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## Andrew Marvell, 313 An Horatian Ode upon Cromwel's Return from Ireland

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### 313 An Horatian Ode upon Cromwel's Return from Ireland.

The forward Youth that would appear  
Must now forsake his *Muses* dear,  
Nor in the Shadows sing  
His Numbers languishing.  
5 'Tis time to leave the Books in dust,  
And oyl th'unused Armours rust:  
Removing from the Wall  
The Corslet of the Hall.  
So restless *Cromwel* could not cease  
10 In the inglorious Arts of Peace,  
But through adventrous War  
Urged his active Star.  
And, like the three-fork'd Lightning, first  
Breaking the Clouds where it was nurst,  
15 Did thorough his own Side  
His fiery way divide.  
For 'tis all one to Courage high  
The Emulous or Enemy;  
And with such to inclose  
20 Is more then to oppose.  
Then burning through the Air he went,  
And Pallaces and Temples rent:  
And *Caesars* head at last  
Did through his Laurels blast.  
25 'Tis Madness to resist or blame  
The force of angry Heavens flame:  
And, if we would speak true,

Much to the Man is due.  
Who, from his private Gardens, where  
30 He liv'd reserv'd and austere,

As if his highest plot  
To plant the Bergamot,  
Could by industrious Valour climbe  
To ruine the great Work of Time,  
35 And cast the Kingdome old  
Into another Mold.  
Though Justice against Fate complain,  
And plead the antient Rights in vain:  
But those do hold or break  
40 As Men are strong or weak.  
Nature that hateth emptiness,  
Allows of penetration less:  
And therefore must make room  
Where greater Spirits come.  
45 What Field of all the Civil Wars,  
Where his were not the deepest Scars?  
And *Hampton* shows what part  
He had of wiser Art.  
Where, twining subtile fears with hope,  
50 He wove a Net of such a scope,  
That *Charles* himself might chase  
To *Caresbrooks* narrow case.  
That thence the *Royal Actor* born  
The *Tragick Scaffold* might adorn  
55 While round the armed Bands  
Did clap their bloody hands.  
*He* nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable Scene:  
But with his keener Eye  
60 The Axes edge did try:  
Nor call'd the *Gods* with vulgar spight  
To vindicate his helpless Right,  
But bow'd his comely Head,  
Down as upon a Bed.  
65 This was that memorable Hour  
Which first assur'd the forced Pow'r.

So when they did design  
The *Capitols* first Line,  
A bleeding Head where they begun,  
70 Did fright the Architects to run;

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And yet in that the *State*  
Foresaw it's happy Fate.  
And now the *Irish* are asham'd  
To see themselves in one Year tam'd:  
75 So much one Man can do,  
That does both act and know.  
They can affirm his Praises best,  
And have, though overcome, confest  
How good he is, how just,  
80 And fit for highest Trust:  
Nor yet grown suffer with Command,  
But still in the *Republick's* hand:  
How fit he is to sway  
That can so well obey.  
85 He to the *Commons Feet* presents  
A *Kingdome*, for his first years rents:  
And, what he may, forbears  
His Fame to make it theirs:  
And has his Sword and Spoys ungirt,  
90 To lay them at the *Publick's* skirt.  
So when the Falcon high  
Falls heavy from the Sky,  
She, having kill'd, no more does search,  
But on the next green Bow to perch;  
95 Where, when he first does lure,  
The Falckner has her sure.  
What may not then our *Isle* presume  
While Victory his Crest does plume!  
What may not others fear  
100 If thus he crown each Year!  
A *Caesar* he ere long to *Gaul*,  
To *Italy* an *Hannibal*,  
And to all States not free  
Shall *Clymacterick* be.  
105 The *Pict* no shelter now shall find

Within his party-colour'd Mind;  
But from this Valour sad  
Shrink underneath the Plad:

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Happy if in the tufted brake  
110 The *English Hunter* him mistake;  
Nor lay his Hounds in near  
The *Caledonian* Deer.  
But thou the Wars and Fortunes Son  
March indefatigably on;  
115 And for the last effect  
Still keep thy Sword erect:  
Besides the force it has to fright  
The Spirits of the shady Night,  
The same *Arts* that did *gain*  
120 A *Pow'r* must it *maintain*.

## NOTES

Title Horatian] *1681MS* Horation *1681*

**313** Title *Horatian Ode* not only an imitation of the manner of the Roman poet, particularly his *Odes*, IV. 4, but also an imitation of the strategy of his poetry which presents the reader with sometimes conflicting ideas, leaving the reader to resolve them

**313** Text: Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous Poems*, 1681, see no. 311, pp. 115–18. Edition: ed. Elizabeth Story Donno, see no. 311, pp. 55–8; ed. David Norbrook and H. R. Woudhuysen, *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, 1992, pp. 166–9 (no. 45) and textual commentary, p. 773.

In all but two surviving copies of the 1681 edition of Marvell's *Poems*, the pages containing this, and two other poems on Cromwell, are cancelled. These copies are in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California and the British Library. A copy in the Bodleian Library (MS Eng. Poet. d. 49) contains MS corrections and additions to the volume. In these MS additions, this poem is divided into four-line stanzas (thus emphasizing its relation to Sir Richard Fanshawe's translation of Horace, *Odes*, IV. 4). These variants from the printed 1681 text are identified as *1681MS*:

8 *Corslet* breastplate of armour

15 thorough] *1681MS* through *1681*

18 *Emulous* jealous

19 *inclose* limit, restrain

23 *Caesars* the king's

32 *Bergamot* herb, a variety of pear

35 Kingdome] *1681* Kingdoms *1681MS*

47 *Hampton* negotiations at Hampton Court (the 'Hampton Propositions') in the late summer of 1647, in the course of which the King rejected the 'Heads of Proposals' presented by the army in July, regarded as the work of Cromwell among other army leaders

52 *Caresbrooks* Carisbrook Castle, where Charles was held

68 *Capitols first Line* a story from Livy, *Annals*, I. 55. 6

83 *sway* rule

85 *Commons*] commons 1681MS Common 1681

89 *Spoys* plunder, trophies

94 *Bow* bough

100 crown] crowns 1681MS

101 *Caesar* Julius Caesar

102 *Hannibal* see Appendix 1

104 *Clymacterick* a fateful, dangerous, or pivotal point

105 *Pict* Scot

106 *party-colour'd* duplicitous

108 *Plad* distinctively Scottish loose cloak, forerunner of the kilt

109 *tufted* beaten through by the 'tuft-hounds', who start the deer

110 *mistake* to cross onto the scent of a fresh deer

112 *Caledonian* Scots

115 *last effect* the hunting metaphor is still running: Cromwell the huntsman ought to dispatch the deer with his sword. The hunt appears to have gone wrong

117-19 compare Aeneas, drawing his sword to keep the ghosts at bay, *Aeneid*, VI. 294