in showers
 Essence of the balmiest flowers?
 Tell me whither, whence you rove,
 Tell me all, my sweetest dove.
 Curious stranger! I belong
 To the bard of Teian song:
 With his mandate now I fly
 To the nymph of azure eye;

Ah! that eye has madden'd many,
But the poet more than any!
Venus, for a hymn of love,
Warbled in her votive grove,
(’Twas in sooth a gentle lay,)
Gave me to the bard away.

See me now his faithful minion,
Thus with softly-gliding pinion,
To his lovely girl I bear
Songs of passion through the air.
Oft he blandly whispers me,
’Soon, my bird, I’ll set you free.’
But in vain he’ll bid me fly,
I shall serve him till I die.

Never could my plumes sustain
Ruffling winds and chilling rain,
’er the plains, or in the dell,
On the mountain’s savage swell;
Seeking in the desert wood
Gloomy shelter, rustic food.
Now I lead a life of ease, Far from such retreats as these;
 From Anacreon’s hand I eat
Food delicious, viands sweet;
Flutter o’er his goblet’s brim,
Sip the foamy wine with him.
Then I dance and wanton round
To the lyre’s beguiling sound;
Or with gently-fanning wings
Shade the minstrel while he sings:
On his harp then sink in slumbers,
Dreaming still of dulcet numbers!
This is all  away  away 
You have made me waste the day.
How I’ve chatter’d! prating crow

Never yet did chatter so.

ODE X.

'TELL me, gentle youth, I pray thee,
What in purchase shall I pay thee
For this little waxen toy,
Image of the Paphian boy?'
Thus I said the other day,
To a youth who pass'd my way:
'Sir,' he answer'd, and the while
Answer'd all in Doric style,
'Take it, for a trifle take it;
Think not yet that I could make it;
Pray, believe it was not I;
No — it cost me many a sigh,
And I can no longer keep
Little gods, who murder sleep!
Here, then, here,' (I said with joy)
'Here is silver for the boy:
He shall be my bosom guest,
Idol of my pious breast.'
Little Love! thou now art mine,
Warm me with that torch of thine;
Make me feel as I have felt,
Or thy waxen frame shall melt.
I must burn in warm desire,
Or thou, my boy, in yonder fire!

ODE XI.

THE women tell me every day,
That all my bloom has past away.
'Behold,' the pretty wantons cry,
'Behold this mirror with a sigh;

The locks upon thy brow are few,
And like the rest, they're withering too!
Whether decline has thinned my hair,
I'm sure I neither know nor care;
But this I know, and this I feel,
As onward to the tomb I steal,
That still as death approaches nearer,
The joys of life are sweeter, dearer;
And had I but an hour to live,
That little hour to bliss I'd give!

ODE XII.

[illegible]

And I had just in terrors fled —
When heaving an indignant sigh
To see me thus unwounded fly,
And having now no other dart,
He glanced himself into my heart!
My heart — alas the luckless day!
Received the god, and died away.

Farewell, farewell, my faithless shield!
Thy lord at length is forced to yield.
Vain, vain, is every outward care,
My foe’s within, and triumphs there.

ODE XIII.

I CARE not for the idle state
Of Persia’s king, the rich, the great!
I envy not the monarch’s throne,
Nor wish the treasured gold my own.
But oh! be mine the rosy braid,
The fervour of my brows to shade;
Be mine the odours, richly sighing,
Amidst my hoary tresses flying.
To-day, I’ll haste to quaff my wine,
As if to-morrow ne’er should shine;
But if to-morrow comes, why then —
I’ll haste to quaff my wine again.
And thus while all our days are bright,
Nor time has dimm’d their bloomy light,
Let us the festal hours beguile
With mantling cup and cordial smile;
And shed from every bowl of wine
The richest drop on Bacchus’ shrine!
For Death may come, with brow unpleasant,
May come, when least we wish him present,

And beckon to the sable shore,
And grimly bid us drink no more!

ODE XIV.

THY harp may sing of Troy's alarms,
Or tell the tale of Theban arms;
With other wars my song shall burn,
For other wounds my harp shall mourn.
'Twas not the crested warrior's dart,
Which drank the current of my heart;
Nor naval arms, nor mailed steed,
Have made this vanquish'd bosom bleed;
No — from an eye of liquid blue,
A host of quiver's cupids flew;
And now my heart all bleeding lies
Beneath this army of the eyes!

ODE XV.

GRAVE me a cup with brilliant grace,
Deep as the rich and holy vase,
Which on the shrine of Spring reposes,
When shepherds hail that hour of roses.
Grave it with themes of chaste design,
Form's for a heavenly bowl like mine.
Display not there the barbarous rites,
In which religious zeal delights;
Nor any tale of tragic fate,
Which history trembles to relate!
No — cull thy fancies from above,
Themes of heaven and themes of love.
Let Bacchus, Jove's ambrosial boy,
Distil the grape in drops of joy,
 And while he smiles at every tear,

Let warm-eyed Venus dancing near,
With spirits of the genial bed,
The dewy herbage deftly tread.
Let Love be there, without his arms,
In timid nakedness of charms;

And all the Graces link'd with Love,
Blushing through the shadowy grove;
While rosy boys disporting round,
In circlets trip the velvet ground;
But ah! if there Apollo toys,
I tremble for my rosy boys!

ODE XVI.

THE Phrygian rock that braves the storm,
Was once a weeping matron's form;
And Progne, hapless, frantic maid,
Is now a swallow in the shade.
Oh! that a mirror's form were mine,
To sparkle with that smile divine;
And like my heart I then should be,
Reflecting thee, and only thee!
Or were I, love, the robe which flows
O'er every charm that secret glows,
In many a lucid fold to swim,
And cling and grow to every limb!
Oh! could I, as the streamlet's wave,
Thy warmly-mellowing beauties lave,
Or float as perfume on thine hair,
And breathe my soul in fragrance there!
I wish I were the zone, that lies
Warm to thy breast, and feels its sighs!
Or like those envious pearls that show
So faintly round that neck of snow,

Yes, I would be a happy gem,
Like them to hang, to fade like them.
What more would thy Anacreon be?
Oh! anything that touches thee.
Nay, sandals for those airy feet —
Thus to be press’d by thee were sweet!

ODE XVII.

NOW the star of day is high,
Fly, my girls, in pity fly,
Bring me wine in brimming urns,
Cool my lip, it burns, it burns!
Sunn’d by the meridian fire,
Panting, languid I expire!
Give me all those humid flowers,
Drop them o’er my brow in showers.
Scarce a breathing chaplet now
Lives upon my feverish brow;
Every dewy rose I wear
Sheds its tears and withers there.
But for you, my burning mind!
Oh! what shelter shall I find?
Can the bowl, or floweret’s dew,
Cool the flame that scorches you?

ODE XVIII.

IF hoarded gold possess’d a power
To lengthen life’s too fleeting hour,
And purchase from the land of death
A little span, a moment’s breath,
How I would love the precious ore!
And every day should swell my store;
That when the Fates would send their minion,

To waft me off on shadowy pinion,
I might some hours of life obtain,
And bribe him back to hell again.
But, since we ne’er can charm away
The mandate of that awful day,
Why do we vainly weep at fate,
And sigh for life’s uncertain date?
The light of gold can ne’er illumine
The dreary midnight of the tomb!
And why should I then pant for treasures?
Mine be the brilliant round of pleasures;
The goblet rich, the board of friends,
Whose flowing souls the goblet blends:
Mine be the nymph, whose form reposes
Seductive on that bed of roses;
And oh! be mine the soul’s excess,
Expiring in her warm caress!

ODE XIX.

WHEN my thirsty soul I steep,
Every sorrow’s lull’d to sleep.
Talk of monarchs! I am then
Richest, happiest, first of men;
Careless, o’er my cup I sing,
Fancy makes me more than king;
Gives me wealthy Croesus’ store,
Can I, can I wish for more?
On my velvet couch reclining,
Ivy leaves my brow entwining,
While my soul dilates with glee,
What are kings and crowns to me?
If before my feet they lay,
I would spurn them all away!

Arm you, arm you, men of might,
Hasten to the sanguine fight;
Let me, oh my budding vine,
Spill no other blood than thine.
Yonder brimming goblet see,
That alone shall vanquish me.
Oh! I think it sweeter far
To fall in banquet than in war!

ODE XX.

WHEN Bacchus, Jove's immortal boy,
The rosy harbinger of joy,
Who, with the sunshine of the bowl,
Thaws the winter of our soul;
When to the inmost core he glides,
And bathes it with his ruby tides,
A flow of joy, a lively heat,
Fires my brain, and wings my feet;
'Tis surely something sweet, I think,
Nay, something heavenly sweet, to drink!
Sing, sing of love, let music's breath
Softly beguile our rapturous death,
While, my young Venus, thou and I
To the voluptuous cadence die!
Then waking from our languid trance,
Again we'll sport, again we'll dance.

ODE XXI.

THOU, whose soft and rosy hues,
Mimic form and soul infuse;
Best of painters! come portray
The lovely maid that's far away.
Far away, my soul! thou art,

But I've thy beauties all by heart.
Paint her jetty ringlets straying,
Silky twine in tendrils playing;
And, if painting hath the skill
To make the spicy balm distil,
Let every little lock exhale
A sigh of perfume on the gale.
Where her tresses' curly flow
Darkles o'er the brow of snow,
Let her forehead beam to light,
Burnish'd as the ivory bright.
Let her eyebrows sweetly rise
In jetty arches o'er her eyes,
Gently in her crescent gliding,
Just commingling, just dividing.
But hast thou any sparkles warm,
The lightning of her eyes to form?
Let them effuse the azure ray
With which Minerva's glances play,
And give them all that liquid fire
That Venus' languid eyes respire.
O'er her nose and cheek be shed
Flushing white and mellow'd red;
Gradual tints, as when there glows
In snowy milk the bashful rose.
Then her lip, so rich in blisses!
Sweet petitioner for kisses!
Pouting nest of bland persuasion,
Ripely suing Love's invasion.
Then beneath the velvet chin,
Whose dimple shades a love within,
Mould her neck with grace descending.
In a heaven of beauty ending;
While airy charms, above, below,

Sport and flutter on its snow.
Now let a floating, lucid veil,
Shadow her limbs, but not, conceal;
A charm may peep, a hue may beam,
And leave the rest to Fancy's dream.
Enough—'tis she! 'tis all I seek;
It glows, it lives, it soon will speak.

ODE XXII.

AND now with all thy pencil's truth,
Portray Bathyllus, lovely youth!
Let his hair in lapses bright,
Fall like streaming rays of light,
And there the raven's dye confuse
With the yellow sunbeam's hues.
Let not the braid, with artful twine,
The flowing of his locks confine;
But loosen every golden ring,
To float upon the breeze's wing,
Beneath the front of polished glow.
Front as fair as mountain-snow,
And guileless as the dews of dawn,
Let the majestic brows be drawn,
Of ebon dies, enriched by gold,
Such as the scaly snakes unfold.
Mingle in his jetty glances,
Power that awes, and love that trances;
Steal from Venus bland desire,
Steal from Mars the look of fire,
Blend them in such expression here,
That we by turns may hope and fear!
Now from the sunny apple seek
The velvet down that spreads his cheek;
And there let Beauty's rosy ray

In flying blushes richly play;
Blushes, of that celestial flame
Which lights the cheek of virgin shame.
 Then for his lips, that ripely gem —
But let thy mind imagine them!
Paint, where the ruby cell uncloses,
Persuasion sleeping upon roses;
And give his lip that speaking air,
As if a word was hovering there!
His neck of ivory splendour trace,
Moulded with soft but manly grace;
Fair as the neck of Paphia's boy,
Where Paphia's arms have hung in joy.
Give him the winged Hermes's hand.
With which he waves his snaky wand:
Let Bacchus then the breast supply,
And Leda's son the sinewy thigh.
But oh! suffuse his limbs of fire
With all that glow of young desire,
Which kindles, when the wishful sigh
Steals from the heart, unconscious why.
Thy pencil, though divinely bright,
Is envious of the eye's delight,
Or its enamoured touch would shew
His shoulder, fair as sunless snow,
Which now in veiling shadow lies,
Removed from all but Fancy's eyes,
Now, for his feet — but hold — forbear —
I see a godlike portrait there;
So like Bathyllus! sure there's none
So like Bathyllus but the Sun!
Oh! let this pictured god be mine,
And keep the boy for Samos's shrine;
Phœbus shall then Bathyllus be,

Bathyllus then the deity!

ODE XXIII.

ONE day, the Muses twined the hands
Of baby Love, with flowery bands;
And to celestial Beauty gave
The captive infant as her slave.
His mother comes with many a toy,
To ransom her beloved boy;
His mother sues, but all in vain!
He ne'er will leave his chains again.
Nay, should they take his chains away,
The little captive still would stay.
'If this,' he cries, 'a bondage be,
Who could wish for liberty?'

ODE XXIV.

FLY not thus my brow of snow,
Lovely wanton! fly not so.
Though the wane of age is mine,
Though the brilliant flush is thine,
Still I'm doom'd to sigh for thee,
Blest, if thou couldst sigh for me!
See, in yonder flowery braid,
Cull'd for thee, my blushing maid,
How the rose, of orient glow,
Mingles with the lily's snow;
Mark, how sweet their tints agree,
Just, my girl, like thee and me!

ODE XXV.

METHINKS, the picture'd bull we see
Is amorous Jove — it must be he!
How fondly blest he seems to bear
That fairest of Phœnician fair!
How proud he breasts the foamy tide
And spurns the billowy surge aside!
Could any beast of vulgar vein,
Undaunted thus defy the main?
No: he descends from climes above,
He looks the God, he breathes of Jove!

ODE XXVI.

AWAY, away, you men of rules,
What have I to do with schools?
They’d make me learn, they’d make me think,
But would they make me love and drink?
Teach me this; and let me swim
My soul upon the goblet’s brim;
Teach me this, and let me twine
 My arms around the nymph divine!
Age begins to blanch my brow,
I’ve time for nought but pleasure now.
Fly, and cool my goblet’s glow
At yonder fountain’s gelid flow;
I’ll quaff, my boy, and calmly sink
This soul to slumber as I drink!
Soon, too soon, my jocund slave,
You’ll deck your master’s grassy grave;
And there’s an end — for ah! you know
They drink but little wine below!

ODE XXVII.

SEE the young, the rosy Spring,
Gives to the breeze her spangled wing;

While virgin Graces, warm with May,
Fling roses o'er her dewy way!
The murmuring billows of the deep
Have languished into silent sleep;
And mark! the flitting sea-birds lave
Their plumes in the reflecting wave;
While cranes from hoary winter fly
To flutter in a kinder sky.
Now the genial star of day
Dissolves the murky clouds away;
And cultur'd field, and winding stream,
Are sweetly tissued by his beam.
Now the earth prolific swells
With leafy buds and flowery bells;
Gemming shoots the olive twine,
Clusters ripe festoon the vine;
All along the branches creeping,
Through the velvet foliage peeping,
Little infant fruits we see
Nursing into luxury!

ODE XXVIII.

'TIS true, my fading years decline,
Yet I can quaff the brimming wine,
As deep as any stripling fair,
Whose cheeks the flush of morning wear;
And if, amidst the wanton crew,
I'm call'd to wind the dance's clue,
Thou shalt behold this vigorous hand,
Not faltering on the Bacchant's wand,
But brandishing a rosy flask,
The only Thyrsus e'er I'll ask!
Let those who pant for Glory's charms,

Embrace her in the held of arms;
While my inglorious placid soul
Breathes not a wish beyond the bowl.
 Then fill it high, my ruddy slave,
And bathe me in its honied wave!
For though my fading years decay,
And though my bloom has passed away,
Like old Silenus, sire divine,
With blushes borrowed from my wine,
I wanton mid the dancing train,
And live my follies all again!

ODE XXIX.

WHEN I drink, I feel, I feel,
Visions of poetic zeal!
Warm with the goblet's freshening dews,
My heart invokes the heavenly Muse.
When I drink my sorrow's o'er;
I think of doubts and fears no more;
But scatter to the railing wind
Each gloomy phantom of the mind!
When I drink, the jesting boy
Bacchus himself partakes my joy;
And while we dance through breathing bowers,
Whose every gale is rich with flowers,
In bowls he makes my senses swim,
 Till the gale breathes of nought but him!
When I drink, I deftly twine
Flowers, begemmed with tears of wine;
And, while with festive hand I spread
The smiling garland round my head,
Something whispers in my breast,
How sweet it is to live at rest!
When I drink, and perfume stills

Around me all in balmy rills,
Then as some beauty, smiling roses,
In languor on my breast reposes,
Venus! I breathe my vows to thee,
In many a sigh of luxury!
When I drink, my heart refines,
And rises as the cup declines;
Rises in the genial flow,
That none but social spirits know,
When youthful revellers round the bowl,
Dilating, mingle soul with soul!
When I drink, the bliss is mine;
There's bliss in every drop of wine!
All other joys that I have known,
I've scarcely dared to call my own;
But this the Fates can ne'er destroy,
Till death o'ershadows all my joy!

ODE XXX.

CUPID once upon a bed
Of roses laid his weary head;
Luckless urchin, not to see
Within the leaves a slumbering bee!
The bee awaked & with anger wild
The bee awaked, and stung the child.
Loud and piteous are his cries;
To Venus quick he runs, he flies!
& Oh, mother! & I am wounded through &
I die with pain & in sooth I do!
Stung by some little angry thing,
Some serpent on a tiny wing &
A bee it was & for once, I know

I heard a rustic call it so.
Thus he spoke, and she the while
Heard him with a soothing smile;
Then said, "My infant, if so much
Thou feel the little wild-bee's touch,
How must the heart, ah, Cupid! be,
The hapless heart that's stung by thee?"

ODE XXXI.

LET us drain the nectar'd bowl,
Let us raise the song of soul
To him, the God who loves so well
The nectar'd bowl, the choral swell!
Him, who instructs the sons of earth
To thrid the tangled dance of mirth;
Him, who was nursed with infant Love,
And cradled in the Paphian grove;
Him, that the snowy Queen of Charms
Has fondled in her twining arms.
From him that dream of transport flows,
Which sweet intoxication knows;
With him, the brow forgets to darkle,
And brilliant graces learn to sparkle.
Behold! my boys a goblet bear,
Whose sunny foam bedews the air.
Where are now the tear, the sigh?
To the winds they fly, they fly!
Grasp the bowl; in nectar sinking,
Man of sorrow, drown thy thinking!
Oh! can the tears we lend to thought
In life's account avail us aught?
Can we discern, with all our lore,
The path we're yet to journey o'er?
No, no! the walk of life is dark;
'Tis wine alone can strike a spark!

Then let me quaff the foamy tide,
And through the dance meandering glide;
Let me imbibe the spicy breath
Of odours chafed to fragrant death;
Or from the kiss of love inhale
A more voluptuous, richer gale!
To souls that court the phantom Care,
Let him retire and shroud him there;
While we exhaust the nectar's bowl,
And swell the choral song of soul
To him, the God who loves so well
The nectar's bowl, the choral swell!

ODE XXXII.

YES, be the glorious revel mine,
Where humour sparkles from the wine!
Around me let the youthful choir
Respond to my beguiling lyre;
And while the red cup circles round,
Mingle in soul as well as sound!
Let the bright nymph, with trembling eye,
Beside me all in blushes lie;
And, while she weaves a frontlet fair
Of hyacinth to deck my hair,
Oh! let me snatch her sidelong kisses,
And that shall be my bliss of blisses!
My soul, to festive feeling true,
One pang of envy never knew;
And little has it learn'd to dread
The gall that envy's tongue can shed.
Away — I hate the slanderous dart,
Which steals to wound the unwary heart;
And oh! I hate, with all my soul,
Discordant clamours o'er the bowl,

Where every cordial heart should be
Attuned to peace and harmony.
Come, let us hear the soul of song
Expire the silver harp along;
And through the dance's ringlet move,
With maidens mellowing into love:
Thus simply happy, thus at peace,
Sure such a life should never cease!

ODE XXXIII.

'Twas in an airy dream of night,
I fancied that I wing'd my flight
On pinions fleeter than the wind,
While little Love, whose feet were twined
(I know not why) with chains of lead,
Pursued me as I trembling fled;
Pursued & could I ever have thought? &
Swift as the moment I was caught!
What does the wanton fancy mean
By such a strange, illusive scene?
I fear she whispers to my breast,
That you, my girl, have stol'n my rest;
That though my fancy, for a while,
Has hung on many a woman's smile,
I soon dissolved the passing vow,
And ne'er was caught by love till now!

ODE XXXIV.

AS in the Lemnian caves of fire,
The mate of her who nursed Desire
Moulded the glowing steel, to form
Arrows for Cupid, thrilling warm;
While Venus every barb imbues

With droppings of her honied dews;
 And Love (alas the victim-heart!)
 Tinges with gall the burning dart;
 Once, to this Lemnian cave of flame,
 The crested Lord of battles came;
 'Twas from the ranks of war he rush'd,
 His spear with many a life-drop blush'd!
 He saw the mystic darts, and smiled
 Derision on the archer-child.
 'And dost thou smile?' said little Love;
 'Take this dart, and thou mayst prove,
 That though they pass the breeze's flight,
 My bolts are not so feathery light.'
 He took the shaft; and oh! thy look,
 Sweet Venus! when the shaft he took;
 He sigh'd, and felt the urchin's art;
 He sigh'd, in agony of heart,
 'It is not light; I die with pain!
 Take; take thy arrow back again.'
 'No,' said the child, 'it must not be,
 That little dart was made for thee!'

ODE XXXV.

HOW I love the festive boy,
 Tripping wild the dance of joy!
 How I love the mellow sage,
 Smiling through the veil of age!
 And whenever this man of years
 In the dance of joy appears,
 Age is on his temples hung,
 But his heart; his heart is young!

ODE XXXVI.

HE, who instructs the youthful crew
To bathe them in the brimmer's dew,
And taste, uncloy'd by rich excesses,
All the bliss that wine possesses!
He, who inspires the youth to glance
In winged circlets through the dance;
Bacchus, the god again is here,
And leads along the blushing year;
The blushing year with rapture teems,
Ready to shed those cordial streams,
Which, sparkling in the cup of mirth,
Illuminate the sons of earth,
And when the ripe and vermeil wine,
Sweet infant of the pregnant vine,
Which now in mellow clusters swells,
 Oh! when it bursts its rosy cells,
The heavenly stream shall mantling flow,
To balsam every mortal woe!
No youth shall then be wan or weak,
For dimpling health shall light the cheek;
No heart shall then desponding sigh,
For wine shall bid despondence fly!
Thus — till another autumn's glow
Shall bid another vintage flow!

ODE XXXVII.

AND whose immortal hand could shed
Upon this disk the ocean's bed?
And, in a frenzied flight of soul
Sublime as heaven's eternal pole,
Imagine thus, in semblance warm,
The Queen of Love's voluptuous form
Floating along the silvery sea
In beauty's naked majesty!
Oh! he has given the raptured sight

A witching banquet of delight;
And all those sacred scenes of love,
Where only hallow'd eyes may rove,
Lie, faintly glowing, half conceal'd,
Within the lucid billows veil'd.
Light as the leaf, that summer's breeze
Has wafted o'er the glassy seas,
She floats upon the ocean's breast,
Which undulates in sleepy rest,
 And stealing on, she gently pillows
Her bosom on the amorous billows.
Her bosom, like the humid rose,
Her neck, like dewy-sparkling snows,
Illume the liquid path she traces,
And burn within the stream's embraces!
In languid luxury soft she glides,
Encircled by the azure tides,
Like some fair lily, faint with weeping,
Upon a bed of violets sleeping!
Beneath their queen's inspiring glance,
The dolphins o'er the green sea dance,
Bearing in triumph young Desire,
And baby Love with smiles of fire!
While, sparkling on the silver waves,
The tenants of the briny caves
Around the pomp in eddies play,
And gleam along the watery way.

ODE XXXVIII.

WHILE we invoke the wreathed spring,
Resplendent rose! to thee we'll sing;
Resplendent rose, the flower of flowers,
Whose breath perfumes Olympus' bowers;
Whose virgin blush of chasten'd dye,

Enchants so much our mortal eye.
When pleasure's bloomy season glows,
The Graces love to twine the rose;
The rose is warm Dione's bliss,
And flushes like Dione's kiss!
Oft has the poet's magic tongue
The rose's fair luxuriance sung;
And long the Muses, heavenly maids,
Have rear'd it in their tuneful shades.
When, at the early glance of morn,
It sleeps upon the glittering thorn,
'Tis sweet to dare the tangled fence,
To cull the timid flowret thence,
And wipe with tender hand away
The tear that on its blushes lay!
'Tis sweet to hold the infant stems,
Yet dropping with Aurora's gems,
 And fresh inhale the spicy sighs
That from the weeping buds arise.
When revel reigns, when mirth is high,
And Bacchus beams in every eye,
Our rosy fillets scent exhale,
And fill with balm the fainting gale!
Oh! there is nought in nature bright,
Where roses do not shed their light!
When morning paints the orient skies,
Her fingers burn with roseate dyes;
The nymphs display the rose's charms,
It mantles o'er their graceful arms;
Through Cytherea's form it glows,
And mingles with the living snows.
The rose distils a healing balm,
The beating pulse of pain to calm;
Preserves the cold inurned clay,

And mocks the vestige of decay:
 And when at length, in pale decline,
 Its florid beauties fade and pine,
 Sweet as in youth, its balmy breath
 Diffuses odour 'en in death!
 Oh! whence could such a plant have sprung?
 Attend — for thus the tale is sung.
 When, humid, from the silvery stream,
 Effusing beauty's warmest beam,
 Venus appear'd, in flushing hues,
 Mellow'd by ocean's briny dews;
 When, in the starry courts above,
 The pregnant brain of mighty Jove
 Disclosed the nymph of azure glance,
 The nymph who shakes the martial lance!
 Then, then, in strange eventful hour,
 The earth produced an infant flower,
 Which sprung, with blushing tinctures drest,
 And wanton'd o'er its parent breast.
 The gods beheld this brilliant birth,
 And hail'd the Rose, the boon of earth!
 With nectar drops, a ruby tide,
 The sweetly orient buds they dy'd,
 And bade them bloom, the flowers divine
 Of him who sheds the teeming vine;
 And bade them on the spangled thorn
 Expand their bosoms to the morn.

ODE XXXIX.

WHEN I behold the festive train
 Of dancing youth, I'm young again!
 Memory wakes her magic trance,
 And wings me lightly through the dance.
 Come, Cybeba, smiling maid!

Cull the flower and twine the braid;
Bid the blush of summer's rose
Burn upon my brow of snows;
And let me, while the wild and young
Trip the mazy dance along,
Fling my heap of years away,
And be as wild, as young as they.

Hither haste, some cordial soul!
Give my lips the brimming bowl;
Oh! you will see this hoary sage
Forget his locks, forget his age.
He still can chant the festive hymn,
He still can kiss the goblet's brim;
He still can act the mellow raver,
And play the fool as sweet as ever!

ODE XL.

WE read the flying courser's name
Upon his side in marks of flame;
And, by their turban's brows alone,
The warriors of the East are known.
But in the lover's glowing eyes,
The inlet to his bosom lies;
Thro' them we see the small faint mark,
Where Love has dropt his burning spark!

ODE XLI.

WHEN Spring begems the dewy scene,
How sweet to walk the velvet green,
And hear the Zephyr's languid sighs,
As o'er the scented mead he flies!
How sweet to mark the pouting vine,
Ready to fall in tears of wine;

And with the maid, whose every sigh
Is love and bliss, entranced to lie
Where the imbowering branches meet —
Oh! is not this divinely sweet?

ODE XLII.

I SAW the smiling bard of pleasure,
The minstrel of the Teian measure;
—Twas in a vision of the night.
He beam— upon my wond—ring sight;
I heard his voice, and warmly prest
The dear enthusiast to my breast.
His tresses wore a silvery dye,
But beauty sparkled in his eye;
Sparkled in his eyes of fire,
Through the mist of soft desire.
His lip exhaled, when—er he sigh—d,
The fragrance of the racy tide;
And, as with weak and reeling feet,
He came my coral kiss to meet,
An infant, of the Cyprian band,
Guided him on with tender hand.
Quick from his glowing brows he drew
His braid, of many a wanton hue,
I took the braid of wanton twine,
It breathed of him and blush—d with wine!
I hung it o—er my thoughtless brow,
And ah! I feel its magic now!
I feel that e—en his garland—s touch
Can make the bosom love too much!

ODE XLIII.

GIVE me the harp of epic song,
Which Homer—s finger thrill—d along;

But tear away the sanguine string,
For war is not the theme I sing.
Proclaim the laws of festal right
I'm monarch of the board to-night;
And all around shall brim as high,
And quaff the tide as deep as I!
And when the cluster's mellowing dew
Their warm, enchanting balm infuse
Our feet shall catch the elastic bound,
And reel us through the dance's round.
Oh, Bacchus! we shall sing to thee,
In wild but sweet ebriety!
And flash around such sparks of thought,
As Bacchus could alone have taught!
Then give the harp of epic song,
Which Homer's finger thrill'd along;
But tear away the sanguine string,
For war is not the theme I sing!

ODE XLIV.

LISTEN to the Muse's lyre,
Master of the pencil's fire!
Sketch'd in painting's bold display,
Many a city first pourtray;
Many a city revelling free,
Warm with loose festivity.
Picture then a rosy train,
Bacchants straying o'er the plain;
Piping, as they roam along,
Roundelay or shepherd-song.
Paint me next, if painting may
Such a theme as this pourtray,
All the happy heaven of love,

These elect of Cupid prove.

ODE XLV.

AS late I sought the spangled bowers,
To cull a wreath of matin flowers,
Where many an early rose was weeping,
I found the urchin Cupid sleeping.
I caught the boy, a goblet's tide
Was richly mantling by my side,
I caught him by his downy wing,
And whelm'd him in the racy spring.
Oh! then I drank the poison'd bowl,
And Love now nestles in my soul!
Yes, yes, my soul is Cupid's nest,
I feel him fluttering in my breast.