

1345
B E L S H A Z Z A R.

AN

ORATORIO.

As it is Perform'd at the

K I N G's T H E A T R E

I N T H E

H A Y - M A R K E T.

The M U S I C K by Mr. H A N D E L.

— Grave & immutabile Sanctis
Pondus adest Verbis, & Vocem Fata sequuntur.

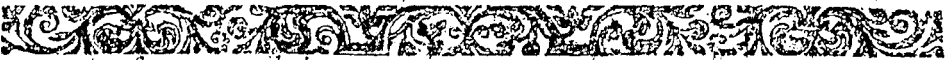
STAT. THEB. lib. I.



L O N D O N:

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BELSHAZZAR, *King of Babylon.*

NITOCRIS, *Mother of Belshazzar.*

CYRUS, *Prince of Persia.*

DANIEL, *a Jewish Prophet.*

GOBRYAS, *an Assyrian Nobleman, revolted to Cyrus.*

ARIOCH, *a Babylonian Lord.*

Messenger.

Chorus of Babylonians.

Chorus of Jews.

Chorus of Medes and Persians.



N. B. The *Oratorio* being thought too long, several things are mark'd with a black Line drawn down the Margin as omitted in the Performance.



BELSHAZZAR.

A N

ORATORIO:

ACT I. SCENE I.

The PALACE in Babylon.

NITOCRIS.



AIN fluctuating State of Human Empire!
First small and weak it scarcely rears its Head,
Scarce stretching out its helpless Infant Arms,
Implores Protection of its neighbour States,
Who nurse it to their Hurt. Anon it strives
For Pow'r and Wealth, and spurns at Opposition.
Arriv'd to full Maturity it grasps
At all within its Reach, o'erleaps all Bounds,
Robs, ravages and wastes the frighted World.
At length grown old, and swell'd to Bulk enormous,
The Monster in its proper Bowels feeds
Pride, Luxury, Corruption, Perfidy,
Contention, fell Diseases of a State,
That prey upon her Vitals. Of her Weakness
Some other rising Power advantage takes,
(Unequal Match!) plies with repeated Strokes
Her infirm aged Trunk: She nods --- she totters ---
She falls --- alas! never to rise again.

The Victor State upon her Ruins rais'd,
Runs the same shadowy Round of fancy'd Greatness,
Meets the same certain End.

A I R.

*Thou, God most high, and Thou alone
Unchang'd for ever dost remain:
Through boundless Space extends thy Throne,
Through all Eternity thy Reign.
As nothing in thy Sight
The reptile Man appears,
Howe'er imagin'd Great:
Who can impair thy Might?
In Heav'n or Earth who dares
Dispute thy Pow'r? --- Thy Will is Fate.*

Da Capo.

O *Babylon*! how fast thy Fate approaches!
Of all the spacious East no Place remains
Yet unsubdu'd but this. The rapid *Cyrus*
Has, like the ancient universal Deluge,
O'erflow'd the Subject Earth. What Strength is left
To stem the Torrent? --- Brazen Gates --- thick Walls ---
A River deep. --- Vain Strength, to guard a People
Who court their Ruin! He whom it most concerns,
To Sloth abandon'd and immers'd in Pleasure,
Is to his People lost --- and to himself.
The People, by his high Example led,
Let loose the Reins to Vice. Idolatry,
Rankest of Weeds, has long o'er-run the Soil,
And for Excision calls. What I could do
I have done to avert it. Small my Skill,
Had not the *Hebrew* Prophet with his Counsel
Supported my weak Steps. See, where he comes:
Wisdom and Goodness in his Front serene.
Conspicuous sit inthron'd.

S C E N E

Enter DANIEL.

Nit. O much belov'd
Of God and Man! Say, is there ought can save
This sinking State?

Dan. Great Queen, 'tis not in Man
To pry into the Counsels of Omniscience.

Nit. I know, for thou hast taught me, Wisdom dwells
In none but God; in Him alone is Power :
He at his Will removes and sets up Kings.
Yet oft some Rays of the Divine Foreknowledge
On Man have shone; to thee he has laid open
The deep and secret Things of Providence:
For Thou hast look'd into the Seeds of Time,
Foretold the Fate of Empires, This for one,
To my great Father. I remember well
His vision of the four successive Kingdoms,
Which thou alone couldst tell, and couldst interpret.
All things concur to shew the Time is near,
When this shall end : --- perhaps thou know'st; how near.

Dan. 'Tis true, O Queen, God by my Mouth reveal'd
To that great Prince the End of Human States;
But not the Time precise. The Times and Seasons
In his own Pow'r reserv'd th' Eternal Mind,
Nor shew'd to Man. For what he has imparted
'Tis ours to praise him, to use That aright,
And rest contented. Yet you well observe
An apt Concurrence of Events to point
The Time not far. --- But you have done your Duty. ---
I mine. No more remains, but to submit
To what God only wise and just ordains.

Nit. *Ah! falling Country! --- Ah! my Son!*
You think not of impending Fate,
Nor fear to bring the Judgments down
That Crimes like yours await;

*But trust, unseasonably brave,
In Walls, in Gates, in Depth of Wave,
In Idol Gods that cannot save!
Alas! that I should live to bear
The Loss of all I hold most dear!*

Dan. Lament not thus, O Queen, in vain!

*Virtue's Part is to resign
All things to the Will Divine,
Nor of its just Decrees complain.
The Sins of Babylon urge on her Fate:
But Virtue still this Comfort gives;
On Earth she finds a safe Retreat,
Or blest in Heav'n for ever lives.*

S C E N E II.

*The Camp of Cyrus before Babylon. A View of the City,
with the River Euphrates running through it.*

Cyrus, Gobryas, Medes, and Persians.

*Chorus of Babylonians upon the Walls, deriding Cyrus as
engag'd in an impracticable Undertaking.*

*Behold by Persia's Hero made
In ample Form the strong Blockade!
How broad the Ditch!----How deep it falls!
What lofty Tow'rs o'erlook the Walls!
Hark, Cyrus,---Twenty times the Sun
Round the great Year his Course shall run:---
If there so long thy Army stay,
Not yet to Dogs and Birds a Prey,
No Succour from without arrive,
Within remain no means to live,
We then may think it time to treat,
And Babylon capitulate.
A tedious time!----to make it short,
Thy wise Attempt will find us Sport!*

Gobr.

Gobr. Well may they laugh, from meagre Famine safe
In plenteous Stores for more than twenty Years;
From all Assault secure in Gates of Brass,
And Walls stupendous; in *Euphrates'* Depth
Yet more secure.

Cyr. 'Tis that Security
Shall aid me to their Ruin. I tell thee, *Gobryas*,
I will revenge thy Wrongs upon the Head
Of this inhuman King.

R E C I T. *accompany'd.*

Gobr. O Memory
Still bitter to my Soul!----methinks I see
My Son, the best, the loveliest of Mankind,
Whose filial Love and Duty above all Sons
Made me above all other Fathers happy;
I see him breathless at the Tyrant's Feet,
The Victim of his Envy!

A I R.

*Opprest with never ceasing Grief,
I drag a painful weary Life,
Of all that made Life sweet bereft;
No Hope but in Revenge is left.*

A I R.

Cyrus. Dry those unavailing Tears;
Haste your just Revenge to speed;
I'll disperse your gloomy Fears,
Dawning Hope shall soon succeed.

Be comforted: Safe tho' the Tyrant seem
Within those Walls, I have a Stratagem
Inspir'd by Heav'n, (Dreams oft descend from Heav'n,)
Shall baffle all his Strength; so strong my Mind
Th' Impression bears, I cannot think it less.

R E C I T.

R E C I T. *accompany'd.*

Methought, as on the Bank of deep *Euphrates*
 I stood, revolving in my anxious Mind
 Our arduous Enterprize, a Voice divine,
 In Thunder utter'd, to the bottom seem'd
 To pierce the River's Depth: The lofty Tow'rs
 Of yon proud City trembling bow'd their Heads,
 As they would kiss the Ground. "Thou Deep, it said,
 "Be dry." No more, but instant, at the Word,
 The Stream forsook his Banks, and in a Moment
 Left bare his oozy Bed. Amaz'd I stood:
 Horror, till then unknown, uprais'd my Hair,
 And froze my falt'ring Tongue. The Voice renew'd:
 "Cyrus, go on and conquer: 'Tis I that rais'd thee,
 "I will direct thy Way. Build thou my City,
 "And without Ransom set my Captives free."

Gob. It was a Vision fair and fortunate,
 And calls to my Remembrance strange Events,
 Before almost forgot. The *Jewish* People,
 Of old the Favourites of Heav'n, so prov'd
 By various Signs, miraculous Protections,
 Nor less miraculous Vengeance on their Foes
Egyptian or *Affyrian*, till their Crimes,
 Heap'd to the popular Sum, incens'd their God
 To leave them, and expose their Land, their City,
 His Temple gloriously magnificent,
 With all his sacred things, a Scorn and Prey
 To that proud City that now braves your Arms:
 This People by our late victorious King,
Nebuchadnezzar, from their native Land
 To this were carry'd Captive. Some of these,
 For Beauty, Science, Prudence most remark'd,
 Chose from their Fellows, stood before the King:
Daniel above the rest, for Virtue fam'd,

And

And by his God belov'd, whose Holy Spirit
In his pure Breast, as in a Temple dwelling,
Enriches it with Knowledge more than Human.
The King's prophetick Dream himself forgot,
He knew, and did interpret. O'er this Province
He was for this made Ruler; and tho' he,
Who now unworthy reigns, regards him not,
Scarce knows his Name, awake to Pleasure only,
Unmindful of whate'er is Great or Good,
The Queen his Mother, to whose Government
He slothful leaves the State, well knows his Merit,
And by his Counsel moves. If ought of Weight
Is in your Dream, this sure must be the People,
And theirs the City meant.

Cyr. *Thy wondrous Tale with Rapture fills my Breast!*

O Cyrus, more than Mortals blest!

At once a Tyrant's Reign to end,

Avenge thy Wrongs, my injur'd Friend,

Restore a People long oppress'd,

From Exile to their native Land,

And execute Divine Command!

Now tell me, *Gobryas*, does not this *Euphrates*
Flow through the midst of *Babylon*?

Gobr. It does.

Cyr. And I have heard you say, that on the West
A monstrous Lake on ev'ry side extended
Four hundred Furlongs, while the Banks were made,
Receiv'd th' exhausted River.

Gobr. 'Tis most true.

The Lake, you see, remains, and the Canal,
Through which the Water flow'd: For still *Euphrates*
Swell'd once a Year above his Banks by Snow
In Summer melted from *Armenian* Mountains,

Would deluge all the Country, but that these
Divert his raging Course.

Cyr. Might not we then
By the same means now drain *Euphrates* dry,
And through its Channel march into the City?

Gobr. Suppose this done: yet still the brazen Gates,
Which from the City to the River lead,
Will bar our Passage, always shut by Night,
When we must make th' Attempt. Could we suppose
Those Gates unshut, we might indeed ascend
With ease into the City.

Cyr. Said you not,
This is the Feast to *Sesach* consecrate?
And that the *Babylonians* spend the Night
In drunken Revels, and in loose Disorder?

Gobr. They do; and 'tis Religion to be drunk
On this occasion.

A I R.

*Behold the monstrous Human Beast
Wallowing in excessive Feast!
No more his Maker's Image found:
But self-degraded to a Swine,
He fixes growling on the Ground
His Portion of the Breath Divine.*

Cyr. Can you then think it strange, if drown'd in Wine,
And from above infatuate, they neglect
The Means of their own Safety?

*Great God! who yet but darkly known,
Thus far hast deign'd my Arms to bring;
Support me still, while I pull down
Assyria's proud injurious King.*

*So shall this Hand thy Altars raise,
This Tongue for ever sing thy Praise;
And all thy Will, when clearly shown,
By thy glad Servant shall be done.*

My Friends, be confident, and boldly enter
Upon this high Exploit. No little Cause
We have to hope Success; since not unjustly
We have attack'd, but being first attack'd,
We have pursu'd th' Aggressor. Add to this,
That I proceed in nothing with Neglect *
Of Pow'r divine: Whate'er I undertake,
I still begin with God, and gain his Favour
By Sacrifice and Prayer.

C H O R U S.

*All Empires upon God depend;
Begun by his Command, at his Command they end.
Look up to him in all your Ways:
Begin with Pray'r, and end with Praise.
Without his Aid you war in vain:
Be subject: --- 'Tis the way to reign.*

S C E N E III.

DANIEL's House.

Daniel, with the Prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah open
before him: Other Jews.

A I R.

Dan. *O sacred Oracles of Truth!
O living Spring of purest Joy!
By Day be ever in my Mouth,
And all my nightly Thoughts employ.
Whoe'er withhold Attention due
Neglect themselves, despising you.*

Da Capo.

* Xenoph. Cyrop. lib. 1.

R E C I T. *accompany'd.*

Rejoice, my Countrymen : The Time draws near,
 The long expected Time herein foretold. *Jer. xxix.*
 Seek now the Lord your God with all your Heart,
 And you shall surely find him. He shall turn
 Your long Captivity : he shall gather you
 From all the Nations whither you are driven,
 And to your native Land in Peace restore you.

*O Lord! the great and dreadful God!
 Justly thou hast thy Curses pour'd
 On our rebellious Heads :
 For ours and for our Fathers Sins
 Thy People are become the Scorn
 Of all the Nations round.
 Yet in thy Wrath remember Mercy :
 O! be thy Fury turn'd away :
 Not for our Righteousness,
 But for thy own great Mercies sake!
 O Lord, hear : O Lord, forgive :
 Defer not, for thine own sake, O our God! ---
 For we are thine, and bear thy Name.*

Dan. Doubt not, our Pray'r is heard ; for long ago,
 Whole Ages ere this *Cyrus* yet was born
 Or thought of, Great *Jehovah*, by his Prophet,
 In Words of Comfort to his captive People
 Foretold, and call'd by Name the wondrous Man.

R E C I T. *accompany'd.*

“ Thus saith the Lord to *Cyrus* his Anointed, *If. xliv. & xlv.*
 “ Whose right Hand I have holden, to subdue
 “ Nations before him : I will go before thee,
 “ To loose the Strong-knit Loins of mighty Kings,
 “ Make straight the crooked Places, break in pieces

“ The

" The Gates of solid Brass, and cut in sunder
 " The Bars of Iron. For my Servants sake,
 " *Isr'el* my Chosen, though thou hast not known me,
 " I have furnam'd thee : I have girded thee :
 " That from the rising to the setting Sun
 " The Nations may confess, I am the Lord,
 " There is none else, there is no God besides me.
 " Thou shalt perform my Pleasure, to *Jerusalem*
 " Saying, Thou shalt be built; and to the Temple,
 " Thy raz'd Foundation shall again be laid."

C H O R U S.

*Sing, O ye Heavens, for the Lord hath done it :
 Earth, from thy Center shout :
 Break forth, ye Mountains, into Songs of Joy,
 O Forest, and each Tree therein :
 Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob,
 And glorify'd himself in Israel.*
Hallelujah.

S C E N E IV. *The Palace.*

Belshazzar, Nitocris, Babylonians and Jews.

A I R.

*Belsh. Let festal Joy triumphant reign,
 Glad ev'ry Heart, in ev'ry Face appear :
 Free flow the Wine, nor flow in vain ;
 Far fly corroding Care.
 Each Hand the Chime melodious raise,
 Each Voice exult in Sefach's Praise.
 Let Order vanish: Liberty alone,
 Unbounded Liberty the Night shall crown.*

For you, my Friends, the Nobles of my Court,
 I have prepar'd a Feast magnificent,
 Worthy of You and Me. A while begone
 Invidious Royalty, unfriendly Form,
 Partial Distinction betwixt King and Subject,
 Master and Vassal: In their Room succeed
 Familiar Conversation, social Mirth,
 Equality promiscuous. But this Night
 I taste of Happiness; the Year besides
 Is sacrific'd to State. Let all my Wives,
 And Concubines attend. Our Royal Mother ----

Nit. I must prevent thee, Son. Who can endure
 Th' unbridl'd Licence of this Festival,
 Miscall'd by the Licentious, Liberty?
 When nought prevails but riotous Excess,
 The noisy idiot Laugh, the Jest obscene,
 The scurril Taunt, and drunken midnight Brawl.
 My Soul starts back at such Brutality,
 Asserting Reason's Empire.

A I R.

*The leavy Honours of the Field,
 Before the boist'rous driving Wind,
 In giddy Dissipation fly.
 To Noise and Folly forc'd to yield,
 The fair Ideas quit the Mind,
 And lost in wild Confusion lie.*

Belf. It is the Custom; I may say, the Law,
 By long Prescription fix'd --- These Captive Jews! ---

[Looking round and spying the Jews.

What do They here? --- they low'r upon our Joys,
 And envy Liberty they cannot taste.
 Yet something your perverse and wayward Nation
 Shall to our Mirth contribute. Bring those Vessels---
 Those costly Vessels my victorious Grandfire
 Took from the Temple of *Jerusalem*,
 And in the Temple of great *Bel* laid up,
 But us'd them not: 'tis fit they should be us'd:
 And let their God, whose Pow'r was found too weak
 To save his People, serve the Conquerors
 Of him and them. We'll revel in his Cups:
 Their rich Materials and choice Workmanship
 Shall well augment the Splendor of our Feast.
 And, as we drink, we'll praise our Country Gods,
 To whom we owe the Prize.

Nit. O Sacrilege!
 Unheard of Profanation!

C H O R U S of *Jews.*

*Recall, O King, thy rash Command,
 Nor prostitute with impious Hand
 To Uses vile the holy Things
 Of great Jehovah, King of Kings.
 Thy Grandfire trembled at his Name,
 And doom'd to Death who durst blaspheme;
 For, he, like us, his Pow'r had try'd;
 Confess'd him Just in all his Ways,
 Confess'd him able to abase
 The Sons of Men that walk in Pride.*

Nit. They tell you true; nor can you be to learn,
 (Tho' Ease and Pleasure have ingross'd you all,)
 Things done in publick View. I'll not repeat
 The sev'nfold heated Furnace, by that God

Whom

Whom you defy, made to his faithful Servants
 A Walk of Recreation; nor the King,
 In height of all his Pride, drove from his Throne,
 And from the first of Men, in Thought a God,
 Reduc'd to brutal Rank: All this, and more,
 Thou know'st as well as I, and shouldst consider.

Belsh. Away!-----Is then my Mother Convert grown
 To *Jewish* Superstition?---Apostate Queen!
 These idle Tales might well become the Dotage
 Of palsy'd Eld, but not a Queen like you,
 In Prime of Life, for Wisdom far renown'd.
 On to the Feast; I waste the Time too long
 In frivolous Dispute; Time, due of Right
 To Pleasure and the Gods.

D U E T.

Nit. O dearer than my Life, forbear,
 Profane not, O my Son,
 With impious Rites Jehovah's Name:
 Remember what his Arm has done:
 The Earth contains not half his Fame:
 Remember, and his Vengeance fear.

Belsh. O Queen, this hateful Theme forbear:
 Join not against your Son
 With Captive Slaves, your Country's Foes:
 Remember what our Gods have done
 To these, who durst their Pow'r oppose:
 Remember, and their Vengeance fear.

Nit. Alas! then must I see my Son
 Headlong to sure Destruction run?

Belsh. Not to Destruction but Delight
 I fly, and all once more invite
 To reign with me this happy Night.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Chorus of Jews.

*By slow Degrees the Wrath of God to its meridian Height ascends;
There Mercy long the dreadful Bolt suspends,
Ere it offending Man annoy;
Long patient for Repentance waits, reluctant to destroy.
At length the Wretch, obdurate grown,
Infatuated makes
The Ruin all his own;
And every Step he takes
On his devoted Head
Precipitates the Thunder down.*



A C T II. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *Without the City, the River almost Empty.*

CYRUS, &c.

C H O R U S.

SEE, from his Post Euphrates flies!
The Stream withdraws his guardian Wave!
Fenceless the Queen of Cities lies!

S E M I - C H O R U S.

*Why faithless River dost thou leave
Thy Charge to hostile Arms a Prey,
Expose the Lives thou ought'st to save,
Prepare the fierce Invader's Way,
And, like false Man, thy Trust betray?*

S E M I - C H O R U S.

*Euphrates hath his Task fulfil'd,
But to Divine Decree must yield.
While Babel Queen of Cities reign'd,
The Flood her Guardian was ordain'd;*

B E L S H A Z Z A R.

*Now to superior Pow'r gives place,
And but the Doom of Heav'n obeys.*

C H O R U S.

*Of Things on Earth, proud Man must own,
Falshood is found in Man alone.*

Cyr. You see, my Friends, a Path into the City
Lies open: fearless let us enter, knowing
That those we are to cope with are the same
We have already conquer'd, strengthen'd then
With Aid of great and numerous Allies,
Wakeful and sober, rank'd in just Array;
Now all asleep or drunk, at best disorder'd:
A helpless State! still worse, when they shall hear
We are within their Walls.

A I R.

*Amaz'd to find the Foe so near,
When Sleep and Wine their Senses drown,
All Hearts shall faint, and melt with Fear,
All Hands unnerv'd fall feebly down.
Useless the Hero's Valour lies,
Useless the Counsel of the Wise.*

Da Capo.

C H O R U S.

*To Arms, to Arms; no more Delay,
God and Cyrus lead the Way.*

[They descend into the River.]

S C E N E

S C E N E II.

A Banquet Room, adorn'd with the Images of the Babylonian Gods. Belshazzar, his Wives, Concubines, and Lords, drinking out of the Jewish Temple-Vessels, and singing the Praises of their Gods.

C H O R U S.

*Ye tutelar Gods of our Empire, look down,
And see what rich Trophies your Victory crown.
Let your own bounteous Gifts, which our Gratitude raise,
Gold, Wine, merry Notes pay our Tribute of Praise.*

*Bel first we sing, great Lord of all below :
To thee our Wealth and Pow'r we owe.
Thee, Nebo, next, whose Wisdom all admire,
For Prescience fam'd, of Arts the Sire.
Sefach, this Night is chiefly thine,
Kind Donor of the sparkling Wine.*

A I R.

*Belsh. Let the deep Bowl thy Praise confess,
Thy Gifts the gracious Giver blefs.
Thy Gifts of all the Gods bestow,
Improve by use, and sweeter grow.
Another Bowl! ---- 'tis gen'rous Wine
Exalts the Human to Divine.*

*Where is the God of Judah's boasted Pow'r?
Let him reclaim his lost Magnificence,
Assert his Rights, prov'd ours by long Possession,
And vindicate his injur'd Honour.---- Ah! ----*

[As he is going to drink, a Hand appears writing upon the Wall over-against him; he sees it, turns pale with Fear, drops the Bowl of Wine, falls back in his Seat, trembling from Head to Foot, and his Knees knocking against each other.

C H O R U S.

*Help, help the King : he faints ! he dies !
 What envious Dæmon blasts our Joys,
 And into Sorrow turns !
 Look up, O King --- speak --- cheer thy Friends :
 Say, why our Mirth thus sudden ends,
 And the gay Circle mourns !*

Belsh. Behold ! --- See there ! ---

*[Pointing to the Hand upon the Wall, which, while
 they gaze at it with Astonishment, finishes the Writ-
 ing, and vanishes.]*

C H O R U S.

*O dire, portentous Sight ! --- but see, 'tis gone,
 And leaves behind it Types unknown :
 Perhaps some stern Decree of Fate,
 Big with the Ruin of our State !
 What God, or godlike Man, can tell
 The Sense of this mysterious Spell ?*

Belsh. Call all our Wisemen, Sorcerers, Chaldeans,
 Astrologers, Magicians, Soothsayers :
 They can perhaps unfold the mystick Words,
 Dispel our Doubts, and ease us of our Fears.

[A Symphony.]

Enter Wisemen of Babylon.

Belsh. Ye Sages, welcome always to your King,
 Most welcome now, since needed most : O minister
 To my sick Mind the Med'cine of your Art.
 Whoe'er shall read this Writing and interpret,
 A splendid purple Robe behind him flows,

A Chain

A Chain of Gold his honour'd Neck shall grace,
And in the Kingdom he shall rule the Third.

Wisem. Alas! too hard a Task the King imposes,
To read the Characters we never learn'd!

C H O R U S.

O Misery! --- O Terror! --- *hopeless Grief!*
Nor God nor Man afford Relief!
Who can this Mystery unveil,
When all our wise Diviners fail!

Enter Nitocris.

Nit. [*Aside.*] How soon the Scene is chang'd! he, who but
Breath'd nought but Mirth and Gaiety, defy'd [now
The God of Heav'n, and wilful stopp'd his Ears
To all Advice, now pale and spiritless,
And helpless sits with all his Gods about him,
Who know not his Distress; and could they know,
They could not bring him Aid. But I must now
Speak Comfort to him, nor increase his Woes
Too great Already --- [*To Belsh.*] O King, live for ever!
Let not thy Heart its wonted Courage lose,
Nor let thy Countenance be chang'd with Fear.
Tho' all thy Wisemen fail thee, in thy Kingdom
There is a Man, among the *Jewish* Captives,
In whom the holy Spirit of God resides;
And in thy Grandfire *Nebuchadnezzar's* Days
Wisdom, like that of God, was found in him,
By which he could interpret mystick Dreams,
Explain hard Sentences, dissolve all Doubts:
Daniel his native Name, but by the King
Nam'd *Belteshazzar*. Let him now be call'd:
He'll read the Writing, and interpret it.

B E L S H A Z Z A R.

Enter Daniel.

Bels. Art thou that *Daniel*, of the *Jewish* Captives?
 I have heard of thee, that a Spirit divine
 Resides in thee; that Light, and Understanding,
 And Wisdom excellent is found in thee.
 Thou seest this Writing on the Wall: The Wisemen,
 Who all were brought before me, could not read it,
 Much less interpret. I have heard of thee,
 That thou canst find Interpretations deep,
 And dissolve knotty Doubts. If thou canst read
 This Writing, and explain, a purple Robe
 Adorns thy Body, a gold Chain thy Neck,
 And in the Kingdom thou shalt rule the Third.

A I R.

Dan. No: To thyself thy Trifles be,
 Or take thy rich Rewards who will:
 Such glitt'ring Trash affects not me,
 Intent on greater Matters still.

R E C I T. accompany'd.

Yet to obey his dread Command,
 Who vindicates his Honour now,
 I'll read this Oracle, and thou,
 But to thy Cost, shalt understand.

R E C I T. accompany'd.

The most high God, O King, gave to thy Grandfire
 A Kingdom, Majesty, Glory and Honour:
 All People, Nations, Tongues trembled before him:
 Whome'er he would he slew, or kept alive;
 Whome'er he would exalted, or abas'd.
 But when from hence his Heart was lifted up,
 His Mind harden'd in Pride, he was depos'd
 His kingly Throne, his Glory taken from him;
 Driv'n from the Sons of Men with Beasts he dwelt,

Himself

Himself become a Beast; nor was restor'd,
Till humbly he confess'd, the most high God
Rules in the Kingdom of Men, and over it
Appoints whome'er he will. And Thou, *Belsazzar*,
His Grandson, though thou knewest all these things,
Yet hast not humbled thy proud Heart to God,
But lifted up thyself against the Lord
Of Heav'n, whose Vessels they have brought before thee,
And thou, thy Lords, thy Wives and Concubines
Have drunk Wine in them: Thou hast prais'd the Gods
Of Gold and Silver, Brass, Iron, Wood and Stone,
Which neither see, nor hear, nor ought perceive:
But Him, the God whose Hand upholds thy Life,
And in whose high Dispose are all thy Ways,
Thou hast not glorify'd, but hast blasphem'd.
From him the Hand was sent, by his Appointment
These Words were written: which I thus interpret.

*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**

Mene, *The God, whom thou hast thus dishonour'd,
The Days hath number'd of thy Reign,
And finish'd it.*

Tekel, *Thou in the Balances art weigh'd,
And art found wanting.*

Peres. *Thy Kingdom is divided,
And to the Medes and Persians given.*

Nit. O Sentence too severe! and yet too sure!
Unless Repentance may reverse the Doom.
Perhaps, my Son, it is not yet too late,
To take thy Mother's Counsel erst despis'd,
Revere the God whose Name thou hast blasphem'd,
Implore his Pardon with repentant Tears,
Redeem Offences past by Righteousness,

Shew

* *Mene*, number'd; *Tekel*, weigh'd; *Upharsin*, and they divide, or shall divide; *Peres* is the Participle Passive singular, divided; *Pharzin* the Active plural.

Shew Mercy to the Poor, and obtain Mercy.
 God yet may lengthen thy Tranquillity,
 And thou --- and I in thee --- may yet be happy.

A I R.

*Regard, O Son, my flowing Tears,
 Proofs of maternal Love:
 Regard thy self: to cure thy Fears,
 Regard the God above.
 Repentance sure will Mercy find,
 But Wrath pursues th' obdurate Mind.*

Da Capo.
 [Exit.]

Belsh. Tho' thy Interpretation sound so harsh,
 Yet I'll perform my Promise. Let him wear
 A splendid purple Robe, with a gold Chain
 His Neck be grac'd; and to complete his Greatness,
 Proclaim him the third Ruler in the Kingdom.

Dan. Your Tinsel Ornaments forbear:
 Your empty Titles wave: the Time is near,
 When thou and all thy gawdy Train
 From sad Experience shall confess,
 (Great Truth! how little understood!)
 The Robe most splendid, Righteousness;
 Virtue the only graceful Chain;
 None truly Great, except the Good.

S C E N E III.

Cyrus, Gobryas, &c. within the City.

A I R.

Cyr. O God of Truth! O faithful Guide!
 Well hast thou kept thy Word!
 Deep Waves at my Approach subside;
 The brazen Portals open wide,
 Glad to receive their Lord.

*The hostile Nations scatter'd fly,
 Nor dare my Presence stay:
 Where'er I go, sure Victory
 Attends; for God is always nigh,
 And he prepares my way.*

You, *Gobryas*, lead directly to the Palace;
 For you best know the way. This revelling Herd
 Cannot oppose our Passage; those who would,
 Fall easy Victims: For the rest, they fly,
 Or take us for their Friends, and reeling shout
 For Joy: We'll be their *Friends*, and join the Shout.
 I seek no Enemy except the Tyrant;
 When he is slain our Task is at an end.
 My worthy Friends, let us not stain our Swords
 With *needless* Slaughter: I begin already
 To count this People mine, myself their Shepherd,
 Whose Office is to feed and to protect them,
 Not to destroy.

C H O R U S.

*O glorious Prince! thrice happy they,
 Born to enjoy thy future Sway!
 To all like thee were Scepters giv'n,
 Kings were like Gods, and Earth like Heav'n:
 Subjection free, unforc'd, would prove
 Obedience is the Child of Love:
 The Fars of Nations soon would cease,
 Sweet Liberty, beatifick Peace
 Would stretch their Reign from Shore to Shore,
 And War and Slav'ry be no more.*



A C T III. S C E N E I.

S C E N E *the* P A L A C E.

Nitocris, Daniel, Jews.

A I R.

Nit.  *Alternate Hopes and Fears distract my Mind:
My weary Soul no Rest can find.
My busy Fancy now presents
A gracious Scene; my Son repents,
And God recalls his Doom:
Now to false Shame he quits his Fears,
False Courage takes, and madly dares
His impious Feast resume:
Then arms and dying Groans resound,
And Streams of Blood gush out around.*

Fain would I know th' Effect of this late Prodigy,
Of your Reproof, and stern Prophetick Threats,
Of my Advice inforc'd with Tears of Love.
Fain would I hope----Is there not room for Hope?
Can he be so insensate to resist
Such pow'rful Arguments, so strongly urg'd
By his own Fears? Can such Perverseness dwell
In human Hearts? ---- It cannot surely be!

Dan. O that it could not! --- But if I may judge
The Future by the Past, it were vain Flatt'ry
To bid you hope for his Conversion.

A I R.

*Can the black Æthiop change his Skin?
His native Spots the Leopard lose?
Then may the Heart obdur'd in Sin,
Grow soft, repent, and virtue choose!*

Threats

*Threats or Advice but move Disdain,
And Signs and Wonders glare in vain.*

Enter Arioch.

Nit. My Hopes revive, here *Arioch* comes: By this 'Tis plain the Revels are broke up. Say, *Arioch*, Where is the King?

Ar. When you had left the Room,
A while deep Silence reign'd: The King sat pensive,
As doubting whether to break up the Banquet,
Or to continue. At length some Parasites,
Those Insects vile that still infest a Court,
Began to minister false Comfort to him:
Surmis'd, the Hand that wrote upon the Wall
Might be some juggling Trick, some pious Fraud,
Contriv'd by *Jews* to vindicate their Faith,
And save the Honour of their God: Suppose
'Twere no Imposture, but the Hand of Heav'n,
Yet *Daniel* might mistake the Sense: At worst,
No Time was fix'd; the Judgments he denounc'd
Might yet be Years to come: The present Moment
Was theirs, their wisest course was to enjoy it,
Nor lose the certain Present for the Future,
Uncertain when to come. With this, again
They sat them down to drink: The Bowl went round:
The King forgot his Fears, the Wine inspir'd him,
And he blasphem'd again. Not long we sat,
When from without the Gates a Noise tumultuous
Was heard, loud Shouts and Cries, and clashing Arms.
The King deputed some to learn the Cause.
I gladly seiz'd the Opportunity,
And fled a Place to swift Destruction doom'd.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. All's lost! --- The Fate of *Babylon* is finish'd!
Cyrus is here, --- even within the Palace!

Nit. *Cyrus*! --- impossible!

Mess. It is too true.

A Tumult heard without, the Gates unbarr'd
 Disclos'd a dreadful Scene: The Guards o'erpow'rd
 By Numbers far superior, fell before them
 With faint Resistance. The victorious Foe
 No sooner saw the Gates set open wide,
 But rush'd at once, and easy Entrance gain'd.

Dan. Thus is at length fulfill'd what God foretold
 Long since by his great Prophet. Now, O Queen,
 The Time is come. Be strong, and arm yourself
 With all your Virtue. This Empire is no more.
 Your Son --- I spare your Grief. Convert your Thoughts
 To what may comfort you. The Past and Present
 Are to God's Justice due; the Future Time
 Hope to his Mercy gives. Whate'er he does
 Is best. Let this sink deep into your Mind,
 Assuage your Grievs, and dissipate your Fears.

Chorus of *Jews.*

Bel boweth down! Nebo stoopeth!

How is Sefach taken!

And how is the Praise of the whole Earth surpriz'd!

Thy Counsel stands, O Lord,

And thou dost all thy Pleasure:

Elam is come up, Media hath besieged:

All our Sighing hast thou made to cease.

For the Lord will have Mercy on Jacob,

And will yet choose Israel,

And set them in their own Land.

S C E N E II.

*Belshazzar, his Lords, and other Babylonians, with their
Swords drawn.*

A I R.

Belsh. *I thank thee, Sefach, thy sweet Pow'r
Does to myself myself restore.
Thy plenteous Heart-inspiring Juice
All my Courage lost renews.
I blush to think I shadows fear'd---
Cyrus, come on: I'm now prepar'd.*

[Exeunt to meet Cyrus.]

*[A martial Symphony, during which a Battle is suppos'd, in
which Belshazzar and his Attendants are slain.]*

S C E N E III.

Cyrus, Gobryas, &c.

A I R.

Gobr. *To Pow'r immortal my first Thanks are due:
My next, great Cyrus, let me pay to you;
Whose Arm this impious King laid low,
The bitter Source of all my Woe.
Tears, sure, will all my Life employ!
Ev'n now I weep, ---- but weep for joy.*

*Cyr. Be it thy Care, good Gobryas, to find out
The Queen, and that great Jew, of whom thou told'st me;
Guard*

Guard them in Safety hither; if Harm befall them,
I shall repent and curse my Victory. [Exit Gobryas.

A I R.

*Destructive War thy limits know:
Here, Tyrant Death, thy Terrors end.
To Tyrants only I'm a Foe,
To Virtue, and her Friends, a Friend.
Let Tyrants keep their Slaves in Awe,
Who hate, yet fear to break their Chain:
From hence thy Glory, Cyrus, draw,
In human Hearts to fix thy Reign.*

Re-enter Gobryas, with Nitocris, Daniel, and Jews.

D U E T.

Nit. *Great Victor, at your Feet I bow,
No more a Queen, ---- your Vassal now!
My People spare: ---- Forgive my Fears!
I mourn a Son! --- Indulge my Tears;
Resistless Nature bids them flow.*

Cyr. *Rise, virtuous Queen, compose your Mind,
Give Fear and Sorrow to the Wind;
Safe are your People, if they Will:
Be still a Queen, a Mother still:
A Son in Cyrus you shall find.*

Cyr. to Dan. Say, venerable Prophet, is there ought
In Cyrus' Pow'r, by which he can oblige
Thee, or thy People?

Dan. O victorious Prince!
The God of Israel, Lord of Heav'n and Earth,
Long ere thy Birth foretold thee by thy Name,
And shew'd thy Conquests! 'Tis to him thou ow'st,
To him thou must ascribe them. Read those Lines,

The great Prediction which thou hast already
In part accomplish'd, and (we trust) will soon
Fulfil the rest.

[*Giving him part of Isaiah's Prophecy, which Cyrus reads.*

How false and weak is human Policy!
Which lays deep Schemes of raising, governing,
Preserving Empires, not regarding him
By whom Kings reign, and Empires rise and fall!

C H O R U S.

*Tell it out among the Heathen, that the Lord is King.
He maketh the Devices of the People of none Effect:
He casteth out the Counsels of Princes:
He putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

R E C I T. accompany'd.

Cyr. Yes, I will build thy City, God of *Israel*,
I will release thy Captives; not for Price,
Not for Reward, but to perform thy Pleasure.
Thus prostrate I confess, Thou art the Lord,
There is none else; there is no God besides thee.
Thou condescendest to call me thy Shepherd,
And I will feed thy Flock. To me thou hast given
The Kingdoms of the Earth: and shall I suffer
Thy Kingdom to lie waste, thy chosen People
In Exile and Captivity to wander?
Far be from *Cyrus* such Ingratitude.
Hear, holy People; hear, Elect of God.
The God of *Israel* ----- (he alone is God).
Hath charg'd me to rebuild his House and City,
And let his exil'd captive People go.
With Transport I obey. Be free, ye Captives,
And to your native Land in Peace return.
Thou, O *Jerusalem*, shalt be rebuilt;

O Temple, thy Foundation shall be laid. *Thou art strong and*
 No Thanks to me!---To God return your Thanks, *and I*
 As I do mine: We all are to his Goodness *As our debt is great*
 Indebted deep: to him be all the Praise.

A N T H E M.

*I will magnify thee, O God my King,
 And I will praise thy Name for ever and ever;
 My Mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord,
 And let all Flesh give Thanks
 Unto his holy Name for ever and ever.* Amen.

F I N I S.

