

A  
PINDARIQUE  
ODE,

Humbly Offer'd to the

QUEEN,

ON THE

Victorious Progress of Her MAJESTY's Arms, un-  
der the Conduct of the Duke of MARLBOROUGH.

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To which is prefix'd,

A DISCOURSE on the PINDARIQUE ODE.

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By Mr. CONGREGVE.

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—*Operosa parvus*  
*Carmina fingo.* Hor. Ode 2. L. 4.

*Tuque dum procedis, Io triumphæ*  
*Non semel dicemus, Io triumphæ*  
*Civitas omnis; dabimusq; Divis*  
*Thura benignis.*

Ibid.

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A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

PINDARIQUE ODE.

**T**HE following Ode is an Attempt towards restoring the Regularity of the Ancient Lyrick Poetry, which seems to be altogether forgotten or unknown by our English Writers.

There is nothing more frequent among us, than a sort of Poems intituled Pindarique Odes; pretending to be written in Imitation of the Manner and Stile of Pindar, and yet I do not know that there is to this Day extant in our Language, one Ode contriv'd after his Model. What Idea can an English Reader have of Pindar, (to whose Mouth, when a Child, the Bees (a) brought their Honey, in Omen of the future Sweetness and Melody of his Songs) when he shall see such rumbling and grating Papers of Verses, pretending to be Copies of his Works?

The Character of these late Pindariques, is a Bundle of rambling incoherent Thoughts, express'd in a like parcel of irregular Stanza's, which also consist of such another Complication of disproportion'd, uncertain and perplex'd Verses and Rhimes. And I appeal to any Reader, if this is not the Condition in which these Titular Odes appear.

On the contrary, there is nothing more regular than the Odes of Pindar, both as to the exact Observation of the Measures and Numbers of his Stanza's and Verses, and the perpetual Coherence of his Thoughts. For tho' his Digressions are frequent, and his Transitions sudden, yet is there ever some secret Connexion, which tho' not always appearing to the Eye, never fails to communicate it self to the Understanding of the Reader.

The Liberty which he took in his Numbers, and which has been so misunderstood and misapply'd by his pretended Imitators, was only in varying the Stanza's in different Odes; but in each particular Ode they are ever Correspondent one to another in their Turns, and according to the Order of the Ode.

All the Odes of Pindar are Songs of Triumph, Victory or Success in the Grecian Games: They were sung by a Chorus, and adapted to the Lyre, and sometimes

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(a) Pausan. Bœotic.

## A Discourse on the

times to the Lyre and (b) Pipe; they consisted of three Stanza's, the first was call'd the Strophé, from the *Version* or circular Motion of the Singers in that Stanza from the Right Hand to the Left. (c) The second Stanza was call'd the Antistrophé, from the *Contraversion* of the Chorus; the Singers, in performing that, turning from the Left Hand to the Right, contrary always to their Motion in the Strophé. The Third Stanza was call'd the Epode, (it may be as being the After-song) which they sung in the middle, neither turning to one Hand nor the other.

What the Origin was of these different Motions and Stations in singing their Odes, is not our present business to enquire. Some have thought that by the Contrariety of the Strophé and Antistrophé, they intended to represent the Contrarotation of the Primum Mobile, in respect of the Secunda Mobilia; and that by their standing still at the Epode, they meant to signify the Stability of the Earth. (d) Others ascribe the Institution to Theseus, who thereby expressed the Windings and Turnings of the Labyrinth in celebrating his Return from thence.

The Method observ'd in the Composition of these Odes, was therefore as follows. The Poet having made choice of a certain Number of Verses to constitute his Strophé or first Stanza, was oblig'd to observe the same in his Antistrophé, or second Stanza; and which accordingly perpetually agreed whenever repeated, both in number of Verses and quantity of Feet: He was then again at liberty, to make a new choice for his third Stanza, or Epode; where, accordingly, he diversify'd his Numbers as his Ear or Fancy led him; composing that Stanza of more or fewer Verses than the former, and these Verses of different Measures and Quantities, for the greater Variety of Harmony, and Entertainment of the Ear.

But then this Epode being thus form'd, he was strictly oblig'd to the same (e) Measure, as often as he should repeat it in the order of his Ode, so that every Epode in the same Ode is eternally the same in Measure and Quantity, in respect to it self; as is also every Strophé and Antistrophé, in respect to each other.

The Lyrick Poet Stesichorus (whom (f) Longinus reckons amongst the ablest Imitators of Homer, and of whom (g) Quintilian says, that if he could have kept within bounds, he would have been nearest of any Body, in Merit, to Homer) was, if not the Inventer of this Order in the Ode, yet so strict an Observer of it in his Compositions, that the Three Stanza's of Stesichorus became a common Proverb to express a thing universally known, (h) ne tria quidem Stesichori nosti; so that when any one had a mind to reproach another with  
excessive

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(b) Pind. Olym. 10. (c) Or from the Left to the Right, for the Scholiasts differ in that, as may be seen in Pind. Schol. Introd. ad Olym. And Alex. ab Alexandro, l. 4. c. 17. speaking of the Ceremony of the Chorus, says, *Cursum auspiciis a Leva dextrorsum—mox a dextra Levorsum*. But the Learned Schmidius takes part with the first Opinion, as more consistent with the Notions of the Ancients concerning the Motions of the Heavenly Spheres, and agreeable to Homer there cited by him. See Eras. Schmid. Prolegom. in Olym. & de Carmin. Lyric. (d) Pind. Schol. & Schmid. ibid. (e) Vid. Jul. Scal. Poetic. ad Fin. Cap. 97. l. 3. (f) Longin. de Sub. c. 13. (g) Quint. Inst. l. 10. c. 1. (h) ἢ τὰ τρία Στεσιχόρου γινώσκεις, de vehementer indocto & imperito dici solitum. Eras. Adag.

## Pindarique O D E.

*excessive Ignorance, he could not do it more effectually than by telling him, he did not so much as know the Three Stanza's of Stesichorus ; that is, did not know that an Ode ought to consist of a Strophé, an Antistrophé, and an Epode. If this was such a mark of Ignorance among them, I am sure we have been pretty long liable to the same Reproof ; I mean, in respect of our Imitations of the Odes of Pindar.*

*My Intention is not to make a long Preface to a short Ode, nor to enter upon a Dissertation of Lyrick Poetry in general : But thus much I thought proper to say, for the Information of those Readers whose Course of Study has not led 'em into such Enquiries.*

*I hope I shall not be so misunderstood, as to have it thought that I pretend to give an exact Copy of Pindar in this ensuing Ode ; or that I look upon it as a Pattern for his Imitators for the future : Far from such Thoughts, I have only given an Instance of what is practicable, and am sensible that I am as distant from the Force and Elevation of Pindar, as others have hitherto been from the Harmony and Regularity of his Numbers.*

*Again, we having no Chorus to sing our Odes, the Titles, as well as Use of Strophe, Antistrophe, and Epode, are Obsolete and Impertinent : And certainly there may be very good English Odes, without the Distinction of Greek Appellations to their Stanza's. That I have mention'd 'em here, and observ'd the Order of 'em in the ensuing Ode, is therefore only the more intelligibly to explain the extraordinary Regularity of the Composition of those Odes, which have been represented to us hitherto, as the most confus'd Structures in Nature.*

*However, tho' there be no necessity that our Triumphal Odes should consist of the Three afore-mention'd Stanza's ; yet if the Reader can observe that the great Variation of the Numbers in the Third Stanza (call it Epode, or what you please) has a pleasing Effect in the Ode, and makes him return to the First and Second Stanza's, with more Appetite, than he could do if always cloy'd with the same Quantities and Measures, I cannot see why some Use may not be made of Pindar's Example, to the great Improvement of the English Ode. There is certainly a Pleasure in beholding any Thing that has Art and Difficulty in the Contrivance ; especially, if it appears so carefully executed, that the Difficulty does not shew it self, 'till it is sought for ; and that the seeming Easiness of the Work, first sets us upon the Enquiry. Nothing can be call'd Beautiful without Proportion. When Symmetry and Harmony are wanting, neither the Eye nor the Ear can be pleas'd. Therefore certainly Poetry, which includes Painting and Musick, should not be destitute of 'em ; and of all Poetry, especially the Ode, whose End and Essence is Harmony.*

*Mr. Cowley, in his Preface to his Pindarique Odes, speaking of the Musick of Numbers, says, which sometimes (especially in Songs and Odes) almost without any thing else makes an Excellent Poet.*

*Having mention'd Mr. Cowley, it may very well be expected, that something should be said of him, at a time when the Imitation of Pindar is the*  
Theme

## A Discourse on the Pindarique O D E.

*Theme of our Discourse.* But there is that great Deférence due to the Memory, great Parts, and Learning of that Gentleman, that I think nothing should be objected to the Latitude he has taken in his Pindarique Odes. The Beauty of his Verses, are an Attonement for the Irregularity of his Stanza's; and tho' he did not imitate Pindar in the Strictness of his Numbers, he has very often happily copy'd him in the Force of his Figures, and Sublimity of his Stile and Sentiments.

~~Yet~~ I must beg leave to add, that I believe those irregular Odes of Mr. Cowley, may have been the principal, tho' innocent Occasion of so many deformed Poems since, which instead of being true Pictures of Pindar, have (to use the Italian Painters Term) been only Caricatura's of him, Resemblances that for the most part have been either Horrid or Ridiculous.

For my own part I frankly own my Error, in having heretofore mis-call'd a few irregular Stanza's a Pindarique Ode; and possibly, if others, who have been under the same Mistake, would ingenuously confess the Truth, they might own, that never having consulted Pindar himself, they took all his Irregularity upon trust; and finding their Account in the great Ease with which they could produce Odes, without being oblig'd either to Measure or Design, remain'd satisfy'd; and it may be were not altogether unwilling to neglect being deceiv'd.

Tho' there be little (if any thing) left of Orpheus but his Name, yet if \* Pausanias was well inform'd, we may be assur'd that Brevity was a Beauty which he most industriously labour'd to preserve in his Hymns, notwithstanding, as the same Author reports, that they were but few in Number.

The Shortness of the following Ode will, I hope, atone for the Length of the Preface, and in some measure for the Defects which may be found in it. It consists of the same Number of Stanza's with that beautiful Ode of Pindar, which is the first of his Pythicks; and tho' I was unable to imitate him in any other Beauty, I resolv'd to endeavour to Copy his Brevity, and take the Advantage of a Remark he has made in the last Strophé of the same Ode, which take in the Paraphrase of Sudorius.

Qui multa paucis stringere Commode  
Novere, morsus hi facile invidos  
Spernunt, & auris mensq; pura  
Omne supervacuum rejectat.

O D E.

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\* Bæotic. pag. 588.