

THE TRIUMPH OF ISIS.

OCCASIONED BY THE FOREGOING POEM.

BY DR. THOMAS WARTON.

ON closing flowers when genial gales diffuse
 The fragrant tribute of refreshing dews;
 When chaunts the milk-maid at her balmy pail,
 And weary reapers whistle o'er the vale;
 Charm'd by the murmurs of the quivering shade,
 O'er Isis' willow-fringed banks I stray'd:
 And calmly musing thro' the twilight way,
 In pensive mood I fram'd the Doric lay.
 When lo! from opening clouds, a golden gleam
 Pour'd sudden splendors o'er the shadowy stream;
 And from the wave arose its guardian queen,
 Known by her sweeping stole of glossy green;
 While in the coral crown that bound her brow,
 Was wove the Delphic laurel's verdant bough.

As the smooth surface of the dimply flood,
 The silver-slipper'd Isis lightly trod,
 From her loose hair the dropping dew she press'd,
 And thus mine ear in accents mild address'd.

No more, my son, the rural reed employ,
 Nor trill the trifling strain of empty joy;
 No more thy love-resounding sonnets suit
 To notes of pastoral pipe or oaten flute.
 For hark! high-thron'd on yon majestic walls,
 To the dear Muse afflicted Freedom calls:
 When Freedom calls, and Oxford bids thee sing,
 Why stays thy hand to strike the sounding string?
 While thus, in Freedom's and in Phœbus' spite,
 The venal sons of slavish Cam, unite;
 To shake yon towers, when Malice rears her crest,
 Shall all my sons in silence idly rest?

Still sing, O Cam, your favourite Freedom's cause;
 Still boast of Freedom, while you break her laws:
 To power your songs of gratulation pay,
 To courts address soft Flattery's soothing lay.
 What tho' your gentle Mason's plaintive verse
 Has hung with sweetest wreaths Musæus' hearse;
 What tho' your vaunted bard's ingenuous woe,
 Soft as my stream, in tuneful numbers flow?
 Yet strove his Muse, by Fame or Envy led,
 To tear the laurels from a sister's head?—
 Misguided youth! with rude unclassic rage
 To blot the beauties of thy whiter page;
 A rage that sullies ev'n thy guiltless lays,
 And blasts the vernal bloom of half thy bays.
 Let Granta boast the patrons of her name,
 Each pompous fool of Fortune and of Fame:
 Still of preferment let her shine the queen,
 Prolific parent of each bowing dean:

Behers each prelate of the pamper'd cheek,
 Each courtly chaplain sanctify'd and sleek;
 Still let the drones of her exhaustless hive
 On fat pluralities supinely thrive:
 Still let her senates titled slaves revere,
 Nor dare to know the patriot from the peer;
 For tinsel'd courts their laurel'd mount despise,
 In stars and strings superlatively wise:
 No longer charm'd by Virtue's golden lyre,
 Who sung of old amid th'Aonian choir,
 Where Cam, slow winding thro' the breezy reeds,
 With kindly wave his groves of laurel feeds.

'Tis ours, my son, to deal the sacred bay,
 Where Honour calls, and Justice points the way;
 To wear the well-earn'd wreath which Merit brings,
 And snatch a gift beyond the reach of kings.
 Scorning, and scorn'd by courts, yon Muses' bower
 Still nor enjoys, nor asks the smile of power.
 Tho' wakeful Vengeance watch my crystal spring,
 Tho' Persecution wave her iron wing,
 And o'er yon spiry temples as she flies,
 "These destin'd seats be mine," exulting cries;
 On Isis still each gift of Fortune waits,
 Still Peace and Plenty deck my beauteous gates.
 See Science walks with freshest chaplets crown'd;
 With songs of joy my festal groves resound;
 My Muse divine still keeps her wonted state,
 The front erect, and high majestic gait:
 Green as of old, each oliv'd portal smiles,
 And still the Graces build my Parian piles:

My Gothic spires in ancient grandeur rise,
And dare with wonted pride to rush into the skies;

Ah! should'st thou fall (forbid it heavenly powers!)
Dash'd into dust with all thy cloud-capt towers;
Who but would mourn to British virtue dear,
What patriot could refuse the manly tear!
What British Marius could refrain to weep
O'er mighty Carthage fall'n, a prostrate heap!

Ev'n late when Radcliffe's delegated train
Auspicious shone in Isis' happy plain;
When yon proud ^d dome, fair Learning's amplest shrine,
Beneath its Attic roofs receiv'd the nine;
Mute was the voice of joy and loud applause,
To Radcliffe due, and Isis' honour'd cause?
What free-born crowds adorn the festive day,
Nor blush'd to wear my tributary bay!
How each brave breast with honest ardors heav'd,
When Sheldon's fane the patriot band receiv'd;
While, as we loudly hail'd the chosen few,
Rome's awful senate rush'd upon our view!

O may the day in latest annals shine,
That made a Beaufort, and an Harley mine:
Then bade them leave the loftier scene awhile,
The pomp of guiltless state, the patriot toil,
For bleeding Albion's aid the sage design,
To hold short dalliance with the tuneful nine.
Then Music left her golden sphere on high,
And bore each strain of triumph from the sky:

Swell'd the full song, and to my chiefs around
 Pour'd the full Pæans of mellifluous sound,
 My Naiads blythe the floating accents caught,
 And listening danc'd beneath their pearly grot;
 In gentler eddies play'd my wanton wave,
 And all my reeds their softest whispers gave;
 Each lay with brighter green adorn'd my bowers,
 And breath'd a fresher fragrance on my flowers.

But lo! at once the swelling concerts cease,
 And crowded theatres are hush'd in peace,
 See, on yon Sage how all attentive stand,
 To catch his darting eye, and waving hand.
 Hark! he begins, with all a Tully's art
 To pour the dictates of a Cato's heart.
 Skill'd to pronounce what noblest thoughts inspire,
 He blends the speaker's with the patriot's fire;
 Bold to conceive, nor timorous to conceal,
 What Britons dare to think, he dares to tell.
 'Tis his alike the ear and eye to charm,
 To win with action, and with sense to warm;
 Untaught in flowery diction to dispense
 The lulling sounds of sweet impertinence;
 In frowns or smiles he gains an equal prize,
 Nor meanly fears to fall, nor creeps to rise;
 Bids happier days to Albion be restor'd,
 Bids ancient Justice rear her radiant sword;
 From me, as from my country, wins applause,
 And makes an Oxford's a Britannia's cause.

While arms like these my steadfast fages wield,
 While mine is Truth's impenetrable shield;

Say, shall the puny champion fondly dare
 To wage with force like this, scholastic war?
 Still vainly scribble on with pert pretence,
 With all the rage of pedant impotence?
 Say, shall I suffer this domestic pest,
 This parricide that wounds a mother's breast?

Thus in the stately ship that long has bore
 Britain's victorious cross from shore to shore,
 By chance, beneath her close sequester'd cells,
 Some low-born worm, a lurking mischief dwells;
 Eats his blind way, and saps with secret toil
 The deep foundations of the watry pile:
 In vain the forest lent its stateliest pride,
 Rear'd her tall mast, and fram'd her knotty side;
 In vain the thunder's martial rage she stood,
 With each fierce conflict of the stormy flood;
 More sure the reptile's little arts devour,
 Than waves, or wars, or Eurus' wintry power.

Ye venerable bowers, ye seats sublime,
 Clad in the mossy vest of fleeting time;
 Ye stately piles of old munificence,
 At once the pride of learning and defence,
 Where ancient Piety, a matron hoar,
 Still seems to keep the hospitable door;
 Ye cloisters pale, that length'ning to the sight,
 Still step by step to musings mild invite;
 Ye high arch'd walks, where oft the bard has caught
 The glowing sentiment, the lofty thought;
 Ye temples dim, where pious duty pays
 Her holy hymns of ever-echoing praise;

Lo! your lov'd Isis, from the bordering vale,
 With all a mother's fondness bids you hail!—
 Hail, Oxford, hail! of all that's good and great,
 Of all that's fair, the guardian and the seat;
 Nurse of each brave pursuit, each generous aim,
 By Truth exalted to the throne of Fame!
 Like Greece in science and in liberty,
 As Athens learn'd, as Lacedæmon free!

Ev'n now, confess'd to my adoring eyes,
 In awful ranks thy sacred sons arise;
 With every various flower their temples wreath'd,
 That in thy gardens green its fragrance breath'd.
 Tuning to knightly tale his British reeds,
 Thy crowding bards immortal Chaucer leads:
 His hoary head o'erlooks the gazing choir,
 And beams on all around celestial fire:
 With graceful step see Addison advance,
 The sweetest child of Attic elegance:
 To all, but his belov'd embrace, deny'd,
 See Locke leads Reason, his majestic bride:
 See sacred Hammond, as he treads the field,
 With godlike arm uprears his heavenly shield.

All who, beneath the shades of gentle Peace,
 Best plann'd the labours of domestic ease;
 Who taught with truth, or with persuasion mov'd;
 Who sooth'd with numbers, or with sense improv'd;
 Who told the powers of reason, or refin'd,
 All, all that strengthen'd or adorn'd the mind;
 Each priest of Health, who mix'd the balmy bowl,
 To rear frail man, and stay the fleeting soul;

All crowd around, and echoing to the sky,
Hail, Oxford, hail! with filial transport cry.

And see yon solemn band! with virtuous aim,
'Twas theirs in thought the glorious deed to frame:
With pious plans each musing feature glows,
And well-weigh'd counsels mark their meaning brows:
"Lo! these the leaders of thy patriot line,"
Hamden and Hooker, Hyde and Sidney shine.
These from thy source the fires of Freedom caught:
How well thy sons by their example taught!
While in each breast th' hereditary flame
Still blazes, unextinguish'd and the same!

Nor all the toils of thoughtful Peace engage,
'Tis thine to form the hero as the sage.
I see the fable-suited prince advance
With lillies crown'd, the spoils of bleeding France,
Edward—the Muses in yon hallow'd shade
Bound on his tender thigh the martial blade:
Bade him the steel for British Freedom draw,
And Oxford taught the deeds that Cressy saw.

And see, great father of the laureat band,
The * British King before me seems to stand.
He by my plenty-crowned scenes beguil'd,
And genial influence of my seasons mild,
Hither of yore (forlorn, forgotten maid)
The Muse in prattling infancy convey'd;
From Gothic rage the helpless virgin bore,
And fix'd her cradle on my friendly shore:

* Alfred. Regis Romani. V. Virg. Æn. 6.

Soon grew the maid beneath his fostering hand,
 Soon pour'd her blessings o'er th' enlighten'd land.
 Tho' rude the f dome, and humble the retreat,
 Where first his pious care ordain'd her seat,
 Lo! now on high she dwells in Attic bowers,
 And proudly lifts to heaven her hundred towers.
 He first fair Learning's and Britannia's cause
 Adorn'd with manners, and advanc'd with laws:
 He bade relent the Briton's savage heart,
 And form'd his soul to social scenes of art,
 Wifest and best of kings!—with ravish'd gaze
 Elate the long procession he surveys:
 Joyful he smiles to find, that not in vain
 He plann'd the rudiments of Learning's reign:
 Himself he marks in each ingenuous breast,
 With all the founder in the race exprest:
 With rapture views, fair Freedom still survive
 In yon bright domes (ill-fated fugitive)
 (Such seen, as when the goddess pour'd the beam
 Unfullied on his ancient diadem)
 Well-pleas'd that in his own Pierian seat
 She plumes her wings, and rests her weary feet;
 That here at last she takes her favourite stand,
 “ Here deigns to linger, ere she leave the land.”

f ————— Ad Capitolia ducit
 Aurea nunc, olim sylvestribus horrida dumis. VIRG. ÆN.