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Saul, An Oratorio

Jennens, Charles

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Act I.

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S A U L,
AN ORATORIO.

ACT I. SCENE I.

AN EPINICION, or Song of Triumph, for the Victory over
Goliath and the Philistines.

I.

HOW excellent thy Name, O Lord,
In all the World is known!
Above all Heav'ns, O King ador'd,
How hast thou set thy glorious Throne!

II.

When thou to quell the Rebel Host
An Infant didst ordain,
Thy Rebels to the Child oppos'd
A Giant's dreadful Rage in vain.

III.

Along the Monster Atheist strode
With more than Human Pride,
And Armies of the Living God
Exulting in his Strength defy'd.

A 2

IV. *The*



IV.

*The Youth inspir'd by Thee, O Lord,
With Ease the Boaster slew,
Our fainting Courage soon restor'd,
And headlong drove that impious Crew.*

V.

*How excellent thy Name, O Lord,
In all the World is known!
Above all Heav'ns, O King, ador'd,
How hast thou set thy glorious Throne!*

Hallelujah.

SCENE II.

SAUL, JONATHAN, MERAB, MICHAL, &c. ABNER introducing
DAVID, High Priest.

Michal. He comes! ———

*O God-like Youth! by all confests'd,
Of Human Race the Pride!
O Virgin among Women blest,
Whom Heav'n ordains thy Bride!
But ah! how strong a Bar I see
Betwixt my Happiness and me!*

Abner. Behold, O King, the brave, victorious Youth,
And in his Hand the haughty Giant's Head.

Saul. Young Man, whose Son art thou?

David. The Son of Jesse,

Thy faithful Servant, and a Bethlemite.

Saul. Return no more to Jesse: Stay with me.

And as an Earnest of my future Favour
Thou shalt espouse my Daughter: Small Reward
Of such Desert! since to thy Arm alone
We owe our Safety, Peace, and Liberty.

DAVID.



D A V I D.

*O King, your Favours with Delight
I take, but must refuse your Praise :
For ev'ry pious Israelite
To God alone that Tribute pays.
Through Him we put to flight our Foes,
And in his Name*

We trod them under that against us rose.

Jonath. O early Piety ! O modest Merit !
In this Embrace my Heart bestows it self,
Henceforth, thou noble Youth, accept my Friendship,
And *Jonathan* and *David* are but one.

M E R A B.

*What abject Thoughts a Prince can have,
In Rank a Prince ! in Mind a Slave !*

Yet think with whom you stoop to link your self,
How poor in Fortune, and in Birth how low ! [*Aside to Jonath.*

J O N A T H A N.

Birth and Fortune I despise ! [*To Merab,*
From Virtue let my Friendship rise.
No Titles proud thy Stem adorn ; [*To David,*
Yet born of God is nobly born :
And of his Gifts so rich thy Store,
That Ophir to thy Wealth is poor.

High Pr. Go on, illustrious Pair ! your great Example
Shall teach our Youth to scorn the fordid World,
And set their Hearts on Things of real Worth.

I.

*While yet thy Tide of Blood runs high,
To God thy future Life devote :
Thy early Vigour all apply
His Glorious Service to promote.*

II. So



II.

*So shall thy Great Creator bleſs
And bid thy Days ſerenely flow :
So ſhall thy youthful Happineſs
In Age no Diminution know.*

III.

*With ſweet Reflection thou ſhalt taſte,
Declining gently to thy Tomb,
The Pleaſure of good Actions paſt,
And hope with Rapture Joys to come.*

Saul. Thou, *Merab*, firſt in Birth, be firſt in Honour :
Thine be the valiant Youth, whoſe Arm has fav'd
Thy Country from her Foes.

Merab. aſide.) O mean Alliance !

*My Soul rejects the Thought with Scorn,
That ſuch a Boy, 'till now unknown,
Of poor, Plebeian Parents born,
Should mix with Royal Blood his own !
Tho' Saul's Commands I can't decline,
I muſt prevent his low Deſign,
And ſave the Honour of his Line.*

MICHAEL.

*See with what a ſcornful Air
She the precious Gift receives !
Tho' e'er ſo Noble, or ſo Fair,
She cannot merit what he gives.
Ah ! lovely Youth ! waſt thou deſign'd
With that proud Beauty to be join'd ?*

SCENE

S C E N E III.

SAUL, MICHAL, &c. *Chorus of Women.*

Mich. Already see, the Daughters of the Land,
In joyful Dance, with Instruments of Musick
Come to congratulate your Victory.

C H O R U S of Women alternately.

I.

*Welcome, welcome, mighty King !
Welcome all who Conquest bring !*

II.

*Welcome, David, warlike Boy,
Author of our present Joy !*

III.

*Saul, who hast thy Thousands slain,
Welcome to thy Friends again !*

IV.

*David his Ten thousands slew ;
Ten thousand Praises are his due !*

Saul. What do I hear ? Am I then sunk so low,
To have this upstart Boy preferr'd before me ?
To him Ten thousands ! and to me but Thousands ?
What can they give him more ? except the Kingdom ?

*With Rage I shall burst his Praises to hear !
Oh ! how I both hate the Stripling, and fear !
What Mortal a Rival in Glory can bear ?*

} [Exit.]

S C E N E



S C E N E IV.

Jonath. Imprudent Women! your ill-tim'd Comparifons,
I fear, have injur'd him you meant to honour,
Saul's furious Look, as he departed hence,
Too plainly shew'd the Tempeft of his Soul.

Mich. 'Tis but his old Difefafe, which thou canft cure. [To David.

O take thy Harp, and as thou oft haft done,
From the King's Breaft expel the raging Fiend,
And footh his tortur'd Soul with Sounds Divine. [Exit David.

*Fell Rage and black Defpair poffeft
With horrid Sway the Monarch's Breaft ;
When David with Celestial Fire
Struck the fweet perfwafive Lyre :
Soft gliding down his ravish'd Ears,
The healing Sounds difpel his Cares ;
Defpair and Rage at once are gone,
And Peace and Hope refume the Throne.*

S C E N E V.

SAUL, DAVID, JONATHAN, MERAB, MICHAL, ABNER, *High
Priest*, ABIATHAR.

Abiath. Rack'd with Infernal Pains ev'n now the King
Comes forth, and mutters horrid Words, which Hell,
No human Tongue, has taught him.

D A V I D.

O Lord, *whoſe Mercies numberleſs
O'er all thy Works prevail,
Tho' daily Man thy Law tranſgreſs,
Thy Patience cannot fail :
If yet his Sin be not too great,
The buſy Fiend controul,
Yet longer for Repentance wait,
And heal his wounded Soul.*

Jonath.

Jonath. 'Tis all in vain, his Fury still continues :
With wild Distraction on my Friend he stares,
Stamps on the Ground, and seems intent on Mischief.

S A U L.

*A Serpent in my Bosom warm'd
Would sting me to the Heart ;
But of his Venom soon disarm'd,
Himself shall feel the Smart.
Ambitious Boy ! now learn, what Danger
It is to rouse a Monarch's Anger !*

[Throws his Javelin. Exit David.

Has he escap'd my Rage ?
I charge thee, *Jonathan*, upon thy Duty,
And All, on your Allegiance, to destroy
This bold, aspiring Youth ; for while he lives,
I am not safe. Reply not, but obey.

[Exit.

M E R A B.

*Capricious Man, in Humour lost,
By ev'ry Wind of Passion tost,
Now sets his Vassal on the Throne,
Then low as Earth he casts him down :
His Temper knows no middle State,
Extreme alike in Love or Hate.*

S C E N E VI.

J O N A T H A N.

O Filial Piety ! O Sacred Friendship !
How shall I reconcile you ? — Cruel Father !
Your just Commands I always have obey'd :
But to destroy my Friend ! the Brave, the Virtuous,

B

The



The God-like *David* ! *Israel's* Defender,
 And Terror of her Foes ! — to disobey You —
 What shall I call it ? — 'Tis an Act of Duty
 To God — to *David* — nay, indeed to You.

No, cruel Father, no :
Your hard Commands I can't obey..
Shall I with sacrilegious Blow
Take Pious David's Life away !
No ; with my Life I must defend
Against the World my best, my dearest Friend.

High Priest.

O Lord, whose Providence
Ever wakes for their Defence,
Who the Ways of Virtue choose ;
Let not thy faithful Servant fall
A Victim to the Rage of Saul,
Who hates without a Cause,
And, in Defiance of thy Laws,
His precious Life pursues..

C H O R U S.

Preserve him for the Glory of thy Name,
Thy People's Safety, and the Heathen's Shame.

The End of the First A C T.

