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1901
PARADISE LOST.
PARADISE LOST.

BY

JOHN MILTON.

WITH NOTES BY

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART.

Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in our Milton met?
A genius universal as his theme;
Astonishing as Chaos; as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair; as Heaven sublime!—Thomson.

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1851.
TO

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH AND ROBERT SOUTHEY

THIS VOLUME

IS APPROPRIATELY DEDICATED.
To endeavour to remedy that which has been well denominated by the first literary authority in England, "a disgraceful defect in literature" — the want of such an edition, as he flatters himself, the present will be found — to restore Milton's loftiest poem to its original purity; bringing it, by means of luminous critical and explanatory notes, within the comprehension of his humblest countrymen, and at a price which will enable all to become possessed of it: — in fine, to do justice to the fame of the greatest epic poet of any age or country, by removing the prejudices which party zeal and hate had heaped on his memory; — was pronounced a bold, if not an impracticable undertaking. That the publisher has been enabled to achieve all this, and bring the work to a triumphant close (although at an outlay which must, in the event of failure, have been ruinous), will ever be to him a source of the proudest gratulation. That he has done so, he has the collective testimony of the press, without a single exception, — of an already extensive and daily increasing circulation, — of many distinguished friends, whose expressions of approbation, and still more substantial aid, he regrets he is not permitted to acknowledge more openly.

He takes, however, this opportunity of expressing his general obligations to his reviewers, as well as to those whose private applause is equally gratifying. To the venerable and highly-endowed Editor, Sir Egerton Brydges, for his unwearied labour, research, and assiduity — to the Laureate, but for whose kindly encouragement and countenance, it is probable
the issue would not have been contemplated—to the classical taste and research of Mr. James Boaden, by whom the text has been diligently collated and revised from every existing edition, and whose critical sagacity has enabled him to detect many glaring errors in the established readings.

With these advantages; enriched by all that scholarship, art, beauty of materials, and elegance of exterior can bestow; this (it may without presumption be named) FIRST COMPLETE AND PERFECT EDITION OF MILTON'S PARADISE LOST, is ushered to public approbation and patronage.

3, SAINT JAMES'S SQUARE,
November 1835.
My task, I hear, is done. No call on me
Remains, my mighty labour to conclude.
In sickness, in calamity, in age,
And destitution;—in a foreign clime,
I have gone through my work of sanctity;
Though sometimes by my fear or toil subdued:
And sometimes, dazzled by the heavenly page,
I have sunk lifeless at its rays sublime.
Oft did I pause, and oft despondent turn'd,
Ere yet I entered on the dread career;
But fitfully the flame within me burn'd:
Yet now and then a spirit to mine ear
Came; and thus said, as by a voice from Heaven:—
"Follow thy youthful vow, and thou shalt be forgiven!"

Geneva,
October 1835.
LIFE OF MILTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE POET'S BIRTH—CHARACTER OF THE TIMES—HIS EARLY EDUCATION AND PROPENSITIES.

The nativity of John Milton was cast at an epoch when mighty events were brewing in the political institutions of England, and when poetry had been advanced to greater perfection than it has ever since reached, except by his own voice. Spenser had not been dead ten years, and Shakspeare was still living. In these two all the inexhaustible abundance of poetical thought, imagery, and language was to be found, even if all other fountains had been shut.

It was a stirring time for all minds, in every department. The whole reign of Queen Elizabeth had been full of gallantry, adventure, and great-mindedness;—of all that captivates the imagination, and all that exercises and elevates the understanding; and it was as profound in learning as original and brilliant in native faculties of the intellect; but there was the leaven of an unholy and factious spirit mixed with it. The Puritans had been working under-ground and above-ground with incessant industry, intrigue, and talent; nor were the Papists more quiet.

Amid these fermenting elements of discord, grown into a frightful strength under the government of the pusillanimous, indiscreet, and pedantic monarch, James I., was our great poet born on the 9th of December, 1608, in the parish of Allhallows, Bread Street, London; the son of John Milton, scrivener. His mother's name was Caston, derived, according to the best authority, from a Welsh family.*

Milton's grandfather was under-ranger of the forest of Shotover, near Halton, in Oxfordshire, in which neighbourhood his family was ancient, but had lost their estates in the civil contests of the houses of York and Lancaster. This grandfather was a rigid Papist; and, having disinherited his son for embracing the Protestant faith, though he had educated him at Christ Church, Oxford, this disinherison drove him to the meeker profession of a scrivener.

His father was advanced to more than a middle age when the poet was born. He was eminent for his skill in music.

It is a curious question, how far accidental circumstances operated on the bent and colours of Milton's genius. Probably he was early educated in Puritan principles. His earliest tutor, Young, was a rigid and zealous Puritan; yet there are many traits in his early taste and early poems which make us hesitate as to his boyish attachment to this sect. His ruling love of poetry and classical erudition was not very congenial with it: his love of the theatre, and all feudal and chivalrous magnificence, was alien to it. There are, however, a few passages in his Lycidas concordant with it.

It does not seem to me that there are any traces of these Calvinistic prejudices at the time he visited Italy, unless his friendship to Charles Deodate be a sign of it; which I think, looking at the poetical addresses to him, it is not. The nature of Milton's lofty temper, which could not endure submission even to college-discipline, is the more probable cause.

As the resistance to monarchical authority grew daily bolder, more obstinate, and more bitter, the chance is that Milton heated his mind, and became more fixed in his

* What becomes of the heralds, who always omit what they most ought to tell? Witness the details of pedigree of Spenser and Milton, both of gentiligious descent; and the chief of the former living at that time in great affluence and magnificence at Althorp, allied to all the highest nobility!
native love of liberty and self-government. As he was a reader of the most abstruse books, he entangled himself in the webs of controversy.

When King James died, March 27th, 1625, Milton was yet a boy, aged sixteen. That monarch could impress upon the poet nothing but scorn and hatred: his tyranny provoked rebellion; his cowardice encouraged it: his odious and imbecile pedantry was in itself a ground of aversion, to a great mind: and these unlucky aids were added to a flame already strong enough to burst from its bondage. The character of the court was notoriously corrupt and prodigal: the favourite Villiers was alone sufficient to rouse all great and good minds against it: the preceding favourite, Carr, had been still worse: there was not only a want of principle, but of talent, in the administration. England had become the laughing-stock of foreign powers: the internal policy was full of violent abuses: the gentry were discontented; their swords were rusting, and pauperus began to mount over their heads; the order of knighthood was cheapened and prostituted: the Church lost the veneration it had till now possessed; and sects, that had hitherto lurked in holes and corners, arose and displayed themselves openly.

The cruel and infamous sacrifice of the life of the heroë Sir Walter Raleigh had filled the nation with horror and disgust; and Bacon's mixture of glory and littleness had taken from high station half its respect and all its splendour. All the relics of the public men of Queen Elizabeth's lofty reign had gradually disappeared. Buckhurst, Cecil, Egerton, Coke, the great navigators and soldiers; the gallant courtiers of ancient nobility; and all the leading names of commoners, rich in domains as well as in blood,—who carried more respect and influence than most of the best of modern nobility. Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, was immured a prisoner in the Tower: the head of the Howards had not recovered attaint and confiscation: the Veres, Cliffords, Nevils, Staffords, &c., were all impoverished: the Courtenays had lost all their honours: young Essex was oppressed, insulted, and spurned. The sharers of the spoils of Church lands alone of the former century were rich.

This state of things encouraged those political opinions which Milton's tutor, Young, had probably instilled into him: but his acquaintance with the Countess of Derby at Harefield, and the Earl of Bridgewater, her son-in-law, must be supposed to have counteracted them for a time.

There can be little doubt that the poet's travels to Italy increased this counteraction. Milton left England in 1638, in his thirtieth year; was presented to Grotius, at Paris, by Lord Scudamore, the English ambassador; proceeded to Nice, embarked for Genoa, and thence through Leghorn and Pisa to Florence. Here he stayed two months: hence he passed through Sienna to Rome, where he stayed another two months. On quitting Rome he visited Naples: it was his purpose also to have visited Sicily and Athens; but the intelligence of the disturbances which had broken out in his own country made him think of home.

He passed back through Rome, where he again stayed two months; and then again to Florence, where also he stopped two months. He now visited Lucca; then went across the Apennines, by Bologna and Ferrara, to Venice: here he sojourned for a month; and then travelled by Verona and Milan to Geneva. His way back lay through France: having been absent about fifteen months.

I have brought these facts together rather out of order, because I believe they were the preservatives of Milton's poetical genius against his political adoptions. I now go back to his earliest manhood. From school the poet was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, in February, 1624, Oct. 16, just before King James's death. Already, or about this time, he had commenced his poetical character, for he had paraphrased two of the Psalms, cxiv. and cxxvi. In this latter are some fine stanzas, indicative of the character of his future genius; witness this speaking of the Creator:—

Who by his wisdom did create
The painted heavens so full of state:
Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the watery main:
Who by his all-commanding might
Did fill the new-made world with light,
And caused the golden-tressed sun
All the day long his course to run;
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The horned moon to shine by night
Amongst her spangled sisters bright.
He with his thunder-clasping hand
Smote the first-born of Egypt land;
And, in despite of Pharaoh tell,
He brought from thence his Israel.
The ruddy waves he left in twain
Of the Erythrean main:
The floods stood still, like walls of glass,
While the Hebrew bands did pass:
But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power.
His chosen people he did bless
In the wasteful wilderness:
In bloody battle he brought down
Kings of prowess and renown:
He foil'd both Senn and his host,
That raved the Amorran coast:
And large-limb'd Og he did subdue,
With all his over-hardy crew;
And to his servant Israel
He gave their land, therein to dwell.

In 1625, also, Milton wrote his poem "On the death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough," said to be his niece, daughter of his sister Phillips. It has some fine stanzas, but a little quaint and far-fetched. Take these for instance:

v.
Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb;
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low-delve'd tomb,
Could heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
Oh, no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that show'd thou wast divine.

vi.
Resolve me, then, O soul, most purely bless'd!
(If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear.)
Tell me, bright spirit, where'er thou hoverest,
Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
Or in the Elysian fields, if such there were;
Oh, say me true, if thou wert mortal wight,
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight?

Thomas Warton observes of this Ode, that "on the whole, from a boy of seventeen, it is an extraordinary effort of fancy, expression, and versification: even in the conceits, which are many, we perceive strong and peculiar marks of genius. I think Milton has here given a very remarkable specimen of his ability to succeed in the Spenserian stanza: he moves with great ease and address amidst the embarrassment of a frequent return of rhyme."

Several other poems of Milton, both English and Latin, were written at college: from all these extraordinary compositions it appears that the tone, richness, and character of Milton's genius were always the same from the age of fifteen; and probably even much earlier: it was always mixed up with both classical and abstruse learning; and with an infusion from the poetry of the Bible. His Latin verses had less of the wild, the sublime, and the visionary, than his English, which of course arose from the difference of his models, and the different characters of the respective languages. The feudal institutions, the enthusiasm and splendour of chivalry, and the superstitions of the dark ages, had introduced a new school of poetry in Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Sackville, Spenser, and Shakespeare, more suited to Milton's genius; which yet he was deterred from introducing in compositions, where he endeavoured to rival the ancient classics. There is more of what would be by cold minds called sober thoughts, sentiments, and images in his Latin productions than in his vernacular; but there certainly is not the same raciness, vigour, and picturesqueness.

His Epistles to his friend Charles Deodate are, indeed, very beautiful: they relate
his studies, his amusements, his feelings, his ambitions; but these have more of amiable virtue in them than of imaginative richness.

From one of these poems it comes out that he was rusticated from his college: the cause has been speculated upon with various comments and conclusions, according to the temperaments and political and personal prejudices of the censors; but I have no doubt that Mr. Mitford's opinion is the correct one. Milton, with a haughty spirit, and a consciousness of his own great genius and learning, would not submit to academical discipline. The line—

Ceteraque ingenio non subeunda nec—

obviously means nothing but a repugnance to the observation of those petty formalities and rules which irritate and insult great minds: it is absurd to construe it to have been corporal punishment.

He retired to his father's villa at Horton, near Colebrook, in Middlesex, glad to quit the dulness of the reedy Cam; and gave himself up entirely to the literature of his own taste in his exile—except during occasional visits to the capital to enjoy the theatres, and the conversation of his friends. His college was glad to have him back again, conscious of the honour he did them by his mighty gifts and acquirements of intellect. But at Horton he says of himself,

Tempora nam licet hic placidis dare libera Musis,

Et totam rapiunt me, mea vita, libri.

Excipit hinc fascam simoni epim pompa theatri,

Et vocat ad planus garrula sceua suos.

Warton says, "Milton's Latin poems may be justly considered as legitimate classical compositions, and are never disgraced with such language and such imagery as Cowley's. Cowley's Latinity, dictated by an irregular and unrestrained imagination, presents a mode of diction, half Latin and half English. It is not so much that Cowley wanted a knowledge of the Latin style, but that he suffered that knowledge to be perverted and corrupted by false and extravagant thoughts. Milton was a more perfect scholar than Cowley, and his mind was more deeply tintured with the excellences of ancient literature: he was a more just thinker, and therefore a more just writer: in a word, he had more taste, and more poetry, and consequently more propriety. If a fondness for the Italian writers has sometimes infected his English poetry with false ornaments, his Latin verses, both in diction and sentiment, are at least free from gross depravations."

"Some of Milton's Latin poems were written in his first year at Cambridge, when he was only seventeen: they must be allowed to be very correct and manly performances for a youth of that age; and, considered in that view, they discover an extraordinary copiousness and command of ancient fable and history. I cannot but add that Gray resembles Milton in many instances: among others, in their youth they were both strongly attached to the cultivation of Latin poetry."

Such was Milton's boyhood and youth; so predominant was his genius from the first. It was at Horton that Milton seems to have meditated an Epic poem on King Arthur, or some other part of the old British story. See "Epitaphium Dannonis" (Deodatus), and "Epistola ad Mansum."

In his "Elegia in adventum Veris," written in his twentieth year, the poet tells us that his poetical powers revived with the spring.

Milton's early love of the theatre has been already mentioned; Warton also observes this, and refers to "L'Allegro," v. 131: but in another place the critic remarks, that his warmest poetical predilections were at last totally obliterated by civil and religious enthusiasm. Milton's writings afford a striking example of the strength and weakness of the same mind. Seduced by the gentle eloquence of fanaticism, he listened no more to the "wild and native wood-notes of Faney's child." In his "Iconoclastes" he censures King Charles for studying "one, whom we well know was the closet companion of his solitude, William Shakespeare."

Nothing could be farther than Milton was, in his own early poetry, from this sour puritanism. In his "Ode at a Solemn Musick," he addresses the harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse, to "wed their divine sounds:"—
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure consent,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow;
And the cherubick host, in thousand quires,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires.
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms,
Singing everlastingly, &c.

Here is an anticipation of the "Paradise Lost."

Again: in his "Address to his Native Language," at a vacation exercise in the college, anno actatis 19, he says,—

But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy choicest treasure;
Not those new-fangled toys and trimming slight,
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight;
But call those richest robes and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some graver subject use;
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound;
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity,
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire: &c.

"Here," Warton again observes, "are strong indications of a young mind, anticipating the subject of the 'Paradise Lost,' if we substitute Christian for Pagan ideas. He was now deep in the Greek poets."

The style, the picturesqueness of language, the character of the imagery, which Milton adopted from the first, was peculiar to himself. I do not say that many of the words, and even images, might not be found scattered in preceding poets, as Spenser, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Joshua Sylvester's Du Bartas; but they could not be found combined into a uniform and unbroken texture, nor with the same uniformity of elevated and spiritual thought. In almost all precedent poets they are patches. That Milton was minutely familiar with the poems of all his celebrated predecessors is sufficiently evident; but so far as he used them, he only used them as ingredient particles. Spenser is rich and picturesque, but Milton has a character distinct from him. Milton's texture is more massy: the gold is weightier: he has a haughtier solemnity.

CHAPTER II.
Critical Account of Milton's College Poetry.

Though there were many things which had a tendency to make Milton in his boyhood and first youth discontented with the social institutions of his country, as they then displayed themselves in all their abuses; yet the relics of former greatness still remained in such preservation as to give full force to the imagination: the names, the feudal history, the trophies of former magnificence, were all fresh. Though King James was mean, pedantic, and corrupt, King Charles had a royal spirit, and a benevolent, accomplished mind: he loved literature and the arts, and had subtle, if not grand, abilities. At this time, therefore, Milton's love of monarchial and aristocratical splendour was contending with his puritanic education, and his personal hatred of arbitrary power: his rich imagination and his stern judgment were at variance: his early poems rarely, if ever, touch upon sectarianism: Spenser and Shakespeare, courts,
castles, and theatres, did not agree with Calvinistic rigours and formalities. Milton's enthusiasm was, as Warton observes, the enthusiasm of the poet, not of the puritan.

At this time he had more of description and less of abstract thought: that sublime elevation of axiomatic wisdom was not yet reached; but from his earliest years he appears to have been conversant and delighted with the tone and expressions of the Hebrew poetry: his grand and inimitable "Hymn on the Nativity" proves this. In that hymn is every poetical perfection, mingled with a sort of prophetic solemnity, which fills us with a religious awe: the nervous harmony and climax of the lines are also admirable. It was written in 1629, when he was in his twenty-first year, probably as a college exercise. Mark this stanza:—

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstain'd with human blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

Or these two stanzas:

The oracles are dumb;
No voice, or hideous hum,
Runs through the arched roof in words decerving;
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the stEEP of Delphos leaving
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent:
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

Dr. Joseph Warton observes here: "attention is irresistibly awakened and engaged by the air of solemnity and enthusiasm that reigns in this stanza and some that follow. Such is the power of true poetry, that one is almost inclined to believe the superstitious real."

I cannot doubt that this hymn was the eponymous prelude of that holy and inspired imagination which produced the "Paradise Lost," nearly forty years afterwards.

I am not aware that our young bard had any prototype in this sort of ode: the form, the matter, the imagery, the language, the rhythm, are all new. Milton seems himself in the state of wonder and awe of the shepherds, and of all those whom he describes as affected by this miracle. The trembling, the fervour, the blaze, is true inspiration. In this state, the poet, visited by heavenly appearances, must have forgot all worldly fear, and written at this early age solely after his own ideas. The manner in which he describes the dim superstitions of the false oracles is quite magical.

I mention these things here as illustrative of Milton's life. We must consider him now, when he had scarcely reached manhood, as already a perfect poet: he had stamped his power; and was entitled to take his own course accordingly in future life. Good words and pleasing thoughts may easily be worked into harmonious verse; but this is not poetry, I know nothing in which the genuine spell of poetry more breaks out than in the hymn I have here been praising. To show this, I must cite one more stanza:—

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue:
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king
In dismal dance about the furnace blue:
The brutal gods of Nile as fast,  
Isis, and Osiris, and the dog Anubis, haste.

"These dreadful circumstances," says Warton, "are here endowed with life and action; they are put in motion before our eyes, and made subservient to a new purpose of the poet by the superinduction of a poetical fiction, to which they give occasion. Milton, like a true poet, in describing the Syrian superstitions, selects such as were most susceptible of poetical enlargement; and which, from the wildness of their ceremonies, were most interesting to the fancy."

There are magical words of the same character in almost every stanza. There is not a finer line in the whole range of descriptive poetry than this:—

In dismal dance about the furnace blue.

Yet this ode Johnson passes over in silence. Milton was already in a state of mental fervour, in which all the materials of poetry were spiritualized into a pure golden flame ascending in glory to the skies.

Read also the two following lines, where the poet speaks of the flight of Osiris:—

In vain with timbrel'd anthems dark  
The sable-stole sorcerers bear his worship'd ark.

We cannot reason upon the effect of such combinations of words,—the charm is indefinable. Into what a temperament of aerial power must the author have been worked! Well might this sublime priest of the muses then exclaim,

Nee duri libet usque minas perfore magistri,  
Cateraque ingenio non subeunda meo.

No notice has been handed down how this extraordinary performance was received; it seems yet to have produced no fame to him. When he retired to his father's house at Horton next year, he retired as one who had yet done nothing. His Latin poems want the solemnity, the sublimity, the enthusiasm, the wildness, the imaginativeness, of these English, in which the spirit of Dante and Spenser already began to show itself, moulded up with a character of his own. But Ovid was a poet of a more whimsical and undignified kind, of whom it was strange that he should have been fond, but whom his Latin verses almost everywhere show to have been a great favourite with him.

When we see to what holy subjects and what holy imagery Milton's mind was turned, there is reason for some surprise that he should still have had it in contemplation to produce an epic poem on the inferior and comparatively puerile theme of King Arthur, which no imaginative invention could have invested with the same dignity; when even chivalry had not yet arrived at its historic grandeur, and when everything must have had a fabulousness which shocked probability. This is the more extraordinary, because Milton, though intimately conversant with the old romances, was still more familiar with the spirit, the language, the sublimity of the Sacred Story. It is clear that he was not frightened by the difficulty of duly treating this awful subject, from the manner in which he touched upon it in his majestic hymn, where he showed himself a master of all its mysterious tones. Had he at this time taken subjects from the Bible for a series of odes and hymns, he might even have excelled himself.

He has been supposed not to have had a lyrical ear: nothing can be a greater mistake. The arrangement of his stanza, and the climax of his rhymes in this hymn, are perfect. To my perception there is no other lyrical stanza in our language so varied, so musical, and so grand. The Alexandrian close is like the swelling of the wind when the blast rises to its height.

The poet, perhaps, already grasped at too immense a circuit of human learning; he might be at this early age darkening his mind with the factitious subtleties of politics and theology, which might overlay the sublime and inimitable fire of the Muse. It seems as if he pursued the most abstruse, dry, and puzzling tracks of study. It is indeed to be remarked, that in most of his poems, there is occasional over-fondness for allusion to these blind parts of learning. Life is not long enough for everything; nor can the most ardent flame of the intellect entirely overcome an excessive superincumbence of dead matter.
Though Milton's Latin poetry has been remarked not generally to partake of the character of his English, it has some exceptions. Warton observes of his poem "In Quintum Novembri,"—a college exercise,—that "it contains a council, conspiracy, and expedition of Satan, which may be considered as an early and promising prolonson of the bard's genius to the 'Paradise Lost.'"

In this poem the cave of Phoebus (Murther) and Prodotes (Treason) with its inhabitants, are finely imagined, and in the style of Spenser.

"There is," says Warton, "great poetry and strength of imagination in supposing that Murther and Treason often fly as alarmed from the inmost recesses of their own horrid cavern, looking back, and thinking themselves pursued."

In his seventeenth year Milton wrote a poem, ("In Obitum Praesulis Eliensis,") on Dr. Nicholas Fenton, bishop of Ely, who died 5th October, 1626. In the midst of his lamentations he supposes himself carried to heaven. Cowper shall give the general reader a taste of it; for as Warton, candid in his very admiration, observes, "this sort of imagery, so much admired in Milton, appears to me to be much more practicable than many readers seem to suppose."

I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
And soar'd with angels to the stars,
Like him of old, to whom 'twas given
To mount on fiery wheels to heaven,
Boote's wagon, slow with cold,
Appall'd me not; nor to behold
The sword that vast Orion draws,
Or e'en the Scorpion's horrid claws, &c. &c.

The same elegant and classical commentator remarks, that "the poet's natural disposition, so conspicuous in the 'Paradise Lost,' and even in his prose works, for describing divine objects, such as the bliss of the saints, the splendour of heaven, and the music of the angels, is perpetually breaking forth in some of the earliest of his juvenile poems, and here more particularly in displaying the glories of heaven, which he locally represents, and clothes with the brightest material decorations: his fancy, to say nothing of the Apocalypse, was aided and enriched with descriptions in romances."

The next poem, "Naturam non pati senium," a college exercise, is also praised by Warton. He says that it "is replete with fanciful and ingenious allusions. It has also a vigour of expression, a dignity of sentiment, and elevation of thought, rarely found in very young writers."

The poem consists of sixty-nine lines. The whole is beautiful. In answer to those who assert the liability of nature to old age, the poet says,

At Pater Omnipotens, fundatis fortes astra,
Consuluit rerum summae, ceterisque peregit
Pondere fatorum lanceae, atque ordine summo
Singula perpetuum jussit servare tenorem.
Veluitur hinc lapa maundi rota prima diurno ;
Raptat et ambitos sociâ vertigine exulos.
Tardior haud solito Saturnus, et acer ut olim
Fulmineum rutitâ cristâ casside Mavors.
Floridus aternum Phoebus juvenilis coruscat,
Nec foavit effectus loca per declivia terras
Devexo tenone Deus; sed semper amictâ
Lace potens, eadem carrit per signa rotarum.
Surgit odoratis pariter formosus ab Indis,
Etherem pecus albenti qui cogit Olympo,
Mane vocans, et serus agens in pascua eoth:
Temporis et gemino disperit regna colore.

No! the Almighty Father surer laid
His deep foundations, and providing well
For the event of all, the scales of Fate
Suspended, in just equipoise, and bade
His universal works, from age to age,
One tenour hold, perpetual undisturb'd.
Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
Continual, day by day, and with it bears
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In social measure swift the heavens around.
Nor tardier now is Saturn than of old;
Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
Phoebus, his vigour unimpar'd, still shows
The effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
A downward course, that he may warm the vales;
But ever rich in influence, runs his road,
Sign after sign, through all the heavenly zone.
Beautiful, as at first, ascends the star
From odoriferous Ind, whose office is
To gather home betimes the ætherial flock,
To pour them over the skies again at eve,
And to discriminate the night and day.—Cowper.

Gray, a century afterwards, wrote tripos verses, at Cambridge, on the subject—
"Anne Luna est habitabilis?"

In 1627, anno aetatis 18, Milton wrote his elegy, "Ad Thomam Junium præceptorem suum, apud mercatores Anglicos Hamburgae agentes, Hastoris munere fungentem." This Thomas Young was Milton's tutor before he went to St. Paul's school. He was a Puritan, of Scotch birth. He returned to England in 1628, and was afterwards preferred by the Parliament to the mastership of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1644, whence he was ejected for refusing the engagement. He died, and was buried at Stow-market, in Suffolk, where he had been vicar thirty years. From Young, Milton says that he received his first introduction to poetry.

Primus ego Aonios, illo praenunte, recessus
Lustralam, et bidi sacra vireta jugi;
Pie riousque haus exlatices, Clioque favente,
Castalio sparsi liqua ter ora mero.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUBJECT OF MILTON'S COLLEGE POETRY CONTINUED.

It does not appear at what exact date Milton wrote his beautiful Latin poem to his father (who lived till 1641), excusing his devotion to the Muses: it was probably before he left Cambridge. Though it assumes that his father did not oppose his pursuits, yet I think we may infer that he had endeavoured to persuade him to occupy himself with some lucrative profession:—

Nec tu perge, precor, sacras contemnere Musas, &c.

The poet ends in this noble manner:—

Et vos, o nostri, juvenia carmina, iusus,
Si modi perpetuos sperare audefitus annos,
Et domini superesse rego, luxemque suer,
Nec spissos rapient oblivia nigra sub Orco;
Porsitan has laudes, decantatunqie parentis
Nomen, ad exemplum, sero serravitæ avo.

This is an aspiration which Warton praises with congenial enthusiasm, and which was duly fulfilled to its utmost extent.

This poem may be taken as perfectly biographical, as well as poetical; I think it proper, therefore, to give the whole poem, as translated by Cowper.

TO HIS FATHER.

(TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM COWPER.)

O, that Pieria's spring would through thy breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood!
That, for my venerable father's sake,
All manner themes renounced, my Muse on wings
Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
For thee, my Father! howsoe'er it please,
She frames this slender work; nor know I aught
That may thy gifts more suitably requite;

* See Mitford's Poetical Dedication to his edition of Parnell.
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude;
But such as I possess, I send thee all:
This page presents thee in their full amount
With thy son's treasures, and the sun is nought;
Nought save the riches that from airy dream,
In secret grooves and in laurel bowers,
I have by golden Clio's gift acquired.

Verse is a work divine: despise not thou
Verse, therefore, which evinces (nothing more)
Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespeaks him animated from above.
The gods love verse: the infernal powers themselves
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the slades.
In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale
Tremulous sibyl, make the future known:
And he who sacrifices, on the shrine
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threatening bull,
And when he spreads his recking entrails wide
To scrutinize the fates enveloped there.
We too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies, (and one eternal now
Shall be the only measure of our being),
Crown'd all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the sturvy firmament resound:
And even now the fiery spirit pure,
That wheels you circling orbs, directs, himself,
Their mazy dance with melody of verse
Unutterable, immortal; hearing which,
Huge Opheius holds his hiss suppress'd.
Orion, soften'd, drops his ardent blade;
And Atlas stands unconscious of his load
Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
Luxurious dainties, destined to the gulf
Immense of gluttony, were known, and ere
Lycaon deluged yet the temperate board.
Then sat the bard a customary guest,
To share the banquet; and his length of locks
With beechen honours bound, proposed in verse
The character of heroes, and their deeds
To imitation: sung of chaos old;
Of nature's birth; of gods that crept in search
Of acorns fallen, and of the thunder-bolt
Not yet produced from Etna's fiery cave:
And what avails, at last, tune without voice.
Devout of matter? Such may suit perhaps
The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear,
And the oaks follow'd. Not by chords alone
Well tune'd, but by resistless accents more
To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
He moved: these praises to his verse he owes.

Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless powers, by whom inspired, thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoin'd
In close affinity, we sympathize
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also; and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring god.
No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,
My Father! for thou never bad'st me tread
The beaten path and broad, that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid shamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous and ill observed;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, le'd'st me far away
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts
My Father! who, when I had open'd once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learn'd
The full-toned language of the eloquent Greeks.
Whose lofty music graced the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flowers
That Gallia boasts,—those too with which the smooth
Italian his degenerate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth;
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.
To sum the whole, whate'er the heaven contains,
The earth beneath it, and the air between,
The rivers and the rest less deep, may all
Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
Concurring with thy will; science herself,
All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head,
And offers me the lip, if dull of heart
I shrink not, and decline her gracious boon.
Go, now, and gather dross, ye scordid minds
That covet it: what could my Father more?
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode,—the heaven in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe
As they were insecure, who made the boy
The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all-dazzling wreath.
I, therefore, although last and least, my place
Among the learned in the laurel grove
Will hold, and where the conqueror's ivy twines,
Henceforth exempt from the unletter'd throng
Profane, nor even to be seen by such.
Away, then, sleepless Care! Complaint, away!
And Envy, with thy jealous leer malign!
Nor let the monster Calumny shoot forth
Her venom'd tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileged, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high for your viperean wound.
But thou, my Father! since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power.
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts.
And bear them treasured in a grateful mind.
Ye, too, the favourite postime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers! if ye dare
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To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorb'd
In the oblivious Leithian gulf,
 Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the fathers of a distant age.

In 1627, Milton wrote his first Latin elegy, addressed to Charles Deodate, in answer to a letter from Cheshire.

Milton's Latin epistles are written in the style of Ovid, but the matter and language not servilely borrowed from him. It seems to me extraordinary that Milton should have taken Ovid for his model. I agree with Warton that it would have been more probable that he would have taken Lucertius and Virgil, as more congenial to him. His poems, "Ad Patrem" and "Mansus," I consider much superior, and in a different manner. I cannot agree that "his inherent powers of fancy and invention display themselves" much in the "Elegies." I suspect that the greater part of them might have been by any classical scholar of lively talents, rich in learning, and practised in conversation. Not so "Ad Patrem" or "Mansus?" or some of the college exercises. But it is no more than justice to quote Warton's more favourable judgment on the sixth elegy, also addressed to Deodate. He says, "the transitions and corrections of this elegy are conducted with the skill and address of a master, and form a train of allusions and digressions, productive of fine sentiment and poetry. From a trifling and unimportant circumstance, the reader is gradually led to great and lofty imagery."

Of all the elegies, that which pleases me most, and which I consider far the most poetical, and at the same time the most original in its imagery, is the fifth elegy, "In Adventum Veris," etatis 20, 1629.

But even here the images have not the raciness and wildness of the descriptions in his English poems. Warton speaks of it as excellent in all the requisites of poetry.

Here Milton says that his poetical genius returns in the spring: in later life, he has said that the autumn was the season of his composition.

The last elegy is, perhaps, the best, next to that upon the Spring. Milton was apt to encumber his poetry with too many learned allusions, which unfitted them for the general readers, who might have taste and sympathy without much technical erudition.

At this period, Milton's mind, though his English poems prove that at times it was grave and deep, yet occasionally showed all the playfulness of his youthful age. I am not sure that I like his Ovidian graces. I prefer the solemn tones of his grander imagery; his picturesque descriptions of the scenery of nature: his voices among the lonely mountains; his evening contemplations, and his studious melancholy by the night-lamp. I prefer his allusions to the fables of Gothic romance rather than to the pantheon of the classics, which does not carry with it any part of our belief. Our imaginations can easily enter into the superstitions of the dark ages, which have far more of dignity and sublimity.

Perhaps Milton was at this date more proud of his scholarship than of his own original genius, as Petrarch to the last preferred his own Latin poems to his Italian, and

* Charles Deodate, the son of Theodore, was born in 1574, at Geneva, where the family still flourishes. See Galiffe's "Généalogies des Familles Genevoises." Theodore came to England, and married a lady of good birth and fortune. In 1609 he appears to have been physician to Henry, Prince of Wales, and the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Queen of Bohemia. He was brother of John Deodate, a learned Parthian divine, whose theological works, printed at Geneva, are well known. The family came from Lucera on account of their religion.

The following notice as to the family, I am favoured with by one of its members, a learned librarian in the Public Library of Geneva. It is extracted from a letter written by Theodore, the father of Charles Deodate, and dated London, 8th March, 1675.

"Nous avons tous le premier rang entre les familles nobles et patriciennes de tous tems a Lucques, et en sommes encore en possession; le pere de mon grand-pere lega en son palais l'empereur Charles Quint; il etoit alors gaulonlar; auquel tems mon grand-pere m'acquit, et l'empereur fut son parrain, et le houma Charles, et lui donna l'enseigne des diamans, qu'il portoit en son col, a son depart. Nous avons eu des generaux d'armee. Le general Diodati conserva Brissac a l'empereur contre l'armee des princes d'Allemagne; et fut tu de une ville de canon dans Munich en Baviere. A cette heure nous avons Don Jean Diodati, chevalier de Malthe, grand-prieur de Venise, cousin-germain de feu mon pere; &c."
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CHAPTER A

placed on them his hopes of fame. But in a language which is not our own we can never equally express our unborrowed thoughts. In bringing our phraseology to the test, we are driven to the train of mind of others. It is only when the language rises up with the mental conception that it is racy and vigorous. Hence, in my opinion, there is a radical defect in all modern Latin poetry—though it may still have great merit of a secondary sort. I deny that Milton shows in these Latin compositions, unless, perhaps, on some rare occasion, anything of the peculiarity of his native genius.

In his own tongue there are bursts of that mind which produced "Paradise Lost," even in his verses from the age of thirteen. Sometimes an image, sometimes an epithet displays it. A holy inspiration had already commenced in his mind. The tone of the sacred writings had taken fast possession of his enthusiasm: this perhaps was increased by his study of Dante. In Spenser there is more profusion and more flexibility, but not the same sombre and sublime cast. In Shakespeare also, there is more sweetness and less study; more of the "native woodland wild;" but not that solemn and divine strain, as if an oracle spoke. There is a sort of prophetic awe in the outbreathings of Milton, like that of the Hebrew poetry: yet there is nothing totally uncompounded with human learning. Perhaps it were better if it had been. It is occasionally encumbered.

Milton conforms everything to his own grand inventions. Shakespeare enters into the souls of others. Spenser brings them upon the stage in groups, in all the allegorical fabulousness of their outward forms. He is the painter of the times of chivalry, moralized into fictions of his own, which display the different virtues in the adventures of different knights; they form wonderful tales of inexhaustible variety,—giants, and enchanted castles, and imprisoned damsels, rescued by heroic courage and divine interference.

CHAPTER IV.

ON L’ALLEGRO AND IL PENSIEROSE.

Milton left the university of Cambridge in 1632, at the age of twenty-three, and retired to the villa of his father at Horton in Buckinghamshire: here he wrote those juvenile poems, which are the most celebrated. The exact date of the "L’Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," is not known: it is evident that they were suggested by a poem in Burton’s "Anatomy of Melancholy," and by a few beautiful stanzas of Beaumont and Fletcher. These poems are familiar to all: they are rich in picturesque description of natural imagery, selected and combined with the power of splendid genius, according to the opposite humours of cheerfulness and contemplative melancholy; and are the more attractive, because they paint Milton’s individual taste, character, and habits. The style of the scenery is principally adapted to the spot and neighbourhood where he now lived.

But if I may venture the opinion, I will own that these are not the compositions in which the peculiarity of the grandeur of Milton’s genius displays itself. Beautiful as these Odes are, there are others, besides Milton, who might have written them:—not many indeed. They have not the solemnity,—the dim and unearthly visions,—the awful and gigantic grandeur,—the prophetic enthusiasm,—the terrible roll and bound and swell of the "Hymn on the Nativity." The subject did not call for such merits:—but then, if they are excellent, they are excellent in an inferior walk.

Probably I shall be thought heterodox in this judgment. I much prefer "Il Penseroso" to "L’Allegro," as more solemn, more deep-coloured, and more original in its imagery. Perhaps the general merit of these two pieces lies more in a selection of rural pictures combined with taste, than in particular images,—except in a few passages of the latter poem. The metre wants variety and sonorousness.

The passages I chiefly allude to, are Contemplation—

down to

| Him that you soar on golden wing, |
| — the far-off curfew sound, |
| Over some wide-water’d shore, |
| Swinging slow with sullen roar. |
Again:

Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career;
down to the end.

In general, there is more of description than of sentiment, more of the material than of the immaterial, in these two compositions: but there are some parts of them which are very important to the illustration of the poet's character. The poet describes a very early period of the morning, "by selecting and assembling such picturesque objects," says Warton, "as were familiar to an early riser. He is waked by the lark, and goes into the fields: the sun is just emerging, and the clouds are still hovering over the mountains: the cocks are crowing, and, with their lively notes, scatter the lingering remains of darkness. Human labours and employments are renewed with the dawn of day: the hunter, formerly much earlier at his sport than at present, is beating the covert; and the slumbering morn is roused with the cheerful echo of hounds and horns; the mower is whetting his scythe to begin his work; the milk-maid, whose business is of course at daybreak, comes abroad singing; the shepherd opens his fold, and takes the tale of his sheep, to see if any were lost in the night," &c. line 67.

When he sees towers and battlements bosomed high in tufted trees, the same excellent commentator says, "it is the great mansion-house in Milton's early days, before the old-fashioned architecture had given way to modern arts and improvements. Turrets and battlements were conspicuous marks of the numerous new buildings of King Henry VIII., and of some rather more ancient, many of which yet remained in their original state unchanged and undecayed: nor was that style, in part at least, quite omitted in Inigo Jones's first manner; where only a little is seen, more is left to the imagination. These symptoms of an old palace, especially when thus disposed, have a greater effect than a discovery of larger parts, and even a full display of the whole edifice. The embosomed battlements, and the spreading top of the tall grove, on which they reflect a reciprocal charm, still farther interest the fancy from the novelty of combination; while just enough of the towering structure is shown to make an accompaniment to the tufted expanse of venerable verdure, and to compose a picturesque association. With respect to their rural residence, there was a coyness in our gothic ancestors: modern seats are seldom so deeply embushed: they disclose all their glories at once; and never excite expectation by concealment, by gradual approaches, and by interrupted appearances."

At line 131, the poet alludes to a stage worthy of his presence:

Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakspeare, fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

Milton had not yet gone such extravagant lengths in puritanism, as to join with his reforming brethren in condemning the stage.

By "trim gardens" (II Pens. i. 50), Milton means those gardens of elaborate artifice and extravagance, of which Bacon has given a description; some of which I still remember in existence, in my own boyhood, sixty years ago. There was a sort of magnificence and variety about them, in some respects more interesting than modern barrenness. I often wish them back:—the terraces, the slopes, the wilderness-walks, the mazes, the alleys, the garden-plots, the gravel-walks, the bowers, the summer-houses, the bowling-greens, have been too rudely and indiscriminately swept away.

Where the poet says, line 169,

Or call up him who left half-told
The story of Cambises's bold,

he expresses his admiration of Chaucer, "the father of English poetry," says Warton, "who is here distinguished by a story remarkable for the wildness of its invention; and hence Milton seems to make a very pertinent and natural transition to Spenser, whose 'Faery Queene,' although it externally professes to treat of tournaments and the trophies of knightly valour, of forests drear and terrific enchantments, is yet allegorical, and contains a remote meaning concealed under the veil of a fabulous story and of a typical narrative, which is not immediately perceived. Spenser sings in sage and
solemn tunes, with respect to his morality, and the dignity of his stanza. In the mean
time, it is to be remembered that there were other great bards, and of the romantic
class, who sang in such tunes, and who mean ‘more than meets the ear.’ Both Tasso
and Ariosto pretend to an allegorical and mysterious meaning; and Tasso’s enchanted
forest, the most conspicuous fiction of the kind, might have been here intended.
Berni allows that his incantations, giants, magic gardens, monsters, and other romantic
imageries, may amuse the ignorant, but that the intelligent have more penetration.
Ord. Inam. l. r. c. xxv.

Ma voi ch’ avete gli intelletti sani,
Mirate la dettrina che s’ asconde
Sotto queste coperte alte e profonde

“One is surprised,” continues Warton, “that Milton should have delighted in ro-
mances: the images of feudal and royal life which those books afford, agreed not at
all with his system. A passage should here be cited from our author’s ‘Apology for
Smeckynnus’:—‘I may tell you whither my younger feet wandered: I betook me
among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of
knighthood,’ &c. The extraordinary and most imaginative, but inconsistent poet, ex-
claims, line 155,

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale, &c.

Being educated at St. Paul’s school, contiguous to the church, he thus became im-
pressed with an early reverence for the solemnities of the ancient ecclesiastical
architecture,—its vaults, shrines, aisles, pillars, and painted glass, rendered yet more
awful by the accompaniment of the choral service.”

It is unnecessary to copy the opinion which Johnson gives of “L’Allegro” and “II
Penseroso,” because it is in every one’s hands. Johnson yet allows that “they are two
noble efforts of imagination.”—They would be noble for a common poet; but not com-
paratively for Milton: I cannot allow them that high invention which belongs to the
bard of “Paradise Lost.” Warton criticises Johnson’s comment with a just severity:
“Never,” says he, “were fine imagery and fine imagination so marred, mutilated, and
improvered by a cold, unfeeling, and imperfect representation.”—“No part of
‘L’Allegro,’” says Johnson, “is made to arise from the pleasures of the bottle.”
What sad vulgarity! Who could suspect that Milton would write a Bacchanalian song?

It seems to me that these two poems are much more valuable for their development
of Milton’s studies and amusements, than for their poetry, by proving his love of
nature,—of books,—of solitude,—of contemplation,—of all that is beautiful, and all
that is romantic,—than for those bold figures, and that glorious fiction, which were his
power and his chief delight. Observation and an accurate copy of the external ap-
pearances of nature do not make the highest poetry: to copy always restrains the
imagination.

When we make things after our own fashion, we have the ascendancy over them:
it is better to deal with the invisible world than with the visible; but we ought to asso-
ciate them together: mere description is always imperfect: all the grandeur of natural
scenery will not avail, unless by its tendency to operate on the human mind. This is
the spell of Gray’s poetry: this makes the charm of Collins’ “Ode to Evening”: this is
the magic of the poetical part of Cowley’s “Essays”: all those parts of Shake-
speare’s dramas which break into pure poetry, are of this cast. It is a charm, which
to my apprehension, was scarce ever reached by Dryden or Pope: Byron repeatedly
reached it; sometimes he was extravagant: Wordsworth absolutely deals in it. All
impression on the mind is nothing, unless the mind throws back its own colours upon it.

All the labour and all the art in the world will do nothing for poetry: they may
draw copiously and freely from a cistern which they have previously filled with bor-
rrowed water: but the water will be stale, rapid, and good for nothing.

I have said the more on these two lyrics of Milton, because they are so much more
universal favourites than some of his diviner compositions. The greater part of the
images are within every one’s observance; but this is not, I think, a high merit: the
poet’s eyes should “give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.” Here the
images, for the most part, are such as actually exist bodily: the touches upon their
most picturesque features are, indeed, exquisite; and here and there are passages 
of aerial music unknown to common ears: but then the want of dignity, of the "long- 
resounding pace" in the versification, lessens the magic. The whole is written lightly, 
and upon the surface: the poet skims away, just touches with his wings, and goes on: 
he does not here rise in slow and majestic dignity to the sun; hovering sometimes on 
his mighty pinions, and seeming to hang over the earth, as if his eye was penetrating 
into its depths; and then, as if with an angel's power, again darting into the upper 
regions of the sky.

I can scarcely suppose that these two pieces cost Milton any labour, or time, or 
strong exercise of mind: each of them might easily have been produced by him in a 
few hours: but there is an abstraction of mind, a visionary enthusiasm, which requires 
very different sort of nursing: in that state Milton must have been in his sublimer 
compositions. Here he deals with nothing difficult, nor enters into the mysteries of 
the soul.

If I say that there is not much sentiment in these descriptions I shall probably be 
answered, that the images are selected by sentiment, and so arranged as to produce a 
particular tone of sentiment. If it be so, the sentiment is not brought out; and the 
poet ought not to trust to others to bring out that which he ought to express himself. 
It will not be pretended that there is any moral pathos here; and moral pathos is 
assuredly one of the finest spells of poetry. Pathos cannot be produced by a writer 
who has not a visionary presence of the objects which produce it: but it were better to 
give more of the pathos, and less of the objects.

This faculty, indeed, was not Milton's chief excellence: now and then he is pathetic 
in "Paradise Lost," but he has none of Shakespeare's human pathos: he was too stern 
and heroic for tears.

It is rarely that I get into a different track of criticism from Warton; but Warton 
was perhaps too exclusively fond of imagery and descriptions, and therefore has esti-
imated the poems, of which I am now speaking, higher than I do. Warton also wanted 
pathos, but he was not without a gentle and kindly sentiment.

These descriptive poems had long fallen into oblivion, when, about 1740, they were 
revived by the Wartons, who formed a school upon them. Like all schools, when they 
one took up the thing, they carried it too far: but Collins, in his "Ode to Evening," 
stopped precisely at the true point: Gray caught some of the infusion; and I suspect, 
that in two or three images or epithets, he was indebted to Collins; but did not owe his 
tone to the Warton school, being rather their senior, and drinking from the original 
fountains, not only of Milton, but still more of the Italians, as well as of the classics. 
Altogether, the cast and combination of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" is his 
own, though he may have borrowed particular ingredients. His is a perfect model, sui 
generis. Joseph Warton's "Ode to Fancy" is an attempted echo of "L'Allegro" and 
"Il Penseroso:" indeed, almost a cento.

CHAPTER V.
ON LYCIDAS, AND EPIPHAUS DAMONIS.

Edward King, fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, the friend of Milton, passing 
over to Ireland to visit his friends, the ship struck on a rock on the English coast. 
August 10th, 1637, when all on board perished. He was son of Sir John King, knight, 
secretary for Ireland under Queen Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I. At Cambridge, 
Edward King was distinguished for his piety and proficiency in polite letters. "Lyci-
das," which laments his death, first appeared in the Cambridge collection of verses 
on that occasion, 1638.

Dr. Johnson's censuro on this poem is gross and tasteless: it is disgraceful only to 
the critic. He has treated with insolent rudeness one tenfold greater than himself: he 
has set the example; and why should he be spared? I will endeavour to discuss this 
question with the utmost impartiality, and confer neither praise nor blame from un-
founded prejudice.

This poem is so far from deserving the character applied to it by Johnson, that "the
diction is harsh, the rhymes unpleasing,”—that the language is throughout imaginative and picturesque, and the rhythm harmonious and enchanting: there is no poem in which the epithets are more beautiful, more appropriate, and more fresh: they are like the diction of no predecessor, but of some of the occasional passages of rural description by Shakspeare, in his happiest modes: the outburst at the commencement is eminently striking, and rich with poetry: the images that present themselves, and the transitions, are always natural, and sometimes sublime: they have this difference from those of “L’Allegro” and “II Penseroso,” that they are more spiritual; that is, they are more mingled up with intellect: they are not purely material. As to the poem being pastoral, Johnson might much more object to the Psalms; as in Addison’s beautiful version,—

The Lord my pasture shall prepare, &c.

where the Deity himself is represented in the character of a shepherd.

But it will be asked what invention there is in this poem? There is invention in the epithets, in the combinations, in the descriptions, in the apostrophes, in the visionary parts of the poem, in the sorrows, the predictions, and the consolations: in all those associations, which none but a rich and poetical mind produces.

Johnson had so accustomed himself to cultivate dry reason only, that he thought all array of imagery idle and useless. If he had any feeling, it was only when he argued himself into it; it did not come from the senses: he loved abstraction; but it was not the abstraction of shadows, nor the “bodying forth” of “airy nothing.” Milton’s mind was in a blaze, surrounded by a whole range of invisible worlds and their aerial inhabitants: his genius gave to matter an ideal light and ideal properties: he connected the dignity of human existence with the beauty and the grandeur of the scenery of nature.

The epithets which true poets give to imagery confer upon it its spell: “Lycidas” is full of these epithets from beginning to end; they are always fresh and exquisitely vivid, but never extravagant or over-ornamental.

The versification is as regular as is consistent with vigour and variety: the five-feet lines are far preferable to the shorter lines of the two poems before discussed.

“Lycidas” is full of learned allusions, perhaps too full,—which was Milton’s fault.

Dr. Joseph Warton has truly said, that the admiration or dislike of this poem is an infallible test whether a reader has or has not a poetical taste: he who is not enraptured with it can have no genuine idea of poetry.

If we are asked what puts all within the range of mind before us in such brilliant or such affecting colours, we can only say that it is indefinable, but that we cannot doubt its effects. All secondary poets attempt this by a false gloss: they are full of ornament; but the ornament is a glare, or a set of artificial flowers: there is no fragrance,—no vivifying spirit. In a true poet, like Milton, all springs up unsought from the fountain of the soul or the heart: it is an enthusiasm; but an enthusiasm not unapproved by the sober judgment and the conscience. Nothing is good, which there is not some susceptibility within us ready instantly to recognise: nothing can be forced upon us by artful effort: no fictitious gilding will avail. The poet’s difficulty is to find expressions for what he really feels.

Now and then there may be a momentary blaze in inferior authors; but, in bards like Milton, all is one texture of light.

Just before Milton’s return from Italy in 1639, his friend Charles Deodate died, and the news met him on his arrival: he then wrote a Latin elegy on him, entitled “Epitaphium Damosis,” which has some similitude to “Lycidas.” Warton says, that there are in it some new and natural country images, and the common topics are often recommended by a novelty of elegant expression: it contains some passages which wander far beyond the bounds of bucolie song, and are in his own original style of the more sublime poetry. Milton cannot be a shepherd long: his own native powers break forth, and cannot bear the assumed disguise.

At line 155 of this elegy, he hints his design of writing an epic poem on some part of the ancient British story. So, in his poem entitled “Mansus,” he says,

Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem.
There are the ancient kings of Britain: this was the subject for an epic poem that first occupied his mind. King Arthur, at his death, was supposed to be carried into the subterraneous land of fairy or of spirits, where he still reigned as a king; and whence he was to return into Britain, to renew the round table, conquer all his enemies, and re-establish his throne: he was therefore "etiam movens bella sub terris," still meditating wars under the earth. The impulse of Milton's attachment to this subject was not entirely suppressed: it produced his "History of Britain." By the expression, "revoenbo in carmina," the poet means, that these ancient kings, which were once the themes of the British bards, should now again be celebrated in verse. Milton, in his "Church Government," written in 1641, says that, after the example of Tasso, "it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in one of our own ancient stories!" It is possible that the advice of Manse, the friend of Tasso, might determine the poet to a design of this kind.

CHAPTER VI.

ON COMUS.

In 1634, Milton wrote his immortal "Mask of Comus," for John Egerton, first Earl of Bridgewater, then Lord President of Wales, to be presented at Ludlow Castle, which was his Lordship's residence.

The poet's father held his house under the Earls of Bridgewater, at Horton, near Harefield, and not far from Ashridge: thus, perhaps, was the poet introduced to that noble family: he certainly had not yet become a decided puritan and republican. The Countess of Derby (Alice Spencer), mother-in-law of the Earl of Bridgewater, and also widow of Lord Chancellor Egerton, was a generous patroness of poets, and, among the rest, of her relation, the author of the "Faery Queene." Such a patroness would be, above all others, grateful to Milton.

"Comus" was acted by the Earl's children, the Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton, and the Lady Alice Egerton.

The Egertons were among the most powerful of the nobility, and lived in the most state. By a marriage with a co-heiress of the great feudal family of Stanley, who were co-heirs to the royal races of Tudor and Plantagenet, they held a sort of demi-regal respect. Their domains were large, and their character for hospitality and accomplish-ments stood high. This historical house have, a century afterwards, rendered themselves again immortal by designing and patronizing national works of another class.*

Masks had been common in the time of Ben Jonson. I leave to antiquaries to trace the origin of the subject and design of "Comus." The merit lies not in the hint but in the superstructure. The story is said to have been occasioned by a domestic incident of the Egerton family.

When we open this poem, we seem to enter on the beings and language of another world. Every word is poetry.

The first of the dramatic personae is the Spirit, whose speech runs to ninety-two lines. It is of the deepest interest to the piece, and opens to us the sovereignty of Neptune—the quartering of our island to his blue-haired deities—the parentage of Comus—his dangerous arts, and the Spirit's own protecting intervention.

Next comes Comus attended by his monstrous rout, whom he thus addresses:

The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold, &c.

The noise of their revelry calls the attention of the Lady, who now enters:

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now.

"By laying the scene of this Mask," Warton observes, "in a wild forest, Milton secured to himself a perpetual fund of picturesque description, which, resulting from

* The canal navigation of the last Duke of Bridgewater, who died in 1803, is celebrated all over the world. The last two Earls, who succeeded him, were indeed less eminent, and dimmed—the former by his mediocrity, the latter by his eccentricities—some of the lustre of the name. The last died in 1829. Such are the chances and changes of time.
situation, was always at hand. He was not obliged to go out of his way for this striking embellishment: it was suggested of necessity by present circumstances. The same happy choice of scene supplied Sophocles in ‘Philoctetes,’ Shakspeare in ‘As You Like It,’ and Fletcher in the ‘Faithful Shepherdess,’ with frequent and even unavoidable opportunities of rural delineation; and that of the most romantic kind. But Milton has had additional advantages: his forest is not only the residence of a magician, but is exhibited under the gloom of midnight. Fletcher, however, to whom Milton is confessedly indebted, avails himself of the latter circumstance."

The lady exclaims,

A thousand phantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And sery tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

Warton says, "I remember these superstitions, which are here finely applied, in the ancient voyages of Marco Paolo the Venetian, speaking of the vast and perilous desert of Lop in Asia, 'Cernuntur et audiuntur, in eo interdum, et sepicus nocta, demnonum variae illusiones. Unde viatoribus suam cavendum est, ne multum ab invicem sciperos dissocent, aut aliquis a tergo sesa dintias imperiato. Alloquin, quamprimium propter montes et calles quieplam comitum. suorum aspectum pertiderit, non facile ad cos veniet: nam audiuntur ibi voces demonum, qui solitarie inciduntes propris appellant nominaibus, voces. fiantes illorum quos comitari se putant, ut a recto itinere abducus in perniciem deductum."—De Regionib. Oriental. I. r. c. 44. But there is a mixture from Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess,' A. r. S. i. p. 108. The shepherdess mentions, among other nocturnal terrors in a wood, 'Or voices calling me in dead of night.' These fancies from Marco Paolo are adopted in Heylin's 'Cosmographic,' I am not sure if in any of the three editions printed before 'Comus' appeared." @ The song on Echo is more exquisite than anything of its kind in our language.

"Comus," says Warton, "is universally allowed to have taken some of its tints from the 'Tempest.'"

The following is a beautiful passage:

'Tis most true
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house.

On which Warton has the following somewhat singular note:—"Not many years after this was written, Milton's friends showed that the safety of a senate-house was not inviolable: but when the people turn legislators, what place is safe from the tumults of innovation, and the insults of disobedience?" True—if uncontrolled by king and lords, as they have lately attempted to be.

The poet, speaking of chastity, says,

Yea, there, where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

Dr. Joseph Warton remarks, in his "Essay on Pope," that poet's imitation of this and other passages of Milton's juvenile poems. "This is the first instance," adds Thomas Warton, "of any degree even of the slightest attention being paid to Milton's smaller poems by a writer of note since their first publication. Milton was never mentioned or acknowledged as an English poet till after the appearance of 'Paradise Lost;' and long after that time these pieces were totally forgotten and overlooked. It is strange that Pope, by no means of a congenial spirit, should be the first who copied 'Comus' or 'I Penseroso.' But Pope was a gleaner of the old English poets; and he was here pilfering from obsolete English poetry, without the least fear or danger of being detected."

At l. 780 the lady says,

* See lib. iii. p. 201, edit. 1692, fol. Sylvestre, in Du Bartas, has also the tradition in the text, ed. fol. ut supr. p. 271.
To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-eld power of chastity,
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery,
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.

Upon this passage, also, Warton has the following curious note:—

"By studying the reveries of the Platonic writers, Milton contrasted a theory concerning chastity and the purity of love, in the contemplation of which, like other visionaries, he indulged his imagination with ideal refinements, and with pleasing but unmeaning notions of excellence and perfection. Plato's sentimental or metaphysical love, he seems to have applied to the natural love between the sexes. The very philosophical dialogue of the Angel and Adam, in the eighth book of 'Paradise Lost,' altogether proceeds on this doctrine. In the 'Sweeetymus' he declares his initiation into the mysteries of this immaterial love. 'Thus from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years, and the ceaseless round of study and reading, led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volume of Plato, and his equal Xenophon; where, if I should tell ye what I learned of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so,' &c. But in the dialogue just mentioned, where Adam asks his celestial guest, 'Whether angels are susceptible of love, whether they express their passion by looks only, or by a mixture of irradiation, by virtual or immediate contact?' our author seems to have overleaped the Platonic pale, and to have lost his way among the solemn conceits of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas. It is no wonder that the angel blushed, as well as smiled, at some of these questions."

The incomparable poem of "Comus" thus ends:—

Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free;
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the saphry chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

Thyer says, that "the moral of this poem is very finely summed up in the six concluding lines. The thought contained in the last two might probably be suggested to our author by a passage in the 'Table of Cebes,' where Patience and Perseverance are represented stooping and stretching out their hands to help up those who are endeavouring to climb the craggy hill of Virtue, and yet are too feeble to ascend themselves:"

Mr. Francis Egerton (afterwards the last Earl of Bridgewater) has observed upon this, that, 'had this ingenious critic duly reflected on the lofty mind of Milton,

Smit with the love of sacred song,
and so often and so sublimely employed on topics of religion, he might readily have found a subject, to which the poet obviously and divinely alludes in these concluding lines, without fetching the thought from the 'Table of Cebes.' In the preceding attack I am convinced Mr. Thyer had no ill intention; but by overlooking so clear and pointed an allusion to a subject calculated to kindle that lively glow in the bosom of every Christian, which the poet intended to excite, and by referring it to an image in a profane author, he may, beside stifling the sublime effect so happily produced, afford a handle to some in these 'evil days,' who are willing to make the religion of Socrates and Cebes (or that of Nature) supersede the religion of Christ. The moral of this poem is, indeed, very finely summed up in the six concluding lines, in which, to wind up one of the most elegant productions of his genius,

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
threw up his last glance to Heaven, in rapt contemplation of that stupendous mystery whereby He, the lofty theme of Paradise Regained, stooped from above all height,

'bowed the Heavens, and came down on Earth,' to atone as man for the sins of men,
to strengthen feeble Virtue by the influence of his grace, and to teach her to ascend his throne."

Numerous critics, from Toland to Todd, have given the character of this poem; but Thomas Warton's is by far the best: Johnson, with some good passages, has intermixed much captious objection, and not a little vulgarity. He cannot refrain from a sort of coarse sneer, which affects to be humour.

"We must not," says Warton, "read Comus with an eye to the stage, or with the expectation of dramatic propriety. Under this restriction the absurdity of the Spirit speaking to an audience in a solitary forest at midnight, and the want of reciprocation in the dialogue, are overlooked. 'Comus' is a suite of speeches, not interesting by discrimination of character; not conveying a variety of incidents, nor gradually exciting curiosity; but perpetually attracting attention by sublime sentiment, by fanciful imagery of the richest vein, by an exuberance of picturesque description, poetical allusion, and ornamental expression." To this the critic adds many other excellent observations.

A Mask, written for a private theatre, and to be performed by highly-educated actors, is not like a play to be exhibited to a mixed and common audience: long speeches, therefore, of a tone too lofty for vulgar ears, are not here objectionable. Of the texture of the present composition every word is eminently poetical. Passages of similar beauty may be found in Shakespeare, and even in Fletcher,—but not a uniform and unbroken web. It is true that there is little passion in this dramatic poem; but none is pretended to: while it is enchantingly descriptive, it is at the same time philosophically calm. We are carried into a fairy region of good spirits and bad: and everything of rural scenery that is delightful, associated with wild and picturesque beliefs of an invisible world in mountains, valleys, forests, and rivers, is introduced to keep up the magic. Were it a mere description of inanimate nature, it would be comparatively dull. Here, too, a beautiful girl, of high rank, richly accomplished in mind, is introduced, to pour out, under alarming circumstances, a divine eloquence of exalted and affecting sentiment. Virtue and truth, and purity of intellect and heart, break out at every word. To these strains who can deny poetical invention! What definition of poetry can be given, by which this Mask can be excluded from a very high place? Is it not everywhere either brilliant and picturesque or lofty fiction? It is said that the characters have no passion; but how is passion a necessary ingredient of poetry? Poetry must create; but it may create beings of tranquil beauty, and calm exaltation. Cavillers say, that the Brothers ought not to philosophize, while the Sister is left alone in the dangers of a solitary forest: but their faith in a protecting Providence will not allow them to think her in great danger. It may be replied that this is an improbable degree of faith. Is it a poetical improbability? It seems as if such censors think that nothing must be represented which does not occur in every-day life. Poetry is literally, and to all extent, the reverse of this.

Minor bards may give occasional touches of outward poetry by illustrations of imagery and description; but the whole structure and soul of Milton's "Comus" is poetry: not the dress, but the intrinsic spirit, and the essence. The characters of the Attendant Spirit, and of Comus, are exquisite inventions. What is copied from observation, is not always poetry; therefore Dryden and Pope were very often not poets.

There are numerous ideas implanted in our nature, which are not bodily truths, but imaginative truths: even single epithets convey these, as is shown by every part of "Comus," while picturesque words point out the leading features of every rural object. No such words ever appear in Dryden or Pope, unless they are borrowed. Their descriptions are general and vague: they convey fine sounds, but no precise ideas. The true poet cannot avoid seeing: images haunt him; he cannot get rid of them; he does not call up his memory to produce empty words, but he draws from the visionary shapes before him.

While Milton was framing the "Comus," he, no doubt, lived in the midst of his own creation: he only clothed the tongues of his characters with what it appeared to him in his vision they actually spoke.
CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ARCADES.

The "Arcades" was a Mask, which was part of an entertainment presented to Alice Spencer, Countess Dowager of Derby, and afterwards widow of Lord Chancellor Egerton, at Harefield in Middlesex, and acted by some noble persons of her family.

This celebrated lady was daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorp, who was then one of the richest commoners of England. Her first husband, Earl Ferdinando, was a most accomplished nobleman, who died in the flower of his age;—it is supposed by poison, because he would not enter into the plots of the Jesuits to claim the crown from Queen Elizabeth, on account of his royal descent; for which see the famous volume, called "Dolman's Conference," written by Parsons the Jesuit, and see also Hallam, and Hargrave.

Norden, in his "Speculum Britanniae," about 1590, speaking of Harefield, says, "There Sir Edmond Anderson, Knight, Lord-Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, hath a fair house, standing on the edge of the hill; the river Colne passing near the same, through the pleasant meadows and sweet pastures, yielding both delight and profit." "I viewed this house," says Warton, "a few years ago, when it was for the most part remaining in its original state. It has since been pulled down; the porters' lodges on each side of the gateway are converted into a commodious dwelling-house. It is near Uxbridge; and Milton, when he wrote 'Arcades,' was still living with his father at Horton, near Colnebrook, in the same neighbourhood. He mentions the singular felicity he had in vain anticipated in the society of his friend Deodat, on the shady banks of the river Colne:

Imus, et argutâ paulum recumbamus in umbra,
Aut ad aquas Colni, &c.—Epit. Damon. 1. 149.

Amidst the fruitful and delightful scenes of this river the nymphs and shepherds had no reason to regret, as in the third song, the Arcadian 'Ladon's lillied banks.' Unquestionably this Mask was a much longer performance. Milton seems only to have written the poetical part, consisting of these three songs and the recitative soliloquy of the Genius: the rest was probably prose and machinery. In many of Jonson's Masques the poet but rarely appears, amid a cumbersome exhibition of heathen gods and mythology."

The Countess of Derby died 26th January, 1635—6, and was buried at Harefield. (See "Lyon's Environ's of London.")

Harrington has an epigram on this lady, B. iii. 47.

IN PRAISE OF THE COUNTESS OF DERBY, MARRIED TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

This noble Countess lived many years
With Derby, one of England's greatest peers:
Fruitful and fair, and of so clear a name,
That all this region marcell'd at her name.

But this brave peer extinct by hasten'd fate,
She stay'd, ha, too, too long in widow's state;
And in that state took so sweet state upon her,
All ears, eyes, tongues, heard, saw, and told her honour, &c.

But Milton is not the only great English poet who has celebrated the Countess Dowager of Derby. She was the sixth daughter, as we have seen, of Sir John Spencer, with whose family Spenser the poet claimed an alliance. In his "Colin Clout's come home again," written about 1595, he mentions her under the appellation of Amaryllis, with her sisters Phyllis or Elizabeth, and Charylls or Anne; these three of Sir John Spencer's daughters being best known at Court. See I. 536.

No less praiseworthy are the sisters three,
The honour of the noble family,
Of which I meanest boast myself to be,
And most that unto them I am so nigh.

After a panegyrie on the first two, he next comes to Amaryllis, or Alice, our lady, the dowager of Earl Ferdinando, lately deceased:—
But Amaryllis, whether fortunate,
Or else unfortunate may I read,
That freed is from Cupid’s yoke by fate,
Since which she doth new bands adventure dread,
Shepherd, whatever thou hast heard to be
In this or that praised diversely apart,
In her thou mayest them assembled see,
And seal’d up in the treasure of her heart

And in the same poem he thus apostrophizes to her late husband, under the name
of Amyntas: see l. 434.

Amyntas quite is gone, and lies full low,
Having his Amaryllis left to morn!
Help, O ye shepherds! help ye all in this,—
Her loss is yours; your loss Amyntas is!
Amyntas, flower of shepherds’ pride forlorn;
He, whilst he lived, was the noblest swain
That ever piped on an oaten quill;
Both did he other, which could pipe, maintain,
And eke could pipe himself with passing skill.

And to the same Lady Alice, when Lady Strange, before her husband Ferdinando’s
succession to the earldom, Spenser addressed his “Tears of the Muses,” published in
1591, in a dedication of the highest regard; where he speaks of “your excellent
beauty, your virtuous behaviour, and your noble match with that most honourable lord,
the very pattern of right nobility.” He then acknowledges the particular bounties
which she had conferred upon the poets. Thus the lady who presided at the repre-
sentation of Milton’s “Arcades” was not only the theme but the patroness of Spenser.
The peerage-book of this most respectable countess is the poetry of her times.

CHAPTER VIII.
ON MILTON’S FOREIGN TRAVELS.

In 1637, at twenty-nine, Milton, on the death of his mother, obtained his father’s
leave to visit Italy. I have already mentioned the course of his travels. The accom-
plished and amiable Sir Henry Wotton, whose admiration and heart had been won by
the poet’s “Comus,” gave him his advice and recommendations. At Florence, Rome,
and Naples, he was received with applause and kindness by all the most eminent
literati. He, who had been little noticed in his own country, was received with the
most distinguished honours abroad, in the country of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and
Tasso.

How happened this? Yet such is the perversity of human nature!
It is a subject of deep regret that Milton has not left a written account of his travels,
with details such as modern visitors of the same and other countries give; or even
such short notes as Gray sent in his letters. It is impossible to conceive any other so
qualified to receive delight from these visits as Milton. Above all other men, his mind
was full of the richest and most profound classical recollections. Not only his fancy
held a mirror to all the beautiful and golden scenery, and all the exquisite and grand
displays of the arts of painting and sculpture, but he had a creative imagination,
beyond all other men, which must have fired into a blaze at them. All with which his
mind had been stored from boyhood, drawn from distant sources, must now have
seemed to be realized. He saw the very identical relics of classical times embodied
before his eyes; he saw clear skies, and beautiful scenes, of which we have no idea in
a northern climate. The Alps and the Apennines, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic,
and above all the bay of Naples, gave him landscapes and sea-views such as an
Englishman, who has never quitted his own country, can have no conception of.
He visited Galileo, which, however, was supposed to have raised some dangerous
prejudices against him; but his great friend was the Marquis Manoel of Naples, who
had been the friend of Tasso, and who was himself a poet. “Ad M anus” is one of the
best of his Latin poems. With what enthusiasm must Milton have entered into
Tasso's character, as well as that of Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto! Dante's genius was, no doubt, the nearest to his own: but in addition to the epic imagination, there is in his personal history something so striking, so melancholy, and so full of deep interest, that it adds twofold to the attraction with which we read his poetry.

Three, at least, of these four mighty poets suffered great misfortunes: but the history of their lives is well known, and this is not the place for treating of them. We have nothing English of the same sort as their respective geniuses, unless, perhaps, Spenser. The sombreness and mystical sublimity of Dante, is peculiar to himself; he has been admirably translated by Cary: he lived in a glorious time for poetry, when superstition fostered and coloured all its noblest creations; and when the chilling and false artifices of the cold critic had not yet paralyzed exertion;—when all was hope and adventure, both of mind and body.

Had Milton's mind at this epoch been so strongly infected with puritanism as his enemies averred, he could not have enjoyed Italian manners and Italian genius. There he saw all the pomp and warmth of religion; puritanism had all its acridity and rigidity, and all its freezing bareness. Coming fresh from these things, of which he has expressed his delight, I know not how he could so at once plunge into principles, which would destroy them all to the very root; but such are the inconsistencies of frail humanity! Gray saw all these things with equal sensibility and taste, if not with equal genius; and he remained fixed in the love of them through life.

But it is worthy of remark, that as soon as Milton actively took the side of this cause of destruction, the Muses left him for twenty years. Coming fresh from the living fountains of all imaginative creation, the happy delirium of glorious genius subsided into a cold and harsh stagnation of all that was eloquent and generous. The blight was more violent and effective in proportion as the bloom had been strong.

Milton did not stay long enough at any of the great Italian cities: instead of eighteen months among them all, his stay ought to have been four or five years.

I give in this place Cowper's translation of the Latin epistle to Manso.

TO GIOVANNI BATTISTA MANSO,
MARQUIS OF VILLA.

[14 Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen for genius, literature, and military accomplishments. To him Torquato Tasso addressed his 'Dialogues on Friendship;' for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country in his poem entitled 'Gerusalemme Conquistata,' book xx.

Fra cavaliere magnanimi, e cortesi,
Risplende il Manso.

During the author's stay at Naples, he received at the hands of the Marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities; and, desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city."

These verses also to thy praise the Nine,
O Manso! happy in that theme, design;
For, Gallas and Macciens gone, they see
None such besides, or whom they love, as thee;
And, if my verse may give the need of fame,
Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
Already such it shines in Tasso's page,
For thou wast Tasso's friend, from age to age;
And next, the Muses consign'd, not unaware
How high the charge, Marino to thy care;
Who, singing to the nymphs Adonis' praise,
Burst thee the patron of his copious lays.
To thee alone the poet would intrust
His latest vows; to thee alone his dust:
And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
In labour'd brass, thy tribute to his shade.
Nor this contented thee—but, lest the grave
Should aught absorb of theirs, which thou couldst save.
All future ages thou hast taught'd to teach
The life, lot, genius, character of each,
Eloquent as the Carian sage, who true
To his great theme, the life of Homer drew.
Druids, hence, and who the poet's legends declare a name.

Apollo's fair shrine with hymns of festive sound,

Though Heracles had ventured there before.

The earth, an exile from his heavenly home,

He soothed his pains of exile with the lyre.

Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,

And soften'd lynxes wonder'd at the strain.

Well may we think, O dear to all above!

Thy birth distinguished by the smile of Jove; and that Apollo shed his kindliest power,

And Mars' son, on that propitious hour;

Since only minds so born can comprehend

A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.

Hence, on thy yet unfaded cheek appears,

The lingering freshness of thy greener years;

Hence in thy front and features we admire

Nature unwither'd, and a mind entire.

O, might so true a friend to me belong,

So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime;
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being, future wars,
With all his martial knights, to be restored
Each to his seat, around the federal board;
And, O! if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plunders in triumphant verse!
Then, after all, when with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent,
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my death-bed bend,
I shall but need to say, 'Is he yet my friend?'
He too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me, and with the graceful wreath,
Or of Parnassus, or the Paphian isle.
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while
Then also, if the fruits of faith endure,
And virtue's promised recompense be sure,
Borne to those seats, to which the blest aspire
By parity of soul and virtuous fire,
These rites, as Fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumined by celestial day.
And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
Joy in the bright beatitude of heaven!

We may conceive what delight Milton had in talking with Manso about Tasso, and how it encouraged his own desire of poetical immortality. The honours paid to Tasso as a poet were of a kind of which the cold northern clime of England gave no example. Spenser had died in poverty, ruined and neglected: Shakspeare seems to have been little personally known in his lifetime; for nothing is recorded of his habits and private character.

But though Tasso was cruelly used by his inglorious and base prince, his countrymen worshipped him, and bore with all his eccentricities. In England, except by Chance and Spenser, there had been no great epics of fiction. The metrical narratives were, for the most part, dull chronicles: that fiery force, where life breathes in every line and every image, was almost unknown. It is by the invention of grand fables that poets must stand high: little patches of flowers—a style of similes and metaphors, will not do. The manners and credences of Europe, from the commencement of the crusades, afforded inexhaustible subjects of heroic poetry: fictions improved upon the romantic tales of the Provençal bards could never be wanting to the imagination or the lyre.

Milton returned by Venice, where he made a large collection of music for his father; and thence passed through Geneva, at which he made a short sojourn with John Deodate, a learned theologian and professor, the relation of his friend Charles Deodate, and became acquainted with Frederic Spanheim. Here he is supposed to have renewed his Calvinistic and puritanical prejudices. It is somewhat strange that this small place should have been the focus of all that troubled the governments of Europe for more than a century. They were not content with forming a republican government for their own petty canton, for which it was well suited, but struggled to turn all the great monarchies into republics.

The poet must have been delighted with the lake-scenery and Alpine summits of this magnificent country; yet, after the pomp of Italy, its splendid arts, its princely societies, its genial skies, its imaginative delights, men must have seemed here to have dwindled into formal and dull automatons. Here might be learning; but it was dry and tasteless: here was now no Beza, or D'Aubigné, nor any anticipation of the eloquent and passionate Rousseau, or spiritual De Stuel, or historic and philosophical Sismondi.

I have endeavoured to find some traces of Milton's visit in Geneva; but have yet discovered none. I am told it is a mistake that the Deodate campaign at the adjoining village of Cologni, which Byron inhabited in 1816, was that which belonged to the Deodate family when Milton was here. In the "Livre des Anglais," preserved in the state-archives at the Hôtel de Ville, are registers of the English (including John Knox), who took refuge here from 1551 to 1558, and had an English chapel in Geneva.
CHAPTER IX.

ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF MILTON'S PROSE WORKS.

In 1639 Milton returned to England; he had the grief of finding that his friend Charles Doodate was already dead: on that occasion he wrote the Latin pastoral entitled "Epitaphium Daononis." He now undertook the tutorship of his two nephews, John and Edward Phillips, and added to them some other pupils. Having professed to have been drawn back to England to take a part in the cause of liberty, then breaking out into open contest, Johnson considers this occupation a falling off from his boasted high intentions, and utters a growling sort of merriment at the failure. This is in the tone of the biographer's usual insults on the great bard: he is on these occasions coarse, pompous, and unjust. Milton did not come home to take a part by the sword, but by the pen: if therefore he endeavoured to aid an incompetent income by taking pupils, what inconsistency was there in this? The sneer comes doubly ill from one who had been himself a schoolmaster.

It seems that Milton endeavoured to teach his scholars a wider range of knowledge than the Doctor thought practicable; whereupon follows that famous passage of Johnson, which has been so often cited, and which is so excellent, that I must repeat it again:—

"The purpose of Milton," he begins, "was to teach something more solid than the common literature of schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects, such as the Georgic and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have basied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education in his imaginary college.

"But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation; whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong: the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and justice are virtues and excellences of all times and all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence, that one may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostatics or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

"Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

"Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantic or paradoxical; for, if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars: Socrates was rather of opinion that what we had to learn was, how to do good and avoid evil.

"Οττι τοι ἐν μεγάροις καυὸτ' ἀγαθότε τετυγκαί.""

Had Johnson always written so, what a beautiful and perfect work he would have made!

But now Milton's evil days began: he entered into thorny controversies which blind the imagination, and harden and embitter the heart. It was not for sublime talents, like his, to entangle themselves in these webs: his mighty genius could not move under the oppressive weight of so much abstruse, and, I will add, useless, though multifarious and astonishing learning. But I am bound to notice what has been stated on the other side. Fletcher, in the "Introductory Review of Milton's Prose Works," says, "Let us never think of John Milton as a poet, merely; however in that capacity he may have adorned our language, and benefited, by ennobling, his species. He
was a citizen also, with whom patriotism was as herculean a passion, prompting him to do his country service, as was that 'inward prompting' of poesy, by which he did his country honour. He was alive to all that was due from man to man in all the relations of life: he was invested with a power to mould the mind of a nation, and to lead the people into 'the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue.' The poet has long eclipsed the man: he has been imprisoned even in the temple of the Muses; and the very splendour of the bard seems to be our title to pass 'an act of oblivion' on the share he bore in the events and discussions of the momentous times in which he lived. Ought not, rather, his wide renown in this capacity to lead us to the contemplation and study of the whole of his character and his works? Sworn by a father, who knew what persecution was, at the first altar of freedom erected in this land, he, a student, of the finest temperament, bent on grasping all sciences, and professing none, and burning with intense ambition for distinction, forsook his harp, and 'the quiet and still air of delightful studies,' and devoted the energies of earliest and maturest manhood, to be aiding in the grandest crisis of the first of human causes: and he became the most conspicuous literary actor in the dreadful yet glorious drama of the grand rebellion. He beheld tyranny and intolerance trampling upon the most sacred prerogatives of God and man; and he was compelled by the nobility of his nature, by the obligations of virtue, by the loud summons of beleaguered truth; in short, by his patriotism as well as his piety, to lay down the lyre, whose earliest tones are yet so fascinating; to 'doff his garland and singing robes,' and to adventure within the circle of peril and glory; and buckling on the controversial panoply, he threw it off only when the various works of this volume, surpassed by none in any sort of eloquence, became the record and trophy of his achievements, and the worthy forerunners of those poems, which a whole people 'will not willingly let die.'

The summit of fame is occupied by the poet, but the base of the vast elevation may justly be said to rest on these prose works; and we invite his admirers to descend from the former, and survey the region that lies round about the latter;—a less explored, but not less magnificent domain.

Fletcher has (p. vii.) inserted the following extract. In the "Second Defence of the People of England," Milton is led in self-defence, he says, "to rescue his life from that species of obscurity which is the associate of unprincipled depravity. He then commences in this strain his too brief autobiography:—

"This it will be necessary for me to do on more accounts than one: first, that so many good and learned men among the neighbouring nations, who read my works, may not be induced by this fellow's clamours to alter the favourable opinion which they have formed of me, but may be persuaded that I am not one who ever disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct, or the maxims of a Freeman by the actions of a slave; and that the whole tenour of my life has, by the grace of God, hitherto been unsullied by any enormity or crime: next, that those illustrious worthies, who are the objects of my praise, may know that nothing could afflict me with more shame than to have any vices of mine diminish the force or lessen the value of my panegyric upon them; and, lastly, that the people of England, whom fate, or duty, or their own virtues, have incited me to defend, may be convinced from the purity and integrity of my life, that my defence, if it do not redound to their honour, can never be considered as their disgrace.

"I will now mention who and whence I am. I was born at London, of an honest family: my father was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life; my mother, by the esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed. My father destined me from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that from twelve years of age I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight: my eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches; which, however, could not chill the ardour of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the grammar school, and by other masters at home: he then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable progress in philosophy, sent me to the university of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the appro-
bation of the good, and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts.

"After this I did not, as this miscreant feigns, run away into Italy, but of my own accord retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regrets of most of the fellows of the college, who showed me no common marks of friendship and esteem. On my father's estate, where he had determined to pass the remainder of his days, I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I devoted entirely to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement. In this manner I spent five years, till my mother's death: I then became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy. My father gave me his permission, and I left home with one servant. On my departure, the celebrated Henry Wotton, who had long been King James's ambassador at Venice, gave me a signal proof of his regard, in an elegant letter which he wrote, breathing not only the warmest friendship, but containing some maxims of conduct which I found very useful in my travels. The noble Thomas Scudamore, King Charles's ambassador, to whom I carried letters of recommendation, received me most courteously at Paris. His lordship gave me a card of introduction to the learned Hugo Grotius, at that time ambassador from the Queen of Sweden to the French court; whose acquaintance I anxiously desired, and to whose house I was accompanied by some of his lordship's friends. A few days after, when I set out for Italy, he gave me letters to the English merchants on my route, that they might show me any civilities in their power.

"Taking ship at Nice, I arrived at Genoa, and afterwards visited Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence. In the latter city, which I have always more particularly esteemed for the elegance of its dialect, its genius and its taste, I stopped about two months; when I contracted an intimacy with many persons of rank and learning, and was a constant attendant at their literary parties; a practice which prevails there, and tends so much to the diffusion of knowledge and the preservation of friendship. No time will ever abolish the agreeable recollections which I cherish of Jacob Gaddi, Carolo Dati, Frescobaldo, Culsellero, Bonomatthai, Clementillo, Francisco, and many others.

"From Florence I went to Sienna, thence to Rome; where, after I had spent about two months in viewing the antiquities of that renowned city, where I experienced the most friendly attentions from Lucas Holstein, and other learned and ingenious men, I continued my route to Naples; there I was introduced by a certain relation, with whom I had travelled from Rome, to John Baptista Manso, marquis of Villa, a nobleman of distinguished rank and authority, to whom Torquato Tasso, the illustrious poet, inscribed his book on 'Friendship.' During my stay, he gave me singular proofs of his regard; he himself conducted me round the city, and to the palace of the vicerey; and more than once paid me a visit at my lodgings. On my departure he gravely apologized for not having shown me more civility, which he said he had been restrained from doing, because I had spoken with so little reserve on matters of religion.

"When I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece, the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home.

"While I was on my way back to Rome, some merchants informed me that the English jesuits had formed a plot against me if I returned to Rome, because I had spoken too freely of religion: for it was a rule which I laid down to myself in those places, never to be the first to begin any conversation on religion; but, if any questions were put to me concerning my faith, to declare it without any reserve or fear. I nevertheless returned to Rome. I took no steps to conceal either my person or my character; and for about the space of two months, I again openly defended, as I had done before, the reformed religion in the very metropolis of popery.

"By the favour of God, I got back to Florence, where I was received with as much affection as if I had returned to my native country. There I stopped as many months as I had done before, except that I made an excursion of a few days to Lucca; and crossing the Apennines, passed through Bologna and Ferrara to Venice.
"After I had spent a month in surveying the curiosities of this city, and had put on board a ship the books which I had collected in Italy, I proceeded through Verona and Milan, and along the Leman lake to Geneva.

"The mention of this city brings to my recollection the slandering More, and makes me again call the Deity to witness, that in all those places, in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue; and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it would not elude the inspection of God.

"At Geneva I held daily conferences with John Diodati, the learned professor of theology.

"Then, pursuing my former route through France, I returned to my native country, after an absence of one year and about three months, at the time when Charles, having broken the peace, was renewing what is called the episcopal war with the Scots; in which the royalists being routed in the first encounter, and the English being universally and justly disaffected, the necessity of his affairs at last obliged him to convene a parliament.

"As soon as I was able, I hired a spacious house in the city for myself and my books; where I again with rapture renewed my literary pursuits, and where I calmly awaited the issue of the contest, which I trusted to the wise conduct of Providence and to the courage of the people.

"The vigour of the parliament had begun to humble the pride of the bishops. As long as the liberty of speech was no longer subject to control, all months began to be opened against the bishops; some complained of the vices of the individuals; others of those of the order. They said that it was unjust that they alone should differ from the model of other reformed churches, and particularly the word of God.

"This awakened all my attention and my zeal: I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first objects of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights, I perceived that, if I ever wished to be of use, I ought at least not to be wanting to my country, to the church, and to so many of my fellow Christians, in a crisis of so much danger. I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object. I accordingly wrote two books to a friend, concerning 'The Reformation of the Church of England.'"

Here we have Milton's own account of his own early life, of which we cannot doubt the accuracy.

This treatise ends in the form of a prayer, "piously laying the sad condition of England before the footstool of The Almighty," than which there is not a more sublime patriotic Ode in any language. Thus:

"Thou therefore that sittest in light and glory unapproachable; Parent of angels and men! next, thee I implore, Omnipotent King, Redeemer of that last remnant, whose nature thou didst assume, ineffable and everlasting love! And thou, the third subsistence of divine infinitude, illumining spirit, the joy and solace of created things, and Tripersonal Godhead! look upon this thy poor and almost spent and expiring church: leave her not thus a prey to these importunate wolves, that wait, and think it long, till they devour thy tender flock; those wild bears that have broken into thy vineyard, and left the print of their polluting hoofs on the souls of thy servants. O, let them not bring about their damning designs, that stand now at the entrance of the bottomless pit, expecting the watch-word to open and let out those dreadful locusts and scorpions, to re-involve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall never more see the sun of thy truth again; never hope for the cheerful dawn; never more hear the bird of morning sing. Be moved with pity at the afflicted state of this our shaken monarchy, that now lies labouring under her throes, and struggling against the grudges of more dreadful calamities.

* Alexander More.
"O thou, that after the impetuous rage of five bloody inundations and the succeeding sword of intestine war, soaking the land in her own gore, didst pity the sad and ceaseless revolution of our swift and thick-coming sorrows; when we were quite breathless, of thy free grace didst motion peace and terms of covenant to us; and, having first well-nigh freed us from anti-Christian thraldom, didst build up this Britannic empire to a glorious and enviable height, with all her daughter-islands about her; stay us in this felicity: let not the obstinacy of our half-obedience and will-worship bring forth that viper of sedition, that, for these fourscore years, has been breeding to eat through the entrails of our peace; but let her cast her abortive spawn without the danger of this travelling and throbbing kingdom, that we may still remember in our solemn thanksgivings, how for us the northern ocean even to the frozen thules was scattered with the proud shipwrecks of the Spanish armada; and the very maw of hell ransacked, and made to give up her concealed destination, ere she could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.

"O, how much more glorious will those former deliverances appear, when we shall know them not only to have saved us from greater miseries past, but have reserved us for greater happiness to come! Hitherto thou hast but freed us, and that not fully, from the unjust and tyrannous claim of thy foes; now, unite us entirely, and appropriate us to thyself; tie us eternally in willing homage to the prerogative of thy eternal throne.

"And now we know, O thou our most certain hope and defence, that thine enemies have been consulting all the sorceries of the great whore, and have joined their plots with that sad intelligence of tyrant that mischiefs the world with his mines of Ophir, and lies thirsting to revenge his naval ruins that have larded our seas: but let them all take counsel together, and let it come to nought; let them decree, and do thou cancel it; let them gather themselves, and be scattered; let them embattled themselves, and be broken; let them embattled, and be broken, for thou art with us!

"Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains, in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages, whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rage of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when thou, the eternal and shortly-expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of this world; and distributing national honours and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they, undoubtedly, that, by their labours, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive, above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones, into their glorious titles; and in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the doubtless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in over-measure for ever."

It would be quite impossible to give an adequate account of Milton's life and character, were I to omit here to insert the whole of the Preface to the second book of his "Reason of Church Government urged against Prelates," of which parts only have been hitherto extracted by former biographers:—

"How happy were it for this frail, and, as it may be called, mortal life of man, since all earthly things which have the name of good and convenient in our daily use, are withal so cumbersome and full of trouble, if knowledge, yet which is the best, and lighteston possession of the mind, were, as the common saying is, no burden; and that what it wanted of being a load to any part of the body, it did not with a heavy advantage overlay upon the spirit.

"For, not to speak of that knowledge that rests in the contemplation of natural causes and dimensions, which must needs be a lower wisdom as the object is low, certain it is, that he who hath obtained in more than the scantiest measure to know anything distinctly of God, and of his true worship, and what is infallibly good and happy in the state of man's life; what in itself evil and miserable, though vulgarly not so esteemed; he, that hath obtained to know this, the only high valuable wisdom
indeed, remembering also that God, even to a strictness, requires the improvement of these his entrusted gifts, cannot but sustain a sorer burden of mind, and more pressing than any supportable toil or weight which the body can labour under; how and in what manner he shall dispose and employ those sums of knowledge and illumination, which God hath sent him into this world to trade with.

"And that which aggravates the burden more is, that, having received amongst his allotted parcels, certain precious truths, of such an orient lustre as no diamond can equal, which nevertheless he has in charge to put off at any cheap rate, yea, for nothing, to them that will; the great merchants of this world, fearing that this course would soon discover and disgrace the false glitter of their deceitful wares, wherewith they abuse the people, like poor Indians, with beads and glasses, practise by all means how they may suppress the vending of such rarities, and at such a cheapness as would undo them, and turn their trash upon their hands.

"Therefore, by gratifying the corrupt desires of men in fleshly doctrines, they stir them up to persecute with hatred and contempt all those that seek to bear themselves uprightly in this their spiritual factory; which they foreseeing, though they cannot but testify of truth and the excellency of that heavenly traffic which they bring, against what opposition or danger soever, yet needs it must sit heavily upon their spirits, that being in God's prime intention, and their own, selected heralds of peace and dispensers of treasure inestimable, without price to them that have no peace; they find in the discharge of their commission, that they are made the greatest variance and offence, a very sword and fire, both in house and city, over the whole earth.

"This is that which the sad prophet Jeremiah laments:—'Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention!' And, although divine inspiration must certainly have been sweet to those ancient prophets, yet the irksomeness of that truth which they brought was so unpleasant unto them, that everywhere they call it a burden. Yea, that mysterious Book of Revelation which the great evangelist was bid to eat, as it had been some eye-brightening electuary of knowledge and foresight, though it were 'sweet in his mouth,' and in the learning, 'it was bitter in his belly,' bitter in the denouncing.

"Nor was this bid from the wise poet Sophocles, who, in that place of his tragedy where Jieresias is called to resolve king Oedipus in a matter which he knew would be grievous, brings him in bemoaning his lot, that he knew more than other men.

"For surely to every good and peaceable man, it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the disperser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own happiness.

"But when God commands to take the trumpet, and blow a dolorous or jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say or what he shall conceal. If he shall think to be silent as Jeremiah did, because of the reproach and derision he met with daily, 'and all his familiar friends watched for his halting,' to be revenged on him for speaking the truth, he would be forced to confess as he confessed; 'his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay.'

"Which might teach these times not suddenly to condemn all things that are sharply spoken or vehemently written as proceeding out of stomach virulence and ill-nature; but to consider rather, that if the prelates have leave to say the worst that can be said, or do the worst that can be done, while they strive to keep themselves, to their great pleasure and commodity, those things which they ought to render up, no man can be justly offended with him that shall endeavour to impart and bestow, without any gain to himself, those sharp and saving words, which would be a terror and a torment in him to keep back.

"For me, I have endeavoured to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the church's good. For, if I be, whether by disposition, or what other cause, too inquisitive, or suspicious of myself and mine own doings, who can help it?

"But this I foresee, that should the church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the
author of so foul a deed; or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and

courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days, without the

least furtherance or contribution of those few talents, which God at that present had

lent me; I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of dis-
courage and reproach. Timorous and ungrateful, the church of God is now again at

the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou warest;—what matters it for thee, or thy

bewailing? When time was, thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou hast read or

studied, to utter in her behalf: yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired

thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hast the diligence, the parts, the lan-
guage of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified; but when the cause

of God and his church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee

which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants,

but thou wert dumb as a beast: from henceforward be that which thine own brutish

silence hath made thee!

"Or else I should have heard on the other ear,—Slothful, and ever to be set light by,

the church hath now overcome her late distresses after the unwearied labours of many

her true servants that stood up in her defence; thou also wouldst take upon thee to

share amongst them of their joy: but wherefore thou? Where cast thou show any

word or deed of thine, which might have hastened her peace? Whatever thou dost

now talk, or write, or look, is the alms of other men's active prudence and zeal. Dare

not now to say or do anything better than thy former sloth and infancy; or, if thou

darest, thou dost impudently to make a thrifty purchase of boldness to thyself, out of

the painful merits of other men. What before was thy sin, is now thy duty, to be

abject and worthless.

"These, and such-like lessons as these, I know would have been my matrix duly,

and my even-song: but now by this little diligence mark what a privilege I have

gained with good men and saints, to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of

the church, if she should suffer, when others, that have ventured nothing for her sake,

have not the honour to be admitted mourners: but, if she lift up her drooping head

and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have

my charter and freewill of rejoicing to me and my King.

"Concerning, therefore, this wayward subject against prelates, the touching where-

fore is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men; as by what hath been said

I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath

entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a

preventive fear lest this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the

good provision of peaceful hours; so, lest it should be still imputed to me, as I have

found it hath been, that some self-pleasing humours of vain-glory hath incited me to

contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head; from

this needless surmisal I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal auditor, if I

can but say successfully that which in this exigent behoves me; although I would be

heard only, if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally for

a while I shall beg leave I may address myself.

"To him it will be no new thing, though I tell him that if I hunted after praise, by

the estimation of wit and learning, I should not write thus out of mine own season

when I have neither yet completed to my mind the fall circle of my private studies,

although I complain not of any insufficiency to the matter in hand; or were I ready to

my wishes, it were a folly to commit anything elaborately composed to the careless

and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times.

"Next, if I were wise only to my own ends, I would certainly take such a subject as

of itself might catch applause (whereas this hath all the disadvantages on the con-

trary), and such a subject as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and

time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection

of a faultless picture; whereas in this argument the not deferring is of great moment to

the good speedings, that, if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much.

"Lastly, I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself infe-

rior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I

may account, but of my left hand; and though I shall be foolish in saying more to
this purpose, yet, since it will be such a folly as wisest men go about to commit, having only confessed and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly, to have courteous pardon: for, although a poet soaring in the high reason of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might, without apology, speak more of himself than I mean to do; yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empirical conceit, to venture and indulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me.

"I must say, therefore, that after I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense), been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers at home and at the school, it was found, that whether aught was imposed by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of my own choice in English, or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live.

"But much later in the private academies of Italy, whither I was favoured to resort, perceiving that some tribes which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabout (for the manner is, that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there), met with acceptence above what was looked for; and other things, which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to pack up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps; I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that with labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die.

"These thoughts at once possessed me; and these other, that if I were certain to write as men buy leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had, than to God's glory, by the honour and instruction of my country.

"For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Aristotle followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end (that were a toilsome vanity), but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things, among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother-dialect; that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above, of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that; but content with these British islands as my world; whose fortune hath hitherto been, that, if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.

"Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musings, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief model; or whether the rules of Aristotle herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed, which in them that show art, and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art: or, lastly, what king, or knight, before the Conquest, might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero.

"And, as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy his choice, whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the infidels, or Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemagne against the Lombards; if to the instinct of nature and emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and there be nothing adverse in our climate or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories; or whether those dramatic compositions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation.
The Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the 'Song of Solomon,' consisting of two persons, and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges: and the 'Apocalypse' of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies; and this, my opinion, the grave authority of Porphyrius, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm.

Or, if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnific odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are, in most things, worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most and end faulty.

But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets, beyond all these, not in their divine arguments alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable.

These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some, though most abused, in every nation; and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to imbued and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty stanzas the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church: to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship.

Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime; in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and reflexes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe: tracking over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon truth herself, unless they see her elegantly dressed; that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed.

And what a benefit this would be to our youth and gentry, may be soon guessed by what we know of the corruption and bane, which they suck in daily from the writings and interludes of licentious and ignorant poetasters, who having scarce ever heard of that which is the main consistence of a true poem, the choice of such persons as they ought to introduce, and what is moral and decent to each one; do for the most part lay up vicious principles in sweet pills to be swallowed down, and make the taste of virtuous documents harsh and sour.

But, because the spirit of man cannot demean itself lively in this body without some recreating intermission of labour and serious things, it were happy for the commonwealth, if our magistrates, as in those famous governments of old, would take into their case, not only the deciding of our contentious law cases and brawls, but the managing of our public sports and festival pastimes; that they might be, not such as were authorized a while since, the provocations of drunkenness and lust, but such as may inure and harden our bodies by martial exercises to all warlike skill and performance; and may civilise, adorn, and make discreet our minds by the learned and affable meeting of frequent academies, and the procurement of wise and artful recitations, sweetened with eloquent and graceful intimations to the love and practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude, instructing and bettering the nation at all opportunities, that the call of wisdom and virtue may be heard everywhere, as Solomon saith, 'she crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets, on the top of high places, in the chief concourse, and in the openings of the gates.'

Whether this may not be, not only in pulpits, but after another persuasive method at set and solemn panegyrics, in theatres, porches, or what other place or way may win most upon the people, to receive at once both recreation and instruction, let them in authority consult.

The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within my
ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me, by an abortive and forelorn discovery; and the accomplishment of these lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelates, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery, no free and splendid wit can flourish.

"Neither do I think it shame to covenant with my knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted; as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amonest, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained from the invocation of dame Memory and her syren daughters; but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleased.

"To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed, at my own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.

"Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand, but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies, to come into the dim reflection of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk, and there be fair to club quotations with men whose learning and belief lies in marginal stuffings, who, when they have, like good sumpters, laid ye down their horse-loads of citations and fathers at your door, with a rhapsody of who and who were bishops here or there, ye may take off their pack-saddles, their day's work is done, and episcopacy, as they think, stoutly vindicated. Let any gentle apprehension, that can distinguish learned pains from unlearned drudgery, imagine what pleasure or profundness can be in this, or what honour to deal against such adversaries.

"But were it the meanest under-service, if God by his secretary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back; for me especially now when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labours of the church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in my own resolutions; till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure himself or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the learned office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.

"However thus church-outed by the prelates, hence may appear the right I have to meddle in these matters, as before the necessity and constraint appeared."

CHAPTER X.
OF MILTON'S MARRIAGE.

Milton was now thirty-four years old, when he seems to have taken upon himself suddenly the resolution to marry; his choice fell on Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, Esq., of Forest Hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire, an active royalist, who lived gayly and expensively. The match was ill-suited, and did not turn out happily. He was caught by the lady's beauty, but found neither her mind nor her disposition accordant; she was soon tired of his studious habits and quiet unvisited house, after the company to which she had been accustomed at her father's mansion. In a few weeks she requested permission to revisit her father, where she stayed, in defiance of his remonstrance, the whole summer: she would not even answer his letters. This so provoked him.
that he resolved to divorce her; and to justify his resolution, published, in 1644, his "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, restored to the good of both sexes." "He declares," says Fletcher, "his object to be to prove, first, that other reasons of divorce besides adultery, were, by the law of Moses, and are yet to be, allowed by the Christian magistrate, as a piece of justice, and that the words of Christ are not hereby contraried: next, that to prohibit absolutely any divorce whatever, except those which Moses excepted, is against the reason of law. The grand position is this:—that indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature, unchangeable, hinderings, and ever likely to hinder, the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce than adultery, provided there be a mutual consent for separation."

He next published the "Tetrachordon, or Exposition of the four chief places in Scripture which treat of Nullities in Marriage." Thirdly, "The Judgment of the famous Martin Bucer, touching Divorce." Fourthly, "Colasterion," a reply to a nameless answer to his first work.

These tracts raised a great clamour against the author. It seems to me probable, that the lady married Milton against her will, at the instigation of her parents. Todd has discovered documents, which show that an acquaintance had subsisted between Powell and Milton's father, a native of Oxfordshire, and that Powell had borrowed money of him, which was not paid at the former's death. Powell was a distressed and ruined man, expensive and reckless: it is probable, therefore, that he may have sacrificed his daughter, who soon was willing to escape from one not suited to her habits of life.

This conjecture is in concurrence with some ingenious surmises of Mitford, founded on certain passages which he has extracted from Milton's tracts. Mrs. Milton seems to have been a dull, unintellectual, insensitive woman, though possessed of outward personal beauty.

She was alarmed at last, when she found Milton in earnest to take another wife, and contrived an interview, at which she begged his pardon, and was restored to her home, where she died in a few years: but I doubt, from certain passages in Milton's poetry, if he did not think that he had yielded to her tears with too much softness.

The whole of the documents relative to Milton's claim on Powell's property, which are set forth at length by Todd, who recovered them from the public archives, are very curious. It appears that it was as early as 1627, when Milton was a student at Cambridge, that his father advanced 500l. to Powell on mortgage, to his son's use. I take this to have been a settlement made as a provision for the poet.

When Powell died, loaded with debt, in Jan. 1646-7, Milton took possession of the mortgaged property, and the widow with eight children, was left penniless: she claimed her thirds for dower, but could not obtain them.

Upon Mrs. Powell's petition, 19th April, 1651, the following notes are made:—

"By the law Mrs. Powell might recover her thirds, without doubt: but she is so extremely poor, she hath not wherewithal to prosecute; and besides, Mr. Milton is a harsh and choleric man, and married Mr. Powell's daughter, who would be undone if any such course were taken against him by Mrs. Powell; he having turned away his wife heretofore for a long space, upon some other occasion."

The date of the death of this first wife of Milton is said to have been 1653. His father died in 1647, in the poet's house, who had also received under his hospitable roof the ruined family of Powell, till their father died; but he seems to have been upon no terms with the widow.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS VARIOUS LITERARY OCCUPATIONS.

In 1645 the collection of Milton's early poems was published by Humphrey Mosely, the fashionable publisher of poetry of that age.

In 1641 came out "Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence against Smeetymnuus."

Next year, "An Apology for Smeetymnuus," in reply to Bishop Hall's or his son's "Modest Confutation against a scandalous and seditious Libel." This is Milton's last work on the puritan side of the controversy.
In 1644 he published his "Tractate of Education: to Master Samuel Hartlib."

The month of November of this year produced the "Areopagitica: a Speech for the liberty of Unlicensed Printing. To the Parliament of England." Milford pronounces this to be the finest production in prose from Milton's pen. "For vigour and eloquence of style, unconquerable force of argument, majesty and richness of language, it is not to be surpassed."

In 1648-9 he published "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving that it is lawful, and hath been held so through all ages, for any, who have the power, to call to account a tyrant or wicked king, and after due conviction, to depose and put him to death, if the ordinary magistrate have neglected or denied to do it; and that they, who of late so much blame deposing, are the men that did it themselves."

This tract was a defence of the execution of King Charles, against the objections of the Presbyterians.

The very title of this treatise is surely in the highest degree objectionable, and does not in these days require any refutation. To say the truth, this is a part of Milton's character which puzzles me—and no other. This bloodthirstiness does not agree with his sanctity, and other mental and moral qualities. I will not say that kings may not be deposed: but Charles I. ought not to have been deposed, much less put to death. In the poet, however, posterity has forgotten the regicide.

In 1648-9 came out his "Observations on the Articles of Peace between James Earl of Ormond for King Charles the First on the one hand, and the Irish Rebels and Papists on the other hand: and on a letter sent by Ormond to Colonel Jones, Governor of Dublin: and a Representation of the Scots Presbytery at Belfast in Ireland," &c.

"Such," says Milton, "were the fruits of my private studies, which I gratuitously presented to the church and to the state, and for which I was recompensed by nothing but impunity, though the actions themselves procured me peace of conscience and the approbation of the good: while I exercised that freedom of discussion, which I loved. Others, without labour or desert, got the possession of honours and emoluments; but no one ever knew me, either soliciting anything myself, or through the medium of my friends; ever beheld me in a supplicating posture at the doors of the senate or the levees of the great. I usually kept myself secluded at home, where my own property, part of which had been withheld during the civil commotions, and part of which had been absorbed in the oppressive contributions which I had to sustain, afforded me a scanty subsistence. When I was released from these engagements, and thought that I was about to enjoy an interval of uninterrupted ease, I turned my thoughts to a history of my country, from the earliest times to the present period."

In 1649, Milton says, "I had already finished four books of the history, when after the subversion of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic, I was surprised by an invitation from the council of state, who desired my services in the office of foreign affairs. A book appeared soon after, which was ascribed to the king, and contained the most insidious charges against the Parliament. I was ordered to answer it, and opposed the Iconoclast to the Icon." The title is "ΕΙΚΟΝΟΚΑΛΑΣΘΙΕ: in answer to a book entitled ΕΙΚΑΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΧΙ, the portraiture of his majesty in his solitudes and sufferings."

A question has been raised, and fiercely battled of late, as to the genuineness of the "Icon Basilike." The circumstantial evidence seems strong that it was composed by Bishop Gauden.®

Besides that every reader must be curious about this exordium, it would be doing great injustice to Milton's prose works to omit the following extract from the preface to this extraordinary production:

"To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen from so high a dignity, who hath also paid his final debt both to nature and his faults, is neither of itself a thing commendable, nor the intention of this discourse. Neither was it fond ambition, nor the vanity to get a name, present or with posterity, by writing against a king. I never was so thirsty after fame, nor so destitute of other hopes and means, better and more certain to attain it: for kings have gained glorious titles from their favours by writing against private men, as Henry VIII. did against Luther; but no man ever

gained much honour by writing against a king, as not usually meeting with that force of argument in such courtly antagonists, which to convince might add to his reputation. Kings most commonly, though strong in legions, are but weak in arguments; as they who ever have accustomed from the cradle to use their will only as their right hand, their reason always as their left. Whence unexpectedly constrained to that kind of combat, they prove but weak and puny adversaries; nevertheless, for their sakes, who through custom, simplicity, or want of better teaching, have no more seriously considered kings, than in the gaudy name of majesty, and admire them and their doings as if they breathed not the same breath with other mortal men, I shall make no scruple to take up (for it seems to be the challenge both of him and all his party) to take up this gauntlet, though a king's, in the behalf of liberty and the commonwealth.

"First, then, that some men (whether this were by him intended, or by his friends) have by policy accomplished after death that revenge upon their enemies, which in life they were not able, hath been oft related: and among other examples we find, that the last will of Cæsar being read to the people, and what bounteous legacies he hath bequeathed them, wrought more on that vulgar audience to the avenging of his death, than all the art he could ever use to win their favour in his lifetime. And how much their intent, who published these overlate apologies and meditations of the dead king, drives to the same end of stirring up the people to bring him that honour, that affection, and by consequence that revenge, to his dead corpse, which he himself living could never gain to his person, it appears both by the conceited portraiture before his book, drawn out to the full measure of a masking scene, and set there to catch fools and silly gazers; and by those Latin words after the end, 'Vota dabunt quæ bella negarunt;' intimating, that what he could not compass by war, he should achieve by his meditations: for in words which admit of various sense, the liberty is ours, to choose that interpretation, which may best mind us of what our restless enemies endeavour and what we are timely to prevent. And here may be well observed the loose and negligent curiosity of those, who took upon them to adorn the setting out of this book; for though the picture set in front would martyr him and saint him to befoul the people, yet the Latin motto in the end, which they understand not, leaves him, as it were, a political contriver to bring about that interest, by fair and plausible words, which the force of arms denied him. But quaint emblems and devices, begged from the whole pageantry of some twelfth night's entertainment at Whitehall, will do but ill to make a saint or martyr: and if the people resolve to take him sainted at the rate of such a canonising, I shall suspect their calendar more than the Gregorian. In one thing I must commend his openness, who gave the title to this book, Εἰκόνιον Βασιλικόν, that is to say the King's Image; and by the shrine he dresses out for him, certainly would have the people come and worship him. For which reason this answer also is entitled Iconoclastes, the famous surname of many Greek emperors, who in their zeal to the command of God, after long tradition of idolatry in the church, took courage, and broke all superstitious images to pieces. But the people, exorbitant and excessive in all their motions, are prone oftimes not to a religious only, but to a civil kind of idolatry, in idolising their Kings: though never more mistaken in the object of their worship; heretofore being wont to repute for saints those faithful and courageous barons, who lost their lives in the field, making glorious war against tyrants for the common liberty; as Simon de Montford, Earl of Leiceste, against Henry III.; Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster, against Edward II. But now with a besotted and degenerate baseness of spirit, except some few who yet retain in them the old English fortitude and love of freedom, and have testified it by their matchless deeds, the rest, imbastardized from the ancient nobleness of their ancestors, are ready to fall flat and give adoration to the image and memory of this man, who hath offered at more cunning fetches to undermine our liberties, and put tyranny into an art, than any British king before him: which low dejection and debasement of mind in the people, I must confess, I cannot willingly ascribe to the natural disposition of an Englishman, but rather to two other causes; first, to the prelates and their fellow-teachers, though of another name and sect, whose pulpit-stuff, both first and last, hath been the doctrine and perpetual infusion of servility and wretchedness to all their hearers, and whose lives the

* The Presbyterians.
type of worldliness and hypocrisy, without the least true pattern of virtue, righteousness, or self-denial in their whole practice. I attribute it next to the fictitious inclination of most men divided from the public by several ends and humours of their own. At first no man less beloved, no man more generally condemned, than was the King; from the time that it became his custom to break parliaments at home, and either willfully or weakly to betray protestants abroad to the beginning of these combustions. All men inveighed against him; all men, except court-vassals, opposed him and his tyrannical proceedings; the cry was universal; and this full parliament was at first unanimous in their dislike and protestation against his evil government; but when they who sought themselves and not the public, began to doubt, that all of them could not by one and the same way attain to their ambitious purposes, then was the King, or his name at least, as a fit property first made use of, his doings made the best of, and by degrees justified; which begot him such a party, as, after many toils and struggles with his inward fears, emboldened him at length to set up his standard against the parliament: when as before that time, all his adherents, consisting most of dissolute swordsmen and suburb-roysters, hardly amounted to the making up of one ragged regiment strong enough to assault the unarmed house of commons. After which attempt, seconded by a tedious and bloody war on his subjects, wherein he hath so far exceeded those his arbitrary violent places in time of peace, who they before hated him for his high misgovernment, may, fought against him with displayed banners in the field, now applaud him and extol him for the wisest and most religious Prince that lived. By so strange a method amongst the mad multitude is a sudden reputation won, of wisdom by wilfulness and subtle shifts, of goodness by multiplying evil, of pity by endeavouring to root out true religion.

"But it is evident that the chief of his adherents never loved him, never honoured either him or his cause, but as they took him to set a face upon their own malignant designs; nor bemoan his loss at all, but the loss of their own aspiring hopes: like those captive women, whom the poet notes in his IIiad, to have bewailed the death of Patroclus in outward show, but indeed their own condition:—

Πάτροκλου πράσασιν ᾠδὼν δ' αὐτῷ κήδε ἔκάστη.

I do not by this insertion mean that my consent should be implied to Milton's principles and arguments in this extraordinary production, but to exhibit it as a proof of a gigantic mind. The style is hard and Latinized; but after a few pages, when the ear is familiarized to it, it strikes by its extraordinary force, precision, and originality; by the copiousness of its learning, and the unexpected subtlety of its arguments.

Milton now entered into the famous controversy with Salmasius. By the order of the state he wrote "Defensio pro Populo Anglico contra Claudii Anonymi, alias Salmasii Defensionem Regiam," 1651, afterwards translated into English by Washington. Salmasius (Claude de Saunaise) had the reputation of one of the greatest scholars of the age. In some respects this dispute was disgraced by the grossest personalities on both sides; many think that Milton destroyed Salmasius's title to classicality: Mitford's opinion is otherwise; and he has discussed the question with much erudition, research, and taste.

This book raised the reputation of Milton upon the Continent. He says, "I am about to discourse of matters, neither inconsiderable nor common; but how a most potent king, after he had trampled upon the laws of the nation, and given a shock to its religion, and begun to rule at his own will and pleasure, was at last subdued in the field by his own subjects, who had undergone a long slavery under him; how afterwards he was cast into prison; and when he gave no ground, either by words or actions, to hope better things of him, he was finally by the supreme council of the kingdom condemned to die, and beheaded before the very gates of the royal palace. I shall likewise relate (which will much conduce to the easing men's minds of a great superstition) by what right, especially according to our law, this judgment was given, and all these matters transacted; and shall easily defend my valiant and worthy countrymen (who have extremely well deserved of all subjects and nations in the world) from the most wicked calumnies both of domestic and foreign railers, and especially from the

* From the translation by Washington.
reproaches of this most vain and empty sophister, who sets up for a captain and ring-leader to all the rest. For what king’s majesty sitting upon an exalted throne, ever shone so brightly, as that of the people of England then did, when shaking off that old superstition, which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment upon the king himself, or rather upon an enemy who had been their king, caught as it were in a net by his own laws (who alone of all mortals challenged to himself impunity by a divine right), and scrupled not to inflict the same punishment upon him, being guilty, which he would have inflicted upon any other? But why do I mention these things as performed by the people, which almost open their voice themselves, and testify the presence of God throughout? who, as often as it seems good to his infinite wisdom, uses to throw down proud and unruly kings, exalting themselves above the condition of human nature, and utterly to extirpate them and all their family. By his manifest impulse being set on work to recover our almost lost liberty, following him as our guide, and adoring the impresses of his divine power manifested upon all occasions, we went on in no obscure, but an illustrious passage, pointed out and made plain to us by God himself. Which things, if I should so much as hope by any diligence or ability of mine, such as it is, to discourse of as I ought to do, and to commit them so to writing, as that perhaps all nations and all ages may read them, it would be a very vain thing in me: for what style can be august and magnificent enough, what man has parts sufficient to undertake so great a task? Since we find by experience, that in so many ages as are gone over the world, there has been but here and there a man found, who has been able worthily to recount the actions of great heroes and potent states; can any man have so good an opinion of his own talents, as to think himself capable to reach these glorious and wonderful works of Almighty God, by any language, by any style of his? Which enterprise, though some of the most eminent persons in our commonwealth have prevailed upon me by their authority to undertake, and would have it be my business to vindicate with my pen against envy and calumny (which are proof against arms) those glorious performances of theirs (whose opinion of me I take as a very great honour, that they should pitch upon me before others to be serviceable in this kind of those most valiant deliverers of my native country; and true it is, that from my very youth I have been bent extremely upon such sort of studies, as inclined me, if not to do great things myself, at least to celebrate those that did), yet as having no confidence in any such advantages, I have recourse to the divine assistance; and invoke the great and holy God, the giver of all good gifts, that I may as substantially, and as truly, discourse and refute the sauciness and lies of this foreign declamator, as our noble generals piously and successfully by force of arms broke the King’s pride and his unruly domineering, and afterwards put an end to both by inflicting a memorable punishment upon himself, and as thoroughly as a single person did with ease, but of late confute and confound the king himself, rising as it were from the grave, and recommending himself to the people in a book published after his death, with new artifices and allurements of words and expressions. Which antagonist of mine, though he be a foreigner, and though he deny it a thousand times over, but a poor grammarian; yet not contented with a salary due to him in that capacity, chose to turn a prudential coxcomb, and not only to intrude in state affairs, but into the affairs of a foreign state; though he brings along with him neither modesty, nor understanding, nor any other qualification requisite in so great an arbitrator, but sauciness, and a little grammar only. Indeed, if he had published here, and in English, the same things as he has now wrote in Latin, such as it is, I think no man would have thought it worth while to return an answer to them, but would partly despise them as common, and exploded over and over already; and partly abhor them as sordid and tyrannical maxims, not to be endured even by the most abject of slaves: nay, men that have sided with the King, would have had these thoughts of his book. But since he has swoln it to a considerable bulk, and dispersed it amongst foreigners, who are altogether ignorant of our affairs and constitution, it is fit that they who mistake them should be better informed; and that he who is so very forward to speak ill of others, should be treated in his own kind. If it be asked, why we did not then attack him sooner, why we suffered him to triumph so long, and pride himself in our silence? for others I am not to answer; for myself I can boldly say, that I had neither words nor arguments long to
seek for the defence of so good a cause, if I had enjoyed such a measure of health as would have endured the fatigue of writing: and being but weak in body, I am forced to write by piecemeal, and break off almost every hour, though the subject be such as requires an uninterrupted study and intenseness of mind. But though this bodily indisposition may be a hindrance to me in setting forth the just praises of my most worthy countrymen, who have been the saviours of their native country, and whose exploits, worthy of immortality, are already famous all the world over; yet I hope it will be no difficult matter for me to defend them from the insolence of this silly little scholar, and from that saucy tongue of his at least. Nature and laws would be in an ill case, if slavery should find what to say for itself, and liberty be mute; and if tyrants should find men to plead for them, and they that can master and vanquish tyrants should not be able to find advocates; and it were a deplorable thing indeed, if the reason mankind is ended withal, and which is the gift of God, should not furnish more arguments for men's preservation, for their deliverance, and, as much as the nature of the thing will bear, for making them equal to one another, than for their oppression and for their utter ruin under the domineering power of one single person. Let me therefore enter upon this noble cause with a cheerfulness, grounded upon this assurance, that my adversary's cause is maintained by nothing but fraud, fallacy, ignorance, and barbarity; whereas mine has light, truth, reason, the practice and the learning of the best ages of the world, of its side."

In 1654 Milton published his "Defensio secunda contra Infamem Libellum Anonymum, cui titulus, Regi Sanguinis Clamor ad Caelum adversus Parricidas Anglicanos."* This commences with another magnificent passage regarding himself:

"Jam videor mihi, ingressus iter, transmarinos tractus et rectas late regiones, sublimis perdurare; vultus innumeros atque ignotos, animi sensus mecum conjunctissimos; hinc Germanorum virile et infestum servitut robor, inde Francorum vividi dignique nomine liberales impetus, hinc Hispanorum consulta virtus, Italorum inde sedata subique comos magnanimitas ob octos versatur. Quicquid uspian liberorum pectorum, quicquid ingemni, quicquid magnanimi aut prudens latet aut se palam profetur, alii tacite favere, alii aperte suffragari, accurrecere alii et planus accipere, alii tandem vero vieti, deditios se tradere. Videor jam mihi, tantis circumseptos copis, ab Hercoleis usque columnis ad extremos Liberi patris terminos, libertatem diu pulsam atque exulum, longo intervallo domum ubique gentium reducere: et, quod Triptolemus olim fertur, sed longe nobilibrem Cereali illa frugem ex civitate mea gentibus importare; restitutum nempem civilium liberumque vitae cultum, per urbes, per regna, per nationes disseminare, &c."

"I seem to survey, as from a towering height, the far-extended tracts of sea and land, and innumerable crowds of spectators, betraying in their looks the liveliest interest, and sensations the most congenial with my own: here I behold the stout and manly prowess of the German, disdaining servitude; there the generous and lively impetuousity of the French; on this side the calm and stately valour of the Spaniard; on that the composed and varied magnanimity of the Italian. Of all the lovers of liberty and virtue, the magnificent and the wise, in whatever quarter they may be found, some secretly favour, others openly approve; some greet me with congratulations and applause; others, who had long been proof against conviction, at last yield themselves captive to the force of truth. Surrounded by congregated multitudes, I now imagine, that, from the columns of Hercules to the Indian ocean, I behold the nations of the earth recovering that liberty which they so long had lost; and that the people of this island are transporting to other countries a plant of more beneficial qualities, and more noble growth, than that which Triptolemus is reported to have carried from region to region; that they are disseminating the blessings of civilization and freedom among cities, kingdoms, and nations. Nor shall I approach unknown, nor perhaps unloved, if it be told that I am the same person, who engaged in single combat that fierce advocate of despotism, till then reputed invincible in the opinion of many, and in his own conceit, who insolently challenged us and our armies to the combat; but

* The author of this book was Peter de Morin, afterwards Prebendary of Canterbury. See an "Account of Alexander Mornes," among the Literati of Geneva, where he published many books. See Senebier's "Histoire Littéraire."
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whom, while I repelled his virulence, I silenced with his own weapons; and over whom, if I may trust to the opinion of impartial judges, I gained a complete and glorious victory."

In 1654 Milton published his "Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes," showing that it is not lawful for any Power on earth to compel in matters of religion."

The same year he published "Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove Hirings out of the Church; wherein is also discourse of Tithe, Church-fees, and Church-revenues; and whether any Maintenance of Ministers can be settled by law."

He wrote also "A Letter to a Friend concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth;" and, "The Present Means and brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth, easy to be put in practice, and without delay; in a Letter to General Monk."

In 1660 he published "The ready and easy way to establish a free Commonwealth, and the excellence thereof compared with the inconveniences and dangers of re-admitting Kingship in the realm."

In the same year he published "Brief Notes upon a late Sermon, titled the Fear of God, preached and since published by Matthew Griffith, D. D., and Chaplain to the late King, wherein many notorious wrestlings of Scripture, and other falsities, are observed."

I cannot help lamenting that Milton spent so many years in these bitter political and sectarian squabbles: "coarser minds" would have done for that work. He was always powerful—sometimes splendid; but here his passions were human, and too often mingled with earthly dross. That magnificent and stupendous imagination must have often slept: his faculties duly employed might have produced other epic poems equal to "Paradise Lost:" he might even have gained something more of facility and softness: other gardens of Eden might have been described, and human passions of half-etherial sublimity might have been embodied: his youthful purpose of some romantic tale of chivalry might also have been executed.

Perhaps he would never have attained to the rich profusion of Spenser; but he would have been far more nervous, gigantic, and heaven-exalted in his characters and descriptions: he would have painted castles and battles and enchantments with a darker, more awesome, and more prophet-like power; he would have given, by a few mighty strokes, what Spenser somewhat weakens by the expanded multiplicity of his touches. With the collected sternness of Dante, and the gloomy touches of his inspired vein, he would have filled the imagination with something of superhuman exaltation of visionary grandeur.

What themes for a creative mind did the superstitions, manners, and traditionary tales of chivalry offer! Milton's memory was stored with this branch of literature, and delighted in it; and his faculty of sublime fiction could have added to it any ornaments he chose: but mighty as was his imagery, the spiritual part of his power was still mightier: magnificence of thought and sentiment is his prime characteristic. It is his force of reflection and comment, which overcomes and electrifies us; the vast extent of his views; his comprehension, and stupendous grasp; and, while he speaks as a poet, he speaks also as a sage, and a philosopher.

How would he have described the Crusades, above all other poets! what endless diversity of scenery, heroism, customs, incidents, moral and intellectual character; observation, learning, opinion, reasoning, principles, would he have supplied! This would have been far superior to the story of "King Arthur," in which, perhaps, there is some mixture of childishness, unbecoming the lofty bard's austere grandeur.

While Milton's mind was immersed for twenty years in all those mean contests of human ambition or bigotry, in which intrigue, artifice, and selfish passions pervert and darken the heart and the head, he must have stifled those radiant visions of spiritual purity, which were his natural food and delight. A suppressed fire often turns to poison; and perhaps it gave some embitterment to the poet's feelings: but the fire now and then blazed unexpectedly in a glorious flame amid endless pages of subtle or heavy prose.

Perhaps he would not have lost his eye-sight, if he had pored less over these controversial mysteries, dry as the dust of the barren desert. The dreams of imagination give rest to the eyes, and are brightest when the outward view is closed.

The vexations humours with which the poet had to contend must have added to the
irritable temperament of his frame. He was naturally "a choleric man," according to the report of Mrs. Powell, the mother of his first wife; and he had a scorn of mean intellects and unlearned persons. Loftiness was a prime ingredient in his disposition, as well as in his mental faculties: detraction and contumely enraged him: his opinions were strong and fixed—he would bend to no man. As he never deviated from the paths of duty he had chalked out, so opposition embittered his temper, or excited his scorn: he was not one, therefore, who could buffet in troubled waters without a great wear of his frame. He himself says, that he lost his sight "overplied in liberty's defence." This was, no doubt, true:—the sour humours of the body might, by a natural effect, disarrange the eyes: they were tender even in his youth.

The cause of liberty, pursued from the purest motives, if it could be separated from the constant participation of the great body who were actuated by a love of licentiousness, and an envious desire to overturn and plunder the great and the rich, would become such a mind as Milton's: but the large mass of the active movers of that celebrated contest was of a temper, and passion, and principle utterly unfitted to the bard's holy spirit. He was blinded by his zeal in a cause in which his heart and his convictions were embarked, and he reaped the fruit of the food he sought in bitterness and sorrow: he found thorns and brambles and weeds without end, wherever he applied his sickle.

Opinions differ concerning the character of the sovereign, against whom he lifted his voice and his hand. That unhappy monarch was so placed by birth and circumstances, that perhaps the wisest man and the greatest hero could not have escaped safe, much less victorious. He had some weaknesses, of which a leading one was dulness: he was a man of elegant taste, numerous accomplishments, varied learning, with a sensitive, generous heart, and undoubted piety: he entertained some notions of kingly power, which in these days would be generally condemned; but in the times in which he imbibed and persevered in them, it would have been truly extraordinary if he had thought otherwise. The most plausible charge laid against his character is insincerity: this arose from want of firmness. He was sometimes led into momentary concessions contrary to his conviction.

The trust he put in Buckingham cannot be entirely excused, because that minister was deficient in almost every quality necessary to a statesman: his want of high talents, his profligacy, his profusion, his deficiency in all the grand principles of a sound government, his corruption, his reckless indiscretions, offered a mark for the revolutionary passions of the age, which they could not miss. But the system of favouritism was then the general fault of monarchs; and Charles had a warm and friendly heart, which could not easily give up an attachment. On the contrary, the unfortunate prince has been blamed for sacrificing Strafford: for that afflicting charge nothing less than extreme durese can be an excuse.

When once the sword of civil contest is drawn, neither party thinks itself safe till it has destroyed the other: this is the excuse the parliamentarians plead for putting Charles to death. I shall never cease to consider it a bloodthirsty and unpardonable act. All my veneration for Milton, and all the power of argument of his mighty mind, will not alter that opinion.

The opposition to the rule of kings had been secretly brooding and fomenting through Europe for near a century, but had been kept down in England by the magnificent and prudent spirit of Queen Elizabeth: but the Puritans had been constantly at work against her throne, while the Jesuits beset it on other principles, and with other views. At Milton's birth, the imbecility of King James had encouraged that spirit in the former growing sect, which struck at the root of all ancient institutions. Milton probably drank in those schisms with his earliest breath: but for a time his classical and romantic studies, the glories of his poetical imagination, his neighbourhood to the feudal hospitalities of Harfield, the smiles of Spenser's patroness, the noble and splendid pageantry of Ludlow Castle, and his travels among the seats of the ancient arts, the heroic fabilities of Tasso, and the glowing recollections of the Marquis Manso in the Elysian scenery of the sunny bay of Naples, suspended, and nearly expelled them.

But when the discordant trumpet of open civil strife was once sounded, and by an
unhappy spell excited all the early predilections which had been instilled into his childhood, the Muse, for whom nature had best fitted him, was for a long time forgotten; and all the crabbed lore of puritanical gloom overshadowed the native fire of a heavenly imagination.

In whatever turn his mind took, he had power and force to go beyond other men. When his gigantic strength entered the field of battle, like Samson, he would lay all prostrate before him; and like him, rather than submit and give triumph to his foes, would have grasped the columns, and brought the tumbling roof of the theatre* on the heads of all; willing to fall himself in the common ruin, rather than let the proud and the mighty prevail over him. Here lay his ambition; here he had something of the spirit of his Fallen Angels. To him all monarchs of the ordinary vigour of human intellect appeared but as children of the dust: in the conscious vastness of his intellectual supremacy, he met them, when they put on the armour of assault, with scorn and defiance.

CHAPTER XII.

MILTON'S CONTROVERSIAL WRITINGS.

On March 15, 1648-9, the council of state appointed Milton secretary for the foreign tongues. In 1652 the poet's eyesight was entirely lost; but he was still continued in his office, and allowed an assistant, Mr. Philip Meadowes. About this time his first wife died, leaving him three daughters. He did not re-marry till 1656. This second wife was daughter of Captain Woodcock, of Hackney: she died in childbed the next year, and was buried at St. Margaret's, Westminster, 16th February, 1657.

On April 17, 1655, it was ordered that "the former salary of Mr. John Milton of two hundred eighty-eight pounds, &c., formerly charged on the council's contingencies, be reduced to one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and paid to him during his life out of his Highness's Exchequer."

Bishop Sumner says, it is presumed that from this time Milton ceased to be employed in public affairs; but Todd gives proofs that he continued to be employed long afterwards, first with the aid of Philip Meadowes, and afterwards, in 1657, of Andrew Marvell, the poet, whose noble panegyrical verses are prefixed to the Paradise Lost.†

As late as the 25th of October, 1659, there is a warrant of state for the payment to John Milton and Andrew Marvell of £86 12s. each, at the rate for each of £200 per annum.

A little before the king's coming over, Milton was sequestered from his Latin secretaryship, and the salary.

In 1658 he amused himself by editing from a MS. "the Cabinet-Council of Ralegh."

Whatever merit Milton might have in the able and learned discharge of his political services, it is deeply to be lamented that his brilliant and sublime faculties were so employed. He had a mind too creative to be wasted in writing down official despatches, or turning them into classical Latin: humble talents would have done better for such laborious and technical tasks. How the slumbering fire of his rich and ever-varying fictions must have consumed his heart and his brain!—How he must have fretted at the base intrigues of courts and counsels, and the turpitude of human ambition!—While immured within dark and close official walls, how he must have sighed and pined to be courting his splendid visions, of a higher and more congenial world, on the banks of some haunted stream!—The woods and forests, the mountains, seas and lakes, ought to have been his dwelling-places.—The whispers of the spring, or the roaring of the winter-winds, ought to have soothed or excited his spirits.—In those regions aerial beings visit the earth; there the soul sees what the concourse of mankind puts to flight; there the mean passions, that corrupt the human bosom, have no abode.

* The building was a spacious theatre.

† A curious letter of Milton's to Lord President Bradshaw, as early as 1653, recommending Marvell as an assistant, is given by Todd, then lately discovered in the State Paper Office.
To make a man of business requires nothing but petty and watchful observation, cold reserve, and selfish craft: to catch the moment when caution in others is asleep; to raise hopes, yet promise nothing; to seem to give full information, yet to be so vague, that everything is open to escape. How can the poet practise such arts as these? He is lost in himself; he is wrapped up in his own creations.

Milton has left interspersed in his controversial writings fragments of autobiography which have every sort of value. They are full of facts,—are vigorous, wise, eloquent, and sublime.

They are also proofs of that enthusiasm of character, which led the poet to those ideal views of liberty that are inconsistent with human frailty.

Of such passages the first, and perhaps most interesting, is the writer’s description of his own person:

“I do not believe,” says the poet, “that I was ever once noted for deformity, by any one who ever saw me; but the praise of beauty I am not anxious to obtain. My stature certainly is not tall; but it rather approaches the middle than the diminutive. Yet what if it were diminutive, when so many men, illustrious both in peace and war, have been the same? And how can that be called diminutive, which is great enough for every virtuous achievement? Nor, though very thin, was I ever deficient in courage or in strength; and I was wont constantly to exercise myself in the use of the sword, as long as it comported with my habits and my years. Armed with this weapon, as I usually was, I should have thought myself quite a match for any one, though much stronger than myself; and I felt perfectly secure against the assault of any open enemy. At this moment I have the same courage, the same strength, though not the same eyes; yet so little do they betray any external appearance of injury, that they are as unclouded and bright as the eyes of those who most distinctly see. In this instance alone I am a dissembler against my will. My face, which is said to indicate a total privation of blood, is of a complexion entirely opposite to the pale and the cadaverous; so that, though I am more than forty years old, there is scarcely any one to whom I do not appear ten years younger than I am; and the smoothness of my skin is not, in the least, affected by the wrinkles of age.”

His adversary had maliciously and daringly accused him of looseness of life and conversation. To this Milton indignantly thus replies:—“But because as well by this upbraiding to me the bordelloes, as by other suspicious glancings in his book, he would seem privily to point me out to his readers, as one whose custom of life were not honest but licentious; I shall entreat to be borne with, though I digress; and in a way not often trol, acquaint ye with the sum of my thoughts in this matter, through the course of my years and studies; although I am not ignorant how hazardous it will be to do this under the nose of the envious, as it were in skirmish to change the compact order, and instead of outward actions to bring inmost thoughts into front. And I must tell ye, readers, that by this sort of men I have been already bitten at; yet shall they not for me know how slightly they are esteemed, unless they have so much learning as to read what in Greek ἀπειροκαλᾶ is, which, together with envy, is the common disease of those who censure books that are not for their reading. With me it fares now, as with him whose outward garment hath been injured and ill-bedightened; for having no other shift, what help but to turn the inside outwards, especially if the lining be of the same, or, as it is sometimes, much better? So if my name and outward demeanour be not evident enough to defend me, I must make trial if the discovery of my inmost thoughts can: wherein of two purposes both honest, and both sincere, the one perhaps I shall not miss; although I fail to gain belief with others, of being such as my perpetual thoughts shall here disclose me, I may yet not fall of success in persuading some to be such really themselves, as they cannot believe me to be more than what I feign. I had my time, readers, as others have, who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places, where the opinion was, it might be soonest attained; and as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended; whereof some were grave orators and historians, whose matter me thought I loved indeed, but as my age then was, so I understood them; others were the smooth elegiac poets, whereof the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easy, and most agreeable to nature’s part in me, and
for their matter, which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome: for that it was then those years with me which are excused, though they be least severe, I may be saved the labour to remember ye. Whence having observed them to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections, which under one or other name they took to celebrate; I thought with myself by every instinct and presage of nature, which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task, might with such diligence as they used embolden me; and that what judgment, wit, or elegance was my share, would herein best appear, and best value itself, by how much more wisely, and with more love of virtue I should choose (let rude ears be absent) the object of not unlike praises: for albeit these thoughts to some will seem virtuous and commendable, to others only pardonable, to a third sort perhaps idle; yet the mentioning of them now will end in serious. Nor blame it, readers, in those years to propose to themselves such a reward, as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred: whereof not to be sensible when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and withal and ungentle, and swainish breast: for by the firm settling of these persuasions, I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient, that if I found those authors any where speaking unworthy things of themselves, or unchaste of those names which before they had extolled; this effect it wrought with me, from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored: and above them all, preferred the two famous renorners of Beatrice and Laura, who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts without transgression. And long it was not after when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy. These reasonings, together with a certain niceness of nature, an honest haughtiness, and self-esteem either of what I was, or what I might be (which let envy call pride), and lastly that modesty, whereof though not in the title page, yet here I may be excused to make some beseeching profession: all these uniting the supply of their natural aid together, kept me still above those low descents of mind, beneath which he must deject and plunge himself, that can agree to salable and unlawful prostitutions. Next (for hear me out now, readers), that I may tell ye whither my younger feet wandered; I betook me among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn canons the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or of his life, if it so befel him, the honour and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn; and if I found in the story afterward, any of them, by word or deed, breaking that oath, I judged it the same fault of the poet, as that which is attributed to Homer, to have written indecent things of the gods: only this my mind gave me, that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect the girt spur, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder, to stir him up, both by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect the weakness of any attempted chastity. So that even these books, which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living, I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence, proved to me so many incitements, as you have heard, to the love and stedfast observation of that virtue which abhors the society of bordelloes. Thus, from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato, and his equal Xenophon: where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy; (the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion, which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's name, carries about:) and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in
the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue—
with such abstracted sublimities as these; it might be worth your listening, readers;
as I may one day hope to have ye in a still time, when there shall be no chiding; not
in these noises."

CHAPTER XIII.

MILTON'S CHARACTER OF CROMWELL.

This character is of the utmost importance, because it will show us what the great
republican thought of the Protector's services, and what he expected from him.

Oliver Cromwell was sprung from a line of illustrious ancestors, who were distin-
guished for the civil functions which they sustained under the monarchy, and still
more for the part which they took in restoring and establishing true religion in this
country. In the vigour and maturity of his life, which he passed in retirement, he was
conspicuous for nothing more than for the strictness of his religious habits and the
innocence of his manners; and he had tacitly cherished in his breast that flame of
piety which was afterwards to stand him in so much stead on the greatest occasions,
and in the most critical exigencies. In the last parliament which was called by the
king, he was elected to represent his native town; when he soon became distinguished
by the justness of his opinions, and the vigour and decision of his counsels. When the
sword was drawn, he offered his services, and was appointed to a troop of horse, whose
numbers were soon increased by the pious and the good, who flocked from all quarters
to his standard; and in a short time he almost surpassed the greatest generals in the
magnitude and rapidity of his achievements. Nor is this surprising; for he was a
soldier disciplined to perfection in the knowledge of himself; he had either extin-
guished, or by habit had learned to subdue, the whole host of vain hopes, fears, and
passions, which infest the soul. He first acquired the government of himself; and over
himself acquired the most signal victories; so that on the first day he took the field
against the external enemy, he was a veteran in arms, consummately practised in the
tolls and exigencies of war. It is not possible for me, in the narrow limits in which I
circumscribe myself on this occasion, to enumerate the many towns which he has
taken, the many battles which he has won. The whole surface of the British empire
has been the scene of his exploits, and the theatre of his triumphs; which alone would
furnish ample materials for a history, and want a copiousness of narration not inferior
to the magnitude and diversity of the transactions. This alone seems to be a sufficient
proof of his extraordinary and almost supernatural virtue, that by the vigour of his
genius, or the excellence of his discipline, adapted not more to the necessities of war
than to the precepts of Christianity, the good and the brave were from all quarters
attracted to his camp, not only as to the best school of military talents, but of piety
and virtue; and that during the whole war, and the occasional intervals of peace, amid
so many vicissitudes of faction and of events, he retained and still retains the obedience
of his troops, not by largesses or indulgence, but by his sole authority, and the regu-
larity of his pay. In this instance his fame may rival that of Cyrus, of Epaminondas,
or any of the great generals of antiquity. Hence he collected an army as numerous
and as well equipped as any one ever did in so short a time; which was uniformly
obedient to his orders, and dear to the affections of the citizens; which was formidable
to the enemy in the field, but never cruel to those who laid down their arms; which
committed no lawless ravages on the persons or the property of the inhabitants; who,
when they compared their conduct with the turbulence, the intemperance, the impiety,
and the debauchery of the royalists, were wont to salute them as friends, and to con-
consider them as guests. They were a stay to the good, a terror to the evil, and the
warmest advocates for every exertion of piety and virtue. Nor would it be right to
pass over the name of Fairfax, who united the utmost fortitude with the utmost courage;
and the spotless innocence of whose life seemed to point him out as the peculiar
favourite of Heaven. Justly indeed may you be excite to receive this wreath of
praise; though you have retired as much as possible from the world, and seek those
shades of privacy which were the delight of Scipio. Nor was it only the enemy whom
you subdued; but you have triumphed over that flame of ambition and that lust of glory, which are wont to make the best and the greatest of men their slaves. The purity of your virtues and the splendour of your actions consecrate those sweets of ease which you enjoy, and which constitute the wished-for haven of the toils of man. Such was the case which, when the heroes of antiquity possessed, after a life of exertion and glory not greater than yours, the poets, in despair of finding ideas or expressions better suited to the subject, feigned that they were received into heaven, and invited to recline at the tables of the gods. But whether it were your health, which I principally believe, or any other motive which caused you to retire, of this I am convinced; that nothing could have induced you to relinquish the service of your country if you had not known that in your successor liberty would meet with a protector, and England with a stay to its safety, and a pillar to its glory; for, while you, O Cromwell, are left among us, he hardly shows a proper confidence in the Supreme, who distrusts the security of England; when he sees that you are in so special a manner the favoured object of the divine regard. But there was another department of the war, which was destined for your exclusive exertions.

"Without entering into any length of detail, I will, if possible, describe some of the most memorable actions with as much brevity as you performed them with celerity. After the loss of all Ireland, with the exception of one city, you in one battle immediately discomfited the forces of the rebels; and were busily employed in settling the country, when you were suddenly recalled to the war in Scotland. Hence you proceeded with unwearied diligence against the Scots, who were on the point of making an irruption into England with the king in their train; and in about the space of one year, you entirely subdued, and added to the English dominion, that kingdom, which all our monarchs, during a period of eight hundred years, had in vain struggled to subject. In one battle you almost annihilated the remainder of their forces, who, in a fit of desperation, had made a sudden incursion into England, then almost destitute of garrisons, and got as far as Worcester; where you came up with them by forced marches, and captured almost the whole of their nobility. A profound peace ensued; when we found, though indeed not then for the first time, that you were as wise in the cabinet as valuable in the field. It was your constant endeavour in the senate either to induce them to adhere to those treaties which they had entered into with the enemy, or speedily to adjust others which promised to be beneficial to the country. But when you saw that the business was artfully procrastinated, that every one was more intent on his own selfish interest than on the public good, that the people complained of the disappointments which they had experienced, and the fallacious promises by which they had been gull'd, that they were the dupes of a few overbearing individuals, you put an end to their domination. A new parliament is summoned; and the right of election given to those to whom it was expedient: they meet; but do nothing; and after having wearied themselves by their mutual dissensions, and fully exposed their incapacity to the observation of the country, they consent to a voluntary dissolution. In this state of desolation, to which we were reduced, you, O Cromwell! alone remained to conduct the government, and to save the country. We all willingly yield the palm of sovereignty to your unrivalled ability and virtue, except the few among us, who either ambitious of honours which they have not the capacity to sustain, or who envy those which are conferred on one more worthy than themselves, or else who do not know that nothing in the world is more pleasing to God, more agreeable to reason, more politically just or more generally useful, than that the supreme power should be vested in the best and the wisest of men. Such, O Cromwell, all acknowledge you to be; such are the services which you have rendered, as the leader of our councils, the general of our armies, and the father of your country; for this is the tender appellation by which all the good among us salute you from the very soul. Other names you neither have nor could endure; and you deservedly reject that pomp of title which attracts the gaze and admiration of the multitude: for what is a title but a certain definite mode of dignity? but actions such as yours, surpass, not only the bounds of our admiration, but our titles; and like the points of pyramids, which are lost in the clouds, they soar above the possibilities of titular commendation. But since, though it be not fit, it may be expedient, that the highest pitch of virtue should be circumscribed within
the bounds of some human appellation, you endured to receive, for the public good, a title most like to that of the father of your country; not to exalt, but rather to bring you nearer to the level of ordinary men; the title of King was unworthy the transcendent majesty of your character; for if you had been captivated by a name, over which, as a private man, you had so completely triumphed and crumbled into dust, you would have been doing the same thing as if, after having subdued some idolatrous nation by the help of the true God, you should afterwards fall down and worship the gods which you had vanquished. Do you then, sir, continue your course with the same unrivalled magnanimity; it sits well upon you;—to you our country owes its liberties; nor can you sustain a character at once more momentous and more august than that of the author, the guardian, and the preserver of our liberties; and hence you have not only eclipsed the achievements of all our Kings, but even those which have been fabled of our heroes. Often reflect what a dear pledge the beloved land of your nativity has entrusted to your care; and that liberty which she once expected only from the chosen flower of her talents and her virtues, she now expects from you only, and by you only hopes to obtain. Revere the fond expectations which we cherish, the solicitudes of your anxious country; revere the looks and the wounds of your brave companions in arms, who, under your banners, have so strenuously fought for liberty; revere the shades of those who perished in the contest; revere also the opinions and the hopes which foreign states entertain concerning us, who promise to themselves so many advantages from that liberty, which we have so bravely acquired, from the establishment of that new government, which has begun to shed its splendour on the world, which, if it be suffered to vanish like a dream, would involve us in the deepest abyss of shame; and lastly, revere yourself; and, after having endured so many sufferings and encountered so many perils for the sake of liberty, do not suffer it, now it is obtained, either to be violated by yourself, or in any one instance impaired by others.

"You cannot be truly free unless we are free too; for such is the nature of things, that he, who entrenches on the liberty of others, is the first to lose his own, and become slave. But, if you, who have hitherto been the patron and tutelary genius of liberty; £ you, who are exceeded by no one in justice, in piety, and goodness, should hereafter invade that liberty which you have defended, your conduct must be fatally operative, not only against the cause of liberty, but the general interests of piety and virtue. Your integrity and virtue will appear to have evaporated, your faith in religion to have been small; your character with posterity will dwindle into insignificance, by which a most destructive blow will be levelled against the happiness of mankind. The work which you have undertaken is of incalculable moment, which will thoroughly sift and expose every principle and sensation of your heart, which will fully display the vigour and genius of your character, which will evince whether you really possess those great qualities of piety, fidelity, justice, and self-denial, which made us believe that you were elevated by the special direction of the Deity to the highest pinnacle of power. At once wisely and discreetly to hold the sceptre over three powerful nations, to persuade people to relinquish inveterate and corrupt for new and more beneficial maxims and institutions, to penetrate into the remotest parts of the country, to have the mind present and operative in every quarter, to watch against surprise, to provide against danger, to reject the blandishments of pleasure and the pomp of power;—these are exertions compared with which the labour of war is a mere pastime; which will require every energy and employ every faculty that you possess; which demand a man supported from above, and almost instructed by immediate inspiration."

I add to this some important queries, applicable to all times, addressed by the great politician to the people themselves. They will be read at this time with the deepest interest—

"For who would vindicate your right of unrestrained suffrage, or of choosing what representatives you liked best, merely that you might elect the creatures of your own faction, whoever they might be, or him, however small might be his worth, who would give you the most lavish feasts, and enable you to drink to the greatest excess? Thus not wisdom and authority, but turbulence and gluttony, would soon exalt the vilest miscreants from our taverns and our brothels, from our towns and villages, to the rank
and dignity of senators. For, should the management of the republic be entrusted to persons to whom no one would willingly entrust the management of his private concerns? and the treasury of the state be left to the care of those who had lavished their own fortunes in an infamous prodigality? Should they have the charge of the public purse, which they would soon convert into a private, by their unprincipled peculations? Are they fit to be the legislators of a whole people who themselves know not what law, what reason, what right and wrong, what crooked and straight, what licit and illicit means? who think that all power consists in outrage, all dignity in the parade of insolence? who neglect every other consideration for the corrupt gratification of their friendships, or the prosecution of their resentments? who disperse their own relations and creatures through the provinces, for the sake of levying taxes and confiscating goods; men, for the greater part, the most profligate and vile, who buy up for themselves what they pretend to expose to sale, who hence collect an exorbitant mass of wealth, which they fraudulently divert from the public service; who thus spread their pillage through the country, and in a moment emerge from penury and rage, to a state of splendid and of wealth? Who could endure such thievish servants, such vicegerents of their lords? Who could believe that the masters and patrons of a banditti could be the proper guardians of liberty? or who would suppose that he should ever be made one hair more free by such a set of public functionaries (though they might amount to five hundred elected in this manner from the counties and boroughs), when among them who are the very guardians of liberty, and to whose custody it is committed, there must be so many, who know not either how to use or to enjoy liberty, who either understand the principles or merit the possession?"

I now resume my remarks upon the poet's genius and acquirements.

Milton's knowledge of human nature was confined to general traits: he had not detected the minute foldings and smaller particularities, nor opened those secret movements of the passions which familiarize us with private life. All was drawn with the enlarged eye of his own magnificent mind. In this respect he was utterly dissimilar to Shakespeare: he had none of the dramatist's playfulness and flexibility. Milton was always Milton, as Byron was always Byron: neither of them could transport himself into other characters. He spoke of others as an observer; not as identified with them. It appears to me, that this individuality will be found to go through all Milton's writings, and all the conduct of his life: he lived among a world of inferior beings, to whom his stern sublimity could not conform. This showed itself in the very outset of his career,—at college,—where he rebelled against academical discipline; and to this in a great degree may be attributed the vehement and relentless part he took against royalty, and also his separation from the sect with whom he commenced his warfare against the throne.

Villemin, in his life of the poet in the "Biographie Universelle," notices this inflexibility, and the unfitness for practical commerce with the world which it caused.

Yet hence arose many of the grand thoughts and gigantic images that adorned and exalted his poetry: thus he never fell beneath his lofty sphere. Such is the view I take of him in his private character: my business is not to repeat what I find in other books, but to examine for myself. I do not undertake to bring together all which has been said already: on the contrary, much which has been said before seems to me to be on that account not necessary to be said again: I do not desire to supersede other biographers, but rather wish to be admitted among them. I have the hope of saying something which is not to be found elsewhere, and such as will gain the assent of others at least for its probability; for I scorn to seek for novelty at the expense of truth.

All the facts of Milton's life have been laboriously searched for, and brought forward already: opinions upon them are not yet exhausted: unfortunately too many biographers copy each other in this portion of their task: they are either incapable of thinking for themselves, or they do not venture it: they scarcely even vary the expressions. The effect of this is nausea to the purchaser of such books: the "decies repetita" is always repulsive. Perhaps it will be answered, that what had been before observed was just, and therefore required no alteration: if so, the public did not want the renewal of that of which it was in possession.
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Johnson is a critic who has always been a favourite with English readers: his piquancy and severity please; but these, when applied to Milton, are by persons of imagination or taste read with distaste from their perverse and wilful malignity. They often show the vigour of the critic's intellect, and the ingenuity of his pointed language; but they are false or exaggerated in decision, and irreverent and harsh in language. The splendour of Milton's genius ought to have kept aloof such pedantic petulance. If such faults could have been justly imputed to him, still the author of "Paradise Lost" should have been approached with awe, and commented on with the most decorous and profound respect. What right had Johnson to attack and blacken the poet's moral character by imputing motives of passion and ill-humour to him, which he has himself in the most positive and solemn manner denied? He saw the abuses of the existing government, he deluded himself with the hope that by a grand change his own ideal views of perfection might be accomplished. If we believe him,—and he must have a most ungenerous and corrupt mind who can doubt,—his heart was the seat of all earthly integrity, and exalted by the most purified and spiritual aspirations. Of all mean passions, envy could least enter a bosom which had so lofty and calm a confidence in the superiority of its own intellectual gifts: no man envies what he scorns and estimates at nothing.

CHAPTER XIV.

MILTON'S BLINDNESS, AND OCCUPATIONS AFTER THE RESTORATION.

Milton's enemies had had the baseness to charge his blindness as a judgment upon him: he repels this charge with a just indignation, at the opening of his "Second Defence for the People of England."

"I wish," commences this magnificent passage, "that I could with equal facility refute what this barbarous opponent has said of my blindness; but I cannot do it, and I must submit to the affliction. It is not so wretched to be blind, as it is not to be capable of enduring blindness. But why should I not endure a misfortune, which it behooves every one to be prepared to endure if it should happen; which may, in the common course of things, happen to any man, and which has been known to have happened to the most distinguished and virtuous persons in history? What is reported of the Angur Tiresias is well known; of whom Apollonius sung thus in his 'Argonauties':—

To men he dared the will divine disclose,
Nor fear'd what Jove might in his wrath impose;
The gods assign'd him age without decay,
But snatch'd the blessing of his sight away.

But God himself is truth; in propagating which, as men display a greater integrity and zeal, they approach nearer to the similitude of God, and possess a greater portion of his love. We cannot suppose the Deity envious of truth, or unwilling that it should be freely communicated to mankind: the loss of sight, therefore, which this inspired sage, who was so eager in promoting knowledge among men, sustained, cannot be considered as a judicial punishment; and did not our Saviour himself declare that that poor man whom he had restored to sight had not been born blind, either on account of his own sins, or those of his progenitors?

"And with respect to myself, though I have accurately examined my conduct, and scrutinized my soul, I call thee, O God, the searcher of hearts, to witness, that I am not conscious, either in the more early or in the later periods of my life, of having committed any enormity which might deservedly have marked me out as a fit object for such a calamitous visitation: but since my enemies boast that this affliction is only a retribution for the transgressions of my pen, I again invoke the Almighty to witness that I never at any time wrote anything which I did not think agreeable to truth, to justice, and to piety. This was my persuasion then, and I feel the same persuasion now. Thus, therefore, when I was publicly solicited to write a reply to the defence of the royal cause, when I had to contend with the pressure of sickness, and with the apprehension of soon losing the sight of my remaining eye, and when my medical attendants..."
clearly announced, that if I did engage in this work it would be irreparably lost, their premonitions caused no hesitation and inspired no dismay: I would not have listened to the voice even of Esculapius himself from the shrine of Epidaurus, in preference to the suggestions of the heavenly monitor within my breast: my resolution was unshaken, though the alternative was either the loss of my sight or the desertion of my duty; and I called to mind those two destinies which the oracle of Delphi announced to the son of Thetis.

"I considered that many had purchased a less good by a greater evil, the meed of glory by the loss of life; but that I might procure great good by little suffering; that, though I am blind, I might still discharge the most honourable duties, the performance of which, as it is something more durable than glory, ought to be an object of superior admiration and esteem; I resolved, therefore, to make the short interval of sight which was left me to enjoy as beneficial as possible to the public interest.

"But, if the choice were necessary, I would, sir, prefer my blindness to yours; yours is a cloud spread over the mind, which darkens both the light of reason and of conscience; mine keeps from my view only the coloured surfaces of things, while it leaves me at liberty to contemplate the beauty and stability of virtue and of truth. How many things are there besides which I would not willingly see; how many which I must see against my will; and how few which I feel any anxiety to see! There is, as the Apostle has remarked, a way to strength through weakness. Let me then be the most feeble creature alive, as long as that feebleness serves to invigorate the energies of my rational and immortal spirit; as long as in that obscurity in which I am enveloped, the light of the divine presence more clearly shines! And, indeed, in my blindness, I enjoy in no inconsiderable degree the favour of the Deity; who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but himself. Alas! for him who insults me, who maligns and merits public execration! For the Divine law not only shields me from injury, but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not indeed so much from the privation of my sight, as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings, which seem to have occasioned this obscurity. To this I ascribe the more tender assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, their reverential observances."

Every one is familiar with the poet's twenty-second sonnet on this subject.

Cyrine, this three-years-day these eyes, though clear,—
Bereth of light, their seeing have forgot—
What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overpried
In liberty's defence, my noble task.

One is a little surprised that he could so long endure this laborious and tedious office of secretary, especially after his sight began to fail him. His nephew, Edward Phillips, for some time assisted him.

In 1652 he entirely lost his sight.

Todd has recovered a curious letter of Milton from the State-Paper Office, recommending his friend Andrew Marvell, the poet, for some employment:—"A gentleman, whose name is Mr. Marvell,—a man, both by report and the converse I have had with him, of singular desert for the state to make use of; who also offers himself, if there be any employment for him. His father was the minister of Hull, and he hath spent four years abroad in Holland, France, Italy, and Spain, to very good purpose, as I believe, and the gaining of these four languages;—besides he is a scholar, and well read in the Latin and Greek authors; and no doubt, of an approved conversation; for he comes now lately out of the house of the Lord Fairfax, who was general, where he was intrusted to give some instructions in the languages to the lady, his daughter."

This letter of Milton was written in 1653: but Marvell was not joined to Milton in the office of Latin secretary, till 1657. Marvell's commendatory poem on the "Paradise Lost," is well known:—

When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold,
In slender book his vast design unfold; &c.

Milton's salary as Latin secretary was £288 18s. 6d. a year. In 1659, he was only paid at the rate of £200 a year, having then retired.
In this retirement, about two years before the Restoration, he began the "Paradise Lost." Though retired, he was visited by all foreigners of distinction, and some persons of rank at home; but he was known and admired more for his political services than for his poetry.

He had, as has been mentioned, done little in poetry, for the last twenty years, except his few sonnets: of these, Johnson speaks with a tasteless and unworthy contempt; that they are rich in thought, sentiment, and naked sublimity of language, is now undisputed.

It appears that Milton yet relaxed nothing of his mental activity. After the death of Cromwell he must have seen the imminent danger of that republican form of government, which he had spent so much zeal and such gigantic talents to establish. Not only his head but his heart was involved in this establishment. He had worked himself to a fury against kings, and what he supposed to be the tyranny inseparable from their power. His ambition does not appear to have been in the least degree selfish; he had no views of personal aggrandizement: he did not look to riches or political honours: he had no familiarity with those who were called the great; even with Cromwell, his idol, he seems to have had no individual intimacy. Lawrence, "of virtuous father virtuous son," and Cyrine Skinner, were his chief friends. Of the former he says,—

Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining?—
He, who of those delights can judge, and spare,
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

Even the genius of Milton could not have made the progress he did either in production or in learning, if he had admitted the frequent distractions of society. The history of his day is given by the biographers:—but it will not account for the immensity of his reading. The processes of such a mind it is too hazardous to attempt to analyze. His vast memory tempted him sometimes to encumber himself with abstruse and useless literature. One is a little astonished that a creative brain, which is constantly working its materials into new shapes, and combinations, can reflect things precisely in the form and colours in which it receives them.—Even the "Paradise Lost" is occasionally patched with allusions of this kind.—There is, however, an unaccountable charm in the manner in which the poet occasionally mentions remote names of persons and places. A single word calls up a whole train of ideas:—but then this is a mere reference to an instructed and rich memory.

Milton's whole life ought to have been employed in creation, not reproduction.—But this opinion will not perhaps be commonly assented to, or even understood. The poet was a powerful reasoner in his political and theological discussions, but not always free from obscurity or sophistry. His heated mind saw certain questions in an exaggerated or partial view.

The time was now arriving, when it was necessary to throw away and forget politics. In spite of all his efforts, the monarchy was at length restored. He had now reason to dread the fate of the other regicides: it was necessary for a time to conceal himself: Vane and others were taken, condemned, and put to death. The part which Milton had taken in justifying the decapitation of the late king, by arguments and in language insulting and contemptuous, might reasonably have been expected to have marked him out to the Court for a signal object of vengeance. He was finally spared: by what influences this was effected, is now little known: this act of mercy reflects great honour on the government.

Though there are many reasons to suppose that Milton's poetical fame was yet but little acknowledged, this extraordinary regard shown to him by sparing his life raises a contrary inference. He had no claims for forbearance from the King on account of his political talents:—these were powers which it must have been desirable to crush. The greater part of those who had the monarch's ear were prodigante men, who, even if they had been well acquainted with the poetry which the bard had hitherto put forth, would not have enjoyed it; even Lord Clarendon seems to have had no taste for this sort of genius: he commends Cowley as having taken a flight beyond other votaries
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of the Muses; and the historian's warm loyalism, in theory as well as personal attachment, would have felt abhorrence beyond other men for the immortal bard's political writings. We are constrained to leave the cause of this mercy in the dark, and give the glory to those who exerted it.

Now came in a flood of poetasters from the French school; dissolute, base-minded, and demoralizing,—with little genius, but some wit,—epigrammatists, satirists, and buffoons,—ridiculing all that was grave, praising nothing but what was worldly and unprincipled.

It is true that Dryden was now beginning to work himself into fame, but on the French model; which, however, he improved by the force of thought and language, and harmony of vigorous versification. I need not observe how unlike was the genius of Milton and of Dryden: Johnson has admirably analyzed the latter, to which his own taste inclined. He who is partial to Dryden, will never, I think, much relish Milton; though it will be objected that the case was otherwise with Gray, who is said to have united his admiration of both. There is a want of grandeur, of sentiment, of creation, of visionariness in Dryden. His style is clear, powerful, and buoyant; but his thoughts are often common, and his imagery is unpicturesque and vague: he was more intellectual than imaginative: his mind was turned to the world, and the observances of actual and daily life: he was often happy in acuteness of discrimination upon the manners and characters of the time: witness his portrait of Achitophel (Lord Shaftesbury). Here the extreme subtlety of his understanding displayed itself in full force.

This was exactly what suited the reigning taste at this epoch. Let us contemplate Milton while such things were the rage. He had now withdrawn himself from the angry and harsh contests in which he had been so many years engaged, and was contemplating battles a thousand-fold more exalted, of rebel angels with almighty power. Never, in his more worldly employments, seeing things but in their grandest phases, with what calm scorn must he now have looked down upon the petty witticisms of what the Court and nation now considered the brilliant emanations of poetic genius! Davennant was his friend, and Milton may have found some fine things in Gondibert; but there are no traces that the two poets had at this period any familiarity or intercourse. I do not recollect that Milton and Cowley were acquainted; nor do Milton's early poems seem to have come under Cowley's notice: if they had, he would assuredly have quoted them in his "Prose Essays."*

The conduct of those who were now re-admitted to power, was too well calculated to confirm the poet's hatred of monarchy: but in silent solitude and darkness he worked complacently on. Conscious of his own superiority of genius, he did not regard the loud applauses of the mob in favour of others. He did not wonder that the dissolute in life should have no taste for the pure spiritualities of true poetry: he relied upon the rewards of posterity with a just and sure faith. While others were grooping upon earth in sensual pleasures, he lived by his imagination in heaven: his outward blindness did but strengthen his inward light. Perhaps but for this blindness his creative faculties had not been sufficiently concentrated to produce his great poem. Something of this opinion he seems himself to have entertained; thus drawing comfort from his misfortune. He was now shut out from worldly distractions; and the day was as the covering calm of night to him. The humility of his fortune, the singularity of his habits, all aided contemplation. The Muse can never live, except feebly and languidly, amid material luxuries: she delights in the majesty of thought, the scorn of all sublunary pleasures.

The poet, in his long intercourse with the busy world, had, like others, shown the human passions of anger, bitterness, contempt, and invective:—he now threw them all off: they nowhere appear in the sublime poetry he now produced, unless perhaps by slight allusion in a few passages of "Samson Agonistes," where the memory of the past revives a few stings.

In 1665 Milton married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, daughter of Sir Edward

In fact, when they appeared in 1645, he was in the King's service, and personally attended His Majesty; and he died in 1667, before the second edition of the poems, and the very year in which the "Paradise Lost" was published.
Minshull, knight of an ancient Cheshire family. She survived him above fifty years, and, retiring to Nantwich in Cheshire, died there in 1727.

Ellwood, the quaker, now undertook to read to him, for the sake of the advantage of his conversation and instruction. When the plague raged in London, 1663, Ellwood received Milton and his family into his house at Chalfont, St. Giles, in Buckinghamshire. Here Ellwood says it was that the poet communicated to him the manuscript of "Paradise Lost."

Bishop Newton remarks, that considering the difficulties "under which the author lay, his unfitness at the public affairs and his own, his age and infirmities, his not being now in circumstances to maintain an amanuensis, but obliged to make use of any hand that came next to write his verses as he made them, it is really wonderful that he should have the spirit to undertake such a work, and much more that he should ever bring it to perfection."

At this time he addressed a beautiful Latin letter to his friend Peter Heimbach, a German, of which the following is Hayley's translation:

"If, among so many funerals of my countrymen, in a year so full of pestilence and sorrow, you were induced, as you say, by rumour to believe that I also was snatched away, it is not surprising; and if such a rumour prevailed among those of your nation, as it seems to have done, because they were solicitous for my health, it is not unpleasant; for I must esteem it as a proof of their benevolence towards me. But by the graciousness of God, who had prepared for me a safe retreat in the country, I am still alive and well; and, I trust, not utterly an unprofitable servant, whatever duty in life there yet remains for me to fulfil. That you remember me after so long an interval in our correspondence, gratifies me exceedingly: though, by the politeness of your expression, you seem to afford me room to suspect that you have rather forgotten me, since, as you say, you admire in me so many different virtues wedded together. From so many weddings I should assuredly dread a family too numerous, were it not certain that in narrow circumstances, and under severity of fortune, virtues are most excellently reared and most flourishing. Yet one of these said virtues has not very handsomely rewarded me for entertaining her; for that which you call my political virtue, and which I should rather wish you to call my devotion to my country (enchanting me with her captivating name), almost, if I may say so, expatriated me. Other virtues, however, join their voices to assure me that wherever we prosper in rectitude, there is our country. In ending my letter, let me obtain from you this favour; that if you find any parts of it incorrectly written, and without stops, you will impute it to the boy who writes for me, who is utterly ignorant of Latin, and to whom I am forced (wretchedly enough) to repeat every single letter that I dictate. I still rejoice that your merit as an accomplished man, whom I knew as a youth of the highest expectation, has advanced you so far in the honourable favour of your prince. For your prosperity in every other point you have both my wishes and my hopes. Farewell."

"London, August 26, 1666."

CHAPTER XV.

Milton's Contemporaries—"PARADISE REGAINED" AND "SAMSON AGONISTES."

On 27th April, 1667, Milton sold his "Paradise Lost" to Samuel Simmons for an immediate payment of five pounds; another five pounds to be paid on the sale of thirteen hundred copies of the first edition; a third five pounds on the sale of the same number of the second edition; and the same sum after an equal sale of the third edition; each edition not to exceed fifteen hundred copies. In two years the poet recovered the second payment; he did not live to receive the other payments: therefore 2800 copies had not been sold in seven years.

Johnson and others contend that the sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in these times, was a proof that the poet's merit was not unfelt. I do not think so. John Dennis observes in a passage of his "Familiar Letters," quoted by Mitford, that "never any poet left a greater reputation behind him than Mr. Cowley, while Milton remained*

* See Ellwood's "Autobiography," and see T. Warton's character of this book in Todd, i. 187.
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obscure, and known but to few; but the great reputation of Cowley did not continue half a century, and Milton's is now on the pinnacle of the Temple of Fame."

Mitford enumerates the following poets as contemporary with Milton:—"Waller, Suckling, Crashaw, Denham, Lovelace, Brome, Sherborne, Fanshaw, Davenant, besides others of inferior note." He might have added—Habington, Stanley, Carew, Herbert, Withers. But none of these were of any mark, or power of invention, unless Cowley and Davenant. It does continue to appear to me extraordinary, that so many false and petty beauties should start up successively to be the temporary fashion of poetry. Invention is not improbability: it is to embody and bring before others the spirits of the past and the absent; it is not the trick of flowery or sparkling language; but the busy-bodies of a nation,—they who give the tone in society, having no natural taste or feeling,—require artificial stimulants. The court of Charles II. was too much adulterated to endure the spiritual grandeur of Milton: he would have dispelled all the delusions of the wicked magician of voluptuousness: his sternness, his haughty wisdom, his unbending dogmas, were to them terrible and revolting.

At the same time, though the exalted bard was little noticed by the "fashionable world," or by popular authors, we cannot suppose that he found no readers. That class of learned men, who were now thrown into the shade—the republican party,—must have remembered and admired Milton's zeal in their cause, and have had the curiosity to read his poem; but perhaps in silence and obscurity.

Dryden, too, though of so different a genius and taste, as well as politics, was fully sensible of the poet's merit. In the Preface to his "State of Innocence," soon after Milton's death, he says, "I cannot, without injury to the deceased author of 'Paradise Lost,' but acknowledge that this poem has received its entire foundation, part of the design, and many of the ornaments from him. What I have borrowed will be so easily discerned from my mean productions, that I shall not need to point the reader to the places; and truly I should be sorry, for my own sake, that any one should take the pains to compare them together; the original being undoubtedly one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems, which either this age or nation has produced."

Other notices are collected by Todd, which it is not necessary to repeat.

In 1688 appeared a folio edition of the "Paradise Lost," under the patronage of Lord Somers: in 1695 appeared a third folio edition, with the learned commentary of Patrick Hume.

In 1670 appeared the poet's "History of England," carried down to the Norman Conquest; which was mutilated by the licensor, by striking out passages which have since been recovered and replaced.

In 1671 were published the "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes." It is said that Milton was mortified at finding that the former was considered inferior to the "Paradise Lost." It is inferior because it has less invention; but in many of the sublime merits of the last, not at all inferior; there is more of human interest in it. Nor is the "Samson Agonistes" the production of a less vigorous and majestic genius.

The "Paradise Regained" is supposed to have been planned or begun at Chalfont. Eltwood having called on the poet after his return to London, was shown by him this poem, with the remark, "This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont." He is said to have written it in a state of uninterrupted fervour, according to the spirit which he names as inherent in him, in a letter to his friend Decoleate, September 2d, 1637:

"It is my way to suffer no impediment, no love of ease, no avocation whatever, to chill the ardour, to break the continuity, or divert the completion of my literary pursuits."

In several passages of the "Samson Agonistes" the poet is supposed to allude to his own feelings and fate, especially in these lines, beginning at v. 75:

1. dark in light, exposed
   To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
   Within doors or without, still as a fool,
   In power of others, never in my own;
   Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half,
   O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
   Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
   Without all hope of day! &c.
Hayley says, "In these lines the poet seems to paint himself. The litigation of his will produced a collection of evidence relating to the testator, which renders the discovery of those long-forgotten papers peculiarly interesting: they show very forcibly, and in new points of view, his domestic infidelity and his amiable disposition. The tender and sublime poet, whose sensibility and sufferings were so great, appears to have been almost as unfortunate in his daughters as the Lear of Shakspere. A servant declares in evidence, that her deceased master, a little before his last marriage, had lamented to her the ingratitude and cruelty of his children: he complained that they combined to defraud him in the economy of his house, and sold several of his books in the basest manner. His feelings on such an outrage, both as a parent and a scholar, must have been singularly painful; perhaps they suggested to him these very pathetic lines."

Dunster adds, that, "as it appears, from the latest discoveries relating to the domestic life of Milton, that his wife was particularly attentive to him, and treated his infirmities with much tenderness, this passage seems to restrict the time when this drama was written to a period previous to his last marriage, or at least nearly to that immediate time while the singular ill-treatment of his daughters was fresh in his memory." This also coincides with what Mr. Hayley observed respecting its being written immediately after the execution of Sir Henry Vane, which took place June 14th, 1662. Milton was then in his fifty-fourth year, in which* we are told he married his third wife. This would make the "Samson Agonistes" at least three years prior to the "Paradise Regained;" of which we know he had not thought previous to the summer of 1665.

In that magnificent passage beginning at l. 667,—

God of our fathers! what is man,
That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,
Heads without name, no more remember'd;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect.
Yet towards these thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their height of noon,
Cheapest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past:
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission;
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high,
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captivated;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty.
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deformed,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days: in fine,
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end;—

Bishop Newton says, that, in speaking of the unjust tribunals, Milton reflected on the trials and sufferings of his party after the Restoration; and that when he talks of poverty,

* Not till 1665.
this was his own case; he escaped with life, but lived in poverty; and though he was always very sober and temperate, yet he was much afflicted with the gout, and other "painful diseases in crude old age."—when he was not yet a very old man.

"But," Newton adds, "Milton was the most heated enthusiast of his time: speaking of Charles the First’s murder, in his ‘Defence of the People of England,’ he says, ‘Quonquam ego hae divino potius instinu vasta esse crediderim, quoties memoria repeto,’" &c.

The poet goes on:

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

"These concluding verses," says Hayley, "of this beautiful chorus appear to me particularly affecting, from the persuasion that Milton, in composing them, addressed the last two immediately to Heaven, as a prayer for himself. If the conjecture of this application be just, we may add, that never was the prevalence of a righteous prayer more happily conspicuous; and let me here remark, that however various the opinions of men may be concerning the merits or demerits of Milton’s political character, the integrity of his heart appears to have secured to him the favour of Providence; since it pleased the Giver of all good not only to turn his labour to a peaceful end, but to irradiate his declining life with the most abundant portion of those pure and sublime mental powers, for which he had constantly and fervently prayed, as the choicest bounty of Heaven."

Again, Hayley thinks that at l. 759 Milton alludes to his own connubial infidelity, and regret for his forgiveness at the repentance of his first wife, suspicious of its sincerity.

But it is not only to the unhappiness of his marriage that Milton alludes in this stern poem: he also renews his political prejudices at l. 1418.

Lords are lordliest in their wine,
And the well feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concern’d;
No less the people on their holydays
Impetuous, insolent, &c.

Warton observes that he here expresses his contempt of a nobility and an opulent clergy, that is, lords both spiritual and temporal, who by no means coincided with his levelling and narrow principles of republicanism and Calvinism, and whom he tacitly compares with the lords and priests of the idol Dagon.

There can be no doubt that the whole of this poem arose out of the state of Milton’s personal feelings at the Restoration. It is the blaze of a mind as gigantic as Samson’s form and strength. His imagination is everywhere on fire both with intellectual and material visions. A vulgar taste in poetry would call the nakedness of his language prosaic: but in the enthusiasm of forceful thought the petty ornaments of language are disregarded. It is in the exaltation of the soul, in belief in visionary presence, that high poetry consists.

We are bound to contemplate the bard in these lofty moods:—to think how his spirit rose above his unpromising and painful situation;—and with what sublime images, sentiments, and reflections, he soothed himself!—How he glowed when he imagined Samson pulling down destruction on the hands of his foes!—His vigorous and enthusiastic mind roused him to be thus ready to devote himself to the common ruin.

Though now retired, neglected, and subject to many stings of disappointment, I doubt not he was altogether happier than when his mere memory, observation, and judgment were occupied in the coarse conflict of practical affairs. Imagination is more gratifying than memory, and idealism than reality. It is difficult to conceive how so creative a mind could so long bend itself to the servile office of secretarship: to find correctness of expression in a dead language for diplomatic communications was but a pedantic employment; and a waste of powers which ought only to have been applied to the highest intellectual exertions.

It is clear, however, that by whatever arguments the poet might reconcile himself to his blindness, there were moments when he felt most bitterly the deprivation: the passages I have cited from "Samson Agonistes" prove this. In his poverty he could
not employ a skilful and learned amanuensis, who could take down his expressions with facility: the aid and consolation of books, except at the mercy of others, were shut to him. He grieved for the loss of that outward view of the face of nature in which he had delighted: he could no longer roam alone at his own will amid the woods and forests and green fields: he sat of a sunny morning in his house-porch, enjoying the fresh air; but this was in a suburb of the great city, in a confined garden: the freedom of limb, the exhilaration of boundary exercise, the breasting of the blowing wind, the change of the fresh breeze, which varies with each contending step, were not his!

O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!

All was blank, and every footstep was fickle and tottering, and at the mercy of another. We perceive that after a life of such high virtue as he was conscious that he had led, there were bitter hours when he thought this fate hard. As his endowments were sublime, so were his expectations lofty: his temper was naturally scornful; and as he could himself do mighty things, so perhaps he demanded more of others than they could well perform. He had not descended to a minute observance of all the flexibilities, ductilities, and windings of the human character: he did not forgive or consider its littleness, its petty passions, and mean and ignorant thoughts.

It seems to me to be a biographer's duty thus to analyze the character of a great man, if it be done with a conscientious desire of explaining the truth. Mere facts, uncommented on, are neither interesting nor instructive: better omit the comment than do it frivolously or affectedly; still less, maliciously. I myself have no doubt that the poet was wrong in his political opinions; but I have still less doubt that he was strictly conscientious in them. To call in question the sincerity of his protestations and aspirations,—his magnificent effusions of holy hope and enthusiasm,—would be not only stupid, but wicked.

CHAPTER XVI.

MILTON'S DEATH.

There are certain minor points which it is very useful to ascertain, but which, when once established, do not require to be repeated; such are many of the particulars verified with the most exemplary labour by Todd. If anything were wanting, Mitford has gone over the ground again with acute and discriminate taste and judgment: a poet himself, of deep feeling, and eloquent originality.

I will however just mention, that the poet did not entirely abandon literary production after having published the two magnificent poems last noticed. In 1672 he put forth his "Artis Logicae Plenior Institutio;" and in 1673 his "Treatise of True Religion, Heresy," &c.

In the year of his death he published his "Familiar Letters in Latin," with some "Academical Exercises."

In the preceding year he reprinted his "Juvenile Poems," with additions, among which is the "Tractate on Education," published in 1644.

His health now gave way fast, and his fits of the gout became violent; but such was the firmness of his mind, that Aubrey says, even in the paroxysms of this fell disease, "he would be very cheerful, and sing." He died quietly at his house in Bunhill-fields, on Sunday, November 8th, 1674; having only a month of completing his sixtieth year. Thus departed the greatest epic poet of England,—and, in my opinion, of any country or age. He was buried near his father, in the chancel of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

His person was beautiful in youth, but his face too delicate: he was of middle height, active, and a good swordsman: temperate in his food, and all his habits of life, except in study, in which he indulged to excess even from his childhood. His evenings were usually passed in music and conversation: his chief time of composition appears to have been the night; and by the aid of a most retentive memory, he dictated in the morning to an amanuensis what he had thus composed.

His biographers say that he was of an equal and placid temper: but this is not the character given by Mrs. Powell, the mother of his first wife; who, however, was an
angry and prejudiced witness. Todd has printed a full account of his munificent will, which was first discovered by T. Warton, and which, being contested, furnishes several curious particulars of his domestic habits. He had an humble establishment, consisting of two maid-servants and a man-servant: he dined usually in his kitchen. He never was a man of worldly ostentation, and always despised money: he seems to have been stern to his daughters, and exacted too much from them; they accordingly did not steadily love him. It must have been an irksome task to them to read to him in languages which they did not understand.

As to the poet's religious tenets, a treatise has been lately recovered from the State-Paper Office, which has made a great noise among the theologians; the title is, "De Doctrina Christiana, ex Sacris duntaxat Libris petita, Disquisitionum Libri duo posthum." King George IV. put it into the hands of Dr. Sumner (afterwards Bishop of Winchester), to be edited and translated. It is said that the poet, being dissatisfied with the Bodies of Divinity then published, was thus induced to compile one for himself. This treatise is considered to prove that Milton was finally an Arian. It is calmly and moderately written; not with the animosity of a controversialist, but it wants the author's former or usual condole, and argumentative force.

Bishop Burgess, considering that this work disproves the poet's orthodoxy, has disputed its genuineness; but it is generally admitted that its authenticity cannot be doubted. This extraordinary treatise contains many singular opinions, which none but theologians will take the trouble to discuss.

Milton left three daughters:—Anne, who was deformed, and died in childhood; Mary, who died single; and Deborah, who married Abraham Clarke, a weaver in Spitalfields, and died, aged seventy-six, in August, 1727. Her daughter married Thomas Foster, also a weaver in Spitalfields, and died at Islington, May 9th, 1754, in her sixty-sixth year.

Sir Christopher Milton, the poet's only brother, was knighted and made a judge by James II., but soon retired from the bench. He retired to Ipswich, and afterwards to the village of Rushmere, about two miles distant, where he died; and was buried in the church of St. Nicholas, Ipswich, March 22d, 1692. He left children.

Milton had also two nephews by his sister Philips,—John Philips and Edward Philips, both authors.

CHAPTER XVII.

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

I now come to general observations on the poet's character and genius: of these I have already intermixed some in the course of the narrative: if I recur to any of the same opinions and reflections, although in other words, I must crave the reader's indulgence.

Of this "greatest of great men," the private traits and whole life were congenial to his poetry. Men of narrow feelings will say that his political writings contradict this congeniality. His politics were, no doubt, violent and fierce; but it cannot be doubted that they were conscientious. He lived at a crisis of extraordinary public agitation, when all the principles of government were moved to their very foundations, and when there was a general desire to commence institutions de novo.

In his early poems there are occasional passages which show his taste for monarchi-
cal and aristocratic manners; for the pomp of the state and the church; for the glories of chivalry and the feudal system; for the halls of “knights and barons bold;” for the music and the solemn gloom of magnificent cathedrals:

the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy-proof;
And storied windows, richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear, &c.—II Penseroso.

Milton’s imagination was not at all suited to the cold and dry hypocrisy of a Puritan; but his gigantic mind gave him a temper that spurred at all authority. This was his characteristic through life: it showed itself in every thought and every action, both public and private, from his earliest youth; except that he did not appear to rebel against parental authority; for nothing is more beautiful than his mild and tender expostulation to his father, in that exquisite Latin address which has been quoted.

His great poems require such a stretch of mind in the reader, as to be almost painful. The most amazing copiousness of learning is sublimated into all his conceptions and descriptions. His learning never oppressed his imagination; and his imagination never obliterated or dimmed his learning: but even these would not have done, without the addition of a great heart and a pure and lofty mind.

That mind was given up to study and meditation from his boyhood till his death; he had no taste for the vulgar pleasures of life; he was all spiritual. But he loved fame enthusiastically, and was ready to engage in the great affairs of public business: and when he did engage, performed his part with industry, skill, and courage. Courage, indeed, mingled in a prominent degree, among his many other mighty and splendid qualities.

Who is equal to analyze a mind so rich, so powerful, so exquisite?

I do not think that tenderness was his characteristic; and he was, above all other men, unyielding. His softer sensibilities were rather reflective than instantaneous; his sentiments came from his imagination, rather than from his imagination from his sentiments.

The vast fruits of his mind always resulted from complex ingredients; though they were so amalgamated, that with him they became simple in their effects. It is impossible now to trace the processes of his intellect. We cannot tell what he would have been without study; but we know that he must have been great under any circumstances, though his greatness might have been of a different kind.

He made whatever he gathered from others his own; he only used it as an ingredient for his own combinations.

His earliest study seems to have been the holy writings; they first fed his fancy with the imagery of Eastern poetry; and nowhere could he have found so sublime a nutriment. But what is any nutriment to him who cannot taste, digest, and be nourished? It depends not upon the force and excellence of what is conveyed; but upon the power of the recipient: it is, almost all, inborn genius, though it may be under the influence of some small modification from discipline.

However great and wonderful Milton was, there were some points in which both Spenser and Shakspeare exceeded him; because in those points nature had been more favourable to them. Probably both Spenser and Shakspeare were more ductile to the world. Milton was stern, solitary, unbending, contemplous, proud, yet unsentimental. With his disposition and taste, he was little observant of the minor manners and characters of society: he was always thoughtful, inflexible, and abstracted. Loftiness of musing was the sphere in which he lived: his books were his companions; his imagination surrounded him with another and a spiritual world.

Providence has endowed us with the power to conceive what is more magnificent and more beautiful than that which the material world exhibits. We know not why—it is among the mysteries of the Almighty.

If he who nurses these spiritualities is at the same time a materialist in action, then we may doubt the good of them: but assuredly Milton was not guilty of this inconsistency. Read all his earnest and eloquent professions of innocence; and who can
hesitate to give credit to them? His controversial opponents have attempted to throw
dirt upon him, but have not succeeded. He provoked the most bitter hostility; yet no
immorality could be fastened upon him.

Allowing the poet to have been harsh and choleric, yet the sanctity of his disposition
and character appears to me demonstrative. I can reconcile this with his severe poli-
tics, though those seem, certainly, not very merciful.

Superficial minds, affecting the tone of wisdom, hold out that the gifts of the Muse
are incompatible with serious business. Milton, the greatest of poets, affords a crushing
answer to this. In the flower of his manhood, and through middle age, he was a statist, and active man of executive affairs in a crisis of unexampled difficulty and
danger. His controversial writings, both in politics and divinity, are solid, vigorous,
original, and practical; and yet he could return at last to the highest flights of the
Muse, undamped and undimmed.

The lesson of his life is one of the most instructive that biography affords: it shows
what various and dissimilar powers may be united in the same person, and what a gran-
deur of moral principles may actuate the human heart; but at the same time it shows
how little all these combined talents and virtues can secure the due respect and regard
of contemporaries. It is absurd to deny that Milton was neglected during his life,
and that his unworldly-mindedness let the meanest of the people mount over his head. He
lived poor, and for the most part in obscurity. Even high employments in the state
seem to have obtained him no luxuries, and few friends or acquaintance: no brother
poets flocked round him; none praised him, though in the habit of flattering each other.

The poet, indeed, might have been employed more consistently with his sublime
genius, than in political and theological controversy. He lost nineteen precious years of
his middle life in those irritating occupations, from the age of thirty-two to fifty-one:
after that age he occupied the remaining fourteen years of his life principally in poetry.
His controversies had not sullied his imagination, nor affected the sanctity of his
thoughts, language, or temper:—I mean, after these degrading labours ceased; for,
while busy in them, they must have necessarily embittered his feelings and lowered his
mind. It is melancholy to think how much of grand invention, which he might in
those long years have put forth, has been lost to the world.

I do not say that the writings which during that period he did put forth have been
entirely useless; but they were beneath Milton's best powers, and might probably
have been executed by inferior talents. I here suppose them excellent in their depart-
ment and unmixed with mischief; but this is more than can be conceded positively
to them. The notions of republicanism are assuredly carried too far; and nothing
can be more dangerous than to resist all authority, and call in question all ancient
institutions.

If intellect is the grand glory of man, Milton stands pre-eminent above all other
human beings; above Homer, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Spenser, and Shakspeare!
To the highest grandeur of invention upon the sublimest subject he unites the greatest
wisdom and learning, and the most perfect art. Almost all other poets sink into
twinkling stars before him. What has issued from the French school of poetry seems
to be the production of an inferior order of beings, and in this I include even our Dry-
den and Pope; for I cannot place these two famous men among the greatest poets:
they may be among the first of a secondary class.

It is easy to select fine passages from minor poetical authors; but a great poet must
be tried by his entirety,—by the uniform texture of his web.

Milton has a language of his own; I may say, invented by himself. It is somewhat
hard, but it is all sincere: it is not vermicular, but has a laminated cast, which requires a
little time to reconcile a reader to it. It is best fitted to convey his own magnificent
ideas: its very learnedness impresses us with respect: it moves with a gigantic step;
it does not flow, like Shakespeare's style; nor dance, like Spenser's. Now and then
there are transpositions somewhat alien to the character of the English language,
which is not well calculated for transposition; but in Milton this is perhaps a merit,
because his lines are pregnant with deep thought and sublime imagery, which require
us to dwell upon them and contemplate them over and over. He ought never to be
read rapidly; his is a style which no one ought to imitate till he is endowed with a soul
like Milton's. His ingredients of learning are so worked into his original thoughts, that they form a part of them; they are never patches.

One would wish to present to oneself the mental and moral character of Milton even from his childhood. Probably he was absorbed in himself, and by no means ductile; lonely in his pleasures, uncompanionable, and seemingly sullen; angry when interrupted in his books: satirical or contemplative at frivolous conversation; contradictory when roused, and hardly when answered: estimated doubtfully by his father; sometimes praised; sometimes raising high expectations; sometimes causing fear, and even anger and remonstrance.

Genius will never be dictated to; and few observers can distinguish this repugnance from an obstinate and dull indolence. They, on the contrary, who are quick to apprehend, but who have no ideas of their own, take things rapidly and without resistance.

One should like to imagine the difference of early character, habits, sentiments, pursuits, conduct, and temper, between Milton and Gray; both sons of men following the same calling, both living in the bustle of the city, and both addicted to literary occupations. There was this primary difference, that Milton had a good father, and Gray a bad one.

Milton was probably more stern; Gray more tender and morbid: Milton more confident and aspiring; Gray more fearful and hopeless. Each loved books and learning, and each had an exquisite taste. Milton was more vigorous; Gray more nice. Both were imaginative and fond of romantic fiction: but Milton was more enterprising.

Gray's fastidiousness impeded him; he was

A pumy insect, shivering at the breeze.

Milton was dauntless, defiant, and, when insulted, fierce; perhaps ferocious: nothing shook his self-reliance. Gray was driven back even by a frown.

The "Elegiac Bard" might have done tenfold more than he did if he had been more courageous, but could never have done what Milton has done: he had not the same invention, nor the same natural sublimity. Milton was far the happier being, though he engaged in controversies which Gray's peaceful spirit would have avoided. Milton was a practical statesman; Gray would have been utterly unfit to engage in affairs of state.

Gray's spirits were partly broken by the unprincipled and brutal conduct of his father to his mother; but they were naturally low: his inborn sensitiveness amounted to disease. He seems to have been more delicate and precise in his classical scholarship, and more exact in all his knowledge; but it was not so mingled up with original thought, and therefore not so valuable: his memory was often more memory, and therefore was exact. This did not arise from inability, but from timidity and indolence: he lived in the solemn and monotonous cloisters of a college; he had nothing of the ordinary movements of life to excite him; all the faculties of his mind, therefore, except his memory, were often stagnant. The memory works best when the passions are least moved.

The dim misty gray hues of vacant despondence will chill the lips and palsy the voice. Who fears the ridicule or censure of men, but anticipates not the cheer of triumph, will want the sources of energy and enterprise. The blood must glow in the veins, and the heart must dance, to enable us to do great things.

We cannot doubt that this was the case with Milton: many noble passages regarding himself in his prose works prove it: he nursed glorious and holy hopes from his childhood. Afterwards, in the midst of the foulest calamities, he was undaunted and undismayed. Even in the most perilous times, when the ban of proscription and the sword of death were hanging over his head, he conceived, and partly composed his "Paradise Lost." He had a spring of soul which nothing could relax.

Magnanimity grows strong by opposition and difficulty: and when a difficulty is conquered, the energy is doubled: no one knows what powers are in him till he is pressed: when they come out from pressure, hope and confidence come with them. It is not till after we have been tried that we trust to ourselves: then we stand unmoved by the blast, and laugh at the storm. All genuine power grows more vigorous after it has been tried.
Thousands go down to the grave, unconscious of the native faculties, which, if exercised, might have distinguished them: but buried faculties are an encumbrance, and breed diseases; and it cannot be doubted that this was one of the maladies of Gray. Milton was never to be silenced; the fire within found vent; and then his great heart was at ease, and triumphed.

There was not the same force and depth in his early Latin poems as in his early English: this perhaps arose from the constraint of writing in a foreign and dead language. He was compelled to look to models; and whatever merits the ancient classic poets have, they have not the sombre tone and colouring, and the picturesque imaginativeness, which began in the Italian school with Dante. Of that school Milton was the noblest and most inborn scholar: in some of his earliest English verses he caught Dante's magnificent darkness, his mystical images, his spiritual visions.

Milton is never an empty dealer in words; it is always the thought, the sentiment, the image, which impels him to speak: it breathes— it throws forth the raciness of life. His earliest poems travel out of the track of mere observation, and explore the spiritual world. He ventures among miracles, and hears aerial voices, and rises among the choirs of angels. In any but the most sublime genius it would have been rash hardihood to have entered so early on such unearthly subjects. He has acquitted himself with the vigour of the most matured age.

If the "Hymn on the Nativity" was a college exercise, its original force is the more extraordinary, because he was under the surveillance of technical judges; and nothing but a master-genius could have emboldened him to take his own peculiar course. How those to whom it was addressed must have stared when they compared it with the creeping, feeble, lame, colloquial, trite compositions which surrounded it! They must have started, half annoyed, half doubting, half delighted against their will, half shrinking at what they suspected to be rebellious audacity; half recollecting models; then beginning to think that the young poet had found out a new language, but whispering to themselves that heresies from admitted models ought to be discouraged.

The example was not followed; no one caught the tone: probably it was found too difficult to assume. No one had the genius, or the force, or the taste to achieve it. The first edition of the "Juvenile Poems" appeared in 1615; no other was called for, for nearly thirty years.

It is wilful misrepresentation, therefore, to say that these poems received much notice from Milton's contemporaries. They are far above the taste of his age, or perhaps of the immediate popular taste of any age. Common readers love common passions, and the images which are familiar to them; they like practical observations upon actual daily life, and witticisms upon their neighbours, rivals, and superiors.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON MILTON'S POETRY CONTINUED.

Milton lived in a time, perhaps, more propitious to poetry than even the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Superstition, chivalry, and romance had begun to abate; but philosophy and reason had commenced their influence, without checking imagination. The times were stirring, and such times are propitious to the Muse. The public mind began to let itself loose from old chains.

From the days of the Restoration there has been no poetical freedom of mind; unless in our own latter days.

The counteraction to the favourableness I have spoken of, was the metaphysical taste introduced by King James. That monarch had no imagination, but a ridiculous pedantry. Talents of a secondary nature, which were the slaves of example, might bow to this; but bad models would not repel genius while it could choose its own.

The language had not yet arrived at fastidiousness: the picturesque energies of feudal chivalry were not forgotten, nor had their influence over the imagination entirely ceased: they were enough in the belief of the people to be capable of being recalled.
The drama had arrived at great force of excellence, though mixed with many irregularities.

The ranks and characters of society were yet distinctly marked. There was luxury and polish without effeminacy; learning had not yet exhausted itself; if the court was corrupt, it was not yet frivolous. There was enthusiasm of loyalty, and enthusiasm of rebellion.

The age of Elizabeth was imaginative and romantic, but not classical; the age of James was pedantic; the age of Charles was fitted for a sober heroism.

Milton had the encouragement of foreigners for his early Latin poetry, which received their high praise when he travelled into Italy. Gray, equally eminent by similar compositions about the same age, did not exhibit to them his talents in this department; if he had received the same approbation, it would not have given him the same confidence. One was all buoyancy, the other all depression; one had received his father's encouragement, the other his father's blight; one had vowed himself to glory, the other was too timid to think of it.

Of modern poets, Gray's epithets are perhaps most picturesque; but they do not unite with them visionariness, like Milton's. Examine the "Elegy in the Churchyard:" they are all pictures of material realities. All the descriptions in that beautiful poem are merely such as a curious and tasteful eye could derive from observation only; there is no invention.

In all the descriptive poems of Milton there is rich and wonderful invention. The combinations in "Lycidas" are strikingly inventive; this is one of its marked features, and gives it that passion which shows itself in the excitement of the mind. There is a hurry of ideas; a conflict of lamentations and consolations.

In almost all the contemporary poetry there is flatness, lameness, and mean colloquiality; a high tone is never uniformly sustained: strong words are mixed with weak, and one half of a line falls from the other; in some, there is a feeble, thin, and conversational diffusion; as in old George Wither. It is sustenance which is Milton's characteristic excellence: single good lines may be found in his predecessors. His strains are closely wrought, and everywhere with the golden thread; with grand images, and noble combinations of design.

Milton lived for the Muse; he vowed himself to the Muse. He professed it; he did not pretend to speak of it as a mere idle amusement, as if he was half ashamed of it: he knew its worth, its dignity, and its difficulties. No one wanting enthusiasm ever succeeded in this vocation: its purposes cannot be effected by doubtful spirits and faint hopes. Gray affected to write merely as an occasional amusement, and not to make a business of it; this affectation was beneath a great mind.

Spenser is allegorical throughout; Milton is only occasionally allegorical. Spenser is the poet of chivalry; Milton is the poet of the Bible. Milton therefore is not properly romantic, nor a poet risen out of the feudal ages. He addresses himself to all nations, all ages, all mankind,—all mankind; he has indeed many casts of words, and many images derived from compositions which originated with the Troubadours; and he would not have been what he is, unless Dante and the Italian school had preceded him. Milton was a massy "cloth of gold," while others were a slight fabric of slight materials.

Part of Dante's grandeur lies in a mystical brevity peculiar to himself. Milton sketches out his figures more fully and clearer; yet they are more difficult to sketch, because they are above humanity; whereas Dante most alludes to human characters, and their conduct on earth. This alone proves the superiority of Milton over Dante: but then Dante lived in a darker age, when the revival of learning was in its infancy: Milton had many great examples of poetical fiction before him.

Beautiful and rich as Spenser is, Milton has taken little of his cast; there is not much similarity in their language, and none in their rhythm: their fictions are of different materials, and in different forms. Milton had always a predilection for sacred subjects: he seems to have turned more to the dramatists for expression and sentiment, and even imagery; Shakespeare especially, Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher. That Sylvestor was such a favourite, must be accounted for by impressions made upon his childhood.

Milton seems always to have kept aloof in his holiness: he thus did not suffer his
mind to be diluted by vulgar thoughts. The effect of his deep meditations and studies was never broken in upon. He kept up his dignity, his self-esteem, and the pride and ambition of his calling. By mingling much with the world we catch its petty passions, and lower ourselves to its tone and temperament. The facts which have been handed down to us of his life, accord well with the character of his writings: he was fearless, and this added to his strength: a timid hand will never strike out noble notes.

If it could be proved that there is no virtue or sound sense in spirituality; that we can rely on nothing but the material objects presented to our view; then poetry would be an empty, uninstrucive, and even delusive amusement: but I presume that they who attempt to set up such a philosophy will incur the disgrace of its meanness and its falsehood. All the charms and almost all the virtues of our being are spiritual. Nature has implanted in us the delight of looking to something beyond actual existences; and in gratifying this delight lies the magic of poetry. That poetry which does not attempt and perform this, scarcely deserves the name. Above all others, unless perhaps Shakspeare, Milton has performed it. What exquisite idealism and inventiveness there is in "Comus!"

But let no one mistake the fantastic for the inventive: this, instead of being a proof of genius, is a proof of the want of it; yet the great vulgar, as well as the little vulgar, mistake one for the other. Charlatans in criticism consider that the mark of poetical invention is improbability, or impossibility: on this principle Homer and Virgil were minor poets. To bring the past to life is a primary purpose of poetry; this is true invention; not to describe forms merely, but mind and spirit, and internal movement. The power is in proportion to the dignity and grand characters of the actors brought into play: thus Milton rises not only to the height of humanity, but of angels good and bad, the obedient and the rebellious. What must have been the force and splendour of an imagination which could duly conceive and paint such beings! The excellence is in proportion as truth and probability are preserved in lofty conceptions. If this be the test, then what other poet can contend with Milton? Homer and Virgil have drawn heroes, but they were merely men: their imaginations have not risen to the wars of ethereal beings, and battles with the Almighty. And even in the softer scenes of mere human passions and enjoyments, how superior are Adam and Eve to all other personifications in poetry!

It has been objected that the subject is too lofty and solemn for human sympathy;—a tasteless and absurd criticism. Of more earthly scenery, what can equal the garden of Eden? Or are we to have no interest in the description of it because we have lost it? On topics of almost incredible grandeur, the poet never uses exaggerated language, but is sober, congrual, and speaks with a comprehensive majesty, as if he was master of his mighty subject, and elevated above human intellectuality. Every other bard would have betrayed weakness by inflated language. If he had thought about the minor artifices or ornaments of what is called poetry, he must have soon abandoned his task as beyond the power of human performance. All is in the thought; the plainer the language, the nobler as well as easier the execution. That frivolous adornment, that outward investment of flowers, of which petty artists boast, is mere trickery.

Had Milton taken a subject less divine, a subject from uninspired history, I doubt if he would have executed it with equal success. His own perceptions were too elevated to enter with minuteness into inferior characters; he knew not the feebler passions and little windings of the human heart: he could not draw the vast variety of man's obliquities, like Shakspeare. Whatever we are accustomed to admire in the best of other poets, sinks into paleness and insignificance before the splendour and sublimity of Milton.

But minor poets often fail, not only from want of native force, but because they propose to themselves false objects of excellence: they substitute perverse inventiveness for genuine creation; and too often describe and copy, when they ought to invent. The poet should turn spirituality into imagery; but it must not be mere body,—it must have life, and thought, and soul. Milton has given something of material shape to the airy beings of a higher sphere, but he has never divested them of the bright and indefinable radiance of divinity.

There can be no unity in the description of inanimate nature, or in what is didactic;
consequently there can be no perfect invention; it is only therefore in the epic or the dramatic that there can be poetry of the primary class: this will exclude from the first class many of the celebrated poets of our own country.

Looking to human agency, who has constructed with us a long and well-combined narrative of imaginary characters? If this merely human creation be difficult, what has Milton performed? How comparatively easy is it to personify and delineate the diversity in the moral and intellectual characters of mankind,—to put it in action amid the scenes of human life, and to show human passions in conflict! yet how rarely have even these powers been exhibited!

The true poet must create: he must leave artists to illustrate and adorn. Whoever employs himself much in the mechanism of composition, must be deficient in enthusiasm and warmth; he must feel no inspiration. Language will come of course to him who thinks profoundly, feels deeply, and sees with imaginative brightness. What is brilliant in itself, requires no ornament of paint and colours.

To study Milton's poetry is not merely the delight of every accomplished mind, but it is a duty. He who is not conversant with it, cannot conceive how far the genius of the Muse can go. They who have no mirror in their minds to receive and reflect, may be but slightly and dimly touched; but they must let the rays shine upon them, even as the sun falls upon the barren rocks; at some happy moment they may be benefited by the genial beams.

Here are none of the frivolous idlenesses; the wanton sports of imagination; the false voluptuousness; the whimsical fictions; the affected pathos; the sickly whinings; the forced deliriums; the raptures of extravagant words; the feigned melancholy; the morbid musings; the dreamy mistiness of unmeaning verbiage; the echoes of echoes of artificial sounds. All is pure majesty; the sober strength, the wisdom, from above, that instructs and awes. It speaks as an oracle,—not with a mortal voice.

The bard, whatever might have been his inborn genius, could never have attained this height of argument and execution but by a life of laborious and holy preparation:—a constant converse with the ideas suggested by the Sacred Writings; the habitual resolve to lift his mind and heart above earthly thoughts; the incessant exercise of all the strongest faculties of the intellect; retirement, temperance, courage, hope, faith.

He had all the aids of learning; all the fruit of all the wisdom of ages; all the effect of all that poetic genius, and all that philosophy had achieved: all were infused and mingled up in his mind with his own native growth. Had his learning been heaped on a mind of less native splendour, it could have produced none of these results: it fell upon a fire, which bore it up into a golden and ethereal flame.

While the gigantic productions of such a mind were in progress, the poet must have felt strong consolations for all his misfortunes, privations, and dangers; but not unmixed, it appears, with some regrets and some complaining. This last we must infer from the passages in "Samson Agonistes," already noticed.

Whoever is powerful in virtuous faculties, and exercises them as he ought, must necessarily feel a great and proud delight from the exertion; but in the noble employment of the mind there is unmingled delight: hours become like minutes, and days like hours. Sitting in the humble porch of his humble house, blind, poor, meanly clad, unattended, how great must Milton have felt above all kings and conquerors of the earth,—above the possessors of the wealth of the world, the inhabitants of marble palaces and golden saloons! He knew his own dignity; and it was among his glories that he knew it. He never shrunk from the assertion of his own ascendancy. It did not lower his self-esteem to hear the popular shouts bestowed on his inferior,—on Waller, and Cowley, and Denham, and the wits that basked in the sunshine of the Court, while he was neglected, and his sublime strains unfelt and untaught: he knew the day would come when all that was wise and great must acknowledge his supremacy.

Perhaps self-confidence was among his leading traits: if he had been deficient in this quality he would never have performed what he did. It may produce rashness; where there is innate strength it will produce success. Temerity is better than a chilling and helpless fear; to have power, and not to know it, is worse perhaps than not to have it: whoever depends on the opinions of others, and cannot assert his own cause, is almost sure to be crushed.
nothing is more useful in literary biography than to endeavour to ascertain by what means others have attained extraordinary excellence: there must always be a concurrence of causes, of which some may perhaps be accidental: the inborn gift is first, and indispensable; but encouragement, discipline, and toil are also necessary. It is clear that Milton showed the superiority of his endowments at ten years old; and all other concurrences would have done nothing without these.

Can any case be shown where true genius did not exhibit itself in early childhood? It appears to me very improbable. I know no ascertained case. An extreme sensibility is a primary ingredient: this must show itself early. Sometimes common observers have mistaken the symptoms of genius; but this does not alter the case. Vulgar censors often take the appearances of genius in childhood for folly; as has been so beautifully described by Beattie, in “Young Edwin.”

CHAPTER XIX.

RECAPITULATION OF MILTON’S PERSONAL CHARACTER.

I know not that much can be added to the traits of Milton’s character which I have already given. As in almost all cases of great genius, there is a consonance in the qualities of the poetry and the poet. Grandeur, inflexibility, sternness, originality, naked force—all true splendour, or strength, arises from internal conviction or belief.

The poet was never compliant to the ways of the world: from his very childhood he kept himself aloof: he nursed his visions in solitude, and soothed his haughty hopes of future loftiness of fame by lonely musing: the ideal world in which his mind lived would not coalesce with the rude concourse of mankind.

As to his own purity and sanctity of soul, the declarations and enthusiastic apostrophes in his own prose writings render it impossible to doubt it: he made them in the hearing of his most bitter enemies,—public enemies through all Europe,—rendered furious by a common cause, in which all the principles of ancient institutions were involved. The extent to which he carried his arguments appears to me wrong, and I cannot deem his conclusions other than harsh and vindictive; but, as I have said before, I do not think that tenderness of feeling was his distinction. His gigantic heart was not easily melted into tears; he knew how to paint rebellious angels, mighty even in their defeat.

All his excitations were intellectual: his thoughts were compound: but it is surprising how a mind habituated for twenty years to the coarse routine of public business could at once throw it all off, and produce a poetical texture so close-wrought, and of such unmingled majesty. Plain as the style is, it never sinks into colloquiality or the language of business: he had kept his genius aloof from his daily occupation, and suffered not the world to blow or breathe upon it.

In the commencement of the ninth book of the “Paradise Lost,” the poet speaks of his subject as more heroic than the subjects of the Iliad and Aeneid:

- If answerable style I can obtain
  Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
  Her nightly visitation unimplored,
  And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
  Easy my unpredmeditated verse,
  Since first this subject for heroic song
  Pleased me, long chusing and beginning late;
  Not sedulous by nature to indite
  Wars, hitherto the only argument
  Heroic deem’d.

So before, in book vii., addressing himself to his Muse Urania, he says:

- Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
  More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchange
  To hoarse or mute: though fall’n on evil days,
  On evil days though fall’n, and evil tongues;
  In darkness, and with dangers compass’d round,
  And solitude: yet not alone, while thou
  Visit’st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
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Purples the east. Still govern thou my song,
Urania: and fit audience find, though few.

That his inward light became more radiant from his outward darkness I cannot doubt. This he expresses himself in the sublime opening of his third book:

Thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovereign vital lamp: but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn
So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill;
Smit with the love of sacred song. But chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hollow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equall'd with me in fate,
So were I equall'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Meonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of eve or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off; and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with an universal blank
Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

There is nothing in all the materials of biography more applicable to an author's character than this affecting and majestic burst of egotism: though it will be repeated in the poetry, I should consider myself worse than tasteless if I omitted to insert it here.

If we do not dwell on these parts of the poet's thoughts and feelings, we pass over his principal and most exalted traits. The metrical writer, whose life is not a poem, is of an inferior class, and a mere poetical artist. No assumed character,—nothing which does not proceed from "a believing mind" (to use Collins's expression), will be efficient. Milton, while he was composing "Paradise Lost," battled with the angels, and lived in the garden of Eden. While he was dictating the passages I have cited, how unutterably grand must have been the exultation of his mind!

Great pains have been taken to discover what is called the origin of "Paradise Lost." Such conjectures may amuse the curious in bibliography; for higher purposes they are but empty trifles. The great number of authors, to whom it is pretended to track the poet, is alone a proof how little certainty there is in such researches. It appears to me that these critics mistake the nature of originality. It is not so much in the novelty of the ingredients, as in their selection and new combinations, that originality consists.

In confirmation of what the poet has said of his "long chasing, and beginning late," he thus expresses himself in his second book of the "Reformation of Church Government," in 1641:

"Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him towards the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the
trencher fury of some rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained of dame Memory and her siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his scratchimages with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs.

I am convinced that this is the only true account of the origin of "Paradise Lost." Shakspeare's originality might be still more impugned, if an anticipation of hints and similar stories were to be taken as proof of plagiarism. In many of the dramatist's most beautiful plays the whole tale is borrowed, as for instance, "Romeo and Juliet" from Luigi da Porto; but Shakspeare and Milton turn brass into gold. This sort of passage-hunting has been carried a great deal too far, and has disgusted and repelled the reader of feeling and taste. The novelty is in the raciness, the life, the force, the just association, the probability, the truth; that which is striking because it is extravagant, is a false novelty. He who borrows to make patches is a plagiarist; but what patch is there in Milton? All is interwoven, and forms part of one web.

No doubt, the holy bard was always intent upon sacred poetry, and drew his principal inspirations from Scripture. This distinguishes his style and spirit from those of all other poets; and gives him a solenity which has not been surpassed save in the Book whence welled that inspiration.

The poem is one which could not have been produced solely by the genius of Milton, without the addition of an equal extent and depth of learning, and an equal labour of reflection. Neither Shakspeare, nor Spenser, nor any other great poet, of any country, could have produced it. It is never an effusion. I conjecture that it was produced slowly, after long musing on each passage; though he hints otherwise himself. It has always a great compression. Perhaps its perpetual allusions to all past literature and history are sometimes carried a little too far for the popular reader; and the latinized style requires to be read with the attention due to an ancient classic.

Probably all the author's diversified mental faculties and acquirements worked together in the production of almost every portion of this majestic edifice. There is nothing of mere simple imagination in any part; all is moral, didactic, wise, sublime, as well as creative and visionary.

All language appears deified in every other poet, compared with Milton's: it has few transpositions; and is never guilty of flowery ornaments, which vulgar taste mistakes for poetical richness. Serious, profound, devoted, gigantic in conception, and sublime in words, he speaks as an inspired emanation of a higher state of being! There is a sombre awe in him, to which we listen as to an oracle. He dictates and imposes a force of authority, which we dare not question. We tremble while we believe.

In the Life which I have thus attempted of the most sublime of all English authors, it has not been my purpose to be minute, and to collect together all which had been previously told of the great poet.

It has seemed to me on the present occasion even judicious to adhere to the leading features only; and to give them, not from the representations of others, but from my own feelings, reflections, and convictions. I am afraid that there are many who admire Milton, principally, if not solely, upon the force of authority. All the admiration I have myself expressed is strictly sincere: I have uttered no affected raptures; and I have not spoken but from the unchanging opinion of a long and studious life.

To have given novelty to a subject so often treated, would be almost a hopeless wish. In stating the dry facts of such a topic there can be little variety of expression: but I have rather relied upon the force of opinions and comments, than of facts already known: of the justness and taste of these, and of the manner in which they are expressed, others must judge: the quality on which I rely is their sincerity. I have not been pleading as a plausible advocate for one whom I have undertaken the task of praising: the difficulty has not been in finding pleas for admiration, but in finding language adequate to the demands for which excellence gave occasion. The personal character of the poet should be all along concurrent with the genius of his poetry. From his very childhood he was a worshipper of the Muse Urania.
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It has been unfortunate for Milton that his most popular biographer should be Johnson, whose Memoir is written in such a deliberate spirit of detraction as to fix on the writer a certain degree of moral turpitude. As a critic he has here shown extreme insensibility and want of taste, except on the "Paradise Lost," of which his eulogy, though strongly expressed, is, as I shall attempt to prove, little more in substance than a copy from Addison.

He who criticised Milton with the most congenial spirit was Thomas Warton. Hayley had an amiable enthusiasm; but his style was languid, diffuse, and often sickly, full of colloquial and feminine superlatives: such as "most affectionate"—"most tender"—"most affecting." Hayley was full of elegant erudition, but he had no imagination: Bishop Johnson was classical, but feeble and unoriginal: Bentley and Warburton were acute but fantastic. It is hardly necessary to characterize minor annotators.

CHAPTER XX.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CRITICISMS ON "PARADISE LOST," BY ADDISON AND JOHNSON.

The two grand criticisms on the "Paradise Lost" are those of Addison and Johnson. Whatever praise Johnson may have obtained for what he has written on this subject, a strict examination will show that he owes entirely to his predecessor: all is drawn from Addison. It is true, that he has clothed it in his own diction; and that it had passed through the ordeal of his own mind, so as not to be reproduced identical; but yet precisely similar: it has a more compressed contexture; and more point, which is taken for more force.

Both critics consider this divine poem under the four heads of fable, characters, sentiments, and language; and both concur in all the necessary requisites of each, and that Milton has fulfilled them all. As an epitome of Addison, that which Johnson has written is valuable; as an original, it has no merit at all. In one respect it is more adapted to modern taste; that it less often insists on bringing those questions to the standard models of Homer and Virgil; which, however excellent, must be now admitted to be sometimes arbitrary: in general, however, they are founded on reason, and therefore indispensable.

As greatness is the first quality, the superiority of Milton's fable to those of Homer and Virgil cannot be disputed; nor is his manner of conducting it less skilful and perfect; having unity, always going forward to its end, and never interrupted by irrelevant episodes. The vastness of the invention of the outline, when little could be drawn from tradition, history, or observation, is stupendous.

The characters are equally out of the conception of mere human uninspiring. The delineation of Satan, and the other Fallen Angels, would have appeared to any other mind but Milton's beyond the reach of human ability. The ideas of Adam and Eve before the fall might not appear so utterly hopeless: but as they then partook of divinity, nothing but the boldest imagination could have ventured upon the subject.

The sentiments appropriate to such characters could only be supplied by a genius partaking of an inspiration above humanity. The grandeur of thought must have been incessant, and liable to no deceptions: the imagination of many may be strong enough to invent and communicate the workings of human passions and human intellects; but of angels in obedient bliss, of angels in rebellion, who but Milton could venture to paint the designs or emotions?

Nor is the difficulty of adequate language less than of adequate conception. How are we to express the spiritual, but by the aid of signs drawn from materiality? And this is liable to the objection, that what is divine is degraded by an illustration from what is earthly. Even Milton himself has not escaped this censure. However, there is a considerable portion of Milton's poem which does not consist in the sublimity of imagery, but in what Johnson, I think, calls "argumentative sublimity"—thoughts which are purely intellectual.

Johnson has not followed Addison through all the details in which these grand principles are examined and exemplified; but such as he has selected are mainly the
same: nor has he failed to insist on the faults which have struck his predecessor. I am not sure that Addison himself, with all his candour, has not sometimes censured causelessly: I think that he has done so in the famous allegory of Sin and Death in the tenth book; and I am fortified in this opinion by Bishop Atterbury, whose taste was not only unquestionable, but exquisite. It is an invention of inexpressible magnificence, both in conception and expression: its materiality is the object of disapprobation by the critics.

It seems to me impossible to draw the line how far the shadowy beings of spirit may be represented by poets as taking part in material agency: if not allowed at all, there must be an end to the sublimest allegories.

It is true that Sin and Death might have passed from the gates of hell to earth without building a bridge of such materials as Milton supposes: but though it was not necessary, I cannot consider it an unpardonable license upon the ground of its materiality. It may be said that it is allowable to personify abstract ideas, and give them some minglement of action; but not to carry it far. Thus Gray, in his "Hymn to Adversity," speaks of her "iron hand," and Collins, in his "Ode to the Passions," exhibits Fear as striking the "chords" of the harp. But such ideal creatures may surely be allowed to act a little more on reality than this. The rule is good, that the invention ought not to go beyond what we are capable of believing,—at least in our moments of enthusiasm. Whether the allegory of Sin and Death, under the effect of such vivid and sublime description, goes beyond this, will depend on the different structure of different minds. For my part, I can see the gates of hell open, and the bridge in the progress of its formation! There are many passages in the poetry of the Bible not less typified by material description; but many of these objectors are the very people who have least genuine taste for spirituality.

One of the finest passages of Johnson is the following:—"The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate Milton's appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy: Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind: he sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven." But this is far above the general tone of his criticism; and is half undone again by a passage in a subsequent page, where he speaks of the inconvenience of the design, which requires the description of what cannot be described,—the agency of spirits: he is sometimes raised above himself by the inspiration of Addison's noble essay; then he sinks again to his own level. It was not Addison's opinion that the agency of spirits could not be described; he only says that spirits must not be too particularly engaged in action. Bishop Newton justifies these agencies of imaginary beings: I have no doubt that they are the very essences of the highest poetry. It is true that to bring Violence, Strength, and Death on the stage, as active persons, is absurd; and that what may be introduced in poetry may be sometimes improper for the definite lines and colourings of sculpture and painting. What is most sublime is often vague and half enveloped in mists.

Addison says, "Milton seems to have known perfectly well wherein his strength lay, and has therefore chosen a subject entirely conformable to those talents of which he was master. As his genius was wonderfully turned to the sublime, the subject is the noblest that could have entered into the thoughts of man: everything that is truly great and astonishing has a place in it; the whole system of the intellectual world,—the chaos, and the creation—heaven, earth, and hell,—cater into the constitution of his poem."

Johnson follows in the same steps, and begins almost in the same words:—"He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius; and to know what it was that nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others,—the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful: he therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said; on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance." So much for Johnson's originality!
There is indeed one leading passage in Johnson's criticism, of which no traces can be found in Addison:—and behold what it is!—"Original deficiency cannot be supplied: the want of human interest is always felt. 'Paradise Lost' is one of the books which the reader admires and bays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its pursuit is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction; retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions!"

Such was Johnson's taste; such his sensibility; such the character of his intellect! Yet this is he whose censorious and heartless judgment is to blast the fame of poets of less strength than Milton, yet of great merits, like Gray and Collins!—who is to set up Blackmore and Watts; and exalt Dryden and Pope above all other men of poetical genius!

Having thus closely examined this celebrated critique of the biographer, I find that it sinks to nothing; and as almost all his pretensions to critical judgment in the higher branches of poetry have been founded on it, the ground ought surely to be taken from under him. In his discrimination of the respective merits of Dryden and Pope he is more at home, and therefore more to be depended on.

As to Addison's Essay, it ought to be studied and almost got by heart by every cultivated mind which understands the English language. It is in all respects a masterly performance: just in thought, full of taste and the finest sensibility, eloquent and beautiful in composition, widely learned, and so clearly explanatory of the true principles of poetry, that whoever is master of them, cannot mistake in his decision of poetical merit. It puts Milton above all other poets, on such texts as cannot be resisted.

One thing, however, must be observed, that neither Addison nor Johnson seem much acquainted with Italian poetry.

It cannot be unacceptable to put before the reader a few extracts from Addison:—

"Homer and Virgil introduced persons whose characters are commonly known among men, and such as are to be met with either in history, or in ordinary conversation: Milton's characters, most of them, lie out of nature, and were to be formed purely by his own invention. It shows a greater genius in Shakspeare to have drawn his Caliban, than his Hotspur, or Julius Cesar: the one was to be supplied out of his own imagination, whereas the other might have been formed upon tradition, history, and observation. It was much easier, therefore, for Homer to find proper sentiments for an assembly of Grecian generals, than for Milton to diversify his infernal council with proper characters, and inspire them with a variety of sentiments. The loves of Dido and Aeneas are only copies of what has passed between other persons. Adam and Eve before the Fall are a different species from that of mankind, who are descended from them; and none but a poet of the most unbounded invention and the most exquisite judgment, could have filled their conversation and behaviour with so many apt circumstances during their state of innocence.

"Nor is it sufficient for an epic poem to be filled with such thoughts as are natural, unless it abound also with such as are sublime. Milton's chief talent, and indeed his distinguishing excellence, lies in the sublimity of his thoughts. There are others of the moderns, who rival him in every other part of poetry; but in the greatness of his sentiments, he triumphs over all the poets both modern and ancient, Homer only excepted. It is impossible for the imagination of man to distend itself with greater ideas, than those which he has laid together in his first, second, and sixth books. The seventh, which describes the creation of the world, is likewise wonderfully sublime, though not so apt to stir up emotion in the mind of the reader, nor consequently so perfect in the epic way of writing, because it is filled with less action. Let the judicious reader compare what Longinus has observed on several passages in Homer, and he will find parallels for most of them in the 'Paradise Lost.'"

Again, in another place—"Aristotle observes, that the fable of an epic poem should abound in circumstances that are both credible and astonishing: or, as the French critic chooses to phrase it, the fable should be filled with the probable and the marvellous. This rule is as fine and just as any in Aristotle's whole Art of Poesy.

"If the fable is only probable, it differs nothing from a true history; if it is only marvellous, it is no better than a romance: the great secret, therefore, of heroic poetry
CHAPTER XXI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

"The description of Adam and Eve" (continues Addison in his admirable Essay), "in the fourth book, as they first appeared to Satan, is exquisitely drawn, and sufficient to make the fallen angel gaze upon them with all that astonishment, and those emotions of envy, in which he is represented.

"There is a fine spirit of poetry in the lines which follow; wherein they are described as sitting on a bed of flowers, by the side of a fountain, amidst a mixed assembly of animals. The speeches of these first two lovers flow equally from passion and sincerity: the professions they make to one another are full of warmth; but at the same time founded on truth: in a word, they are the gallantries of Paradise. The part of Eve's speech, in which she gives an account of herself upon her first creation, and the manner in which she was brought to Adam, is, I think, as beautiful a passage as any in Milton, or perhaps in any other poet whatsoever. These passages are all worked off with so much art, that they are capable of pleasing the most delicate reader, without offending the most severe:—

That day I oft remember, when from sleep, &c.

A poet of less judgment and invention than this great author would have found it very difficult to have filled these tender parts of the poem with sentiments proper for a state of innocence; to have described the warmth of love, and the professions of it, without artifice or hyperbole; to have made the man speak the most endearing things, without
descending from his natural dignity, and the woman receiving them without departing from the modesty of her character; in a word, to adjust the prerogative of wisdom and beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper force and loveliness. This mutual subordination of the two sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole poem, as particularly on the speech of Eve, I have before mentioned, and upon the conclusion of it; when the poet adds that the devil turned aside with envy at the sight of so much happiness, r. 192, &c.

Of all the difficulties Milton had to overcome, the greatest seems to me to have been the description of the battle of the angels in the sixth book; because he was necessitated to resort to material agency. It is founded on Rev. xii. 7, 8—"There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." Bishop Newton says, "within the compass of this one book we have all the variety of battles that can well be conceived. We have a single combat and a general engagement: the first day's fight is with darts and swords, in imitation of the ancients: the second day's fight is with artillery, in imitation of the moderns; but the images in both are raised proportionally to the superior nature of the beings here described: and when the poet has briefly comprised all that has any foundation in fact and reality, he has recourse to the fiction of the poets in their descriptions of the giants' war with the gods. And,

When war hath thus perform'd what war can do, he rises still higher, and the Son of God is sent forth, in the majesty of the Almighty Father, agreeably to Scripture: so much doth the sublimity of Holy Writ transcend all that is true, and all that is feigned, in description."

In the following passages, Addison rises to a sublimity, which assuredly has never, in any criticism, been surpassed:—"It required great prudence of invention and strength of imagination, to fill this battle with such circumstances as should raise and astonish the mind of the reader; and at the same time, an exactness of judgment to avoid everything that might appear light or trivial. Those who look into Homer, are surprised to find his battles still rising one above another, and improving in horror to the end of the Iliad. Milton's fight of angels is wrought up with the same beauty: it is ushered in with such signs of wrath as are suitable to Omnipotence incensed. The first engagement is carried on under a cope of fire, occasioned by the flights of innumerable burning darts and arrows which are discharged from either host. The second onset is still more terrible, as it is filled with those artificial thunders which seem to make the victory doubtful, and produce a kind of consternation even in the good angels. This is followed by the tearing up of mountains and promontories; till in the last place, Messiah comes forth in the fullness of majesty and terror. The pomp of his appearance, amidst the roarings of his thunders, the flashings of his lightnings, and the noise of his chariot wheels, is described with the utmost flights of human imagination.

"There is nothing on the first and last day's engagement which does not appear natural, and agreeable enough to the ideas most readers would conceive of a fight between two armies of angels.

"The second day's engagement is apt to startle an imagination which has not been raised and qualified for such a description by the reading of the ancient poets, and of Homer in particular. It was certainly a very bold thought in our author to ascribe the first use of artillery to the rebel angels: but as such a pernicious invention may be well supposed to have proceeded from such authors, so it entered very properly into the thoughts of that being, who is all along described as aspiring to the majesty of his Maker. Such engines were the only instruments he could have made use of to imitate those thunders that, in all poetry, both sacred and profane, are represented as the arms of the Almighty. The tearing up of hills was not altogether so daring a thought as the former: we are in some measure prepared for such an incident by the description of the giants' war, which we meet with in many of the ancient poets. What still made this circumstance the more proper for the poet's use, is the opinion of many learned men, that the fable of the giants' war, which makes so great a noise in antiquity, and gave birth to the sublimest description in Iliosol's works, was an allegory founded upon this very tradition of a fight between the good and bad angels.
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“Milton has taken everything that is sublime from the Latin and Greek poets in the giants' wars, and composes out of them the following great image:—

From their foundations loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills with all their load,—
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands.

“Milton has likewise raised his description in this book with many images taken out of the poetical parts of Scripture. The Messiah's chariot is formed upon a vision of Ezekiel, who, as Grotius observes, has very much in him of Homer's spirit in the poetical parts of his prophecy. The lines, in that glorious commission which is given the Messiah, to extirpate the host of rebel angels, are drawn from a sublime passage in the Psalms. The reader will easily discover many other strokes of the same nature.

“As Homer has introduced into his battle of the gods everything that is great and terrible in Nature, Milton has filled his fight of good and bad angels with all the like circumstances of horror. The shout of armies, the rattling of brazen chariots, the hurling of rocks and mountains, the earthquakes, the fire, the thunder, are all of them employed to lift up the reader's imagination, and give him a suitable idea of so great an action. With what art has the poet represented the whole body of the earth trembling even before it was created! ver. 218, &c. In how sublime and just a manner does he afterwards describe the orb'd heaven shaking under the wheels of the Messiah's chariot, with that exception of the throne of God! Notwithstanding the Messiah appears clothed with so much terror and majesty, the poet has still found means to make his readers conceive an idea of him, beyond what he himself is able to describe, ver. 802, &c. In a word, Milton's genius, which was so great in itself, and so strengthened by all the helps of learning, appears in this book every way equal to his subject, which was the most sublime that could enter into the thoughts of a poet.”

Speaking of the eighth book, which describes the creation of Adam and Eve, Addison says,—“These, and the like wonderful incidents in this part of the work, have in them all the beauties of novelty, at the same time that they have all the graces of nature: they are such as none but a great genius could have thought of; though, upon a perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves from the subject of which he treats. In a word, though they are natural, they are not obvious; which is the true character of all fine writing.”

In the tenth book, upon the arrival of Sin and Death into the works of the Creation, he observes,—“The following passage, ver. 641, &c., is formed upon that glorious image in Holy Writ, which compares the voice of an innumerable host of angels uttering hallelujahs to the voice of mighty thunderings, or of many waters.” He continues:—

“Though the author, in the whole course of his poem, particularly in the book we are now examining, has infinite allusions to places of Scripture, I have only taken notice in my remarks of such as are of a poetical nature, and which are woven with great beauty into the body of this fable; of this kind is that passage in the present book, where, describing Sin as marching through the works of nature, he adds,

——Behind her Death
Close follow pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse:

which alludes to that passage in Scripture, so wonderfully poetical, and terrifying to the imagination:—‘And I looked, and beheld a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with sickness, and with the beasts of the earth.’”

Addison concludes his series of eloquent, just, and admirable criticisms thus:—

“I have now finished my observations on a work which does an honour to the English nation. I have taken a general view of it under these four heads,—the fable, the characters, the sentiments, and the language: I have in the next place spoken of the censures which our author may incur under each of these heads; of which I might have enlarged the number if I had been disposed to dwell on so ungrateful a subject.

* Johnson has borrowed this in speaking of Gray's Elegy.
I believe, however, that the severest reader will not find any little fault in heroic poetry, which this author has fallen into, that does not come under one of these heads, among which I have distributed his several blemishes.

"After having thus treated at large of 'Paradise Lost,' I could not think it sufficient to have celebrated this poem in the whole, without descending to particulars: I have therefore endeavoured not only to prove that the poem is beautiful in general, but to point out its particular beauties, and to determine wherein they consist. I have endeavoured to show how some passages are beautiful by being sublime; others by being soft; others by being natural; which of them are recommended by the passion; which by the moral; which by the sentiment; and which by the expression. I have likewise endeavoured to show how the genius of the poet shines by a happy invention, a distant allusion, or judicious imitation; how he had copied or improved Homer or Virgil, and raises his own imaginations by the use he has made of several poetical passages in Scripture. I might have inserted also several passages of Tasso which our author has imitated; but as I do not look upon Tasso to be a sufficient voucher, I would not perplex my reader with such quotations, as might do more honour to the Italian than the English poet. In short, I have endeavoured to particularize those innumerable kinds of beauty, which it would be tedious to recapitulate, but which are essential to poetry; and which may be met with in the works of this great author."

I have here cited enough to draw again the attention of the modern reader to an elegant and exquisite author, whom the more recent fame of subsequent critics seems in some degree to have pushed aside; but who is as superior to Johnson, as Milton is to Pope or Dryden. Addison was not vigorous in his metrical compositions; but he had a beautiful invention in prose. He was a classical scholar, of far finer taste than Johnson; and if not more profound as a moralist, more rich, more chaste, and, as it seems to me, more original. Johnson's critique on Milton is an instance how much he secretly borrowed. In his "Rambler" is a large proportion of verbiage: he has none of that nice, delicate, and sensitive discrimination which delights in Addison; those touches of the heart; those unforced and mellow observations; those flashes of polished and exquisite humour. He too often dictates as a pedagogue, and silences by his coarseness. It is not out of place thus to enure him in a "Life of Milton," whom he has traduced with as much bad taste in literature as malignity of temper. And what is the worth of the praise by which he has affected to counteract his scoffs and his civils?—a disguised echo of the encomium of a predecessor, whose principles of poetry, he was outraging by the whole tenor of his own judgments through the series of poetical biographies he was then composing. Examine the rules by which Addison has tried the details of execution in the successive books of "Paradise Lost." will the praises or censures of Johnson on the poets whom he has criticised abide these tests? Johnson cared little for poetical invention, for imagery, or for sentiment: his whole idea of excellence lay in what he called ratiocination in verse: thus Dryden and Pope were his supreme favourites.

I remember how he shocked the taste and the creed of the higher and more imaginative classes of his poetical readers, when his "Lives" came out: but he was the fashion of the day; and the attempt was vain to stem the tide. The sensitive were stunned by his coarseness; and the worldlings and the talkers became insolent in their triumph. An epigrammatic point, an observation on life, a stinging couplet, can be felt and repeated by every pert disputant in society: but cite a noble passage from a great poet, and it draws sneers or ridicule!

Johnson's work did great injury to the national taste; and debases it even to this day. Imagination, repressed in its proper issues, has broken out in wrong places: it has become fantastic and distorted; in seeking not to be obvious, it has become unnatural. In the search for novelty we ought not to feign impossibilities or improbabilities; nothing should be extravagant; nothing over-coloured. We are to imagine what may be; but which is at the same time grand, beautiful, or pathetic. We are to take advantage of the dim hints of remote history, to fill up the details with the marvellous, the sublime, and the fair. Poetry deals more with the imagination than the understanding; but it must not outrage the understanding.

Some contend that Johnson had imagination: if he had, it was the imagination of
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big and vague words: all his "Rasselas" consists of generalizations: it is little more than a series of moral observations; sometimes powerful or plaintive; too often pompous and verbose, where triteness is covered by grandiloquence. On a few occasions he may have been picturesque—especially in his "Journey to the Hebrides;" but very rarely. Sounding words are easily put together by one long practised in literary composition. He has given no proof of distinct images; of that power of selecting the leading feature, which revives the whole object, and which, above all others, Milton and Shakespeare possessed; and which distinguish—as the epithets in Gray’s "Elegy," and Collins’s "Ode to Evening." Johnson not only could not invent such, but his mind had no mirror for them when they were presented by others; it gave him no pleasure to muse upon them. He had the faculty of powerful reason and strong memory; but the materials of thought afforded by his fancy were sterile and few: he loved therefore society and busy manners for the purposes of observation; in solitude he was miserable: he had no relief from painful recollections. It is thus, in part, that we may account for his distaste of Milton. When he praised, the praise was extorted, and borrowed under the powerful authority of a mightier critic.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MERITS OF MILTON COMPARED WITH THOSE OF OTHER POETS.

It is universally admitted that the primary and most essential quality of a poet is invention; but it must be invention also of a sublime or beautiful kind; and, to be perfect, it must display this excellence in fable, characters, sentiments, and language. Of all our English poets, Milton only has combined all these merits. Shakespeare wanted the first, though he was admirable in the last three. What invention of fable, or even of character, is there in Dryden or Pope? I can hardly think that strictly they have invention of sentiments; for these are by them drawn from observation.

Spenser attained the marvellous in pure invention; but his fictions go beyond nature, and outrage our faith. Chaucer’s tales are rarely, if ever original: they are principally borrowed from the Italians, or from old romances. Sackville’s famous legend is historical. The productions of subsequent poets of the best fame,—I do not speak of the living,—are too brief for much fable, except of Lord Byron: but whatever splendours Lord Byron had, his fables are generally extravagant. In Cowley, Waller, Denham, Prior, Thomson, Collins, Gray, Young, Akenside, Shenstone, Cowper, Burns, Beattie, the Wartons, Kirke White, Shelley, Coleridge, there was no fable. In Crabbe were short fables:—but if they did not want nature, they wanted dignity: they were colloquial and monotonous. Hayley had nothing of the force of fiction;—all his incidents were unpoeitical.

Thus it is, that before the sun of Milton, all other stars are pale,—unless of Homer and Virgil;—and what is there in the fable of these two that can stand before the divine brightness of the bard of angels?

With regard to characters,—invention of such as are at once true to nature, and yet grand, or attractive, is very rare. Those of Dryden and Pope are portraits,—copied from individuals: they are admirable as portraits:—but they have not the sublimity of poetic invention; they have frail humanity for their types. They have not the magnificence of Satan and his brother rebels,—still less of the good angels, nor the purity and beauty of Adam and Eve.

Where there is not invention, there cannot be adequate grandeur. Experience and reality fall short of our ideal greatness. We can always imagine higher things than we observe; and give full evidence to that imagination,—but not if it exceeds probability,—or at least possibility. —Incredibile sed.—Shakespeare, having conceived a character, always preserves it; as Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, &c. Each electrifies by acting appropositely: but this can never be effected by drawing merely from observation: the inventor is the master of the very soul of the person he invents.

* Sir Walter Scott requires an examination peculiar to himself.
He rules all the motives and conduct of the invented being;—and if he paints any inconsistency, it is from his own weakness, and want of sagacity.

The same principles apply to the sentiments as to the characters: if not in conformity with the moral and intellectual traits of the character represented, they are faulty; while that character itself must be striking and estimable, as well as natural.

To invent fable, characters, sentiments,—all with these excellencies,—can only be within the power of a gigantic mind.—Lastly, we come to the language. This ought to be such as expresses these complex inventions the most clearly, most harmoniously, and at the same time with the most dignity. Whatever overlays them,—whatever draws attention from the thought to the words,—is faulty: if the thought is good, it does not want to be raised by the dress;—if it is weak, or trite, it is not fit for poetry; and no ornament of cover can supply a radical defect:—on the contrary, it is a deception, which, when detected, disgusts.—*Tinnitus;*—*inaene est.*—The florid style is always bad. An over-regard to a monotonous harmony fatigues in Pope. Nothing can be more tiresome than a long continuation of the unbroken couplet.

Milton’s metrical combinations,—unfettered by rhyme, run into every variety and extent of musical cadence;—and his diction has often double force from its bold nakedness. His majestic thoughts support themselves in the plainest words.

What is called an illustrative imagination is a feeblter sort of power:—it is a petty invention.—Metaphors and similes may occasionally show visibly what in its abstraction is not easily conceived; but these are rarely necessary except in didactic poetry, which is of an inferior class. Sometimes the thought and the metaphor rise together in the mind, and cannot be separated; but there are spiritual ideas sublimer than any illustration from materiality.

The embodiment ought to lie, not in the metaphor, but in the abstraction itself. By the junction of the metaphor there are two ideas; and the attention is drawn from the principal to the secondary. He, whose chief strength exists in his secondary ideas, is not a great poet. I must confess that I think this was mainly the case with Dryden and Pope. What are Pope’s *“Moral Essays”* but illustration and decoration?—A vast proportion of the primary thoughts is trite.—There is no embodiment except in the dress:—the insile remains abstract. There is not only no contexture of fable, but no fable at all. Mere skill in language can never supply the want of fable, or characters, or sentiments.

Characters and sentiments derive a complex force from a well-combined fable: they are comparatively feeble, if insulated. The actions and the movements of the head and heart are operated upon by the conflicting or consecutive incidents of the fable; and each differently according to the discriminative conformation of the respective actors. That generalization, which separates the represented being from an intricate and particular train of circumstances, can never exhibit him in those strong, affecting, and vivid lights, which are forced forward by the gradual developments of a well-feigned and well-told tale.

Let Pope draw the characters of Buckingham and Wharton—to say nothing of the absence of invention,—we do not read them in a moral worked up by the recital of a long succession of incidents. They are single figures,—contemplated only by themselves. The absence of fable, then, is a defect, which must insuperably disqualify a candidate for a seat on the highest point of Parnassus. Will the *“Rape of the Lock”* be pleased in Pope’s favour? Here the invention has neither greatness nor nature: it is a sportive trifle, as far as the fable goes: it is a piece of exquisite aritifice; a laboured gem of filagree-work.

The power of language must not be wanting;—but it is the least of the four requisites. It cannot be truly good, where the thought is wanting;—but it is sometimes wanting where the thought is good. It is that, of which the semblance of excellence is most easily attained; and which is most apt to delude the common reader.

Flowing language is the taste of superficial and feeble minds: perhaps it is because they only regard the ornament, and can take in but a single image at a time. If there be deep thought into the bargain, it is too complex for them.

Let us suppose,—what I am afraid is true,—that Milton is too high for the voluntary taste of common intellect;—yet it is surely a duty, that all who desire to attain the
advantages of a cultivated education, should have impressed upon them by labour and
care his sublimity, his beauty, and his wisdom. We may not only improve, but acquire
taste by patient lessons. By distinctly studying the genuine purposes of poetry; by
having pointed out to us in whom the chief merit lies; by learning in what it consists:
by clear definitions and demonstrative explanations; by examples precisely applicable;
by calm reasoning; by unexaggerated praise,—we may assist and lead the popular
opinion and sympathy.

There will always be books of bad criticism,—books proceeding not only from a
vicious judgment or mean taste, but from interested motives; and these will have the
more effect, because they flatter the opinions and failings of the vulgar: but they
ought not to go uncounteracted: what is repeated without contradiction is soon taken
to be a truth.

The true principles of poetical invention laid down by Addison are incontrovertible;
but they are not such as are assumed by common critics,—who deem the improbable
and the extravagant a greater proof of genius than the natural;—who, at the same
time, like a tale of familiar life better than a tale of genuine grandeur; and who con-
sider a piquant epigram on the manners of daily occurrence a better proof of intellect
and sagacity than an epic poem.

I know not why vulgarity should be considered natural; but, if it be so, there is a
high nature also, as well as a low nature, and poets are bound to choose the best. The
characters, the sentiments, the language—all must follow the tone and colours of the
fable. In choosing his fable, therefore, Milton felt conscious of his own gigantic
power. Any other mind would have shrank from the hope to sustain the other requi-
sites at the same height. Homer or Virgil might find no difficulty in supporting the
career of Achilles, Hector, or Æneas; but how different the case of the first two of human
beings before the Fall; or of their seducer, the rebel angel—Satan.

There is copious and diversified invention in the Fairy Queen: but it wants unity, and
unbroken progression to one definite end. It is almost like a collection of episodes: the
tales are concurrent rather than consecutive.—Under all the influences of chivalry,
when it was not yet extinct, the mind might be brought to have a poetical belief of
those tales as allegories; but that belief can scarcely be sustained now that the feudal
ages have passed away. Even in Spenser's own age, he often verged on the bounds
of what the mind would then deem extravagant. Our poetical belief in "Paradise
Lost" is cherished by our belief in Scripture. It is miraculous that he never offends
the imagination, considering our habitual awe on such subjects.

Dante is often sublime as he is gloomy, and has a grand and vast imaginative inven-
tion; but he has no combination and unity of fable; and he has only sketches and
outlines rather than finished characters. His sentiments are sometimes obscure, and
there is a mass of crude and irrelevant intermixture: it is something of a chaos of
mighty fragments, rather than a regular building of finished Gothic architecture. Of
Milton, all the parts are exactly disposed, and none left imperfect: they are all of the
same date, in the same style, and in the most graceful proportions.

Beautiful poetry, with an equal regard to the four essential principles, may be writ-
ten on a far humbler subject than Milton's: but where is it now to be found?—and why
has it not been written? One cause I would assign is this, that false criticism chills it.
Technical critics require technical excellences: they like finer work, and gaudy colours,
and varnish: they pay little regard to the solid ore; they look to the mechanical work-
manship: there must be a flower here, and a piece of gold-leaf there; and all must be
polished into one uniform model till it shines, and sparkles, and dazzles; or, on the
other hand, it must be full of such wonders as were never heard or thought of before;
—raving expressions, irregular and dissonant numbers, and an affected sort of madness,
which is called originality and invention! Since the bursting forth of the French
Revolution in 1789, we have had a great deal of this: it has begun to subside; better
criticisms and wiser times are come. Nothing unnatural and monstrous has ever long
kept its hold on the public taste.

Addison's rules are so founded on eternal reason, that they never can be shaken.
There cannot be true poetry of a high order without invention of fable, characters, and
sentiments,—and those having such qualities as the critic demands. A fantastic inven-
tion is the invention of a madman; it is not genius! The purpose of poetry is to convey exalted truths through the medium of feigned examples: if it gives no instruction, one requisite of prime poetry is wanting. They who only deal in decorative poetry, produce flowers without fruits; and, generally, only artificial flowers.

If we receive any pleasure from these stimulative compositions, they work us into a factitious fury, which unfit us for the sober business of life. We retire from the holy strains of Milton, improved in wisdom, fortified against the ills of existence, patient in adversity, and glorying in the works of the Creator. His enthusiasm is always philosophical.

Many will think me too severe in the application of the theory I have adopted, because it will degrade into a much lower class several of their favourite poets. They may still regard them with affection, for they may still afford them refined pleasures; but we must not put their pretensions on false grounds. He cannot strictly deserve the name of poet, who is not an inventor or creator: and he who does not admire Milton to enthusiasm, does not know what poetry is: he may delude himself, but the test is infallible. Mean and dull minds love the worst poets most, or, rather, those smooth versifiers who have no poetry in them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON "PARADISE REGAINED."

There is less complex fable in the "Paradise Regained" than in its predecessor: it is chiefly argumentative, while the other is narrative, dramatic, and full of imagery; but it is scarcely so sublime, if we may allow of argumentative sublimity. It has far more of the moral and practical wisdom, which relates to the state of mankind after the Fall, and therefore affords more lessons of instruction. It has less of the blaze of the sun, but more of the mellow mildness of its setting radiance: it has, however, enough of fable in it, in the poetical sense: the characters are few, and the language, for the most part, subdued and plain: the sentiments are abundant, wise, elevated, and beautiful. Here the poet is more profuse, and more rich, even than in the "Paradise Lost." I cannot bring myself to admit that there is less genius or less excellence in this poem than in the other. If fable were the only grand essence of poetry, then I must yield. Imagery implies materiality and embodiment; so far it is less splendid; but my own taste leads me to the intellectual, the spiritual, the ideal. This may allow of fable, as well as what is more narrative; yet it cannot be denied that there is less invention in the "Paradise Regained:" the story being singular, there was less opportunity for it. Milton had, in the second book of his Reason of Church Government, long before hinted that the rules of Aristotle were not always strictly to be kept; but rather nature to be followed; and that the Book of Job might be considered as "a brief model of an epic poem."

However we may rebel against the principles of Aristotle when they are arbitrary, we must consider the greater part of them to be built on nature and truth; and so far not to be departed from. Fiction, therefore, whether imaginative or spiritual, is indispensable to poetry. For this reason, history in metre is not poetry; nor is the narrative of what is drawn from observation poetry.

I am fully aware what will be the result of an adherence to these strict principles: it will exclude a great part of what has taken to itself the name of poetry. When a writer of verses speaks in his own person, and describes, not his visionary, but his actual feelings and opinions, it is not poetry. We cannot lift ourselves up to the height of an invented character, because sad realities intervene to chill us.

Let us take the example of a popular author, and refer to Cowper's "Task." Here is no fable; here are no invented characters; it wants therefore a primary essential of the best poetry. Then why does it please?—because it is the language of poetry; because in his own person the author speaks the sentiments and tone of poetry. Still the one grand requisito is not there.

The same objection applies to the greater part of Cowley's works, except to the language, where there is often beautiful imagery. I believe nobody reads the "Davideis."
There is no invented fable in Pope's "Eloisa;"—all that is borrowed either from biography or former fictions. All the charm lies in the animation, passion, and harmonious eloquence of the style and versification. The true poet surrounds himself with ideal worlds; he lives out of himself; he lives in others, but those others of his own creation. He escapes from realities to possibilities; but how few have strength of wing for this! Scarcely any can long support themselves in the air: in those ethereal realms their wings soon drop beneath the heat. They are willing to rest upon the earth, and be content with the solid substances around and before them. Appeals to the imagination, however, are not the less excellent, because they are above the vulgar taste. Because there are those among the people whom something of fact pleases better than exalted fiction, is this fiction to be debased in the scale of excellence? We know not the mysteries of Providence, nor why this great poetical genius is so sparingly dispensed: we only know that upon this great scale all except four or five are found wanting. Poetical artists, whose skill lies in the mechanical parts, are numerous; the dress is a bauble; the creative thought is the essence. There is not much difficulty in finding language to illustrate a trite truth, and rhymes to give it harmony to the ear; but the combination of incidents, and exhibition of ideal characters, is another affair.

I have already said that we have scarcely any Epics in our language subsequent to Milton's, except the mean and miserable flatnesses of Blackmore: perhaps, however, a few modern poems may come under the denomination; as Southev's "Joan of Arc," "Madoe," and "Roderic," and some of Scott's and Byron's productions; but Scott's are more lyrical, and many of Byron's Tales incline to this. They want the regularity of the old heroic poem: the characters, too, are not quite natural. Gray's "Bard" may be called a fable; but if it be, it is a lyrical fable.

After the choice of subjects executed by Milton, all others fade into littleness. This is one of the difficulties which he has thrown upon his successors. The actors and the machinery from human materials must appear comparatively uninteresting. We may invent some great hero; but how spiritless will he appear before Satan! and how mean, before Adam and Eve, will all other human beings show themselves!

Still something might be done better than has been done; at once natural, vigorous, and new. We may imagine characters distinctly discriminated, moral, intellectual, generous, bold, enterprising, lofty; and we may put them into a progression of movements, wading through conflicting obstacles, and going forwards to some great end. We may borrow these from no history, nor derive much from observation—the whole may be invention; yet we may keep close to the probabilities of nature, but nature sublimed by virtue, and high inborn endowments.

This will free us from the servile task of copying from actual examples, which freezes the energies of the mind, and binds us down in chains to the earth: because we can always imagine more than we can find, and conceive ideal virtue higher than any which experience justifies. So of ideal beauty:—we can embody visions of fairness and purity, such as no individual ever possessed.

But to invent single characters is not so impracticable, as to make several so invented act their parts in one story, and have their respective qualities drawn out by the conflict. "Hie labor, hoc opus est." A short poem, delineating a single character, real or imaginary, does but little. Prior's "Henry and Emma" goes a little farther, but the fable is not his own: he has merely given a modern versification to the dialogue. As far as it goes, it is very beautiful. Gray's "Elegy" is a soliloquy, and not of an ideal person. Not one of Dryden's Fables is original.

It is remarked that the style of the "Paradise Regained" is much less encumbered with allusions to abstruse learning than the "Paradise Lost." Different critics assign different reasons for this. It is probable that the poet was influenced by regard to the simple language of the New Testament: in previous parts of the Bible there is much more of poetical ornament and figurative richness.

It is probable also that the latter poem was written more hastily and less laboured. As to much imagery,—though a splendid charm, when just and grand, or beautiful,—it is not an essential of poetry. There may be invention, which is not in its strict sense imaginative: it may be purely intellectual and spiritual.
CHAPTER XXIV.
ON MILTON'S JUVENILE POEMS.

It appears, that Milton, from the first verses he composed, always tended to sacred objects, and was always familiar with the style and images of the Scripture: he had early the idea of an epic poem; but his first productions were short and lyrical; in these the invention lay in the sentiments and language: he was always picturesque, and often sublime: his "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are almost entirely descriptive, though there is something of a distinct character in those descriptions as applicable to different states of mind. Here he speaks mainly in his own person, and consonant to his own individual taste: I think, however, that there is less originality in these than in most of his other poems.

"Comus" is the invention of a beautiful fable, enriched with shadowy beings and visionary delights: every line and word is pure poetry, and the sentiments are as exquisite as the images. It is a composition which no pen but Milton could have produced; though Shakespear could have written many parts of it, yet with less regularity, and, of course, less philosophical thought and learning; less profundity and solemnity; but perhaps with more buoyancy and transparent flow.

"Lycidas" stands alone: Johnson says it has no passion; the passion results from the imaginative richness: the bursts of picturesque imagery give a melancholy rapture to a sensitive fancy. But Johnson had no fancy. It is like entering into an enchanted forest, where the wood-nymphs are mourning over their loves in strains of aerial music; or approaching a fairy island, where the sea-nymphs are singing melodious dirges from its promontories.

Johnson's censure of Milton for representing himself and Lycidas as shepherds, would go to destroy all figurative language. A shepherd's, as long as poetry has been known, has been considered a poetical life: his converse with the fields and open air, joined to his leisure, connects itself with all the picturesque imagery. The Scripturcs would have afforded the critic an authority which one should have supposed he would have respected; as, for instance, the beautiful adaptation of Addison, beginning

The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care.

But Johnson had an abhorrence of a rural abode: with him "the full tide of life was at Charling-Cross." He preferred the roll of the hackney-coach, and the cries of London, to the sound of the woodman's axe, the shepherd's hallow, and the echo of the deep-mouthed hounds ringing from some forest-slope; and the witticisms of Aldermen in waistcoats of scarlet and gold at the full-clad table of Thrace the brewer, to dreams by the side of murmuring rivers, or a book in some shade, with the greenery of nature at his feet.

It is not true that there is no grief in "Lycidas;" but grief shows itself in different minds according as they are differently constructed. An imaginative mind does not grieve in the same way as a sterile one: it is not stunned; it expatiates abroad; it dwells on all the scenes in which it has been associated with the object of its loss. If it is full of tears, those tears are gilded by hope: but Johnson looked to death only with a sullen gloom; he saw no bright emanations of joy playing in the skies: with him it was, that

Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled.—Collins.

Johnson prefers Cowley's "Elegy on his friend W. Hervey," on account of its plain unmetaphorical language. Why did he not mention that of Tickell on Addison, where he speaks of their walking and conversing in consecrated groves? The critic says there is no nature in "Lycidas," for there is no truth; no art, for there is nothing new. This I do not understand; a proper novelty is the result of genius, not of art. But the assertion that there is no novelty in this composition is not just: the imagery and the combinations are all new: raciness is one of its beautiful characteristics: it is full of imagery; but principally primal, not metaphorical imagery. "Lycidas" appears to me much more vigorous, more expansive, more vivid, more full of sentiment and intellectuality, than "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," which are the popular favourites.
It is extraordinary that Johnson had the courage to venture such a disreputable criticism; but he was now in the height of his fame, and had grown humourous and arbitrary. His contemporaries feared his vituperation and personal invectives. The Wartons were mild men, and loved too much their own quiet: Mason lived at a distance from him, and abhorred and feared him: Gray was dead: Johnson's club were all his flatterers and worshippers: Burke was absorbed in politics; and Sir Joshua Reynolds never ventured to engage in literary conflict with him. A few feeble missiles were aimed at him by Potter and other mediocrities: but it was a crisis of no brilliance: Hayley became a fashionable poet: and Beattie lost his spirits, and could not carry the "Minstrel" beyond the second canto: Robertson and Gibbon were great in history: but they did not much concern themselves with poetry: Sir William Jones was yet young, vain, and ambitious to go with the stream: Horace Walpole was too delicate, and too fearful of the rude ridicule of Johnson to enter the lists with him; nor probably would his taste have led him to it: I doubt whether Milton's genius had much of his sympathy.

In this age, such an ebullition of vulgar acrimony and hard insensibility would not have been left unassailed and unrepelled. The Southey's, the Lockharts, the Wordsworths, the Wilsons, the Campbells, the Moores, and many an unflinched sword besides, would all have stepped forth. The flattering Thrales, and Boswells, and Hawkinses, and Murphy's, would have had no shield.

I do not know how Cowper felt: he had not yet broke forth into fame, and perhaps was too meek to have then dared an opinion of his own; but he has left many proofs that he was a devoted admirer of Milton. I was a boy when the Life of Milton came out; though the Lives of the more modern poets appeared after I arrived at Cambridge; and then my indignation at the attacks on Collins and Gray rose to a height which has never since subsided.

CHAPTER XXV.
ON MILTON'S SONNETS.

The Sonnets are another object of Johnson's virulent attack: they have a character of their own, supported for the most part by a naked majesty of thought. The model is drawn from the Italians: and Milton's favourite, Dante, set him the example. He took little from the tone of Petrarch: he has none of Petrarch's sweetness. The sternness, severity, gloominess, and sublimity of Dante had his entire sympathy. The English reader may find specimens of Dante's manner in his Sonnets, excellently translated by Hayley, in the notes to his poem on Epic Poetry: I must admit that, in the Sonnets, Milton has not reached his model.

The brevity of the Sonnet will scarcely admit the greater traits of poetry: there is no space for fable; but for the preservation of a single grand thought it is admirably fitted. Mr. Dyce, in his "Specimens of English Sonnets, from the time of Henry VIII., chronologically arranged," has shown their progress and their fashions. They were favourites with Spenser and Shakespeare, and many less eminent poets of those days; as Sydney, Constable, B. Barnes, Daniel, and Drayton. It appears to me that the Sonnets both of Spenser and Shakespeare have been commended too much; they are quaint, laboured, and often metaphysical. Of all authors, Wordsworth has most succeeded in this department.

But there are many of Milton's which are very grand in their nakedness: they have little of picturesque imagery. To make use once more of an expression of Johnson—not as applied to them, but to other parts of Milton—their sublimity is argumentative: it is intellectual and spiritual. There is something at times of ruggedness and involution in the words: they rarely flow. They are spoken as by one, who, conscious of the force of the thought, scorns ornament; they have something of the brevity and the dictatorial tone of the oracle, and seem to come from one who feels conscious that he is

* As T. Warton's book appeared in 1785, he probably composed his remarks soon after the "Lives" were published in 1781. Whether he would have printed them while the Doctor lived, may be a question.
entitled to authority. Compositions so short can only have weight when they come from established names: every word ought to be pregnant with mind, with thought, sentiment, or imagery. The form will not allow diffuseness and smooth diluted periods: the repetition of the rhymes certainly aggravates the difficulty.

If it can be shown that in any one of these Sonnets of Milton there is not much sterling ore, I will give it up. In all there is some important thought, or opinion, or sentiment developed. The modulation may sometimes appear rough to delicate and sickly ears; and there is not the nice polish of a lady's gem come from a refining jeweller's workshop: it is all massy gold,—not filagree'd away into petty ornaments.

The Sonnet on Cromwell is majestic;—on his blindness, sublime;—on his twenty-second birth-day, both pathetic and exalted: others are moral and axiomatic; and others descriptive. Not one is a mere effusion of idle words or insipid common-place; not one has the appearance of being written for the sake of writing.

The necessity of compression gives this form of composition a great merit, when the fountain of the writer's mind is abundant. It is true, that in this short space, barrenness itself can find enough to fill up the outline; but in Milton there is no meaning sentence or useless word. The form of the Sonnet, however, does not refuse mellifluousness when the occasion requires, as Petrarch almost everywhere proves. No verses can be more mellifluous than Petrarch's: something of this will, perhaps, be attributed to the softness of the Italian language; but the English tongue is also capable of it, however obstinately Johnson may have pronounced otherwise. Milton had no Laura to flatter and idolize: he found in his wife a dull, insensate, and capricious woman, unwarmed by his genius, and inapprehensive of his moral qualities: his admiration turned to disgust, and his resentment to bitterness. One may conceive that his genius might have thrown more of the splendour of imagination into his Sonnets: single images, such as are scattered through all the rest of his poetry, might have been thrown into a succession of these small forms, and might have risen by a noble climax to their termination.

If there was one poetical power of Milton more eminent than another, it was his power of description; he gave an idealism to all his material images; and yet they were in the highest degree distinct and picturesque. He knew where to throw a veil, and when to make the features prominent. A poetical image should have the distinctness which a painter can depict; but it should have also something of the indefinite, which a painter cannot depict:—this is Milton's merit; and it is no less that of Dante. It is what art can never reach: what genius only gives by flashes: it is enthusiasm and inspiration.

The question at present is, not whether the Sonnets are equal to Milton's genius, but whether they are good, or as contemptible as Johnson represents them. I say that they are such as none but Milton could have written: they are full of lofty thought, moral instruction, and virtuous sentiment, expressed in language as strong as it is plain. They are pictures of a manly, resolute, inflexible spirit, and aid us in our knowledge of the poet's individual character. Is this light merit?—Where is the enlightened reader who will agree with Johnson, and wish them thrown aside?

But Johnson's prejudices against Milton were inveterate: they must have been taken up early in life from some passion, and have grown with his growth. He never ridded himself of the impressions he imbibed from Landor: his hatred however was partly political. I know not what made him so bigoted and blind a partisan: his birth and station will not account for it;—probably it was imbibed Jacobitism. But there was something adverse in the native structure of the minds of these two celebrated men: if Johnson had genius, it was quite dissimilar to that of Milton: it was solely argumentative: he had no inventive imagination: he saw no phantoms but the gloomy phantoms of superstition: he had no chivalrous enthusiasm: he delighted not to gaze on feudal halls, or "thronges of knights and barons bold:" he thought not of another world; of angels, and heavenly splendour, but as subjects of trembling and painful awe! He turned away from them, except so far as duty enforced his attention; he loved the world, and all its gayeties, and follies, and conflicts.

Could there be a greater contrast to the bard of "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained?" To him who would decapitate kings, and defy the powers of the earth?
To him who would haunt groves and forests, and listen to the lonely blast, and busy himself in deep solitude, and love musing and his own creations, rather than the busy talk of social collision? Him, whose taste is opposed to our own, and from its elevation claims a superiority, we learn first to envy, then to hate, then to scorn. Till we can persuade ourselves that he is in the wrong, we feel our own degradation. Thns Johnson, when he was grasping at the head seat of the literature of his country, could not bear the memory of one whose dissimilar splendour paled his own; hence his constant detractions, his petty caviis, his malignant perversions.

To dwell on this topic is not idle or irrelevant: Johnson still holds the public ear; and to endeavour to weaken his influence is a duty neither useless nor ungenerous. The more the public studies and admires Milton, the higher will be its taste and grasp of intellect. As to the Sonnets, if any one can read them without both pleasurable excitation and improvement, he has a sort of mind which it would be vain to attempt to cultivate—a barren soil, or one overgrown with weeds and prejudices.

CHAPTER XXVI.
ON "SAMSON AGONISTES."

We come again to fable and invention. "Samson Agonistes" is written after the severe model of the ancient Greek tragedies; but it is not fit for the stage, nor intended for it: the characters are few; it indeed almost approaches to a monologue. Many object to the Chorus; but for a dramatic poem it affords many opportunities of noble eloquence. Samson's character is magnificently supported: he is a giant in mind as well as in body: his language, though not suited to the effeminate polish of modern ears, is vigorous and majestic.

There is a deep pathos, but unyielding soul, in all the hero uters: the moral reflections are grand, profound, and expansive. The application everywhere to the poet's own misfortunes and position augments the interest twofold.

Milton, in his preface to this poem, says:—"Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, morallest, and most profitable of all other poems; therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions; that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated," &c.

On this Wariton makes the following note:—"Milton, who was inclined to puritanism, had good reason to think that the publication of his 'Samson Agonistes' would be very offensive to his brethren, who held poetry, and particularly that of the dramatic kind, in the greatest abhorrence: and upon that account, it is probable, that in order to excuse himself from having engaged in this proscribed and forbidden species of writing, he thought it expedient to prefix to his play a formal defence of tragedy." Such defence of what does not require to be defended never makes impression upon bigoted minds. The blind slaves of party are never convinced by reason; they repeat by rote, and cannot be put out of their lesson. Long speeches on the stage become tedious; but are not so to the intelligent reader: and there is no mode by which an ideal character can be represented with so much effect. A person under the influence of passion can best describe his own feelings: we cannot conceive anything more heroic than much of what is said by Samson.

In accordance with some celebrated critics, I have no doubt that the third place of excellence in Milton's works ought to be assigned to "Samson Agonistes"—placing the "Paradise Lost" first, and "Paradise Regained" second. Though "Comus" is exquisite poetry, it has not so much grandeur and holiness: it certainly is more purely imaginative; but then we must consider the compound of the four great essentials; and we must always prefer sublimity to sweetness. To live among the nymphs and dryads is delightful; but moral heroism is more delightful. One is duty; the other is only pleasure.

We are entitled to amuse ourselves by sometimes living in a purely visionary world;
but sometimes also we are called upon to perform our part among the human inhabitants of the solid earth; and the grandeur of bold enterprise, or patient suffering, has a longer, deeper, and more instructive hold upon the mind, than any simple and unmixed play upon the fancy or the senses.

The “Comus” is the work of a younger man, full of hope, elasticity, and joy: the tragedy is the pouring out of one enriched by the wisdom of age and experience, mellowed by misfortune, and elevated by patience under danger and calamity:—of one “fallen on evil tongues and evil days;”—of one resolved to lift himself above subliminary oppression, and rising in grandeur in proportion to the severity of his trials. We muse in this tragedy upon the great hard mingling his ideal inventions with his own personal gloomy recollections and his present sorrows and privations. We trace the workings of his heroic spirit; and we see the sublime picture of lofty virtue and splendid genius “struggling with the storms of fate.” The temperament of poetry is heat and exhalation: it throws out flashes, of which labour and art cannot supply scintillae. Its warmth and tone communicate its contagion to others. Whatever there is of artificial and mechanical attempt to produce this effect on others, fails, and ends in nothing. It is like dead air, whence we draw no healthful breath. No one can write with the powers of a poet except when he is in a state of excitement. All must be centred within him:—there the fire must burn and blaze. He must see with the mental eye, and pore, and believe. Language will accompany this state of spiritualism without being searched for. If the thought does not predominate over the expression, it is not only charmless, but weak and faulty:—

Cold as the snow upon Canadian hills,
   It wakes no spark within, but chills the heart.

The spell comes from the imagination:—there can be no warmth in literary composition where there is no imagination.

The force and brightness of the fire is in proportion to the richness and abundance of the fuel applied to it. Milton applied all invention, all wisdom, all learning, and all knowledge.

Perhaps we must bring to the reading of Milton much greatness of spirit, a strong and unsophisticated fancy—much erudition, and much power of thought, to enable us thoroughly to taste and admire him. In this he differs from Shakespeare, who is equally fitted for the people and for the most radiant and most cultivated minds. One can scarcely deny that this is a superiority in Shakespeare: Milton could not have been what he was without the aid of intense study; but as Milton could not have done what Shakespeare did, so Shakespeare could not have done what Milton did. To have produced “Samson Agonistes” would have been utterly beyond Shakespeare’s reach: Shakespeare, however, would have given more variety of characters, and richness and contrast of incidents: he would have drawn Dalilah more inviting, and Samson more tender: his language would have been more flowing—more vernacular; and if not so sublime, more beautiful: it would have sunk with less consideration, and more immediately into people’s hearts.—“Samson Agonistes” is for study, and not to be lightly perused. But let no scholar—let no magnanimous-souled being who understands the English language, and has any tincture of education, omit to read it, and muse upon it again and again, and lay it up in the treasured stores of his memory: it will exercise and improve all his intellectual faculties, and elevate his heart:—it has at once novelty, truth, and wisdom. He may learn by it lessons for the great affairs of life, enhance his comprehension, and fortify his bosom. He may be taught that sublimity and strength of language lie not in glitter or floweriness:—that strength is naked, and boldness of conception can support itself.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

I have thus given my opinion distinctively of Milton’s epic, dramatic, and lyrical genius. I have done it sincerely, without exaggeration, and, after a habit of considering the subject for many years, with an earnest desire to form a right judgment.
To praise upon mere authority can answer no good purpose; the repetition of false praise will add to its nauseousness: but there can be no certainty of merit, unless we strictly establish principles which shall become a test to it. The endless diversity of capricious opinion puts everything afloat: we can trust to nothing but the concurrence of all ages and all nations. If, therefore, we find that what was laid down by Aristotle has received the sanction of posterity under all changes of manners and varieties of countries, reason enjoins us to rely upon it as truth: I take, therefore, Aristotle's four requisites of good poetry to be undeniable. By these rules Milton must ever stand where he has been placed—at the head of his art, if art it may be called. But the extraordinary thing is, that he has no second in this combination of merits—that he stands alone! There are those whom this will offend; but it is the stern truth. If false, in the sense in which Aristotle uses it, is a necessary essential, the conclusion is incontrovertible.

Of all the fifty-two poets whose Lives have been written by Johnson, and of whom not less than seventeen are mere versifiers, and several of them mediocre versifiers,—Dryden and Pope stand, in common estimation, next to Milton. But however I may sin against the popular opinion, I persevere in saying that they are deficient in this first essential, to which I have alluded: I assert that they have no poetical invention. Pope's "Rape of the Lock" will scarcely be objected to me; nor Dryden's "Fables," which are all borrowed. Sir William Temple's observation of the rarity of poetical genius, so often cited, is thus verified. Single qualities may not be uncommon; it is the union of all the essentials which so seldom occurs. Milton had them all; and each in the most eminent degree. Pope may be said to have had the last three: Dryden wanted the first, and, perhaps, the third.

So far as poetry is to be considered not only the voice of pleasure, but the voice of wisdom, whatever fiction is contrary to probability, is not only not praiseworthy, but culpable. It justly brings poetry into contempt, and gives it the name of an idle, empty art. I prefer even insipidity and triteness to extravagance; the effort to surprise is always vicious. The poet's business is to exhibit nature, but nature in an exalted state: hence I cannot approve Crabbe's poetry, however true to life his descriptions may be. On the other hand, I must admit that Byron in his fictions goes sometimes far beyond nature. These are small names, even the last, to mention after Milton, whose fables utter the songs of angels and archangels; and whose sanctity, elevated into the highest sublimity, keeps due music with the choirs of Heaven! Not but Byron might, if he had been equally devout, have followed Milton in this track.

I am conscious what talents far above mine it requires to treat adequately the subject I have here undertaken: but others, as weak as I am, have already entered on the task with less respectfulness and less love, and I am willing to attempt to wipe away some of the stains they have left. For fifty years I have had an unquenchable desire to refute Johnson's perverse criticisms and malignant obloquies. I know not by what spell his authority over the public is still great. To almost every new edition of Milton, except Todd's and Mitford's, Johnson's Life of the Poet has continued to be reprinted. This repetition surely becomes nauseous.

But he who gains novelty at the expense of truth, pays too dear for it; and gains what is not worth having. Nothing is more easy than to stimulate for a moment by what is new, though unfounded: but sobriety of judgment, and nicety of taste, must give their sanction to what is pronounced. All inconsiderate and unmeasured praise is hurtful. I have forborne to commend any composition of this mighty poet without long and calm thought. I have considered that the powers of Johnson entitled him to a cool and careful consideration before I ought to venture to contradict his opinion; but that, when I could no longer doubt, no force of authority ought to restrain my expression.

But much greater authority than Johnson's on a poetical question is on my side:—Dryden, Addison, Gray, the Wartons, Cowper, Hayley, and innumerable others.

It would be almost superfluous to say more of Milton's merits as a poet, after all that I have said: recapitulation in his case would probably weaken its effect. He had not only every requisite of the Muse; but every one of the highest order, and in the highest degree. His invention of poetical fable, and poetical imagery, was exhaustless, and
always grand, and always consistent with the faith of a cultivated and sensitive mind. Sublimity was his primary and unfailing power. His characters were new, surprising, gigantic, or beautiful; and full of instruction, such as high wisdom sanctioned. His sentiments were lofty, comprehensive, eloquent, consistent, holy, original; and an amalgamation of spirit, religion, intellect, and marvellous learning. His language was his own: sometimes a little rough and unvernacular; but as magnificent as his mind: of pregnant thought; naked in its strength; rich and picturesque, where imagery was required; often exquisitely harmonious, where the occasion permitted; but sometimes strong, mighty, and speaking with the voice of thunder.

I can scarcely go further, to constitute the greatest poet of our nation, and, in my opinion, of the world: for surely, taking dignity of fable and other characters into the question, Homer and Virgil cannot be compared with Milton! And, to fortify me, Addison and Dryden have come to the same conclusion.

In moral character the poet stands among the noblest and the best. His spirit was as holy, and his heart as sanctified, as his writings: for this we must admit the testimony of his own repeated declaration in the face of malignant enemies, and the foulest passion of detraction. But, as humanity cannot be perfect, he was provoked by diabolical slander into reerminations unbecoming the dignity of his supreme genius, and devout heart. His politics were severe, and, in my apprehension, wrong; but they were conscientious. The principles which he entertained, the boldness of his mind pushed to an unlimited and terrible extent: and thus he was brought to justify the decapitation of Charles I. I would forget this, if I could; because, remembering it, I cannot but confess that I feel it a cloud upon his dazzling glory: but as Horsley said on another occasion:

One passing vapour shall dissolve away,
And leave thy glory’s unobstructed ray!

APPENDIX.

MEMORANDA RELATING TO THE FAMILY OF POWELL OF FOREST-HILL, OXFORDSHIRE.

"Milton married in 1643, a daughter of Justice Powell of Sandford, in the vicinity of Oxford, and lived in a house at Forest-hill, about three miles from Oxford."


Nothing can possibly be more erroneous. The families of Powell, alias ap Howell, of Sandford, and Powell of Forest-hill, were not in the remotest degree connected: the former were Roman Catholics. Milton's first wife was Mary, daughter of Richard Powell of Forest-hill. About twenty years ago, the writer, being strongly impressed with the incorrectness of the above statement, and residing for a few months at Oxford, compiled a pedigree of the family of Powell of Sandford, by which the fact is proved to demonstration. There were then no memorials of the family in the church of Forest-hill; and the earliest register commencing A. D. 1700, no notice respecting them could be gleaned from that source. It is probable they came gradually into prosperity under the wings of the Bromes. One Richard Powell is "remembered" as "a servant" (perhaps bailiff or steward) under the will of George Brome of Halton, and is mentioned before the testator's armourer.

Richard Powell of Forest-hill, and Sir Edward Master of Ospringe, in Kent, were executors under the will of George Brome's widow, Eliz. (made 8th September, 1629) proved February 6th, 1634-5.

The will of Edmund Brome of Forest-hill, made November 8th, 1625, was proved August 13th, 1628, by Richard Powell (sole executor), Milton's father-in-law. There is no pedigree of the family to be met with; but the following are some memoranda respecting the will of Richard Powell of Forest-hill, Esq., made December 30th, 1646,
LIFE OF MILTON.

proved March 26th, 1647, by his widow, Anne; and on May 10th, 1662, by his son Richard; by which act the effect of the power so given to the mother was done away with. One of the attesting witnesses was John Milton his son-in-law; but the original will not being now (1831) at Doctors' Commons, curiosity will be disappointed in the expectation of seeing the poet's handwriting.

The testator names as executor, in the first place, his eldest son Richard; and in the second, in case of said Richard's unwillingness to act, his wife Anne; and in the third place, in case of said Anne being unwilling to do so, his friend Mr. John Ellstone of Forest-hill, to whom he gives twenty shillings for a ring. He appoints as overseers his loving friends Sir John Curson and Sir Robert Pye, Knights, and gives to them twenty shillings each for a ring.

He devises his house, &c., at Forest-hill (alias Forsthall) and alludes to his recently compounds for the same at Goldsmiths' Hall, to his eldest son Richard, subject, however, to as follows:—Payment of debts and funeral expenses, &c., satisfying a bond to Anne his, the testator's wife, in reference to her jointure, and which the testator was not able at that period (1646) to discharge out of his personal property; and the remainder was then to be divided into two parts: one of them to belong to the said Richard, and the other to be divided among such of his brothers and sisters as might not have been already, at the time of the testator's decease, provided for; and the sisters to have one-third more apiece than their brothers.

The testator desires that his daughter, Milton, may be had regard to, as to the sufficiency of her portion; and more, if his, the testator's estate will bear it.

His houses and lands at Wheateley, and all other properties of the testator, not so above specifically bequeathed, &c., are given to his said son Richard.

The marriage portion, £1000, promised to John Milton by his father-in-law, was never paid, according to the biographies of the poet. His distresses in the royal cause prevented, probably, the payment of it.

[I am indebted for this information to the kindness of Mr. Frederick Hollbrookes of Parkhurst, Duxley.—Ed.]

No. II.

DESCENDANTS OF MILTON.*

"Milton's direct descendants can only exist, if they exist at all, among the posterity of his youngest and favourite daughter Deborah, afterwards Mrs. Clarke, a woman of cultivated understanding, and not unpleasing manners, known to Richardson and Professor Ward, and patronized by Addison, who intended to have procured a permanent provision for her, and presented with fifty guineas by Queen Caroline. Her affecting examination is well known, on seeing her father's portrait for the first time more than thirty years after his death:—'Oh, my father, my dear father!' 'She spoke of him,' says Richardson, 'with great tenderness; she said he was delightful company, the life of the conversation, not only by a flow of subject, but by unaffected cheerfulness and civility.' This is the character of him whom Dr. Johnson represents as a morose tyrant, drawn by one of the supposed victims of his domestic oppression.

"Her daughter, Mrs. Foster, for whose benefit Dr. Newton and Dr. Birch procured Comus to be acted, survived all her children. The only child of Deborah Milton, of whom we have any accounts besides Mrs. Foster, was Caleb Clarke, who went to Madras in the first years of the eighteenth century, and who then vanishes from the view of the biographers of Milton. We have been enabled, by accident, to enlarge a very little this appendage to his history. It appears from an examination of the parish register of Fort St. George, that Caleb Clarke, who seems to have been parish-clerk of that place, from 1717 to 1719, was buried there on the 26th of October of the latter year. By his wife Mary, whose original surname does not appear, he had three children born at Madras:—Abraham, baptized on the 2d of June, 1703; Mary, baptized on the 17th of March, 1706, and buried on December the 15th of the same year; and Isaac, baptized the 13th of February, 1711. Of Isaac no further account appears. Abraham, the great-grandson of Milton, in September, 1725, married Anna Clarke; and

* From a critique on Godwin's 'Lives of Milton's Nephews,' in Edinburgh Review, No. L.
the baptism of his daughter, Mary Clarke, is registered on the 2d of April, 1727. With her all notices of this family cease. But as neither he nor any of his family, nor his brother Isaac, died at Madras, and as he was only twenty-four years of age at the baptism of his daughter, it is probable that the family migrated to some other part of India, and that some trace of them might yet be discovered by examination of the parish registers of Calcutta and Bombay. If they had returned to England, they could not have escaped the curiosity of the admirers and historians of Milton. We cannot apologize for the minuteness of this genealogy, or for the eagerness of our desire that it should be enlarged. We profess that superstitious veneration for the memory of that greatest of poets, which regards the slightest relic of him as sacred; and we cannot conceive either true poetical sensibility, or a just sense of the glory of England, to belong to that Englishman, who would not feel the strongest emotions at the sight of a descendant of Milton, discovered in the person even of the most humble and unlettered of human beings.”

No. III.

MILTON'S AGREEMENT WITH MR. SYMONS FOR "PARADISE LOST."
DATED 27TH APRIL, 1667.

"These Presents made the 27th of day April 1667, between John Milton, Gent. of the one part, and Samuel Symons, printer, of the other part; witness That the said John Milton in consideration of five pounds to him now paid by the said Samuel Symons, and other the consideraciones herein mentioned, hath given, granted and assigned, and by these presents doth give, grant and assign unto the said Samuel Symons, the executors and assigns, All that Book, Copy, or Manuscript of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost, or by whatsoever other title or name the same is or shall be called or distinguished, now lately licensed to be printed, together with the full benefit, profit, and advantage thereof, or which shall or may arise thereby. And the said John Milton for him, his executors and assigns, doth covenant with the said Samuel Symons, his executors and assigns, that he and they shall at all times hereafter have, hold and enjoy the same and all impressions thereof accordingly, without the let or hindrance of him the said John Milton, his executors or assigns, or any person or persons by his or their consent or privy. And that he the said John Milton, his executors or assigns, or any other by his or their means or consent, shall not print or cause to be printed, or sell, dispose or publish the said book or manuscript, or any other book or manuscript of the same tenor or subject, without the consent of the said Samuel Symons, his executors or assigns: In consideration whereof the said Samuel Symons for him, his executors and assigns, doth covenant with the said John Milton, his executors and assigns, well and truly to pay unto the said John Milton, his executors and assigns, the sum of five pounds of lawful English money at the end of the first impression, which the said Samuel Symons, his executors or assigns, shall make and publish of the said copy or manuscript, which impression shall be accounted to be ended when thirteen hundred books of the said whole copy or manuscript imprinted, shall be sold and retailed off to particular reading customers. And shall also pay other five pounds, unto the said John Milton or his assigns, at the end of the second impression to be accounted as aforesaid, And five pounds more at the end of the third impression, to be in like manner accounted. And that the said three first impressions shall not exceed fifteen hundred books or volumes of the said whole copy or manuscript, a piece. And further, that he the said Samuel Symons and the said John Milton, his executors and assigns shall be ready to make oath before a Master in Chancery concerning his or their knowledge and belief of or concerning the truth of the disposing and selling the said books by retail, as aforesaid, whereby the said Mr. Milton is to be entitled to his said money from time to time, upon every reasonable request in that behalf, or in default thereof shall pay the said five pounds agreed to be paid upon every impression, as aforesaid, as if the same were due, and for and in lieu thereof. In witness whereof, the said parties have to this

* While the grandson of Milton resided at Madras, in a condition so humble as to make the office of parish-clerk an object of ambition, it is somewhat remarkable that the elder brother of Addison should have been the governor of that settlement. The Honourable Galston Addison died there in the year 1709.
writing indented, interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Sealed and delivered in ) John Fisher,

the presence of us, J Benjamin Greene, servt to Mr. Milton.  

Rec'd then of Samuel Simmons five pounds, being the Second five pounds to be paid—mentioned in the Covenant. I say rec'd by me,

Witness, Edmund Upton.

I do hereby acknowledge to have received of Samuel Symonds Citizen and Statoner of London, the Sum of Eight pounds: which is in full payment for all my right, title, or interest, which I have or ever had in the Copy of a Poem intitled Paradise Lost in Twelve Bookes in Svo—By John Milton Gent. my late husband. Witness my hand this 21st day of December 1680.

Witnes, William Yopp, Ann Yopp.

Know all men by these presents that I Elizabeth Milton of London Widdow, late wife of John Milton of London Gent: deceased—have remissed released and for ever quitt claimed And by these presents doe remise release & for ever quitt clayme unto Samuel Symonds of London, Printer—his heirs Executors and Administrators All and all manner of Accoys and Accoys Cause and Causes of Accoys Suites Bills Bonds writings obligatorie Debts dues duties Accompts Summe and Sumes of money Judgments Executions Extents Quarrells either in Law or Equity Controversies and demands—And all & every other matter cause and thing whatsoever which against the said Samuel Symonds—I ever had and which I my heires Executors or Administrators shall or may have clayme & challenge or demand for or by reason or means of any matters cause or thing whatsoever from the beginning of the World unto the day of these presents. In witnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seal the twenty-ninth day of April in the thirty-third Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles by the grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland King defender of the faith & Anno Dom. 1681.

Signed and delivered in the presence of Jos. Leigh Wm. Wilkins.

Elizabeth Milton.

No. IV.

COWLEY'S PREFACE TO HIS POEMS, 1656.

It has been already observed that Cowley had scarcely opportunity to become acquainted with the early poems of Milton; and his party attachments prevented even a wish for personal intimacy; he was engaged besides on active, sometimes foreign service, and, if he read the "Defensio" of the great republican, in all probability read it with horror.

Yet we find on authority not to be questioned, that Milton spoke of Cowley as a poet whom he valued, and named him with Spenser and Shakespeare. This is the more surprising, as Cowley was by ten years the younger man, and his writings had never appeared in a body till 1656, when he returned to England from the Continent, and published them in folio. This volume was, there can be no question, read to Milton in his blindness: the congeniality of their studies, and their religious feelings, led him to estimate highly the only rival that Cambridge had bred to him in Latin verse; and though unnoticed in the volume upon his table, the Preface spoke to him, as by the inspiration of Urania herself. Let the reader imagine the blind bard listening to the following exquisite admonitions, which he alone fully comprehended; and the expectations which of all mankind he only could gratify; and upon which he was then earnestly and silently meditating:

"When I consider how many bright and magnificent subjects the holy Scripture affords and proffers, as it were, to poesy, in the wise managing and illustrating whereof, the Glory of God Almighty might be joined with the singular utility and noblest delight of mankind; it is not without grief and indignation that I behold that divine science employing all her inexhaustible riches of wit and eloquence, either in the wicked and beggarly flattery of great persons, or the unmanly idolizing of foolish women, or the wretched affectation of scurril laughter, or at best on the confused antiquated dreams of senseless fables and metamorphoses. Amongst all holy and consecrated things,
which the devil ever stole and alienated from the service of the Deity; as altars, temples, sacrifices, prayers, and the like; there is none that he so universally, and so long nursed, as poetry. It is time to recover it out of the tyrant’s hands, and to restore it to the kingdom of God, who is the father of it. It is time to baptize it in Jordan, for it will never become clean by bathing in the water of Damascus. There wants, methinks, but the conversion of that, and the Jews, for the accomplishment of the kingdom of Christ. And as men, before their receiving of the faith, do not without some carnal reluctancies apprehend the bonds and futters of it, but find it afterwards to be the trustiest and greatest liberty; it will fare no otherwise with this art, after the regeneration of it: it will meet with wonderful variety of new, more beautiful, and more delightful objects; neither will it want room, by being confined to heaven. There is not so great a lie to be found in any poet, as the vulgar conceit of men, that lying is essential to good poetry. Were there never so wholesome nourishment to be had (but alas, it breathes nothing but diseases) out of these boasted feasts of love and fables; yet, methinks, the unalterable continuance of the diet should make us nauseate it: for it is almost impossible to serve up any new dish of that kind. They are all but the cold ments of the ancients, new-heated, and new set forth. I do not at all wonder that the old poets made some rich crops out of these grounds; the heart of the soil was not then wrought out with continual tillage: but what can we expect now, who come a gleaning, not after the first reapers, but after the very beggars? Besides, though those mad stories of the gods and heroes seem in themselves so ridiculous; yet they were in the whole body (or rather chaos) of the theology of those times. They were believed by all but a few philosophers, and perhaps some atheists, and served to good purpose among the vulgar (as pitiful things as they are), in strengthening the authority of law with the terrors of conscience, and expectation of certain rewards, and unavoidable punishments. There was no other religion; and therefore that was better than none at all: but to us, who have no need of them; to us, who deride their folly, and are wearied with their impertinencies; they ought to appear no better arguments for verse, than those of their worthy successors, the knights errant. What can we imagine more proper for the ornaments of wit or learning in the story of Deucalion than in that of Noah? Why will not the actions of Samson afford as plentiful matter as the labours of Hercules? Why is not Jephthah’s daughter as good a woman as Iphigenia? and the friendship of David and Jonathan more worthy celebration than that of Theseus and Pirithous? Does not the passage of Moses and the Israelites into the Holy Land yield incomparably more poetical variety than the voyages of Ulysses or Æneas? Are the obsolete thread-bare tales of Thebes and Troy half so stored with great, heroic, and supernatural actions (since verse will needs find or make such) as the wars of Joshua, of the Judges, of David, and divers others? Can all the transformations of the gods give such copious hints to flourish and expatiate on, as the true miracles of Christ, or of his prophets and apostles? What do I instance in these few particulars? All the books of the Bible are either already most admirable and exalted pieces of poetry, or are the best materials in the world for it. Yet, though they be in themselves so proper to be made use of for this purpose; none but a good artist will know how to do it: neither must we think to eat and polish diamonds with so little pains and skill as we do marble; for if any man design to compose a sacred poem, by only turning a story of the scripture, like Mr. Quarles’s, or some other godly matter, like Mr. Heywood of angels, into rhyme; he is so far from elevating of poetry, that he only abases divinity. In brief, he who can write a profane poem well, may write a divine one better; but he who can do that but ill, will do this much worse. The same fertility of invention; the same wisdom of disposition; the same judgment in observance of decencies; the same lustre and vigour of election; the same modesty and majesty of number; briefly, the same kind of habit is required to both: only this latter allows better stuff, and therefore would look more deformedly ill dressed in it. I am far from assuming to myself to have fulfilled the duty of this weighty undertaking: but sure I am, there is nothing yet in our language (nor perhaps in any) that is in any degree answerable to the idea that I conceive of it. And I shall be ambitious of no other fruit from this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully:’
Such were the dispositions of that amiable and excellent writer, and such the soil on which this brood-cast of celestial seed was thrown. What a subject of regret that he should have died, without seeing the work he was so modest as to expect from another and superior Muse! He died on the 28th of July, 1667, in the 49th year of his age; and the “Paradise Lost” was then just issuing from the press.

SELECTED ENCOMIASTIC LINES.

BARROW.*

Qui legis Amissam Paradisum, grandia magni
Carmina Miltoni, quid nisi cuncta legis?
Res cunctas, et cunctarum primordia rerum,
Et fata, et fines continet iste liber.
Intima panduntur magni penetrantia mundi,
Scribitur et toto qui quid in orbe latet:
Terraeque, tractusque maris, coelumque profundum,
Salphureumque Erebi, flammivomumque specus:
Quaque colunt terras, pontumque et Tartara caca;
Et quae terraeque ullis conclusum est finibus usquam,
Et sine fine Chaos, et sine fine Deus;
Et sine fine magis, si quid magis est sine fine,
In Christo erga homines conciliatus amor.
Ille qui speraret quis egereret esse futurum?
Et tamen ille hoc diea terram Britannam legit.
O, quantos in bella duces! quo protalit arma!
Quae canit, et quanta, praelia dira tiba!
Celestes acies! atque in certamine coelum!
Et quo celestes pugna deceret agros!
Quantus in aethereis, tollit se Lucifer arnis!
Atque ipse graditur vix Michaelis minor!
Quantis et quam funestis concurrurit iris,
Dum feras hic stellas protecti, ille rapit!
Dum vulnos montes eum tela reciproca torquent,
Et non mortali desuper igne planant;
Stat dubius cui se parti concessat Olympus,
Et metuit pugnae non superesse sue.
At simul in Coelis Messiae insignia fulgent,
Et currus animae, armaque digno Deo,
Horrendumque rote strident, et seva rotarum
Erumpunt torvis fulgura luminibus,
Et flammeae vibrant, et vera tonitra rauco
Admistris flammis insonuere polo;
Excidit attonitis mens omnis, et impectus omnis,
Et cassis dextris irrita tela cadunt.
Ad poenas fugiunt; et, eeu foret Orcus asylum
Infernis certant condere se tenebris.
Cede, Romani scriptores; cede, Grai;
Et quos fama recens vel celebravit anus.
Hae quieunque leget tantum eccinisse putabit
Maonilem ranas, Virgilium culices.

ANDREW MARVELL.†

When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold,
In slender book his vast design unfold,

* In Paradisum Amissam Summi Poete Johannis Miltoni.
† Address to Milton on reading Paradise Lost.
Messiah crown'd, God's reconciled decree,
Rebelling angels, the forbidden tree,
Heaven, hell, earth, chaos, all; the argument
Held me awhile misdoubling his intent
That he would ruin (for I saw him strong)
The sacred truths to Fable and old song;
(So Samson groped the temple's posts in spite)
The world o'erwhelming to revenge his sight.
Yet as I read, still growing less severe,
I liked his project, the success did fear;
Through that wide field how he his way should find
O'er which lame faith leads understanding blind;
Lost he perplex'd the things he would explain,
And what was easy he should render vain.
Or if a work so infinite he spann'd,
Jealous I was, that some less skillful hand
(Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill imitating, would excel,)
Might hence presume the whole Creation's day
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.

Pardon me, mighty Poet! nor despise
My causeless, yet not impious surmise:
But I am now convinced; and none will dare
Within thy labours to pretend to share.
Thou hast not miss'd one thought that could be fit,
And all that was improper dost omit:
So that no room is here for writers left,
But to detect their ignorance or theft.

That majesty which through thy work doth reign,
Draws the devout, deterring the profane:
And things divine thou treat'st of in such state,
As them preserves, and thee, inviolate.
At once delight and horror on us seize,
Thou sing'st with so much gravity and ease;
And above human flight dost soar aloft
With plume so strong, so equal, and so soft:
The bird named from that Paradise you sing,
So never flags, but always keeps on wing.

Where couldst thou words of such a compass find?
Whence furnish such a vast expanse of mind?
Just Heaven thee, like Tiresias, to requite,
Rewards with prophecy thy loss of sight.
Well mightst thou scorn thy readers to allure
With tinkling rhyme, of thy own sense secure;
While the Town-Days writes all the while and spells,
And, like a pack-horse, tires without his bells:
Their fancies like our bushy points appear;
The poets tag them, we for fashion wear.
I too, transported by the mode, offend;
And, while I meant to praise thee, must commend:
Thy verse created, like thy theme sublime,
In number, weight, and measure, needs not rhyme.

DRYDEN.*

Three Poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn:

* Epigram on Milton.
The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
The next, in majesty; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no farther go:
To make a third, she join'd the former two.

ADDISON.*

But Milton next, with high and haughty stalks,
Unfetter'd, in majestic numbers, walks:
No vulgar hero can his Muse engage,
Nor earth's wide scene confine his hallow'd rage.
See! see! he upward springs, and, towering high,
To make a third, she join'd the former two.

ADDISON.*

But Milton next, with high and haughty stalks,
Unfetter'd, in majestic numbers, walks:
No vulgar hero can his Muse engage.
Nor earth's wide scene confine his hallow'd rage.

THOMSON.†

For lofty sense,
Creative fancy, and inspection keen
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast?
Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in thy Milton met?
A genius universal as his theme;
Astonishing as Chaos; as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair; as Heaven sublime!

GRAY.‡

Nor second he that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of ecstasy;
The secrets of the abyss to spy,
He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time:
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.

COLLINS.§

High on some cliff, to Heaven up-piled,
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where, tangled round the jealous steep,
Strange shades o'erbrow the valleys deep,
And holy Genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock;
While on its rich ambitions head
An Eden, like his own, lies spread;
I view that oak the fancied glades among,
By which, as Milton lay, his evening ear,
From many a cloud that dropp'd ethereal dew,
Nigh sphered in heaven, its native strains could hear.
On which that ancient trump he reach'd was hung;
Thither oft his glory greeting.
From Waller's myrtle shades retreating,
With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue.
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
In vain:—Such bliss to one alone
Of all the sons of Soul was known;
And Heaven and Fancy, kindred Powers,
Have now o'erturn'd the inspiring bowers.
Or eurtain'd close such scene from every future view.

MASON. *

Rise, hallow'd Milton! rise and say,
How, at thy gloomy close of day;
How, when "depress'd by age, beset with wrongs;"
When "fallen on evil days and evil tongues?"
When Darkness, brooding on thy sight.
Exiled the sovereign lamp of light;
Say, what could then one cheering hope diffuse?
What friends were thine, save Memory and the Muse?
Hence the rich spoils, thy studious youth
Caught from the stores of ancient Truth:
Hence all thy busy eye could pleased explore,
When Rapture led thee to the Latian shore;
Each scene, that Tiber's bank supplied;
Each grace, that play'd on Arno's side:
The tepid gales, through Tuscan glades that fly;
The blue serene, that spreads Hesperia's sky;
Were still thine own: thy ample mind
Each charm received, retain'd, combined.
And thence "the nightly Visitant," that came
To touch thy bosom with her sacred flame,
Recall'd the long-lost beams of grace,
That whilom shot from Nature's face.
When God, in Eden, o'er her youthful breast
Spread with his own right hand Perfection's gorgeous vest.

DR. ROBERTS.†

Poet of other times! to thee I bow
With lowliest reverence. Oft thou takest my soul,
And waft'st it by thy potent harmony
To that empyreal mansion, where thine ear
Caught the soft warblings of a seraph's harp,
What time the nightly visitant unlock'd
The gates of Heaven, and to thy mental sight
Display'd celestial scenes. She from thy lyre
With indignation tore the tinkling bells,
And turn'd it to sublimest argument.

* Ode to Memory.
† Epistle on the English Poets
COWPER.*

Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appear'd,
And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard:
To carry Nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
Thus Genius rose and set at order'd times,
And shot a day-spring into distant climes,
Ennobling every region that he chose;
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose;
And, tedious years, of gothic darkness pass'd,
Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.
Thus lovely halycons dive into the main,
Then show far off their shining plumes again.

COWPER.†

Philosophy, baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives Him his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches: piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna.

WORDSWORTH.‡

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
O, raise us up! return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice, whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness: and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

I.

He, most sublime of bards, whose lay divine
Sung of the Fall of Man, was in his style
Naked and stern; and to effeminate cars
Perchance ev'n harsh; but who will dare dispute
His strength and grandeur? what bright glories shine
Upon the towers of his gigantic pile,
Which neither storms nor Time's destruction fears,
Eternal growth of an eternal root!

* Table Talk  † The Task, Book iii.  ‡ Sonnet, written in 1592.
How plain the words, that with essential thought,
Pure, heavenly, incorporeal,—by the skill
Of angels' tongues how marvellously wrought,—
The web ethereal, where the serpent's ill
Brought woe and ruin into Paradise,
And drove the sire of man from Eden's bliss.

II.
Not Milton's holy genius could secure
In life his name from insult and from scorn,
And taunts of indignation; foul as fall
Upon the vilest tribe of human kind;
Nor yet untainted could his heart endure
The calumnies his patience should have borne:
For words revengeful started at his call,
And blotted the effulgence of his mind.
But, O, how frail the noblest soul of man!
Not o'er aggressive blame the hard arose;
His monarch's deeds 'twas his with spleen to scan;
And on his reign the gates of mercy close!
He had a hero's courage; but, too stern,
He could not soft submission's dictates learn!  E. B.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

This Book on the whole is so perfect from beginning to end, that it would be difficult to find a single superfluous passage. Milton's poetical style is more sorried than any other: rhymed metre leads to empty words, involutions, and circumlocutions; but it is in the thought, still more than in the language, that this closeness is apparent. The matter, the illustrations, and the allusions, are historically, naturally, or philosophically true. The learning is of every extent and diversity;—recondite, classical, scientific, antiquarian. But the most surprising thing is how he vivifies every topic he touches by poetry: he gives life and picturesqueness to the driest catalogue of buried names, personal or geographical. They who bring no learning, yet feel themselves charmed by sounds and epithets which give a vague pleasure to the mind, and stir up the imagination into an indistinct emotion.

Notwithstanding all that has been said so copiously about poetical imagination, by critics ancient and modern, I still think that the generality of authors and readers have a very confused idea of it. It is the power, not only of conceiving, but creating embodied illustrations of abstract truths, which are sublime, or pathetic, or beautiful.

But those ideas which Milton has embodied, no imagination would have dared to attempt but his own: none else would have risen "to the height of this great argument." Every one else would have fallen short of it, and degraded it.

Johnson says, that an "inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described,—the agency of Spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This being necessary, was therefore defensible, and he should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts." Surely this was quite impossible for the reason Johnson himself has given. The imagination, by its natural tendencies, always embodies Spirit. Poetry deals in pictures, though not exclusively in pictures.

In this respect Milton's poetry is different from almost all other; that it is always founded on our belief, and a belief, which we consider a matter of duty and religion. Milton's imagination is always conscientious; and here again is his peculiarity. Almost every imaginative poet, except Milton, falls occasionally into fantasticility;—perhaps I ought to except also Shakspere. This is the vice of poetry, where there is not the severest judgment and the most profound control; and it is a vice which the bad taste of the public encourages. The flowers, as they are called,—the corrupt ornaments of poetry, please vulgar apprehensions and feelings. Glaring colours, exaggerated forms, rouse ordinary eyes and intellects.
The classical taste, the sober grace of ideal majesty or beauty, appears tame to a mind vitiated with all the extravagances and fooleries of insane romance. The Gothic ages introduced numerous ignorant superstitions and absurd opinions, which in more enlightened times revolt a strict or sober understanding. Fictions founded on such systems, or interwoven with them, except so far as they are merely illustrative, may amuse as momentary sports of wanton or forced invention; but the sound intellect rejects them in its moments of seriousness.

Among the miraculous acquirements of Milton, was his deep and familiar intimacy with all classical and all chivalrous literature,—the amalgamation in his mind of all the philosophy and all the sublime and ornamental literature of the ancients, and all the abstruse, the laborious, the immature learning of those who again drew off the mantle of Time from the ancient treasures of genius, and mingled with them their own crude conceptions and fantastic theories. He extracted from this mine all that would aid the imagination without shocking the reason. He never rejected philosophy;—but where it was fabulous, only offered it as ornament.

It will not be too much to say, that of all uninspired writings (if these be uninspired), Milton's are the most worthy of profound study by all minds which would know the creativeness, the splendour the learning, the eloquence, the wisdom, to which the human intellect can reach.

So far as poetry is made by mere figures of speech, it is a miserable art, which has nothing of invention or thought.

As to material pictures of spiritual existences, they always take such appearances when they visit us, though they can resolve themselves back into air. It is not inconsistent, therefore, or contrary to what we suppose to be the system of the creation, so to represent them. Animation is the soul of fiction; but it is true, that there may be animation without body.

Milton's force and sublimity of fable is especially attested by his frequent concurrence with the hints and language of the Scriptures, and his filling up those dark and mysterious intimations which escape less illuminated minds. Here then imagination took its grandest and most oracular form.

But they who have degraded and depraved their taste by vulgar poetry, not only do not rise to the delight of this tone, but have no conception of it. They deem the bard's work to be a concentration of petty spangles of words, like false jewels made of paste by an adroit artisan. Everything is technical, and they judge only by skill in decoration.

In Milton's language, though there is internal force and splendour, there is outward plainness. Common readers think that it sounds and looks like prose: this is one of its attractions; while all which is stilted, and decorated, and affected, soon fatigues and satisates. To delight the ear and the eye is a mere sensual indulgence;—true poetry strikes at the soul.

After all which has been said of Milton by so many learned and able critics, these remarks may seem superfluous; but I persuade myself that some of the topics of praise here urged have not been duly noticed before. I must here also repeat my conviction, that of all critics, Addison is the most beautiful, eloquent, and just: he enters deep into the fable, the imagery, and the sentiment: most of the other commentators merely busy themselves with the explanation or illustration of the learning.

We are bound to study in what way Milton has exercised his mighty powers of invention and imagination, and what ought to be their purposes, their qualities, and their merits. If any one thinks the imagination to be an idle and empty power, he is as hard and dull as he is ignorant and blind. In the "Paradise Lost" we have demonstrated, what a grand and holy imagination can do.
"THE VERSE."

[The following is from the hand of the poet himself: as it is short, I have given his own orthography,* peculiar in some points.—Ed.]

"The measure is English Heroick Verse without Rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter; grac't indeed since by the use of some famous modern Poets, carried away by Custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint, to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, then else they would have exprest them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish Poets of prime note, have rejected Rime both in longer and shorter Works, as have also, long since, our best English Tragedies; as a thing of it self, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the learned Ancients both in Poetry and all good Oratory. This neglect then of Rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar Readers, that it rather is to be esteem'd an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recover'd to Heroick Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Riming."

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thenceon of Paradise, wherein he was placed. Then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent, who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was by the command of God driven out of heaven with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into hell, described here, not in the centre, for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed; but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos: here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded: they rise; their numbers, array of battel, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and a new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in heaven; for that Angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, a and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook b that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues

a Milton has proposed the subject of his poem in the first six verses: these lines are perhaps as plain, simple, and unadorned, as any of the whole poem; in which particular the author has conformed himself to the example of Homer, and the precept of Horace. His invocation to a work, which turns in a great measure on the creation of the world, is properly made to the Muse who inspired Moses in those books from whence our author drew his subject; and to the Holy Spirit, who is therein represented as operating after a particular manner in the first production of nature. The whole exordium rises very happily into noble language and sentiment, as I think the transition to the fable is exquisitely beautiful and natural.—Addison.

b And Siloa's brook.

Siloa was a small brook that flowed near the temple of Jerusalem: it is mentioned, Isaiah viii. 6; so that, in effect, Milton invokes the heavenly Muse that inspired David and the prophets on Mount Sion, and at Jerusalem; as well as Moses on Mount Sinai.

—Newton.
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. ⁶
And chiefly thou, O Spirit,⁴ that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding⁶ on the vast abyss,
And madest it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine,⁴ what is low raise and support;
That to the bight of this great argument ⁶

Rhyme here means verse.—T. Warton,
Blank verse is apt to be loose, thin, and more full of words than thought: the blank verse of Milton is compressed, close-wove, and weighty in matter.

And chiefly thou, O Spirit.
Invoking the Music is commonly a matter of mere form, wherein the poets neither mean nor desire to be thought to mean, anything seriously: but the Holy Ghost here invoked is too solemn a name to be used insignificantly: and besides, our author, in the beginning of his next work, "Paradise Regained," scruples not to say to the same divine person:—

Inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute.

This address, therefore, is no mere formality: yet some may think that he inures a worse charge of enthusiasm, or even profaneness, in vouching inspiration for his performance: but the Scriptures represent inspiration as of a much larger extent than is commonly apprehended, teaching that "very good gift," in naturals as well as in morals, "descendeth from the great Father of Lights." James i. 17. And an extraordinary skill, even in mechanical arts, is there ascribed to the illumination of the Holy Ghost. It is said of Bezaleel, who was to make the furniture of the tabernacle, that "the Lord had filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, and to devise curious works;" &c. Exod. xxxv. 31.—Heylin.

It may be observed, too, in justification of our author, that other sacred poems are not without the like invocations, and particularly Spenser's hymns of Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty, as well as some modern Latin poems. But I conceive that Milton intended something more: for I have been informed by those who had opportunities of conversing with his widow, that she was wont to say that he did really look upon himself as inspired; and I think his works are not without a spirit of enthusiasm. In the beginning of the second book of the "Reason of Church Government," speaking of his design of writing a poem in the English language, he says, "It was not to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer of that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge; and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." p. 61, edit. 1738.—Newton.

Dove-like sat'st brooding.
Alluding to Gen. i. 2. "The spirit of God moved on the face of the waters:" for the word that we translate moved, signifies properly brooded, as a bird doth upon her eggs; and Milton says like a dove, rather than any other bird, because the descent of the Holy Ghost is compared to a dove, Luke iii. 22. As Milton studied the Scriptures in the original language, his images and expressions are oftener copied from them than from our translations.—Newton.

What in me is dark
Illumine.
He calls the Holy Ghost the illumining Spirit in his "Prose Works," vol. i. p. 273, edit. 1698. Compare Fairfax's "Tasso," b. viii. st. 76:—

Illumine their dark souls with light divine.—Todd.

That to the bight of this great argument.
The height of the argument is precisely what distinguishes this poem of Milton from all others. In other works of imagination, the difficulty lies in giving sufficient elevation to the subject: here it lies in raising the imagination up to the grandeur of the subject, in adequate conception of its mightiness, and in finding language of such
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men. 25

Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of hell,¹ say first what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favour’d of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirr’d up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind; what time his pride
Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels; by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,³
He trusted to have equal’d the Most High,⁴
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in heaven and battel proud

majesty as will not degrade it. A genius less gigantic and less holy than Milton’s would have shrunk from the attempt. Milton not only does not lower, but he illumines the bright, and enlarges the great; he expands his wings, and “sails with supreme dominion” up to the heavens, parts the clouds, and communes with angels and unembodied spirits.

² And justify the ways of God to men.

Pope has thought fit to borrow this verse, with some little variation, “Essay on Man,” ep. i. 16:—“but vindicate the ways of God to man.” It is not easy to conceive any good reason for Pope’s preferring vindicate; but Milton uses justify, as it is the Scripture word, “that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings.” Rom. iii. 4.—And “the ways of God to men are justified in the many argumentative discourses throughout the poem, particularly in the conferences between God the Father and the Son.—Newton.

¹ Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of hell.

The poets attribute a kind of omniscience to the Muse; and very rightly, as it enables them to speak of things which could not otherwise be supposed to come to their knowledge. Thus Homer, II. ii. 455:—

Ὑπὲρ γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστά, πάντες τε, ἐστε τε πάντα.

And see Virgil, En. vii. 645. Milton’s Muse being the Holy Spirit, must of course be omniscient: and the mention of heaven and hell is very proper in this place, as the scene of a great part of the poem is laid sometimes in hell and sometimes in heaven.—Newton.

³ By whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers.

Here Dr. Bentley objects, that Satan’s crime was not his aiming “above his peers:” he was in place high above them before, as the Doctor proves from b. v. 812: but, though this be true, Milton may be right here; for the force of the words seems not that Satan aspired to set himself above his peers, but that he aspired to set himself in glory; that is, in divine glory; in such glory as God and his Son were set in. Here was his crime; and this is what God charges him with in b. v. 725:—

who intends to erect his throne

Equal to ours.

And in b. vi. 88, Milton says that the rebel angels hoped
To win the Mount of God, and on his throne
To set the envier of his state, the proud Aspirer.

See also, to the same purpose, b. vii. 140, &c.—Pearce.

⁴ He trusted to have equal’d the Most High.

See Isaiah, ch. xiv. 13.—Stillingfleet.
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded though immortal: but his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,
Mix'd with obdurate pride and stedfast hate.
At once, as far as angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end

1. Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men.

The nine days' astonishment, in which the angels lay entranced after their dreadful
overthrow and fall from heaven, before they could recover either the use of thought or
speech, is a noble circumstance, and very finely imagined. The division of hell into
seas of fire, and into firm ground impregnated with the same furious element, with
that particular circumstance of the exclusion of hope from those infernal regions, are
instances of the same great and fruitful invention.—Addison.

2. Yet from those flames

No light.

So the Wisdom of Solomon, ch. xviii. 5, 6:—"No power of the fire might give them
light; only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself, very dreadful."—Todd.

3. Darkness visible.

Milton seems to have used these words to signify gloom: absolute darkness is, strictly
speaking, invisible; but where there is a gloom only, there is so much light remaining,
as serves to show that there are objects, and yet that those objects cannot be distinctly
seen.—Pearce.

Seneca has a like expression, speaking of the grotto of Pausilipo, epist. lvii. —"Nihil
illo careere longius, nihil illis facibus obscursius, quae nobis prestant non ut per tenebras
videamus, sed ut ipsas." And, as Voltaire observes, Antonio de Solis, in his "History
of Mexico," speaking of the place wherein Montezuma consulted his deities, says, "It
was a large dark subterranean vault, where some dismal tapers afforded just light
enough to see the obscurity." So Euripides, "Bacche," v. 510:—

'Ας ἄν οὐκ ἄν κλήτως εἰς ὅμοιον καλός

There is much the same image in Spenser, but not so bold, "Faer. Qu." i. i. 14:—

A little glowing light, much like a shade.

Or, after all, Milton might take the hint from his own "Il Penseroso:"
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.—Newton.

4. Hope never comes,

That comes to all.

See Dante's "Inferno," ch. iii. 9:—Lasciate ogni speranza, vol ch'intrate.
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place eternal justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordain'd
In utter darkness; and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of heaven,
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.\(^v\)
O, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall o'erwhelm'd
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,\(^a\)
He soon discerns; and weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beelzebub: to whom the arch-enemy,
And thence in heaven call'd Satan,*—with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:
If thou beest he—But O, how fallen! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
\(^v\) As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.

Thrice as far as it is from the centre of the earth, which is the centre of the world, according to Milton's system, b. ix. 103, and b. x. 671, to the pole of the world; for it is the pole of the universe, far beyond the pole of the earth, which is here called the utmost pole. Homer makes the seat of hell as far beneath the deepest pit of earth as the heaven is above the earth, Iliad, viii. 16. Virgil makes it twice as far, Eneid, vi. 578; and Milton three as far; as if these three great poets had stretched their utmost genius, and vied with each other, who should extend his idea of the depth of hell farthest. But Milton's whole description of hell as much exceeds theirs, as in this single circumstance of the depth of it. And how cool and unaffected is the Τόσα ανθρώπων ἡφαίστεα τα σωματα, το πέτωμα και γόνας οὐδα, of Homer,—the "ligerentes campi," the "ferrea turris," and "horrisono stridentes cardine porto," of Virgil, in comparison with this description by Milton, concluding with that artful contrast, "O, how unlike the place from whence they fell!"—Newton.

* Tempestuous fire.

Psalm xi. 6:—"Upon the wicked the Lord will rain fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest."—Dunster.

\(^v\) To whom the arch enemy.

The thoughts in the first speech and description of Satan, who is one of the principal actors in this poem, are wonderfully proper to give us a full idea of him: his pride, envy, and revenge, obstinacy, despair, and impenitence, are all of them very artfully interwoven. In short, his first speech is a complication of all those passions which discover themselves separately in several other of his speeches in the poem. The whole part of this great enemy of mankind is filled with such incidents as are very apt to raise and terrify the reader's imagination. Of this nature, in the book now before us, is his being the first that awakens out of the general trance, with his posture on the burning lake, his rising from it, and the description of his shield and spear: to which we may add his call to the fallen angels, that lay plunged and stupefied in the sea of fire.

Amidst those impieties which this enraged spirit utters in other places of this poem, the author has taken care to introduce none that is not big with absurdity, and incapable of shocking a religious reader: his words, as the poet himself describes them, bearing only "a semblance of worth, not substance." He is also with great art described as owning his adversary to be Almighty. Whatever perverse interpretation he puts on the justice, mercy, and other attributes of the Supreme Being, he frequently confesses his omnipotence; that being the perfection he was forced to allow him, and the only consideration which could support his pride under the shame of his defeat.—Addison.

\(^a\) And thence in heaven call'd Satan.

For the word Satan, in Hebrew, signifies an enemy: he is the enemy by way of eminence, the chief enemy of God and Man.—Newton.
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright! If he, whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Join'd with me once, now misery hath join'd
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest,
From what bighth fallen: so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder; and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fix'd mind
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of spirits arm'd,
That durst dislike his reign; and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battel on the plains of heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome;
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me: to bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted his empire; that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcileable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of heaven.

So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,

What though the field be lost?

All is not lost.

This passage is an excellent improvement upon Satan's speech to the infernal spirits in Tasso, c. iv. st. 13; but seems to be expressed from Fairfax's translation, rather than from the original:—

We lost the field, yet lost we not our heart.—NEWTON.

Since, by fate, the strength of Gods.

For Satan supposes the angels to subsist by fate and necessity; and he represents them of an empyreal, that is, a fiery substance, as the Scripture itself does, Psalm civ. 4:—

"He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."—NEWTON.
Vaunting aloud, but rack'd with deep despair:
And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer:
O prince, O chief of many throned powers,
That led the imbat'led seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endanger'd heaven's perpetual King;
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate:
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low;
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns;
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallow'd up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conquerour, whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpower'd such force as ours—
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains?
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire;
Or do him mightier service, as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep:
What can it then avail, though we feel
Strength undiminish'd, or eternal being,
To undergo eternal punishment?
Whereeto with speedy words the arch-fiend replied:
Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering; but of this be sure,

*Vaunting aloud.*

This speech is remarkable for brevity and energy of expression, and justness of the thought arising from the nature of the foregoing speech, and Satan's present misery.—Callander.

*Though all our glory extinct.*

As a flame put out and extinguished for ever. This word is very properly applied to their irrecoverable loss of that angelic beauty which accompanied them when in a state of innocencce. The Latins have used the word "extinctus" in the same metaphorical sense. Thus Virgil, *En. iv. 322:—*

> te propter eundem
> Extinctus pudor, et, qua sola sidera adibam,
> Fama prior.

*To be weak is miserable.*

Doing or suffering.

Satan having in his speech boasted that the "strength of gods could not fail," v. 116, and Beelzebub having said, v. 146, "If God has left us this our strength entire, to suffer pain strongly, or to do him mightier service as his thralls, what then can our strength avail us?" Satan here replies very properly, whether we are to suffer or to work, yet still it is some comfort to have our strength undiminished: for it is a miserable thing, says he, to be weak and without strength, whether we are doing or suffering. This is the sense of the place; and this is farther confirmed by what Belial says, b. ii. 199:—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight;
As being the contrary to his high will,
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil:
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of heaven: the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of heaven received us falling; and the thunder,

To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal.

Pearce.

But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd.

Dr. Bentley has really made a very material objection to this and some other passages of the poem, wherein the good angels are represented as pursuing the rebel host with fire and thunderbolts down through Chaos, even to the gates of hell, as being contrary to the accounts which the angel Raphael gives to Adam in the sixth book; and it is certain that there the good angels are ordered to "stand still only and behold," and the Messiah alone expels them out of heaven; and after he has expelled them, and hell has closed upon them, b. vi. 880:

Sole victor from the expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
To meet him all his saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced.

These accounts are plainly contrary the one to the other; but the author does not therefore contradict himself, nor is one part of his scheme inconsistent with another: for it should be considered who are the persons that give these different accounts. In book vi. the angel Raphael is the speaker, and therefore his account may be depended upon as the genuine and exact truth of the matter; but in the other passages Satan himself, or some of his angels, are the speakers; and they were too proud and obstinate ever to acknowledge the Messiah for their conqueror: as their rebellion was raised on his account, they would never own his superiority; they would rather ascribe their defeat to the whole host of heaven than to him alone; or, if they did indeed imagine their pursuers to be so many in number, their fears multiplied them, and it serves admirably to express how much they were terrified and confounded. In book vii. 839, the noise of his chariot is compared to "the sound of a numerous host;" and perhaps they might think that a numerous host were really pursuing. In one place, indeed, we have Chaos speaking thus, b. ii. 996:

Poured out by millions her victorious bands
Pursuing.

But what a condition was Chaos in during the fall of the rebel angels! See b. vi. 871:

Nine days they fell; confounded Chaos roar'd
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy: so huge a rout
Incumbr'd him with ruin.

We must suppose him therefore to speak according to his own fruitful and disturbed imagination; he might conceive that so much
Rain upon ruin, rout on rout,
could not all be effected by a single band: and what a sublime idea must it give us of the terrors of the Messiah, that he alone should be as formidable as if the whole host of heaven were pursuing! So that the seeming contradiction, upon examination proves rather a beauty than any blemish to the poem.—Newton.
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.\(^a\)
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
And, reassuming our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy; our own loss how repair;
How overcome this dire calamity;
What reinforcement we may gain from hope;
If not, what resolution, from despair.\(^a\)
Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,\(^b\)
Briareos, or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,\(^c\)
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
InVESTS the sea,\(^d\) and wished morn delays.

\(^a\) To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.

A truly magnificent line.

\(^a\) If not, what resolution from despair.

The sentiment in this verse may be referred to Seneca's Medea, ver. 163;—
"Qui nihil potest sperare, nihil desperet."—Dunster.

\(^b\) Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove.

Here Milton commences that train of learned allusions which was among his peculiarities, and which he always makes poetical by some picturesque epithet, or simile.

\(^c\) The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff.

Some little boat, whose pilot dares not proceed in his course for fear of the dark night: a metaphor taken from a foundered horse that can go no farther; or night-foundered, in danger of sinking at night, from the term, foundering at sea. I prefer the former, as being Milton's aim.—Hume.

Surely Hume is wrong: the whole of this imagery is beautiful.

\(^d\) Invests the sea.

A phrase often used by the poets, who call darkness the mantle of the night, with which he invests the earth. Milton, in another place, has another such beautiful figure, and truly poetical, when speaking of the moon, b. iv. 699;—
So stretch'd out huge in length the arch-fiend lay,
Chains'd on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs;
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others; and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy shown
On man by him seduced: but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance pour'd.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

And in another place, b. ix. 52:

Night's hemisphere had evil'd the horizon round.
Thus the epithet κυανόθενδος is given to the night by Musæus. Statius has a similar expression to that of Milton, Theb., v. 51:

vestit Athos, &c. callander.

* But that the will.

This is a material part of the poem; and the management of it is admirable. The poet has nowhere shown his judgment more, than in the reasons assigned, on account of which we find this rebel released from his adamantine chains, and at liberty to become the great, though bad agent of the poem. We may also notice the finely plain but majestic language in which these reasons are assigned.—duanSTER.

* On each hand the flames.

Driven backward, &c.

See the achievement of Britomart in Spenser, Faer. Qu. iii. xi. 25. The circumstance of the fire, mixed with a most noisome smoke, which prevents her from entering into the house of Busyrane, is, I think, an obstacle which we meet with in "The Seven Champions of Christendom." And there are many instances in this achievement parallel to those in the adventure of the Black Castle, and the Enchanted Fountain:—

Therewith resolved to prove her utmost might,
Her ample shield she threw before her face,
And her sword's point directing forward right
Assay'd the flame; the which oftentimes gave place,
And did itself divide with equal space,
That through she passed; as a thunder-bolt
Perceth the yielding ayre, &c.

Milton, who tempered and exalted the extravagance of romance with the dignity of Homer, has here given us a noble image, which, like Spenser’s, seems to have had its foundation in some description which he had met with in books of chivalry.—

T. Warton.

* Incumbent on the dusky air

That felt unusual weight.

The conceit of the air’s feeling unusual weight is borrowed from Spenser’s description of the old dragon, Faer. Qu. i. xi. 18:—

Then with his waving wings displayed weyd,
Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground;
And with strong flight did forcibly divyde
The yielding aye, which nigh too feeble found
Her flitting parts; and element unsound,
To beare so great a weight.
He lights; if it were land, that ever burn'd
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire;
And such appear'd in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shatter'd side
Of thundering Etna, whose combustible
And fuel'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him follow'd his next mate;
Both glorying to have 'scapeed the Stygian flood,
As gods, and by their own recover'd strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernatural Power.

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost archangel, this the seat,
That we must change for heaven? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he,
Who now is Sovran, can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equal'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessour; one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be; all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy; will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:

The superiority of Milton in nerve and compression is striking. Spenser breaks his
descriptions into too many parts, by which he distracts his pictures; and I must advoca-
cate the dignity of blank verse over the diffuseness of Spenser's stanza.

h Torn from Pelorus.

Here again Milton brings in his learned allusions and illustrations: the picture is
highly poetical and sublime.

i Farewell, happy fields,

Where joy for ever dwells.

The pathos in this passage is exquisite.

j The mind is its own place, &c.

These are some of the extravagances of the Stoics, and could not be better ridiculed
than they are here, by being put in the mouth of Satan in his present situation.—

Twyer.

Shakespeare says in Hamlet,—

There is nothing either good or bad, but
Thinking makes it so.
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.\(^k\)
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and copartners of our loss,
Lie thus astonish’d on the oblivious pool;
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion; or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regain’d in heaven, or what more lost in hell?

So Satan spake, and him Beelzebub
Thus answer’d: Leader of those armies bright,
Which but the Omnipotent none could have foil’d,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremest, and on the perilous edge
Of battel when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage, and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amaz’d:
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth.
He scarce had ceased, when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him east; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders, like the moon,\(^1\) whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,
Or in Valdarno,\(^m\) to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine,
Hewn on Norwegian hills\(^n\) to be the mast
Of some great annimal, were but a wand,
He walk’d with to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle; not like those steps
On heaven’s azure: and the torrid clime

\(^k\) Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.

Dr. Newton observes that this line is a very fine improvement upon Prometheus’s answer to Mercury in Æschylus. Prom. Vinct. 965, 967. Compare also P. Fletcher’s “Locusts,” 1637, p. 37.

\(^1\) The broad circumference

Hung on his shoulders, like the moon.

See the shield of Radegund. Faer. Qu. v. v. 3. Here Milton shines in all his majestic splendour: his mighty imagination almost excels itself. There is indescribable magic in this picture.

\(^m\) At evening, from the top of Fesolè.

Or in Valdarno.

There is a spell sometimes even in the poet’s selection of proper names: their very sound has a charm.

\(^n\) Norwegian hills.

The hills of Norway, barren and rocky, but abounding in vast woods, from whence are brought masts of the largest size.—Hume.

The annotators leave unnoticed the marvellous grandeur of this description, while they babble on petty technicalities. The “walking over the burning marle” is astonishing and tremendous.
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and call'd
His legions, angel forms, who lay intranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves\(^6\) that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High overarch'd inbower; or scatter'd sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion arm'd\(^7\)
Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast,\(^8\) whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris\(^7\) and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred\(^s\) they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore\(^t\) their floating carcases
And broken chariot-wheels: so thick bestrown,
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He call'd so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of hell resounded\(^a\) Princes, potentates,
Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits: or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battel to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn

\(^6\) Thick as autumnal leaves.
Here we see the impression of scenery made upon Milton's mind in his youth, when he was at Florence. This is a favourite passage with all readers of descriptive poetry. The account of Vallombrosa may be found in the volumes of numerous travellers.

\(^7\) With fierce winds Orion arm'd.
Orion is a constellation represented in the figure of an armed man, and supposed to be attended with stormy weather:—"Assurgens fluetu nimbosus Orion." Virg. Æn. i. 539.—NEWTON.
Here the poet again introduces his learned historical allusions with a magnificent picture.

\(^8\) Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast.
The Red-sea abounds so much with sedge, that in the Hebrew scriptures it is called the "Sedgy Sea." And Milton says "Hath vex'd the Red-sea coast," particularly because the wind usually drives the sedge in great quantities towards the shore.—NEWTON.

\(^s\) Busiris.
Pharaoh is called by some writers Busiris.

\(^t\) Perfidious hatred.
Because Pharaoh, after leave given to the Israelites to depart, followed after them as fugitives.—HUME.

\(^a\) From the safe shore.
Much has been said of the long similitudes of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, wherein they fetch a compass, as it were, to draw in new images, besides those in which the direct point of likeness consists. I think they have been sufficiently justified in the general; but in this before us, while the poet is digressing, he raises a new simile from the floating carcases of the Egyptians.—HEYLIN.

\(^a\) The hollow deep
Of hell resounded.
This magnificent call of Satan to his prostrate host could have been written by nobody but Milton.
To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood,
With scatter’d arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from heaven gates discern
The advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.
Awake, arise; or be for ever fallen!
They heard, and were abash’d, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their general’s voice they soon obey’d,
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram’s son, in Egypt’s evil day,
Waved round the coast, up call’d a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o’er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darken’d all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad angels seen,
Hovering on wing under the eope of hell,
’Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires:
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain.
A multitude, like which the populous north
Pour’d never* from her frozen loins, to pass

*Darker’d all the land of Nile.

The devils, at the command of their infernal monarch, flying abroad over the world to injure the Christian cause, are similarly compared by Tasso to black storms obscuring the face of day (Gier. Lib. iv. 18). And, where they are all driven back by Michael, it is said, ix. 66:—

Liberato di lor quella si negra
Faccia depone il mondo.

* A multitude, like which the populous north
Pour’d never.

This comparison doth not fall below the rest, as some have imagined. They were thick as the leaves, and numberless as the locusts; but such a multitude the north never poured forth. The subject of this comparison rises very much above the others,—the leaves and locusts. The northern parts of the world are observed to be more fruitful of people than the hotter countries; hence “the populous north,” which Sir William Temple calls “the northern hive.”—Newton.

Dr. Newton does not seem to be aware that the three comparisons which he refers to, relate to the three different states in which these fallen angels are represented. When abject they lie supine on the lake, they are in the situation compared, in point of number, to vast heaps of leaves which in autumn the poet himself had observed to bestrew the water-courses and bottoms of Vallombrosa. When roused by their great leader’s objuratory summons, and on wing, they are in this second situation again compared, in point of number, to the locusts which were sent as a divine vengeance or plague on the land of Egypt, when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites depart: these two similes are admirable, and in their place could not, I believe, well be surpassed. That of the locusts, independently of its being taken from Scripture, far surpasses in every respect
Rhine or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons\(^x\)
Came like a deluge on the south, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.

Forthwith from every squadron and each band
The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood
Their great commander; godlike shapes and forms
Excelling human, princely dignities,
And powers, that erst in heaven sat on thrones;
Though of their names\(^y\) in heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and razed
By their rebellion from the Book of Life.

Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names; till, wandering o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies\(^z\) the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of him that made them to transform,\(^a\)

Oft to the image of a brute, adorn'd
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities.\(^b\)

Then were they known to men by various names
And various idols through the heathen world.

\(^x\) When her barbarous sons.

They were truly barbarous; for besides exercising several cruelties, they destroyed all the monuments of learning and politeness wherever they came. They were the Goths, and Huns, and Vandals, who overran all the southern provinces of Europe; and, crossing the Mediterranean beneath Gibraltar, landed in Africa, and spread themselves as far as Libya. Beneath Gibraltar means, more southward, the north being uppermost in the globe.—Newton.

\(^y\) Though of their names.

Psalm ix. 5, 6:—"Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever: their memorial is perished with them." And Rev. iii. 5.—"I will not blot his name out of the book of life."—Gillies.

\(^z\) By falsities and lies.

That is, as Mr. Upton observes, by false idols, under a corporeal representation be'lying the true God. The poet plainly alludes to Rom. i. 22.—Newton.

\(^a\) And the invisible

Glory of him that made them to transform, &c.

Alluding to Rom. i. 23.—Newton.

\(^b\) And devils to adore for deities.

Levit. xvii. 7:—"They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils." And see also Ps. cvi. 37.—Todd.
Say, Muse, their names then known; who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch
At their great emperor's call; as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand;
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those, who, from the pit of hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods adored
Among the nations round; and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throne.
Between the cherubim: yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself, their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First Moloch, a horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud

For the enumeration of the Syrian and Arabian deities, it may be observed, that
Milton has comprised in one hundred and thirty very beautiful lines, the two learned
syntagmas, which Selden had composed on that abstruse subject.—Gibbon, Rom. Emp.
vol. i. p. 539 note, 4to. edit. The exordium to this enumeration, "who first, who last;"
is from Homer, II. v. 703:

"Ενθά τίνα ποταμόν, τίνα δ' ὥστατον."

First, after Satan and Bełzébub, Moloch signifies king, and he is called "horrid
king," because of the human sacrifices which were made to him: the expression,
"passed through fire," is taken from Leviticus, xviii. 21; or 2 Kings, xxiii. 10. His
idol was of brass, sitting on a throne, and wearing a crown; having the head of a calf,
and his arms extended to receive the miserable victims which were to be sacrificed;
and therefore it is here probably styled "his grim idol." He was the God of the
Ammonites, 1 Kings, xi. 7, and was worshipped in Rabba, their capital city, called the
"city of waters," 2 Sam. xi. 27; and in the neighbouring countries as far as to the river
Arnon, the boundary of their country on the south.—Newton.

Dr. Newton also says that Moloch was supposed to be the same as Saturn: but Milton
did not suppose it, or at least did not attend to the supposition; as Saturn himself is
afterwards mentioned, verse 519. But Moloch has also been supposed to be Mars; with
a view to which, Milton seems to have drawn his character in the second book. That
the planet Mars was named Moloch by the Egyptians is mentioned by Beyer, in his
"Additamenta to Selden's Syntagma de Dios Syr."

The part of Moloch is, in all its circumstances, full of that fire and fury which dis-
tinguish this spirit from the rest of the fallen angels. He is described in the first book
as besmeared with the blood of human sacrifices, and delighted with the tears of
parents and the cries of children: in the second book, he is marked out as the fiercest
spirit that fought in heaven: and I will consider the figure which he makes in the sixth
book, where the battle of the angels is described, we find it every way answerable to
the same furious, enraged character.

It may be worth while to observe, that Milton has represented this violent impetuous
spirit, who is hurried on by such precipitate passions, as the first that rises in that
assembly to give his opinion on their present posture of affairs; accordingly, he declares
himself abruptly for war; and appears licensed at his companions for losing so much
time as even to deliberate upon it. All his sentiments are rash, passionate, and desper-
ate: such is that of arming themselves with their tortures, and turning their punish-
ments upon him who inflicted them. His preferring annihilation to shame or misery is
also highly suitable to his character; as the comfort he draws from disturbing the peace
of heaven, that, if it be not victory, it is revenge, is a sentiment truly diabolical, and
becoming the bitterness of this implacable spirit.—Addison.
Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipp'd in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argo'b, and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led e by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God,
On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, f Tophet thence
And black Gehenna call'd, the type of hell.
Next Chemos, g the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Eleale to the asphaltic pool:
Poor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Ev'n to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust-hard by hate; h
Till good Josiah drove them thence to hell.
With these came they, who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates 1 to the brook that parts
Ægypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, j those male,

e The wisest heart
Of Solomon he led.

Solomon built a temple to Moloch on the Mount of Olives, I Kings, xi. 7, which is therefore called "that opprobrious hill."—NEWTON.

f The pleasant valley of Hinnom.

See Jer. vii. 31. It was called also Tophet, from the Hebrew top'h, a drum; drums and such like noisy instruments being used to drown the cries of the miserable children who were offered to this idol: and Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, is in several places of the New Testament, and by our Saviour himself, made the name and type of hell.—NEWTON.

g Next Chemos.

Moloch and Chemos are joined together, I Kings, xi. 7. And it was a natural transition from the god of the Ammonites to the god of their neighbours of the Moabites. See a long geographical note by NEWTON.

h Lust hard by hate.

What a fine moral sentiment has Milton here introduced and couched in half a verse! He might perhaps have in view Spenser's "Mask of Cupid," where anger, strife, &c., are represented as immediately following Cupid in the procession.—THYER.

The poet's moral is exactly verified in the incestuous and cruel conduct of Ammon towards Tamar. 2 Sam. xiii. 15:—"Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred, wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love, wherewith he had loved her." The hemistich is a fine commentary on the passage.—TODD.

i Old Euphrates.


j Baalim and Ashtaroth.

They are frequently named together in Scripture. They were the general names of
These feminine: for spirits, when they please,\(^k\)
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft.
And uncompoundable is their essence pure; 425
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrons flesh; but in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bow'd down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth,\(^1\) whom the Phenicians call'd
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king, whose heart, though large,\(^m\)
Beguiled by fair Idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz\(^n\) came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties, all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat;
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw,\(^o\) when, by the vision led,

the gods and goddesses of Syria and Palestine: they are supposed to mean the sun and the host of heaven.—\textit{Newton}.

\(^k\) For spirits, when they please.


The passage in the catalogue, explaining the manner how spirits transform themselves by contraction or enlargement of their dimensions, is introduced with great judgment, to make way for several accidents in the sequel of the poem.—Addison.

\(^1\) With these in troop

\textit{Come Astoreth.}

The goddess of the Phenicians, under which name the moon was adored. Solomon built her a temple on the Mount of Olives.—\textit{Newton}.

\(^m\) Whose heart, though large.

1 Kings, iv. 29:—"And God gave Solomon largeness of heart."—Todd.

\(^n\) Thammuz.

He was the god of the Syrians, the same with Adonis.—\textit{Newton}.

\(^o\) Ezekiel saw.

See Ezekiel, viii. 12.—Todd.
His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopp'd off
In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers:
Dagon his name: * a sea monster, upward man
And downward fish: yet had his temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed Rimmon,4 whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king;
Ahaz his sottish conquerour, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage,5 and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquish'd. After these appear'd
A crew, who under names of old renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus,6 and their train,
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Ægypt and her priests, to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection,7 when their borrow'd gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazed ox;
Jehovah, who in one night, when he passed8
From Ægypt marching, equal'd with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods:

*Dagon his name.

See 1 Sam. v. 4.—Newton.

* Rimmon.

Rimmon was a god of the Syrians.—Newton.

* God's altar to disparage.

See 2 Kings, xvi. 10; and 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.—Newton.

*Orus, &c.

Orus was the son of Osiris and Isis.—Newton.

* Nor did Israel 'scape

The infection.

The Israelites, by dwelling so long in Egypt, were infected with the superstitions of the Egyptians.—Newton.

* Who in one night, when he pass'd.

See Exod. xii. 12, and Numb. xxxiii. 3, 4. See also Virg. Æn. viii. 698:—
Omnigenâmusque Deâm monstra, et latrator Anubis.—Newton.
Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself: to him no temple stood
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury, and outrage: and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown from insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might;
The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd,
The Ionian gods, of Javan's issue, held
Gods, yet confess'd later than heaven and earth,
Their boasted parents. Titan, heaven's first born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn: he from mightier Jove,

Belial is described in the first book as the idol of the lewd and the luxurious; he is in the second book, pursuant to that description, characterized as timorous and slothful; and, if we look into the sixth book, we find him celebrated in the battle of angels for nothing but that scoffing speech which he makes to Satan, on their supposed advantage over the enemy. As his appearance is uniform, and of a piece, in these three several views, we find his sentiments in the internal assembly every way conformable to his character. Such are his apprehensions of a second battle, his horrors of annihilation, his preferring to be miserable rather than not to be. I need not observe, that the contrast of thought in this speech, and that which precedes it, gives an agreeable variety to the debate.

Mammon's character is so fully drawn in the first book, that the poet adds nothing to it in the second. We were told that he was the first who taught mankind to ransack the earth for gold and silver, and that he was the architect of Pandæmonium, or the infernal palace, where the evil spirits were to meet to counsel. His speech in the second book is every way suitable to so depraved a character. How proper is that reflection, of their being unable to taste the happiness of heaven, were they actually there, in the month of one, who, while he was in heaven, is said to have had his mind dazzled with the outward pomp and glories of the place, and to have been more intent on the riches of the pavement, than on the beatific vision! I shall also leave the reader to judge how agreeable the sentiments are to the same character, b. ii. 262, &c.

Belial, who is reckoned the second in dignity that fell, and is, in the first book, the second that awakens out of the trance, and confers with Satan on the situation of their affairs, maintaining his rank in the second book.—Adison.

These were the prime.

Because these are the idols who are mentioned in the most ancient records, viz. by the sacred text.—Callander.

The Ionian gods.

Javan, the fourth son of Japhet, is supposed to have settled in the south-west part of Asia Minor, about Ionia.—Newton.

Yet confess'd later.

See Deut. xxxii. 17.—Todd.
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;  
So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete  
And Ida known; thence on the snowy top  
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,  
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,  
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds  
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old  
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,  
And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost isles.  
All these and more came flocking downeaft, and damp;  
Yet such wherein appear'd  
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost  
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast  
Like doubtful hue: but he, his wonted pride  
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore  
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised  
Their fainted courage, and dispell'd their fears:  
Then straight commands, that at the warlike sound  
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be uprear'd  
His mighty standard: that proud honour claim'd  
Azazel as his right, a cherub tall;  
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd  
The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,  
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,  
With gems and golden lustre rich imblazed,  
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while  
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:  
At which the universal host up sent  
A shout that tore hell's concave, and beyond  
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.  
All in a moment through the gloom were seen  

\(^2\) The Delphian cliff.  
The famous oracle of Apollo at Delphos; and Dodona, the oracle of Jupiter.—CALLANDER.  
\(^3\) Doric land.  
Greece; the Hesperian fields, Italy; and o'er the Celtic, France and the other countries overrun by the Celts.—NEWTON.  
\(^4\) Utmost isles.  
Britain, Ireland, and the adjacent islands.—CALLANDER.  
\(^5\) Semblance of worth, not substance.  
Spencer, Faer. Qu. ii. ix. 2:—  
Full lively is the semblant, though the substance dead.—THYER.  
\(^6\) Azazel.  
This name is used for some demon or devil by several ancient authors, Jewish and Christian.—NEWTON.  
\(^6\) Shone like a meteor.  
This line has been borrowed by Gray, and applied to the description of his Bard, but with less grandeur and propriety.  
\(^4\) At which the universal host.  
A most magnificent and inimitable passage.
Ten thousand banners rise into the air
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appear’d, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
To hight of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battel; and, instead of rage,
Deliberate valor breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and suage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain,
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force, with fixed thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes, that charm’d
Their painful steps o’er the burnt soil: and now
Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriours old with order’d spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose: he through the armed files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views; their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories; for never, since created man,
Met such imbodied force, as named with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warr’d on by cranes; though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were join’d
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mix’d with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther’s son, Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,

*Dorian mood.

Exciting to cool and deliberate courage.—Newton.

*b Hardening in his strength.

See Dan. v. 20:—His heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride.”—Gillies.

1 Mix’d with auxiliar gods.

In the war between the sons of Oedipus at Thebes, and between the Greeks and Trojans at Ilium, the heroes were assisted by the gods, who are therefore called auxiliar gods.—Newton.

i Uther’s son.

King Arthur, whose exploits Milton once intended to celebrate in an epic poem.—Todd.
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabia.* Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread commander: he, above the rest!
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,

Stand like a tower; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen

Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs: darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather,
(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemn'd
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerced

* By Fontarabia.

Borrowed from Dante. See Cary's Dante.

1 He, above the rest.

The greatest masters in painting had not such sublime ideas as Milton; and, among all their devils, have drawn no portrait comparable to this; as everybody must allow who has seen the pictures or the prints of "Michael and the Devil," by Raphael; or of the same by Guido; and of the "Last Judgment," by Michael Angelo.—Newton.

And in what does this poetical picture consist? In images of a tower; an archangel; the sun rising through mists, or in an eclipse; the ruin of monarchs; and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a crowd of great and confused images, which affect because they are crowded and confused: for, separate them, and you lose much of the greatness; and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness.—Burke.

I can find neither confusion nor obscurity in this passage. The firmness of the devil's station or posture is here compared to that of a tower, and his faded or diminished splendour to that of the sun seen through a morning haze, or from behind the moon during an eclipse; all which is perfectly clear; the objects of comparison being at once grand and illustrative; and the description of them, as far as they are described, distinct, correct, and circumstantial. The properties of solility and firmness only, in the tower, being the objects of comparison, have described its form or magnitude would have been silly and impertinent: but the diminution of brightness is an occasional effect; and when an occasional effect is made the object of poetical comparison or description, it is always necessary to state its causes and circumstances,—which the poet has here done with equal conciseness, precision, perspicacity, and energy; and it is to this that its sublimity is, in a great degree, owing.—R. P. Knight.

As when the sun new-risen.

Few poetical images can be finer than this, or more beautifully expressed. The precision with which the image is delineated is incomparable.

* Millions of spirits for his fault amerced.

I must not here omit that beautiful circumstance of Satan's bursting into tears upon his survey of those innumerable spirits whom he had involved in the same guilt and ruin with himself.
Of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory wither'd. As when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half inclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth;\(^p\) at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way.

O myriads of immortal spirits! O powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty; and that stride
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter: but what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have fear'd,

There is no single passage in the whole poem worked up to a greater sublimity than that wherein his person is described, ver. 589, &c. His sentiments are every way answerable to his character, and suitable to a created being of the most exalted and most depraved nature. Such is that in which he takes possession of the place of torments, ver. 250, &c., and afterwards, ver. 258, &c.

The catalogue of evil spirits has abundance of learning in it, and a very agreeable turn of poetry; which rises in a great measure from its describing the places where they were worshipped, by those beautiful marks of rivers so frequent among the ancient poets. The author had doubtless in this place Homer's catalogue of ships, and Virgil's list of warriors, in his view. The characters of Moloch and Baelial prepare the reader's mind for their respective speeches and behaviour in the second and sixth books. The account of Thadmus is truly romantic, and suitable to what we read among the ancients of the worship which was paid to that idol.

The description of Azazel's stature, and the infernal standard which he upheld, as also of that ghastly light by which the souls appear to one another in their places of torments, are wonderfully poetical. Such are the short of the whole host of fallen angels when drawn up in battle array; the review which the leader makes of his infernal army; the flash of light which appeared upon the drawing of their swords; the sudden production of the Pandemonium; the artificial illumination made in it.—ADDISON.

\(^0\) As when heaven's fire
Hath scathed.

This is a very beautiful and close simile; it represents the majestic stature and withered glory of the angels; and the last with great propriety, since their lustre was impaired by thunder, as well as that of the trees in the simile; and besides, the blasted heath gives us some idea of that singed, burning soil on which the angels were standing. Homer and Virgil frequently use comparisons from trees, to express the stature or falling of a hero; but none of them are applied with such variety and propriety of circumstances as this of Milton. See "An Essay upon Milton's Imitation of the Ancients," p. 24.—NEWTON.

\(^p\) Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.

He had Ovid in his thought, Met. xi. 419:—

Ter conata loqui, ter fictibus ora rigavit.—BENTLEY.

The turn of the words bears a near resemblance to Spenser, Faer. Qu. i. xi. 41:—

Thrice he assay'd it from his foot to draw,
And thrice in vain to draw it did assay.

As also to Sackville, "Induction, Mirror for Magistrates," st. last:—

Thryse he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thryse the sighs did swallow up his voyce.—BOWLE.
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied heaven, shall fail to reascend
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of heaven,
If counsels different or dangers shunn'd
By me have lost our hopes: but he, who reigns
Monarch in heaven, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent, or custom; and his regal state
Put forth at full; but still his strength conceal'd,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own;
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war, provoked: our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, Who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds, whereof so rife
There went a fame in heaven: that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the sons of heaven.
Thither, if but to pray, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption; thither or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature: peace is despair'd;
For who can think submission? war then, war;
Open or understood, must be resolved.
Thrice he spake; and, to confirm his words, outflow
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell: * highly they raged

4. Hath emptied heaven.

It is conceived that a third part of the angels fell with Satan, according to Rev. xii.
4.—Newton.

7. There went a fame in heaven.

There is something wonderfully beautiful, and very apt to affect the reader's imagi-
nation, in this ancient prophecy or report in heaven concerning the creation of man.
Nothing could show more the dignity of the species than this tradition, which ran of
them before their existence: they are represented to have been the talk of heaven
before they were created. Virgil, in compliment to the Roman commonwealth, makes
the heroes of it appear in their state of pre-existence; but Milton does a far greater
honour to mankind in general, as he gives us a glimpse of them even before they are
in being.—Addison.

Far round illumined hell.

Another true Miltonic picture.
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clash’d on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belch’d fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf; undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, wing’d with speed,
A numerous brigad hasten’d; as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe arm’d,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on;¹
Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From heaven; for ev’n in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent: admiring more
The riches of heaven’s pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoy’d
In vision beatific: by him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransack’d the centre, and with impious hands
Riffled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Open’d into the hill a spacious wound,
And digg’d out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how the greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate; and in an hour
What in an age they with incessant toil
And hands innumerable scarce perform.²

Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scumm’d the bullion dross:
A third as soon had form’d within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance fill’d each hollow nook:
As in an organ,³ from one blast of wind,

¹ Mammon led them on.
² And hands innumerable scarce perform.
³ As in an organ.

This simile is as exact as it is new: and we may observe, that Milton frequently
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.  
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 
Rose, like an exhalation,* with the sound 
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet; 
Built like a temple, where pilasters round 
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid 
With golden architrave: nor did there want 
Cornice or frieze with bossy sculptures graven; 
The roof was fretted gold.  Not Babylon, 
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence 
Equal'd in all their glories, to inshrine 
Belus or Serapis, their gods; or seat 
Their kings, when Ægypt with Assyria strove 
In wealth and luxury.  The ascending pile 
Stood fix'd her stately highth: and straight the doors, 
Opening their brazen folds, discover wide 
Within her ample spaces o'er the smooth 
And level pavement: from the arched roof, 
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row 
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed 
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light 
As from a sky.  The hasty multitude 
Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise, 
And some the architect: his hand was known 
In heaven by many a tower'd structure high, 
Where sceptred angels held their residence, 
And sat as princes; whom the supreme King 
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule, 
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright. 
Nor was his name unheard or unadored 
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land 
Men called him Muleiber; and how he fell 
From heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove 
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn 
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve, 
A summer's day; and with the setting sun 
Dropp'd from the zenith like a falling star, 
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle; thus they relate, 
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout 
Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now 
To have built in heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape 
fetches his images from music, more than any other English poet; as he was very fond of it, and was himself a performer upon the organ and other instruments.—Newton.

* Rose, like an exhalation.
Peek supposes that this hint is taken from some of the moving scenes and machines invented by Inigo Jones, for Charles the First's masques.

* And how he fell

Alluding to Homer, II. i. 590. &c.  It is worth observing how Milton lengthens out the time of Vulcan's fall.  He not only says with Homer, that it was all day long; but we are led through the parts of the day, from morn to noon, from noon to evening, and this a summer's day.  See also Odyss. vii. 288.—Newton.
By all his engines; but was headlong sent 750
With his industrious crew to build in hell.

Meanwhile the winged heralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet’s sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers: their summons call’d
From every hand and squared regiment
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended: all access was throng’d; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall,
(Though like a cover’d field, where champions bold
Wont ride in arm’d, and at the soldier’s chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance)\(^2\)
Thick swarm’d, both on the ground and in the air,
Brush’d with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees\(^a\)
In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters: they among fresh dews and flowers\(^a\)
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubb’d with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs: so thick the aery crowd
Swarm’d and were straiten’d; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! they, but now who seem’d
In bigness to surpass earth’s giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs\(^b\), in narrow room—

\(^2\) To mortal combat, or career with lance.

Milton has carefully distinguished the two different methods of combat in the champ. clos.—Callander.

\(^a\) As Bees.

An imitation of Homer, who compares the Grecians crowding to a swarm of bees, II. ii. 87. There are such similes also in Virg. Æn. i. 430, vi. 707. But Milton carries the similitude farther than either of his great masters; and mentions the bees “con-fering their state affairs,” as he is going to give an account of the consultation of the devils.—Newton.

If we look into the conduct of Homer, Virgil, and Milton; as the great fable is the soul of each poem, so, to give their works an agreeable variety, their episodes are as so many short fables, and their similes so many short episodes; to which you may add, if you please, that their metaphors are so many short similes. If the reader considers the comparisons in the first book of Milton,—of the sun in an eclipse,—of the sleeping leviathan,—of the bees swarming about their hive,—of the fairy dance,—in the view wherein I have here placed them, he will easily discover the great beauties that are in each of those passages.—Addison.

\(^a\) They among fresh dews and flowers.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon the poetry of this beautiful passage.

\(^b\) Now less than smallest dwarfs.

As soon as the infernal palace is finished, we are told, the multitude and rabble of spirits immediately shrunk themselves into a small compass, that there might be room for such a numberless assembly in this capacious hall: but it is the poet’s refinement upon this thought which I most admire, and which is indeed very noble in itself; for he tells us, that notwithstanding the vulgar, among the fallen spirits, contracted their
Throng numberless, like that Pygmæan race
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side,
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while over-head the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
Intent; with jocund music charm his ear:
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions, like themselves,
The great seraphic lords and cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat;
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

forms, those of the first rank and dignity still preserved their natural dimensions.—Addison.

Or dreams he sees.
From Apollonius Rhodius, one of his favourite authors, Argonaut. iv. 1479.—Todd.

Witness, spectatress. So Horace, Epod. v. 49:

O, rebus meis
Non infideles arbitres
Nox et Diana.—Heylin.

This is said in allusion to the superstitious notion of witches and fairies having great power over the moon. Virg. Eclog. viii. 69:

Carmina vel coelo possunt deducere lunam.—Newton.

Intent.
One of those picturesque pastoral passages, with which Milton’s early poetry so abounds.

Secret conclave sat.
An evident allusion to the conclaves of the cardinals on the death of a pope.
BOOK II.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In tracing the progress of this poem by deliberate and minute steps, our wonder and admiration increase. The inexhaustible invention continues to grow upon us; each page, each line, is pregnant with something new, picturesque, and great: the condenseness of the matter is without any parallel: the imagination often contained in a single passage is more than equal to all that secondary poets have produced: the fable of the voyage through Chaos is alone a sublime poem. Milton's descriptions of materiality have always touched of the spiritual, the lofty, and the empyreal.

Milton has too much condensation to be fluent: a line or two often conveys a world of images and ideas: he expatiates over all time, all space, all possibilities: he unites earth with heaven, with hell, with all intermediate existences, animate and inanimate; and his illustrations are drawn from all learning, historical, natural, and speculative. In him, almost always, "more is meant than meets the ear." An image, an epithet, conveys a rich picture.

What is the subject of observation may be told without genius; but the wonder and the greatness lie in invention, if the invention be noble, and according to the principles of possibility.

Who could have conceived—or, if conceived, who could have expressed,—the voyage of Satan through Chaos, but Milton? Who could have invented so many distinct and grand obstacles in his way? and all picturesque, all poetical, and all the topics of intellectual meditation and reflection, or of spiritual sentiment?

All the faculties of the mind are exercised, stretched, and elevated at once by every page of "Paradise Lost."

Invention is the first and most indispensable essential of true poetry; but not the only one: the invention must have certain high, moral, sound, wise qualities; and, in addition to these, such as are picturesque or spiritual. It is easy to invent what is improbable or unnatural. Nothing will do which cannot command our belief.

Inventions either of character, imagery, or sentiment, taken separately in small fragments, may still have force and merit: but when they form an integral and appropriate part of a long whole, how infinitely their power, depth, and bearings, are increased!

In poetry, we must consider both the original conceptions and the illustrations: each derives interest and strength from the other: a mere copy of an image drawn from nature may have some beauty; but the invention and the essential poetry lie in their complex use, when applied as an embodiment to something intellectual. Imagery is almost always so used by Milton; and so it was used by Homer and Virgil. This gives a new light to the mind of the reader, and creates combinations which perhaps did not before exist; the poet thus spiritualizes matter, and materializes spirit. When what is presented is merely such scenery of nature as the painter can give by lines and colours, it falls far short of the poet's power and charm. Poetry, purely descriptive, is not of the first order.

There are lines in the "Paradise Lost," which would seem to be mere abstract opinions; but they are not so; inset as they are into the course of a sublime, dense-wave narrative, they derive colour and character from the position which they occupy. So placed, their plainness is their strength and their spell: ornamented language would have weakened them. Of all styles, the uniformly florid is the most fatiguing.

That Milton could bring so much learning, as well as so much imaginative invention, to bear on every part of his infinitely-extended, yet thick-compact ed table, is truly miraculous. Were the learning superficial and loosely applied, the wonder
would not be great, or not nearly so great; but it is always profound, solid, conscientious; and in its combinations original.

Bishop Atterbury has said, in opposition to the general opinion, that the allegory of Sin and Death is one of the finest inventions of the poem. I agree with him most sincerely. The portress of the gates of hell sits there in a character, and with a tremendous figure and attributes, which no imagination less gigantic than Milton's could have drawn. Is it to be objected that Sin and Death are imaginary persons, when all the persons of the poem, except Adam and Eve, are imaginary? Realities, in the strict sense, do not make the most essential parts of poetry.

ARGUMENT.

The consultation began, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven; some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created: their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search? Satan their chief undertakes alone the voyage, is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake themselves several ways, and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to hell gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom and at what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous cast with richest hand
Showers on her kings Barbaric pearl and gold;
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence: and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high; insatiate to pursue
Vain war with heaven, and, by success untought
His proud imaginations thus display'd:
—
Powers and Dominions, Deities of heaven,
For since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigor, though oppress'd and fallen,
I give not heaven for lost; from this descent

See Spenser, Faery Queen, i. iv. 8:

High above all a cloth of state was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,
On which there sate, &c. STILLINGFLEET.

b Or where the gorgeous cast.

See Spenser, Faery Queen, iii. iv. 23:

It did passe
The wealth of the East, and pomp of Persian kings.—NEWTON.

c Showers on her kings Barbaric pearl and gold.

It was the eastern ceremony, at the coronation of their kings, to powder them with gold-dust and seed-pearl. In the "Life of Timur-loc, or Tamerlane," written by a Persian contemporary author, are the following words, as translated by Mons. Petit de la Croix, in the account there given of his coronation, b. ii. c. i.:—"Les princes du sang royal et les rois répandaient à pleines mains," with liberal hand, "sur sa tête quantité d'or et de pâte vers la coutume."—WARBURTON.

See Virgil, Ec. ii. 504:

Barbaric postes auro spolisque superbii.
Celestial virtues rising, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.

Me though just right and the fix’d laws of heaven
Did first create your leader; next free choice,
With what besides, in council or in flight,
Hath been achieved of merit; yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Establish’d in a safe unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer’s aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in hell
Precedence; none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old;
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us: and by what best way,∗
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise, may speak.

He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest spirit
That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair:
His trust was with the Eternal to be deem’d
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all: with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or hell, or worse,
He reck’d not; and these words thereafter spake.—

My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.
For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend, sit lingering here
Heaven’s fugitives, and for their dwelling place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns

∗ None, whose portion.

The sense and syntax are plain enough. There is no one, whose portion of present pain is so small, that he will be ambitious to covet more.

See Spenser, F. Q. vii. vi. 21.—Todd.
By our delay? no; let us rather choose,
Arm’d with hell flames and fury, all at once
O’er heaven’s high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine he shall hear
Infernal thunder; and for lightning see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his angels; and his throne itself
Mix’d with Tartaric sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult and steep, to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumm not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat: descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce Foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? the ascent is easy then:—
The event is fear’d; should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction; if there be in hell
Fear to be worse destroy’d; what can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemn’d
In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end,
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour
Calls us to penance? more destroy’d than thus,
We should be quite abolish’d, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential; happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being;—
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing: and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.

(1) The torturing hour.

Gray has borrowed these words at the opening of his "Hymn to Adversity."

(2) Fatal throne.

That is, upheld by fate, as he expresses it, b. i. 133.—Newton.
He ended frowning, \(^h\) and his look denounced
Desperate revenge and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in Act more graceful and humane:
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seem'd
For dignity composed and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropp'd manna, and could make the worse appear\(^i\)
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels; for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful: yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:
I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged,
Main reason to persuade immediate war,
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success:
When he, who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? the towers of heaven are fill'd
With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heaven's purest light; yet our great Enemy
All incorruptible would on his throne
Sit unpolluted,\(^j\) and the ethereal mould
Incapable of stain would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage,

\(^h\) He ended frowning.

Nobody of any taste or understanding will deny the beauty of the following paragraph; in the whole of which there is not one metaphorical or figurative word. In what then does the beauty of it consist? In the justness of the thought, in the propriety of the expression, in the art of the composition, and in the variety of the versification.—Monroodo.

\(^i\) And could make the worse appear.

Word for word from the known profession of the ancient sophists, Τὸν λόγον τὸν ἑπτῶν κραίττω ποιεῖν.—Bentley.

\(^j\) Sit unpolluted.

This is a reply to that part of Moloch's speech, where he had threatened to mix the throne itself of God with infernal sulphur and strange fire.—Newton.
And that must end us: that must be our cure,
To be no more: sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion? and who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? how he can,
Is doubtful! that he never will, is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire
Belike through impotence, or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish and end
Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
To punish endless? Wherefore cease we then?
Say they who counsel war;—we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?—Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What! when we fled amain, pursued and struck
With heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us? this hell then seem'd
A refuge from those wounds: or when we lay
Chain'd on the burning lake? that sure was worse.
What, if the breath, that kindled these grim fires,
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames? or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? what, if all
Her stores were open'd, and this firmament
Of hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall
One day upon our heads? while we, perhaps
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurl'd,
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk
Under you boiling ocean, wrapp'd in chains:
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespiited, unpitied, unretrieved,
Ages of hopeless end? this would be worse.

k For who would lose,
Through full of pain, this intellectual being.
See Gray's celebrated stanza in his Elegy,
For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey, &c.

l Through impotence.

Weakness of Mind.—Pearce.

m Breath that kindled.
See Isaiah, xxx. 33—Newton.
War therefore, open or conceal'd, alike—
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides;
Not more almighty to resist our might,
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of heaven,
Thus trampled, thus expell'd, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decrees—
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those, who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink and fear
What yet they know must follow, to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their Conqueror. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe may in time much remit
His anger; and perhaps thus far removed
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished: whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;
Or changed at length, and to the place conform'd
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
This horrour will grow mild, this darkness light:
Besides what hopes the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting: since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe.
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb
Counsell'd ignoble case and peaceful sloth,
Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake:—
Either to disenthrone the King of heaven
We war, if war be best; or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife:
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter: for what place can be for us
Within heaven's bound, unless heaven's Lord supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent.
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced halleluiahs; while he lordly sits
Our envied Sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours, and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In heaven, this our delight: how wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained—
Unacceptable, though in heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage: but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves; and from our own
Live to ourselves;* though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable; preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create; and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labour and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? how oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark® doth heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne: from whence deep thunders roar
Musterings their rage, and heaven resembles hell!
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please? this desert soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can heaven show more?
Our torments also may in length of time
Become our elements; these piercing fires
As soft as now severe; our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels,* and the settled state

* Live to ourselves.

Horace, Epist. i. xviii. 107:—
Ut mihi vivam,
Quod superest ævi.—Newton.
* How oft amidst

Thick clouds and dark.

Imitated from Psal. xviii. 11, 13: and xvii. 2.—Newton: and from 1 Kings, viii. 12.
—Todd.

v To peaceful counsels.

These speeches are wonderfully fine; but the question is changed in the course of
the debate.—Newton.
Of order; how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are, and where; dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise.

He scarce had finish'd, when such murmur fill'd
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain a
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Sea-faring men o'er-watch'd, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard
As Mammon ended; and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than hell: so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them: and no less desire
To found this nether empire; which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to heaven.

Which when Beelzebub perceived, than whom
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies: his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:

Thrones and imperial Powers, offspring of heaven,
Ethereal Virtues; or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be call'd
Princes of hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire. Doubtless; while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doom'd

As when hollow rocks retain.

Virgil compares the ascent given by the assembly of the gods to Juno's speech, Æn. x.
96, to the rising wind, which our author assimilates to its decreasing murmurs.—Hume.
Newton observes that this was equally proper; as Juno's speech was to rouse:
Mammon's to quiet.

Now with hoarse cadence lull

Sea-faring men o'er-watch'd.

A noble poetical picture.

Which when Beelzebub.

Beelzebub maintains his rank in the book now before us. There is a wonderful
majesty described in his rising up to speak. He acts as a kind of moderator between
the two opposite parties, and proposes a third undertaking, which the whole assembly
gives in to. The motion he makes of detaching one of their body in search of a new
world, is grounded upon a project devised by Satan, and cursorily proposed by him in
the first book, ver. 650, et seq., upon which project Beelzebub grounds his proposal in
the present book, ver. 314, &c.—Addison.
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne; but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude: for he, be sure,
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt; but over hell extend
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
Us here, as with his golden those in heaven.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined us, and foil'd with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought: for what peace will be given
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conquerour least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault, or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? (There is a place, —
(If ancient and prophetic fame in heaven
Err not) another world, the happy seat
Of some new race call'd Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence; but favour'd more
Of Him who rules above: so was his will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,
That shock heaven's whole circumference, confirm'd.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts to learn
What creatures there inhabit; of what mould,
Or substance: how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness; how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though heaven be shut,
And heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it: here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset; either with hell fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In his disturbance: when his darling sons,
Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise, if this be worth
Attempting; or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires.—Thus Beelzebub
Pleased his devilish counsel, first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed. For whence,
But from the authour of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and earth with hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes; with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:

Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods! and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved; which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of heaven's fair light,
Secure; and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
The dark umbottom'd infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way? or spread his aery flight,
Upborne with undefatigable wings,
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle; what strength, what art can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations thick
Of angels watching round here he had need
All circumspection; and we now no less

1 The happy isle.

The earth hanging in the sea of air. So Cicero calls the earth, De Nat. Deor. ii. 66:
"Quasi magnam quandam insulam, quam nos orbem terrae vocamus."—NEWTON.
Choice in our suffrage: for on whom we send,
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.

This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appear'd
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonish'd: none among the choice and prime
Of those heaven-warring champions could be found,
So hard, as to proffer or accept
Alone the dreadful voyage: till at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride,
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—

O progeny of heaven, empyreal thrones,
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismay'd. Long is the way
And hard, that out of hell leads up to light:
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant
Barr'd over us prohibit all egress.
These pass'd, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night a receives him next,
Wide gaping; and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape into whatever world,
Or unknown region; what remains him less
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, v O Peers,
And this imperial soverainty, adorn'd
With splendour arm'd, with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,

v Of unessential Night.
Unessential, void of being; darkness approaching nearest to, and being the best resemblance of, non-entity.—Hume.

v But I should ill become this throne.
The whole speech, from this line, is wonderfully beautiful in every respect. But the reason why I have quoted it, is, to show how the poet supports Satan's
Monarchal pride, conscious of highest worth, as he expresses it. In the line,
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
I have no doubt but he had in view the speech of Sarpedon in Homer; in which indeed the thought is Homer's, "That a king, being most honoured, should likewise expose himself most to danger." But Milton has given it so much of the rhetorical cast, and dressed it so up with sentences and enthymemas, after the manner of Demosthenes, who, as I have said elsewhere, was his model for speeches, that Homer is hardly to be found in it.—Monboddo.
Refusing to accept as great a share  
Of hazard as of honour, due alike  
To him who reigns, and so much to him due  
Of hazard more, as he above the rest  

High honour’d sits? Go, therefore, mighty powers,  
Terrour of heaven, though fallen! intend at home,  
While here shall be our home, what best may ease  
The present misery, and render hell  

More tolerable: if there be cure or charm  
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain  
Of this ill mansion. Intermit no watch  
Against a wakeful Foe; while I abroad  
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek  
Deliverance for us all: this enterprise  

None shall partake with me. Thus saying rose  
The monarch, and prevented all reply;  
Prudent, lest from his resolution raised  
Others among the chief might offer now,  

Certain to be refused, what erst they fear’d;  
And so refused might in opinion stand  
His rivals; winning cheap the high repute,  
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they  
Dreaded not more the adventure, than his voice  
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose:  

Their rising all at once was as the sound  
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend  
With awful reverence prone; and as a god  
Extol him equal to the Highest in heaven.  

Nor fail’d they to express how much they praised,  
That for the general safety he despised  
His own: for never do the spirits damn’d  
Lose all their virtue;* lest bad men should boast  
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,  
Or close ambition varnish’d o’er with zeal.  

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark  
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:  
As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds  
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, y’erspread  
Heaven’s cheerful face; the hovering element  
Seowls o’er the darken’d landskip snow, or shower:  
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet  

w Their rising all at once.  
The rising of this great assembly is described in a very sublime and poetical manner.  
—ADDISON.  

* Neither do the spirits damn’d  
Lose all their virtue.  
This seems to have been a sarcasm on the bad men of Milton’s time.  

y While the north wind sleeps.  
A simile of perfect beauty: it illustrates the delightful feeling resulting from the contrast of the stormy debate with the light that seems subsequently to break in upon the assembly.
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds; men only disagree*
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if, which might induce us to accord,
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait.

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
In order came the grand infernal peers:
Midst came their mighty paramount, a and seem'd
Alone the antagonist of Heaven; nor less
Than hell's dread emperor, with pomp supreme
And God-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery seraphim inclosed,
With bright emblazonry and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpets' regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By herald's voice explain'd: the hollow abyss
Heard far and wide: and all the host of hell
With deafening shout return'd them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the ranged powers
Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplex'd; where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great chief return.
Part, on the plain, b or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games, or Pythian fields:
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shum the goal

* Men only disagree.
This has allusion to the contentious age in which Milton lived and wrote.—Thyer.

a Midst came their mighty paramount.
Here Satan's pre-eminence is described with a mighty splendour.

b Part on the plain.

The diversions of the fallen angels, with the particular account of their place of habitation, are described with great pregnancy of thought and copiousness of invention. The diversions are every way suitable to beings who had nothing left them but strength and knowledge misapplied. Such are their contentions at the race, and in feats of arms, with their entertainments at v. 530, &c.

Their music is employed in celebrating their own criminal exploits; and their discourse, in sounding the unfathomable depths of fate, free will, and foreknowledge.—Addison.
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form.
As when to warn proud cities war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds, before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears
Till thickest legions close: with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhonian rage more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind: hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
As when Alcides, from Oechalia crown'd
With conquest, felt the envenom'd robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines;
And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, singing
With notes angelical, to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should int 'ril to force or chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony,
What could it less when spirits immortal sing?
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet,
(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense)
Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute:
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame;
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy:
Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope; or arm the obdured breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,

\[535\]

\[540\]

\[545\]

\[550\]

\[555\]

\[560\]

\[565\]

\[570\]
On bold adventure to discover wide  
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps,  
Might yield them easier habitation, bend  
Four ways their flying march, along the banks  
Of four infernal rivers; that disgorged  
Into the burning lake their baleful streams:  
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;  
Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep;  
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud  
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,  
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.  
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,  
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls  
Her watery labyrinth; whereof who drinks,  
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,  
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.  
Beyond this flood a frozen continent  
Lies, dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind, and dire hail which on firm land  
Thaws not; but gathers heap, and ruin seems  
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice;  
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog  
Betwixt Damis and mount Casius old,  
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air  
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.  
Thither by harpy-footed furies haled,  
At certain revolutions all the damn'd  
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change  
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce:  
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice  
Their soft ethereal warmth; and there to pine  
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round,  
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.  
They ferry over this Lethcean sound  
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,  
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach  
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose

Of four infernal rivers.

The several circumstances in the description of hell are finely imagined; as the four rivers which disgorged themselves into the sea of fire, the extremes of cold and heat, and the river of oblivion. The monstrous animals produced in that infernal world are represented by a single line, which gives us a more horrid idea of them than a much longer description would have done:—worse

Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived.

This episode of the fallen spirits, and their place of habitation, comes in very happily to unbend the mind of the reader from its attention to the debate. An ordinary poet would indeed have spun out so many circumstances to a great length, and by that means have weakened, instead of illustrated, the principal fable.—Addison.

b Burns frore.

See Eccles. xlii. 20, 21: "When the cold north-wind bloweth, it devourth the mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and consumeth the grass as fire."—Newton.
In sweet forgetfulness, all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink:
But Fate withstands, and to oppose the attempt
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
View'd first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest; through many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived.
Gorgons, and hydrias, and chimæras dire.
Meanwhile the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scourc the right-hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet deserted
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengal, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs: they on the trading flood

1 In sweet forgetfulness.
This is a fine allegory, to show that there is no forgetfulness in hell. Memory makes
a part of the punishment of the damned, and the reflection but increases their misery.
—Newton.

1 Rocks, caves, &c.

Milton's are the
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death!
and the idea, caused by a word, which nothing but a word could annex to the others,
raises a very great degree of the sublime; which is raised yet higher by what follows,
a universe of death.—Burke.

k Toward the gates of hell.
The flight of Satan to the gates of hell is finely imagined.—Addison.

1 As when far off at sea.

Satan "towering high," is here compared to a fleet of Indiamen discovered at a dis-
tance, as it were "hanging in the clouds," as a fleet at a distance seems to do. This is
the whole of the comparison; but, as Dr. Pearce observes, Milton in his similitudes (as
is the practice of Homer and Virgil too), after he has shown the common resemblance,
often takes the liberty of wandering into some unresembling circumstances; which
have no other relation to the comparison than that it gave him the hint, and as it were
set fire to the train of his imagination.—Newton.
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the pole: so seem'd
Far off the flying fiend. At last appear
Hell bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates: three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock, — Swift
Impenetrable, impaled with cirling fire,\(^{m}\)
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat\(^{a}\)
On either side a formidable shape;
The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting: about her middle round
A cry of hell hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud, and rung
A hideous peal: yet when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still bark'd and howl'd
Within unseen. Far less abhor'd than these
Vex'd Scylla bathing, in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore:
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, call'd
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood,\(^{o}\) to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon\(^{p}\)
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape,\(^{a}\)
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

\(^{m}\) Impaled with cirling fire.
Perhaps Milton might take the hint of this circumstance from his favourite romances, where we frequently meet with the gates of enchanted castles thus impaled with cirling fire.—Thyer.

\(^{a}\) Before the gates there sat.
Here begins the famous allegory of Milton, which is a sort of paraphrase on St. James, i. 15: — "Then, when Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death." The first part of the allegory says only, that Satan's intended voyage was dangerous to his being, and that he resolved however to venture.—Richardson.

\(^{o}\) Lured with the smell of infant blood.
Here is a mixture of classical and demonological learning. Compare Æschylus, "Eumenid." 246, ed. Schutz; and Wierus, "De Lamis," 4to. 1652, coll. 240, 241.—Todd.

\(^{p}\) The labouring moon.
The ancients believed the moon greatly affected by magical practices; and the Latin poets call the eclipses of the moon, laboris luna. The three foregoing lines, and the former part of this, contain a short account of what was once believed, and in Milton's time not so ridiculous as now.—Richardson.

\(^{a}\) The other shape.
See Spenser, F. Q. vii. vii. 46.—Thyer.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast,
With horrid strides; hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired;
Admired, not fear'd: God and his Son except,
Created thing: nought valued he, nor shun'd;
And with disdainful look thus first began:——

Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That darest, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave ask'd of thee:
Retire, or taste thy folly; and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven!

To whom the goblin full of wrath replied:——
Art thou that traitor angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in heaven, and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellions arms
Drew after him the third part of heaven's sons
Conjured against the Highest; for which both thou

* God and his Son except,

The commentators try in vain to justify this ungrammatical expression.

Milton has interwoven in the texture of his fable some particulars which do not seem to have probability enough for an epic poem; particularly in the actions which he ascribes to Sin and Death, and the picture which he draws of the Limbo of Vanity, with other passages in the second book. Such allegories rather savour of the spirit of Spenser and Ariosto, than of Homer and Virgil.

It is, however, a very finished piece of its kind, when it is not considered as a part of an epic poem. The genealogy of the several persons is contrived with great delicacy: Sin is the daughter of Satan, and Death the offspring of Sin: the incestuous mixture between Sin and Death produces those monsters and hell-hounds, which from time to time enter into their mother, and tear the bowels of her who gave them birth: these are the terrors of an evil conscience, and the proper fruits of Sin, which naturally rise from the apprehensions of death. This last beautiful moral is, I think clearly intimated in the speech of Sin, where, complaining of this her dreadful issue, she adds:——

Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe; who sets them on.
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved.

I need not mention to the reader the beautiful circumstance in the last part of this quotation: he will likewise observe how naturally the three persons concerned in this allegory are tempted, by one common interest, to come into a confederacy together: and how properly Sin is made the portress of hell, and the only being that can open the gates of that world of terrors.

The descriptive part of this allegory is likewise very strong, and full of sublime ideas. The figure of Death, the fugal crown upon his head, the menace of Satan, his advancing to the combat, the outcry at his birth, are circumstances too noble to be passed over in silence, and extremely suitable to this king of terrors. I need not mention the justness of thought which is observed in the generation of these several symbolical persons; that Sin was produced upon the first revolt of Satan, that Death appeared soon after he was cast into hell, and that the terrors of conscience were conceived at the gate of his place of torments. The description of the gates is very poetical, as the opening of them is full of Milton's spirit.—Addison.

Addison seems to have been strangely nice in the objection to the introduction of these shadowy beings into an epic poem; and so thought Dr. Newton.
And they, outcast from God, are here condemn'd
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with spirits of heaven,
Hell-doom'd, and breathest defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to engrave thee more,
Thy king and lord! Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings;
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.

So spake the grisly terour; and in shape,
So speaking, and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform: on the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burn'd;¹
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds,
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian;¹ then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air;
So frown'd the mighty combatants, that hell
Grew darker at their frown; so match'd they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a Foe:¹ and now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by hell gate, and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rush'd between.

O father, what intends thy hand, she cried,
Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? and know'st for whom?
For him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordain'd his drudge, to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids;
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both.

¹ And like a comet burn'd.

The ancient poets frequently compare a hero in his shining armour to a comet.
Poetry delights in omens, prodigies, and such wonderful events as were supposed to
follow upon the appearance of comets, eclipses, and the like.—Newton.

¹ Over the Caspian.

With great judgment did the poet take this simile from the Caspian; for that sea is
remarkably tempestuous. See "Purchas his Pilgrimes," part iii. p. 241: and Horaeæ,
Ode n. ix. 2.—Bowle.

² So great a foe.

Jesus Christ, who, as it follows v. 734, will one day destroy both Death, and "him
that has the power of death, that is, the devil."—Heb. ii. 14.—Newton.
She spaké, and at her words the hellish pest
Forbore; then these to her Satan return'd:—
  So strange thy outery, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand
Prevented spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends; till first I know of thee,
What thing thou art, thus double form'd; and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son:
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee.
To whom thus the portress of hell gate replied:
Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul, once deem'd so fair
In heaven? when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee; dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess arm'd,
Out of thy head I sprung;* amazement seized
All the host of heaven; back they recoil'd afraid
At first, and call'd me Sin, and for a sign
Portentous held me: but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse; thee chiefly; who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becamest enamour'd; and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in heaven; wherein remain'd
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory, to our part loss and rout
Through all the empyrean: down they fell
Driven headlong from the pitch of heaven, down
Into this deep, and in the general fall
I also; at which time this powerful key
Into my hand was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb,

* Out of thy head I sprung.

Sin is rightly made to spring out of the head of Satan, as Wisdom or Minerva did out of Jupiter's; and Milton describes the birth of the one very much in the same manner as the ancient poets have described that of the other, particularly the author of the "Hymn to Minerva," vulgarly ascribed to Homer: and what follows seems to be a hint improved upon Minerva's being ravished soon after her birth by Vulcan, as we may learn from Lucian, "Dial. Vulcani et Jovis," et "de Domo."—NEWTON.
Pregnant by thee and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transform'd; but he, my inbred enemy,
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart
Made to destroy: I fled, and cried out Death;
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd
From all her caves; and back resounded, Death.
I fled, but he pursued, though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage; and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismay'd;
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Ingendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st; hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me: for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth
Afresh with conscious terours vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on;
And me his parent would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved; and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though temper'd heavenly; for that mortal dint
Save he who reigns above, none can resist.
She finish'd, and the subtle fiend his lore
Soon learn'd, now milder, and thus answer'd smooth:—
Dear daughter, since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in heaven, and joys

x From all her caves.

Virgil, Æn. ii. 53.

Insonuere cave, geminumque dedere, cavernæ.—Hume.

The repetition of Death here is a beauty of the same kind as that of the name of Eurydice in Virgil, Georg. iv. 525, and of Hylas, Ecl. vi. 44.—Newton.
But how infinitely more sublime!

y Dear daughter.

Satan had now learned his lore or lesson; and the reader will observe how artfully he changes his language: he had said before that he had never seen "sight more detestable;" but now it is dear daughter, and fair son.—Newton.
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us, unforeseen, unthought of; know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain,
Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
Of spirits, that, in our just pretences arm’d,
Fell with us from on high: from them I go
This uncoath errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose; with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wandering quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created, vast and round, a place of bliss
In the purlieus of heaven, and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room; though more removed,
Lest heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now design’d, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom air, imbalm’d
With odours; there ye shall be fed and fill’d
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey.
He ceased, for both seem’d highly pleased, and Death
Grinn’d horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be fill’d, and bless’d his maw
Destined to that good hour: no less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:
   The key of this infernal pit by due,
And by command of heaven’s all-powerful King,
I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o’ermatch’d by living might.
But what owe I to his commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office, here confined,
Inhabitant of heaven and heavenly-born,
Here, in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compass’d round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my authour, thou
My being gavest me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease; where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as becometh
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,\(^2\) 
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;  
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,  
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up drew,  
Which but herself not all the Stygian powers  
Could once have moved: then in the keyhole turns  
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar  
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease  
Unfastens: on a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound  
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus. She open'd, but to shut  
Excell'd her power;\(^2\) the gates wide open stood,  
That with extended wings a banner'd host,  
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through  
With horse and chariots rank'd in loose array;  
So wide they stood, and like a furnace mouth  
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.  
Before their eyes in sudden view appear  
The secrets of the hoary deep;\(^2\) a dark  
Illimitable ocean, without bound,  
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and bight,  
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night  
And Chaos,\(^c\) ancestors of Nature, hold  
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise

\(^2\) Thus saying, from her side the fatal key.

It is one great part of the poet’s art to know when to describe things in general, and when to be very circumstantial and particular. Milton has in these lines showed his judgment in this respect: the first opening of the gates of hell by Sin is an incident of that importance, that if I can guess by my own, every reader’s attention must be greatly excited, and consequently as highly gratified, by the minute detail of particulars our author has given us. It may with justice be further observed, that in no part of the poem the versification is better accommodated to the sense. The drawing up of the portcullis, the turning of the key, the sudden shooting of the bolts, and the flying open of the doors, are in some sort described by the very break and sound of the verses.—Thyer.

\(^\text{b}\) She open’d, but to shut

Excell’d her power.

The grandeur here both of the thought and the picture is incomparable.

\(^\text{b}\) The secrets of a hoary deep.

This prospect, as the gates flew open, astonishes the imagination, and awakens all its curiosity.

\(^\text{c}\) Where eldest Night

And Chaos.

All the ancient naturalists, philosophers, and poets, hold that Chaos was the first principle of all things; and the poets particularly make Night a goddess, and represent Night or darkness, and Chaos or confusion, as exercising uncontrolled dominion from the beginning. Thus Orpheus, in the beginning of his Hymn to Night, addressed her as the mother of the gods and men, and origin of all things. See also Spenser in imitation of the ancients, F. Q. t. v. 22. And Milton’s system of the universe is, in short, that the empyrean heaven, and chaos, and darkness, were before the creation, heaven above and chaos beneath; and then, upon the rebellion of the angels; first, hell was formed out of chaos, stretching far and wide beneath; and afterwards heaven and earth, another world hanging over the realm of Chaos, and won from his dominion.—Newton.
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand:
For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battel bring
Their embryo atoms; they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,
He rules a moment; Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more imbroils the fray,
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of nature, and perhaps her grave,—
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mix'd
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds;—
Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of hell, and look'd a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less peal'd
With noises loud and ruinous, (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona storms,
With all her battering engines bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The stedfast earth. At last his sail-bread vans
He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacancy: all unawares
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep; and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not by ill chance

For hot, cold, &c.

Ovid. Met. i. 19:

Frigida pugnant at calidis, humentia siccis,
Molila cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus.

The reader may compare this whole description of Chaos with Ovid's, and he will easily see how the Roman poet has lessened the grandeur of his by puerile conceits and quaint antitheses; everything in Milton is great and masterly.—Newrons.

To whom these most adhere.
To whatever side the atoms temporarily adhere, that side rules for the moment.

Stood on the brink of hell.
Satan pauses for a moment, terrified at the danger of his enterprise.
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft: that fury stay'd,
Quench'd in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land: nigh founder'd on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; \(^1\) behoves him now both ear and sail.\(^2\)
As when a gryphon, through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth,
Had from his wakeful custody purloin'd
The guarded gold; so eagerly the fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,\(^3\)
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence: thither he plies,
Undaunted to meet there whatever power
Or spirit of the nethermost abyss\(^4\)
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies,
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread\(^5\)
Wide on the wasteful deep: with him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades,\(^1\) and the dreaded name

\(^1\) Half on foot,

Spenser, Faer. Qu. i. xi. 8:—

Half flying, and half footing in his haste.—Newton.

\(^2\) Behoves him now both ear and sail.

It behoveth him now to use both his ears and his sails, as galleys do, according to the proverb,—"remia velisque, with might and main."—Hume.

\(^3\) O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare.

The difficulty of Satan's voyage is very well expressed by so many monosyllables as follow, which cannot be pronounced but slowly, and with frequent pauses.—Newton.

\(^4\) The nethermost abyss.

Though the throne of Chaos was above hell, and consequently a part of the abyss was so, yet a part of that abyss was at the same time below hell; so far below, as that, when Satan went from hell on his voyage, he fell in that abyss ten thousand fathom deep; and the poet there adds, that if it had not been for an accident, he had been falling down there to this hour: nay, it was so deep, as to be illimitable, and where highh is lost. The abyss then, considered altogether, was nethermost in respect of hell, below which it was so endlessly extended.—Pears.

\(^5\) And his dark pavilion spread.

Psalm xlviii. 11:—"He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him."
—Dunster.

\(^1\) Orcus and Ades.

Orcus for Pluto, and Ades for any dark place.—Richardson.
Of Demogorgon; m Rumour next, and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all imbroil'd;
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
To whom Satan turning boldly, thus:—Ye powers,
And spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy,
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but by constraint
Wandering this darksome desert,—as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,—
Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bound
Confine with heaven; or if some other place,
From your dominion won, the ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound: direct my course;
Directed, no mean recompense it brings,
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expell'd, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway,
Which is my present journey, and once more
Ereet the standard there of ancient Night:
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge.
Thus Satan; and him thus the anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answer'd:—I know thee, stranger, who thou art;
That mighty leading angel, who of late
Made head against heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and heaven gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve,
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroach'd on still through your intestine broils
Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately heaven and earth, another world,
Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain n

m Of Demogorgon.
The very name of Demogorgon the ancients supposed capable of producing the most terrible effects, which they therefore dreaded to pronounce. He is mentioned as of great power in incantations.—Newton.

n Link'd in a golden chain.
There is mention made in Homer of Jupiter's golden chain, by which he can draw up the gods, and the earth, and the sea, and the whole universe; but they cannot draw him down. See the passage at large in the beginning of the eighth book of the Iliad. It is most probably and ingeniously conjectured, that by this golden chain may be understood the superior attractive force of the sun, whereby he continues unmoved, and draws all the rest of the planets toward him: but whatever is meant by it, it is
To that side heaven from whence your legions fell:
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger: go, and speed:
Havock, and spoil, and ruin are my gain.

He ceased; and Satan stay'd not to reply;
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renew'd
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire;
Into the wild expanse; and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environd', wins his way; harder beset
And more endanger'd than when Argo pass'd
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks:
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunn'd
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steer'd.
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on, with difficulty and labour he;
But he once past, soon after, when man fell,
(Strange alteration!') Sin and Death amain
Following his track, (such was the will of Heaven)
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endur'd a bridge of wondrous length,
From hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
Of this frail world; by which the spirits perverse
certain that our poet took from it the thought of hanging the world by a golden chain.—

NEWTON.

Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire.

To take in the full meaning of this magnificent similitude, we must imagine ourselves in Chaos, and a vast luminous body rising upward near the place where we are, so swiftly as to appear a continued track of light, and lessening to the view according to the increase of distance, till it end in a point, and then disappear; and all this must be supposed to strike our eye at one instant.—BEATTIE.

Ibid. In Satan's voyage through Chaos there are several imaginary persons described, as residing in that immense waste of matter. This may perhaps be conformable to the taste of those critics who are pleased with nothing in a poet which has not life and manners ascribed to it; but, for my own part, I am pleased most with those passages in this description which carry in them a greater measure of probability, and are such as might possibly have happened: of this kind is his first mounting in the smoke that rises from the infernal pit; his falling into a cloud of nitre and the like combustible materials, that by their explosion still hurried him forward in his voyage; his springing upwards like a pyramid of fire; with his laborious passage through that confusion of elements, which the poet calls

The womb of nature, and perhaps her grave.
The glimmering light which shot into the Chaos from the utmost verge of the creation, and the distant discovery of the earth, that hung close by the moon, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.—ADDISON.

Tamely endur'd a bridge.

Dr. Newton here agrees with Dr. Bentley in censuring this introduction of the infernal bridge, because it is described in the tenth book, for several lines together, as a thing untouched before, and an incident to surprise the reader; and therefore the poet should not have anticipated it here. Milton is said to have apparently copied this bridge, not as Dr. Warton has conjectured, from the Persian poet Sadi, but from the Arabian fiction of the bridge, called in Arabic Al Sîrat, which is represented to extend over the infernal gulf, and to be narrower than a spider's web, and sharper than the edge of a sword.—Pocoek in Port. Mos. p. 282. See Annotations on Hist. of Caliph Vathek, 1786, p. 314.—TOTT.
With easy intercourse passed to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn: here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire
As from her utmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din;
That Satan, with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light;
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waves, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorn'd
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

q By dubious light.

In this line, and in the preceding description of the "glimmering dawn" that Satan first meets with, Milton very probably alludes to Seneca's elegant account of Hercules's passage out of hell, Here, Eur. 668:—

Non caeca tenebris incipit prima via:
Tenus relicte lucis a tergo nitit.
Fulgorque dubious solis affiliet cadit.

Thyer.

r This pendent world, in bigness as a star.

By this pendent world is not meant the earth, but the new creation, heaven and earth, the whole orb of fixed stars immensely bigger than the earth, a mere point in the comparison. This is certain from what Chaos had lately said, v. 1004:—

Now lately heaven and earth, another world,
Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain.

Besides, Satan did not see the earth yet; he was afterwards surprised "at the sudden view of all this world at once," b. iii. 512, and wandered long on the outside of it, till at last he saw our sun, and learned there of the archangel Uriel, where the earth and paradise were. See b. iii. 722. This pendent world, therefore, must mean the whole world—the new-created universe; and "beheld far off," it appeared, in comparison with the empyreal heaven, no bigger than a "star of smallest magnitude," nay, not so large; it appeared no bigger than such a star appears to be when it is "close by the moon," the superior light whereof makes any star that happens to be near her disk to seem exceedingly small, and almost disappear.—Newton.

Additional Note.—Although the text has not been altered, the following discovery merits to be laid before the accurate readers of Milton.

Ver. 555. Fearless to be o'ermatch'd by living might.

Living might would not except even God himself, the Ever-living and the Almighty. The author therefore gave it, "by living might:" as in this same book, ver. 613:—"All taste of living might." This expression is established and consecrated by our Chaucer and Spenser.—Bentley.

In confirmation of the doctor's happy conjecture, "living might" is the reading of Simmons's third edition, 1678, and was probably a correction dictated by Milton, after the second edition was printed. This Dr. Bentley was not aware of.—See Ed. 1678, p. 53.
BOOK III.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I cannot admit this book to be inferior in poetical merit to those which precede it: the argumentative parts give a pleasing variety. The unfavourable opinion has arisen from a narrow view of the nature of poetry: from the theory of those who think that it ought to be confined to description and imagery. On the contrary, the highest poetry consists more of spirit than of matter. Matter is only good so far as it is imbued with spirit, or causes spiritual exaltation. Among the innumerable grand descriptions in Milton, I do not believe there is one which stands unconnected with complex intellectual considerations, and of which those considerations do not form a leading part of the attraction. The learned allusions may be too deep for the common reader; and so far the poet is above the reach of the multitude; but even then they create a certain vague stir in unprepared minds:—names indistinctly heard; visions dimly seen; constant recognitions of Scriptural passages, and sacred names: awfully impressed on the memory from childhood,—awaken the sensitive understanding with sacred and mysterious movements.

We do not read Milton in the same light mood as we read any other poet: his is the imagination of a sublime instructor: we give our faith through duty, as well as will. If our fancy flags, we strain it, that we may apprehend: we know that there is something which our conception ought to reach. There is not an idle word in any of the delineations which the bard exhibits; nor is any picture merely addressed to the senses. Everything therefore is invention:—arising from novelty or complexity of combination: nothing is a mere reflection from the mirror of the fancy.

Milton early broke loose from the narrow bounds of observation; and explored the trackless regions of air, and worlds of spirits,—the good and the bad.—There his pregnant imagination embodied new states of existence; and out of Chaos drew form, and life, and all that is grand, and beautiful, and godlike: and yet he so mingled them up with materials from the globe in which we are placed, that it is an unpardonable error to say that “Paradise Lost” contains little applicable to human interests. The human learning and human wisdom contained in every page are inexhaustible.

On this account no other poem requires so many explanatory notes, drawn from all the most extensive stores of erudition.

Of classical literature, and of the Italian poets, Milton was a perfect master: he often replenished his images and forms of expression from Homer and Virgil, and yet never was a servile borrower. There is an added pleasure to what in itself is beautiful, from the happiness of his adaptations.

I do not doubt that what he wrote was from a conjunction of genius, learning, art, and labour; but the grand source of all his poetical conceptions and language was the Scripture.

I have defended the argumentative, as well as the imaginative parts of this poem. I use imaginative invention in its strict sense, to express that which consists of imagery. The argumentative may be equal invention:—but ideal or spiritual invention: every great poem must unite both in large proportions. There is great simplicity and plainness in the greater part of Milton’s images taken separately; the novelty and grandeur is in their position and association. When Satan beholds the pendent orb of this world floating in immense space, while numberless other globes are suspended in the same vacuity:—the sublimity of the picture is mainly caused by reflecting on the character of him, on whose sight this object breaks.

Spenser’s subject was confined to human nature, represented by a moral allegory; but the manners which he undertook to describe were factitious; and he is often therefore
over-coloured and extravagant; but Milton's subject allowed all the flights of the most gigantic and marvellous imagination; he never therefore offends probability; while we are often obliged to consider Spenser as merely sportive.

ARGUMENT.

God sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this world, then newly created; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created man free, and able enough to have withstand his tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards man; but God again declares, that grace cannot be extended to man without the satisfaction of divine justice; man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore with all his progeny devoted to death must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for man; the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in heaven and earth; commands all the angels to adore him; they obey, and, hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile, Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost orb; where wandering he first finds a place, since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither; thence comes to the gate of heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it; his passage thence to the orb of the sun; he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb; but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner angel; and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed; alights first on Mount Niphates.*

HAIL, holy Light! a offspring of heaven first born,
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam,

* Milton having in the first and second books represented the infernal world with all its horrors, the thread of his fable naturally leads him into the opposite regions of bliss and glory.

If Milton's majesty forsakes him anywhere, it is in those parts of his poem where the divine persons are introduced as speakers. One may, I think, observe, that the author proceeds with a kind of fear and trembling, whilst he describes the sentiments of the Almighty: he dares not give his imagination its full play, but chooses to confine himself to such thoughts as are drawn from the books of the most orthodox divines, and to such expressions as may be met with in Scripture. The beauties therefore which we are to look for in these speeches are not of a poetical nature; nor so proper to fill the mind with sentiments of grandeur, as with thoughts of devotion: the passions which they are designed to raise, are a divine love and religious fear. The particular beauty of the speeches in the third book consists in that shortness and perspicuity of style, in which the poet has conched the greatest mysteries of Christianity, and drawn together, in a regular scheme, the whole dispensation of Providence with respect to man. He has represented all the abstruse doctrines of predestination, free-will and grace; as also the great points of incarnation and redemption (which naturally grow up in a poem that treats of the fall of man), with great energy of expression, and in a clearer and stronger light than I have ever met with in any other writer. As these points are dry in themselves to the generality of readers, the concise and clear manner in which he has treated them is very much to be admired; as is likewise the particular art which he has made use of in the interspersing of all those graces of poetry which the subject was capable of receiving.—Addison.

a *Hail, holy Light.

This celebrated complaint, with which Milton opens the third book, deserves all the praises which have been given it, though it may rather be looked on as an excesiveness than as an essential part of the poem. The same observation might be applied to that beautiful digression upon hypocrisy in the same book.—Addison.

Ibid. Our author's address to Light, and lamentation of his own blindness, may perhaps be censured as an excessiveness or digression not agreeable to the rules of epic poetry; but yet this is so charming a part of the poem, that the most critical reader, I imagine, cannot wish it were omitted. One is even pleased with a fault that is the occasion of so many beauties, and acquaints us so much with the circumstances and character of the author.—Newton.
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light, b
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity; dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence inerace.
Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? c before the sun,
Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detain'd
In that obscure sojourn; while in my flight
Through utter and through middle darkness a borne,
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre,
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night;
Taught by the heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to reascend,
Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; c but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit; nor sometimes forget
Those other two equal'd with me in fate,
So were I equal'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides, c
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:

b Since God is light.

See 1 John i. 5; and 1 Tim. vi. 16.—Newton.

1 Whose fountain who shall tell?

As in Job xxxviii. 19. "Where is the way where light dwelleth?"—Hume.

a Through utter and through middle darkness.

Through hell, which is often called utter darkness: and through the great gulf between hell and heaven, the middle darkness.—Newton.

c Smit with the love of sacred song.

So Virgil, Georg. ii. 475:

Quarum sacra fero ingenta percussae amore.—Newton.

1 The flowery brooks beneath.

Kedron and Siloah. He still was pleased to study the beauties of the ancient poets, but his highest delight was in the songs of Sion, in the holy Scriptures; and in these he meditated day and night. This is the sense of the passage stripped of its poetical ornaments.—Newton.

c Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides.

Mæonides is Homer. Thamyris was a Thracian, and invented the Doric mood or measure. Tiresias and Phineus, the one a Theban, the other a king of Arcadia, famous blind prophets and poets of antiquity.—Newton.
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns\(^a\)
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyreal where he sits
High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view.
About him all the sanctities of heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
Beatitude past utterance;\(^1\) on his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,
His only Son: on earth he first beheld
Our two first parents, yet the only two
Of mankind, in the happy garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrival'd love,
In blissful solitude: he then survey'd
Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of heaven on this side night
In the dun air sublime, and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet,
On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd

\(^a\) *Seasons return, but not to me returns.*

This beautiful turn of the words is copied from the beginning of the third act of Guarini's "Pastor Fido," where Mirtillo addresses the Spring:

\[
\text{Tu torni ben, ma te co no toruano, &c.} \\
\text{Tu torni ben, ta torni, ma te co altro non torna, &c.—Newton.}
\]

\(^1\) *And from his sight received Beatitude past utterance.*

Milton here alludes to the beatific vision, in which divines suppose the happiness of the saints to consist.—Thyer.

Sandys, in his Paraphrase on Job, has a similar passage:

\[
\text{Againe when all the radiant sunnes of light} \\
\text{Before his throne appeare'd, whose only sight} \\
\text{Beatitude intused.—Todd}
\]
Firm land imbosom'd without firmament,  
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air. 
Him God beholding from his prospect high, 
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds, 
Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake:——

Only-begotten Son,  
Transports our adversary? whom no bounds 
Prescribed, no bars of hell, nor all the chains 
Heap'd on him there, nor yet the main abyss 
Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems 
On desperate revenge, that shall redound 
Upon his own rebellious head. And now, 
Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way 
Not far off heaven, in the precincts of light, 
Directly towards the new-created world, 
And man there placed; with purpose to assay 
If him by force he can destroy, or, worse, 
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert: 
For man will hearken to his glozing lies, 
And easily transgress the sole command, 
Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall, 
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault? 
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me 
All he could have: I made him just and right, 
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. 
Such I created all the ethereal powers 
And spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd: 
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell. 
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere 
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love? 
Where only, what they needs must do, appear'd, 
Not what they would: what praise could they receive? 
What pleasure I from such obedience paid? 
When will and reason, (reason also is choice) 
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd, 
Made passive both, had served necessity, 
Not me. They therefore, as to right belong'd, 
So were created, nor can justly accuse 
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate; 
As if predestination over-ruled

1 Firm land imbosom'd without firmament. 
The universe appeared to Satan to be a solid globe, encompassed on all sides, but uncertain whether with water or air, but without firmament, without any sphere or fixed stars over it, as over the earth. The sphere, or fixed stars, was itself comprehended in it, and made a part of it.—Newton. 

k Only-begotten Son. 
I will make one general observation on this and all the speeches in the poem, put into the mouth of God the Father; which is, that nothing can be more unjust than Pope's criticism on Milton, accusing him of making "God turn school-divinity," unless he meant by school-divinity the doctrine of St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, &c: for Milton has copied them with the greatest exactness; and, bating a word or two (fully implied however in those writers), has kept to their very expressions.—Stillingfleet.
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge: they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
I form’d them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthral themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree,
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain’d
Their freedom: they themselves ordain’d their fall.
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls deceived
By the other first: man therefore shall find, grace,
The other none: in mercy and justice both,
Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel;
But mercy first and last shall brightest shine.
Thus while God spake,\(^1\) ambrosial fragrance fill’d
All heaven, and in the blessed spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
Substantially express’d;\(^m\) and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appear’d,
Love without end, and without measure grace;
Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake:—
O Father, gracious was that word which closed
Thy sovrain sentence, that man should find grace;
For which both heaven and earth shall high extol
Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
Encompass’d shall resound thee ever bless’d.
For should man finally be lost? should man,
Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join’d
With his own folly? that be from thee far;\(^n\)
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge

\(^1\) Thus while God spake.

Milton here shows that he was no servile imitator of the ancients. It is very well known that his master, Homer, and all who followed him, where they are representing the Deity speaking, describe a scene of terror and awful consternation. “The heavens, seas, and earth tremble,” &c.; and this, to be sure, was consistent enough with their natural notions of the Supreme Being: but it would not have been so agreeable to the mild, mercifull, and benevolent idea of the Deity upon the Christian scheme; and therefore our author has very judiciously made the words of the Almighty diffusing fragrance

\(^m\) Substantially express’d.

\(^n\) That be from thee for.

See Gen. xviii. 25.—Newton.
Of all things made, and judgest only right.
Or shall the adversary thus obtain
His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught;
Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
Yet with revenge accomplish'd, and to hell
Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself
Abolish thy creation, and unmake,
For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be question'd and blasphemed without defence.
To whom the great Creator thus replied:—
O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son, who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
As my eternal purpose hath decreed:
Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely vouchsafed: once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthral'd
By sin to foul exorbitant desires:
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,
By me upheld; that he may know how frail
His fallen condition is, and to me owe
All his deliverance, and to none but me.
Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
Elect above the rest; so is my will:
The rest shall hear me call, and oft be war'n'd
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
The incensed Deity, while offer'd grace
Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent,
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut:
And I will place within them as a guide
My umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
Light after light, well used, they shall attain;
And to the end, persisting, safe arrive.
This my long sufferance and my day of grace.  

* Some I have chosen.  
Our author did not hold the doctrine of rigid predestination; he was of the sentiments of the more moderate Calvinists; and thought that some indeed were elected of peculiar grace; the rest might be saved, complying with the terms and conditions of the Gospel.—Newton.

+ This my long sufferance and my day of grace.  
It is a great pity that our author should have thus debased the dignity of the Deity,
They who neglect and scorn shall never taste;
But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more,
That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
And none but such from mercy I exclude.
But yet all is not done; man disobeying
Disloyal breaks his fealty, and sins
Against the high supremacy of Heaven,
Affecting Godhead, and so losing all,
To expiate his treason hath naught left;
But to destruction sacred and devote,
He with his whole posterity must die;
Die he or justice must: unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
Say, heavenly powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime; and just the unjust to save?
Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?

He ask'd, but all the heavenly quire stood mute;
And silence was in heaven: on man's behalf
Patron or intercessor none appear'd;
Much less that durst upon his own head draw
The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudged to death and hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renew'd:—

Father, thy word is pass'd; man shall find grace;
And shall grace not find means? that finds her way
The speediest of thy winged messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought;
Happy for man, so coming; he her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost;
Atonement for himself or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.
Behold me then, me for him, life for life,
I offer: on me let thine anger fall;
Account me man; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage;
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
 Lie vanquish'd; thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself for ever; by thee I live,
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due

by putting in his mouth this horrid doctrine of a day of grace, after which it is not possible for a man to repent; and there can be no sort of excuse for him, except the candid reader will make some allowance for the prejudices which he might possibly receive from the gloomy divinity of that enthusiastic age in which he lived.—Thyer.
All that of me can die; yet that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
For ever with corruption there to dwell:
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoil'd of his vaunted spoil;
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop,
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarm'd.
I through the ample air in triumph high
Shall lead hell captive, maugre hell, and show
The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleased, out of heaven shall look down and smile;
While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes,
Death last, and with his carcasse glut the grave:
Then, with the multitude of my redeem'd,
Shall enter heaven long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anguish shall remain, but peace assured
And reconciliation: wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.
His words here ended, but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seized
All heaven, what this might mean and whither tend,
Wondering; but soon the Almighty thus replied:
O thou, in heaven and earth the only peace
Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou,
My sole complacence! well thou know'st how dear
To me are all my works; nor man the least,
Though last created; that for him I spare
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
By losing thee a while, the whole race lost.

*With corruption there to dwell.*

Psalm. xvi. 10. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;" applied to our Saviour's resurrection by St. Peter, Acts ii. 20, 21.—Newton.

*His words here ended.*

What a charming and lovely picture has Milton given us of God the Son, considered as our Saviour and Redeemer!—not in the least inferior in its way to that grander one in the sixth book, where he describes him clothed with majesty and terror, taking vengeance of his enemies. Before he represents him speaking, he makes "divine compassion, love without end, and grace without measure, visibly to appear in his face," v. 110; and, carrying on the same amiable picture, makes him end it with a countenance "breathing immortal love to mortal men." Nothing could be better contrived to leave a deep impression upon the reader's mind; and I believe one may venture to assert, that no art or words could lift the imagination to a stronger idea of a good and benevolent being. The mute eloquence which our author has so prettily expressed in his "silent, yet spake," is with no less beauty described by Tasso, at the end of Armida's speech to Godfrey, c. iv. st. 65.

Cio detto tace, e la risposta attende
Con atto, ch' en silenzio ha voce, e preghi.—Thyer.
Thou therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
Their nature also to thy nature join;
And be thyself man among men on earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
By wondrous birth: be thou in Adam's room
The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restored,
As many as are restored; without thee none.
His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit
Imputed shall absolve them, who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die;
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.
So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate
Giving to death, and dying to redeem;
So dearly to redeem what hellish hate
So easily destroy'd; and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own,
Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
God-like fruition, quitted all to save
A world from utter loss; and hast been found
By merit more than birthright Son of God:
Found worthiest to be so by being good,
Far more than great or high. Because in thee
Love hath abounded more than glory abounds;
Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy manhood also to this throne;
Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
Anointed universal King. All power
I give thee; reign for ever, and assume
Thy merits; under thee, as head supreme,
Thrones, princedoms, powers, dominions, I reduce:
All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide
In heaven, or earth, or under earth in hell.
When thou attended gloriously from heaven
Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send

* As in him, &c.
See 1 Cor. xv. 22.—Newton.
1 Under thee, as head supreme.

Here the speech begins to swell into a considerable degree of sublimity, and that of the purest and most perfect kind, in no way inconsistent with our most reverent ideas of the great Being who is the speaker, as he is portrayed to us in the Holy Scriptures.
—DUNSTER.
The summoning archangels to proclaim
Thy dread tribunal: forthwith from all winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages, to the general doom
Shall hasten: such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
Then, all thy saints assembled, thou shalt judge
Bad men and angels; they arraign'd shall sink
Beneath thy sentence: hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
And after all their tribulations long
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With joy and love triumphing and fair truth:
Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by,
For regal sceptre then no more shall need;
God shall be all in all. But, all ye gods,
Adore him, who to compass all this dies;
Adore the Son, and honour him as me.
No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
The multitude of angels with a shout,*
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy; heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas fill'd
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns inwove with amaranth and gold;
Immortal adoration, a flower which once
In paradise fast by the tree of life
Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence
To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft shading the fount of life,
And where the river of bliss through midst of heaven
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream;
With these, that never fade, the spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams;

*With a shout.

At this expression of angelic praise, it may be proper to give Addison's remarks unbroken upon the amazing colloquy which they had heard. The critic commences at ver. 56, and ends with ver. 415.

The survey of the whole creation, v. 56, and of everything that is transacted in it, is a prospect worthy of Omniscience; and as much above that in which Virgil has drawn Jupiter, as the Christian idea of the Supreme Being is more rational and sublime than that of the heathens. The particular objects on which he is described to have cast his eye are represented in the most beautiful and lively manner.

Satan's approach to the confines of the creation is finely imaged in the beginning of the speech which immediately follows. The effects of this speech in the blessed spirits, and in the Divine Person to whom it was addressed, cannot but fill the mind of the reader with a secret pleasure and complacency.

I need not point out the beauty of the circumstance, wherein the whole host of angels are represented as standing mute; nor show how proper the occasion was to produce such a silence in heaven. The close of this divine colloquy, and the hymn of angels which follows upon it, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.—ADDISON.
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright 
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone, 
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled. 
Then crown'd again their golden harps they took, 
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side 
Like quivers hung, and with preambles sweet 
Of charming symphonies they introduce 
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high; 
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join 
Melodious part: such concord is in heaven. 
Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent, 
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite, 
Eternal King; thee, Author of all being, 
Fountain of light, thyself invisible 
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sittest 
Throned inaccessible; but when thou shadest 
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud 
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine, 
Dark with excessive bright\textsuperscript{v} thy skirts appear, 
Yet dazzle heaven; that brightest seraphim 
Approach not; but with both wings veil their eyes. 
Thee next they sang of all creation first, 
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude, 
In whose conspicuous countenance without cloud 
Made visible the Almighty Father shines, 
Whom else no creature can behold: on thee 
Impress'd the effulgence of his glory abides; 
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests. 
He heaven of heavens and all the powers therein 
By thee created, and by thee threw down 
The aspiring dominations: thou that day 
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare, 
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels that shook 
Heaven's everlasting frame; while o'er the necks 
Thou drovest of warring angels, disarray'd. 
Back from pursuit thy powers with loud acclaim 
Thee only extoll'd, Son of thy Father's might, 
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes; 
Not so on man; him, through their malice fallen, 
Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom 
So strictly; but much more to pity incline. 
No sooner did thy dear and only Son 
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail man 
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined; 
He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife 
Of mercy and justice in thy face discern'd, 
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat

\textsuperscript{v} Dark with excessive bright.

Gray has imitated this, speaking of Milton,—
Blasted with excess of light, 
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Second to thee, offer'd himself to die
For man's offence. O unexampled love,
Love no where to be found, less than Divine!
Hail, Son of God! Saviour of men! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song.
Henceforth; and never shall my harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.
Thus they in heaven, above the starry sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile upon the firm opague globe
Of this round world, whose first convex divides,
The luminous inferior orbs, inclosed
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old;
Satan alighted walks; a globe far off
It seem'd, now seems a boundless continent,
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of night
Starless, exposed, and ever-threatening storms
Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky;
Save on that side, which from the wall of heaven,
Though distant far, some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air, less vex'd with tempest loud:
Here walk'd the fiend at large in spacious field.
As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
To gorge the flesh of lambs, or yeanling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies towards the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chinesees drive
With sails and wind their cany wagons light:
So on this windy sea of land the fiend

*w A globe far off

Satan's walk upon the outside of the universe, which at a distance appeared to him
of a globular form, but upon his nearer approach looked like an unbounded plain, is
natural and noble; as his roaming upon the frontiers of the creation, between that
mass of matter which was wrought into a world, and that shapeless unformed heap of
materials which still lay in chaos and confusion, strikes the imagination with something
astonishingly great and wild.—Addison.

x As when a vulture.

This simile is very apposite and lively, and corresponds exactly in all the particulars.
Satan coming from hell to earth, in order to destroy mankind, but lighting first upon the
bare convex of the world's outermost orb, "a sea of land," as the poet calls it, is very
fitly compared to a vulture flying in quest of his prey, tender lambs or kids newly
eaned, from the barren rocks to the more fruitful hills and streams of India; but
lighting in his way on the plains of Sericama, which were in a manner "a sea of land"
too; the country being so smooth and open, that carriages were driven (as travellers
report) with sails and wind. Imaus is a celebrated mountain in Asia.—Newton.

y Chinese drive

With sails and wind.

Gray has caught the tone of this:
The dusky people drive before the gales.
Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey;
Alone, for other creature in this place,
Living or lifeless, to be found was none;
None yet, but store hereafter from the earth
Up hither like aerial vapours flew
Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
With vanity had fill'd the works of men:
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory, or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or the other life;
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds:
All the unaccomplished works of nature's hand,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mix'd,
Dissolved on earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution wander here:
Not in the neighbouring moon, as some have dream'd;
Those argent fields more likely habitants,
Translated saints, or middle spirits hold
Betwixt the angelical and human kind:
Hither of ill-join'd sons, and daughters born
First from the ancient world those giants came
With many a vain exploit, though then renown'd:
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Senmaar, and still with vain design
New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
Others came single; he, who to be deem'd
A god, leap'd fondly into Ætna flames,
Empedocles; and he who, to enjoy
Plato's Elysium, leap'd into the sea,
Cleombrotus, and many more too long,
Embyros and idiots, cremites and friars,
White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.
Here pilgrims roam, that stray'd so far to seek
In Golgotha him dead, who lives in heaven;
And they, who to be sure of Paradise,

2 Hither of ill-join'd sons.
He means the sons of God ill-joined with the daughters of men, alluding to that text of Scripture, Gen. vi. 4:—"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." Where, by the "sons of God," some Fathers and commentators have understood angels, as if the angels had been enamoured and married to women: but the true meaning is, that the posterity of Seth and other patriarchs, who were worshippers of the true God, and therefore called "the sons of God," intermarried with the idolatrous posterity of wicked Cain.—Newton.

2 And they, who to be sure of Paradise.
This verse, and the two following, allude to a ridiculous opinion that obtained in the dark ages of popery; that at the time of death, to be clothed in a friar's habit, was an infallible road to heaven.—Bowle.
Dying put on the weeds of Dominie,  
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised;  
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fix'd,  
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs  
The trepidation talk'd, and that first moved:  
And now Saint Peter at heaven's wicket seems  
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot  
Of heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!  
A violent cross wind from either coast  
Blows them transverse ten thousand leagues awry  
Into the devious air: then might ye see  
Cowls, hoods, and habits with their wearers toss'd  
And flutter'd into rags; then reliques, beads,  
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,  
The sport of winds: all these upwhirl'd aloft,  
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off,  
Into a limbo large and broad; since call'd  
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown  
Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.  
All this dark globe the fiend found as he pass'd;  
And long he wander'd till at last a gleam  
Of dawning light turn'd thitherward in haste  
His travel'd steps: far distant he descries  
Ascending by degrees magnificent  
Up to the wall of heaven, a structure high;  
At top whereof, but far more rich, appear'd  
The work as of a kingly palace gate,  
With frontispiece of diamond and gold  
Imbellish'd; thick with sparkling orient gems  
The portal shone, inimitable on earth  
By model or by shading pencil drawn.  
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw  
Angels ascending and descending, bands  
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled  
To Padan-Aram in the field of Luz,  
Dreaming by night under the open sky,  
And waking cried “This is the gate of heaven.”  
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood  
There always, but drawn up to heaven sometimes  
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flow'd  
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon  
Who after came from earth, sailing arrived,  

b And that crystalline sphere.
He speaks here according to the ancient astronomy, adopted and improved by Ptolemy.—Newton.

* Into a limbo large and broad.
The *limbus pœtæm*, as it is called, is a place that the schoolmen supposed to be in the neighbourhood of hell, where the souls of the patriarchs were detained, and those good men who died before our Saviour's resurrection. Our author gives the same name to his "Paradise of Fools," and more rationally places it beyond "the backside of the world."—Newton.
The "Limbo of Vanity" has been censured as unbecoming the dignity of the epic.
Wafted by angels; or flew o'er the lake,
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down; whether to dare
The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:
Direct against which open'd from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the earth, a passage wide;
Wider by far than that of after times
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,
Over the promised land to God so dear;
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests his angels to and fro
Pass'd frequent, and his eye with choice regard,
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beersaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore:
So wide the opening seem'd, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence now on the lower stair,
That scaled by steps of gold to heaven gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen; or some renown'd metropolis,
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams:
Such wonder seized, though after heaven seen,
The spirit malign; but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this world beheld so fair.
Round he surveys, 4 (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of night's extended shade,) from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon: then from pole to pole
He views in breadth; and without longer pause
Downright into the world's first region throws
His flight precipitant; and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique way
Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
Stars distant, but nigh hand seem'd other worlds,

4 Round he surveys.
Or other worlds they seem’d, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens, famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves and flowery vales,
Thrice happy isles; but who dwelt happy there
He stay’d not to inquire. Above them all,
The golden sun, in splendour likest heaven,
Allured his eye: thither his course he bends
Through the calm firmament; but up or down,
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or longitude, where the great luminary,
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
Dispenses light from far; they as they move
Their starry dance in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
Turn swift their various motions; or are turn’d
By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
The universe, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep;
So wondrously was set his station bright.
There lands the fiend; a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the sun’s lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.
The place he found beyond expression bright,
Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone
Not all parts like, but all alike inform’d
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire:
If metal, part seem’d gold, part silver clear;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron’s breastplate; and a stone besides
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen:
That stone, or like to that which here below
Philosophers in vain so long have sought;
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
Volatil Hermes, and call up unbound
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
Drain’d through a limbeck to his native form.
What wonder then if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold; when with one virtuous touch,
The arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,
Produces, with terrestrial humour mix’d,
Here in the dark so many precious things,
Of colour glorious and effect so rare?

Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.
The spots in the sun are visible with a telescope: but astronomer perhaps never saw,
“through his glazed optic tube,” such a spot as Satan, now he was in the sun’s orb.
The poet mentions this glass the oftener in honour of Galileo, whom he means here by
the astronomer.—Newton.
Here matter new to gaze the devil met
Undazzled; far and wide his eye commands:
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
But all sunshine. As when his beams at noon
Culminate from the equator, as they now
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air,
No where so clear, sharpen’d his visual ray
To objects distant far; whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious angel stand.
The same whom John’s saw also in the sun:
His back was turn’d, but not his brightness hid;
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head; nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings
Lay waving round: on some great charge employ’d
He seem’d, or fix’d in cogitation deep.
Glad was the spirit impure, as now in hope
To find who might direct his wandering flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of man,

His journey’s end, and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape;
Which else might work him danger or delay:
And now a stripling cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffused, so well he feign’d;
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek play’d; wings he wore
Of many a colour’d plume sprinkled with gold;
His habit fit for speed succinct; and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand.
He drew not nigh unheard; the angel bright,
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turn’d,
Admonish’d by his ear; and straight was known
The archangel Uriel, one of the seven,
Who in God’s presence nearest to his throne
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes
That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth
Bear his swift errands, over moist and dry,
O’er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts:

Uriel,” for thou of those seven spirits that stand
In sight of God’s high throne, gloriously bright,
The first art wont his great authentic will

† The same whom John.
See Rex. xix. 17:—“And I saw an angel standing in the sun.”—Newton.

*S Uriel.
His name is derived from two Hebrew words, which signify God is my light. He is
mentioned as a good angel in the second book of Esdras; and the Jews, and some
Christians, conceive him to be an angel of light according to his name, and therefore
he has, properly, his station in the sun.—Newton.
Interpreter through highest heaven to bring,  
Where all his sons thy embassy attend;  
And here art likeliest by supreme decree  
Like honour to obtain, and as his eye  
To visit oft this new creation round;  
Unspeakable desire to see, and know  
All these his wondrous works, but chiefly man,  
His chief delight and favour, him for whom  
All these his works so wondrous he ordain'd,  
Hath brought me from the quires of cherubim  
Alone thus wandering. Brightest seraph, tell  
In which of all these shining orbs hath man  
His fixed seat, or fixed seat hath none,  
But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;  
That I may find him, and, with secret gaze  
Or open admiration, him behold,  
On whom the great Creator hath bestow'd  
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces pour'd:  
That both in him and all things, as is meet,  
The universal Maker we may praise;  
Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes  
To deepest hell; and, to repair that loss,  
Created this new happy race of men  
To serve him better: wise are all his ways.  

So spake the false dissembler unperceived;  
For neither man nor angel can discern  
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks  
Invisible, except to God alone,  
By his permissive will, through heaven and earth:  
And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps  
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity  
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill  
Where no ill seems; which now for once beguiled  
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held  
The sharpest-sighted spirit of all in heaven:

[Book III.]

What is said here of hypocrisy is censured as a digression; but it seems no more than is absolutely necessary; for otherwise it might be thought very strange, that the evil spirit should pass undiscovered by the archangel Uriel, the regent of the sun, and the sharpest-sighted spirit in heaven; and therefore the poet endeavours to account for it by saying, that hypocrisy cannot be discerned by man or angel; it is invisible to all but God, &c. But yet the evil spirit did not pass wholly undiscovered; for, though Uriel was not aware of him now, yet he found reason to suspect him afterwards from his furious gestures on the mount.—Newton.

The poet’s recollection of his having been detained by the matchless hypocrisy of Cromwell, might have inspired him with this admirable apology for Uriel.—Hayley.

He must be very critically splenetic indeed who will not pardon this little digressional observation. There is not in my opinion a nobler sentiment, or one more poetically expressed, in the whole poem. What great art has the poet shown in taking off the dryness of a mere moral sentence, by throwing it into the form of a short and beautiful allegory!—Thyer.
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus return'd:—
Fair angel, thy desire, which tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify
The great Work-master, leads to no excess
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,
Contented with report, hear only in heaven:
For wonderful indeed are all his works,
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight:
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number; or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw, when at his word the formless mass,
This world's material mould, came to a heap;
Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled; stood vast infinitude confined;
Till at his second bidding darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
And this ethereal quintessence k of heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That roll'd orbicular, and turn'd to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
Each had his place appointed, each his course;
The rest in circuit walls this universe.
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines;
That place is earth, the seat of man; that light
His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,
Night would invade; but there the neighbouring moon,
So call that opposite fair star, her aid,
Timely interposes; and her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing, through mid heaven,
With borrow'd light her countenance triform
Hence fills and empties to enlighten the earth;
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
That spot to which I point is Paradise,
Adam's abode; those lofty shades his bower:
Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires.

\[1\] Pleasant to know.
This is one of those places where a negligence in metre is not only excusable, in
taking away monotony, but carries with it a dignity which no smoothness of verse could
give it, the words being in almost the same order as in Scripture.—Stillingfleet.

\[k\] And this ethereal quintessence.

The four elements hasted to their quarters, but this fifth essence flew upward.—
Newton.
Thus said, he turn'd; and Satan, bowing low,
As to superior spirits is wont in heaven,
Where honour due and reverence none neglects,
Took leave; and toward the coast of earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
Throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel,
Nor stay'd, till on Niphates' top he lights.

1 On Niphates' top.

The poet places Satan on this mountain, says Hume, because it borders on Mesopotamia, in which the most judicious describers of Paradise place it.—DUNSTER.

Satan after having long wandered upon the surface, or utmost wall of the universe, discovers at last a wide gap in it, which led into the creation, and is described as the opening through which the angels pass to and fro into the lower world, upon their errands to mankind. His sitting upon the brink of this passage, and taking a survey of the whole face of nature that appeared to him new and fresh in all its beauties, with the simile illustrating this circumstance, fills the mind of the reader with as surprising and glorious an idea as any that arises in the whole poem. He looks down into that vast hollow of the universe with the eye, or as Milton calls it in his first book, with the ken of an angel. He surveys all the wonders in this immense amphitheatre that lies between both the poles of heaven, and takes in at one view the whole round of the creation.

His flight between the several worlds that shined on every side of him, and the particular description of the sun, are set forth in all the wantonness of a luxuriant imagination. His shape, speech, and behaviour, upon his transforming himself into an angel of light, are touched with exquisite beauty. The poet's thought of directing Satan to the sun, which in the vulgar opinion of mankind is the most conspicuous part of the creation; the placing in it an angel; is a circumstance very finely contrived, and the more adjusted to a poetical probability, as it was a received doctrine among the most famous philosophers, that every orb had its intelligence; and as an apostle in sacred writ is said to have seen such an angel in the sun. In the answer which this angel returns to the disguised evil spirit, there is such a becoming majesty as is altogether suitable to a superior being. The part of it in which he represents himself as present at the creation, is very noble in itself; and not only proper where it is introduced, but requisite to prepare the reader for what follows in the seventh book:—

I saw, when at his word the formless mass,
This world's material mould, came to a heap:
Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled; stood vast infinitude confined;
Till, at his second bidding, Darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.

In the following part of the speech he points out the earth with such circumstances, that the reader can scarce forbear fancying himself employed on the same distant view of it.—ADDISON.
BOOK IV.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I believe that this book of the poem is a general favourite with readers: there are parts of it beautiful; but it appears to me far less grand than the books which precede it; it has, I think, not only less sublimity, but less poetical invention. It required less imagination to describe the garden of Eden than Pandæmonium or Chaos. Adam and Eve are—the one noble, the other lovely;—but still they are human beings, with human passions.

Some criticisms might be made both on the described scenery, and on the occupations of our first parents. The gardener's skill and labours do not seem very necessary or natural at the first spring of the earth's creation. The bard seems for the moment so far to have forgot himself as to attempt rivalry with the picturesque inventions of mere human poets: there is not that compression and massy strength, which is the usual quality of Miltonic painting. Grandeur was Milton's element, not beauty or tenderness! Invention will only be found where the natural strength lies, not where it is sought by labour and art. Where Milton drew a giant, he invented;—where he drew beauty, he borrowed.

It has often been observed, that Satan is the hero of "Paradise Lost," not Adam; and this is true! Neither Adam nor Eve take a part sufficiently active and important.

ARGUMENT.

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil, journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described, overleaps the bounds; sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life, as the highest in the garden, to look about him. The garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve: his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall: overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his tempted, by seducing them to transgress: then leaves them awhile, to know farther of their state by some other means. Meanwhile, Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at noon by his sphere in the shape of a good angel down to Paradise, discovered afterwards by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest: their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong angels to Adam's bower. lest the evil spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers, prepares resistance, but, hindered by a sign from heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O, for that warning voice,\(^a\) which he who saw
The Apocalypse, heard cry in heaven aloud,

\(^a\) O, for that warning voice.

The poet opens this book with a wish, in the manner of Shakespeare: "O, for a Muse of fire!" Pro. to Hen. V.; "O, for a falconer's voice!" Rom. and Juliet, a. ii. s. 2. And, in order to raise the horror and attention of his reader, he introduces his relation of Satan's adventures upon earth, by wishing that the same warning voice had been uttered now at Satan's first coming; which St. John, who in a vision saw the Apocalypse, or revelation of the most remarkable events which were to befall the Christian
Then when the dragon, put to second rout, 5
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
'Bwoe to the inhabitants on earth'! that now,
While time was, our first parents had been warn'd
The coming of their secret foe, and 'scape'd,
Haply so 'scape'd his mortal snare; for now,
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter ere the accuser of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail man his loss
Of that first battel, and his flight to hell:
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, 6 though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which nigh the birth,
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself: horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The hell within him; for within him hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place: now conscience wakes despair
That slumber'd; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be,
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;
Sometimes towards heaven 7 and the full blazing sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began:—
O thou, that, with surpassing 8 glory crown'd,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the God
curch to the end of the world, heard when the dragon was put to second rout, Rev. xii. 12. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath."—Newton.

b Yet not rejoicing in his speed.

Satan was bold far off and fearless; and, as he drew nearer, was pleased with hoped success: but now he is come to earth to begin his dire attempt, he does not rejoice in it; his heart misgives him; horror and doubt distract him. This is all very natural.—Newton.

c Sometimes towards heaven.

All this passage is highly poetical and pathetic.

d O thou, that, with surpassing.

One of those magnificent speeches to which no other name can be given, than that it is supereminently Miltonic. This is mainly argumentative sublimity; in which I think that he is even still greater than in his splendid and majestic imagery. The alternations of this dreadful speech strike and move the mind like the changes of the tempest in a dark night, when the thunder and lightning rear and flash, and then intermit, and then redouble again.

Compare the opening speech in the Phenisse of Euripides; where Porson has remarked, that Milton had once intended to have written a tragedy, not an epic, and to have commenced it with this address to the Sun. It is only necessary to give the Professor's authority:—"These verses, several years before the poem was begun, were shown to me and some others, as designed for the very beginning of a tragedy upon this subject."—Edward Phillips.
Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminish'd heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice; and add thy name,
O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once—above thy sphere;
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King.
Ah, wherefore? he deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks?
How due! yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high,
I 'sdain'd subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome; still paying, still to owe;
Forgetful what from him I still received;
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged: what burden then?
O, had his powerful destiny ordain'd
Me some inferior angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition! Yet why not? some other power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part; but other powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without, to all temptations arm'd.
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed; since love or hate,
To me alike, it deals eternal woe:
Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rue's.
Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide;
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.
O, then at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath; whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts.
Than to submit; boasting I could subdue 85
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain;
Under what torments inwardly I groan;
While they adore me on the throne of hell:
With diadem and sceptre high advanced,
The lower still I fall; only supreme
In misery: such joy ambition finds.
But say I could repent, and could obtain
By act of grace my former state; how soon
Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feign'd submission swore! Ease would recount
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
For never can true reconcilement grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep;
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission bought with double smart.
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging peace:
All hope excluded thus; behold, instead
Of us outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind, created, and for him this world.
So farewell hope, and with hope, farewell, fear;
Farewell, remorse: all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least
Divided empire with heaven's king I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As man ere long and this new world* shall know.
Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face
cThrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair;
Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betray'd
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
each perturbation smooth'd with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first

*This new world.

Satan being now within prospect of Eden, and looking round upon the glories of the creation, is filled with sentiments different from those which he discovered whilst he was in hell. The place inspires him with thoughts more adapted to it. He reflects upon the happy condition from whence he fell, and breaks forth into a speech that is softened with several transient touches of remorse and self-accusation; but at length he confirms himself in impenitence, and in his design of drawing man into his own state of guilt and misery. This conflict of passions is roused with a great deal of art, as the opening of his speech to the Sun is very bold and noble.

This speech is, I think, the finest that is ascribed to Satan in the whole poem.—Addison.

cEach passion dimm'd his face.

Each passion, ire, envy, and despair, dimm'd his countenance, which was thrice changed with pale through the successive agitations of these three passions: for, that paleness is the proper hue of envy and despair, everybody knows; and we always reckon that sort of anger the most deadly and diabolical which is accompanied with a pale, livid countenance.—Newton.
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couch'd with revenge:
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel once warn'd; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He mark'd and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champain head—
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up grew
Insuperable hight of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appear'd, with gay enamel'd colours mix'd:
On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams,
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath shower'd the earth; so lovely seem'd
That landskip: and of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair: now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are pass'd
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odours from the spicy shore

§ Vernal delight and joy.

So in Milton's 'Tractate of Education': "In those vernal seasons of the year, when
the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go
out, and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth."—Todd.

§ Whisper whence they stole.

This expression of the air's stealing and dispersing the sweets of flowers, is very
common in the best Italian poets.—Newton.

1 Sabæan odours.

Wakefield says that Milton delineated this beautiful description from Diodorus
Siculus, lib. iii. 46, where the aromatic plants in Sabea, or Arabia Felix, are described
Of Araby the bless'd; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles:
So entertain'd those odorous sweets the fiend
Who came their bane; though with them better pleased
Than Asmodæus\(^1\) with the fishy flame,
That drove him, though enamour'd, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to \(\mathcal{A}\)gypt, there fast bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journey'd on, pensive and slow;
But farther way found none; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplex'd
All path of man or beast that pass'd that way.
One gate there only was, and that look'd cast
On the other side: which when the arch-felon saw,
Due entrance he disdain'd; and in contempt,
At one slight bound high overlap'd all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve
In hurled cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold:
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burglar, whose substantial doors,
Cross'd-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles:
So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold;
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.
Thence up he flew; and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest\(^k\) there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regain'd, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant,\(^1\) but only used

as yielding "inexpressible fragrance to the sense, not unenjoyed even by the navigator, though he sails by at a great distance from the shore: for, in the spring, when the wind blows off land, the odour from the aromatic trees and plants diffuses itself over all the neighbouring sea." Notes on \(\text{Gray}, \text{p. 10.}--\text{Todd.}

\(^1\) Asmodæus.

This history of Asmodæus has by no means a good effect.—\text{Dunster.}

\(^k\) The middle tree and highest.

"The tree of life also in the midst of the garden," Gen. ii. 9. "In the midst" is a Hebrew phrase, expressing not only the local situation of this enlivening tree, but denoting its excellence, as being the most considerable, the tallest, goodliest, and most lovely tree in that beauteous garden planted by God himself. See Rev. ii. 7.—\text{Hume.}

\(^1\) Of that life-giving plant.

He should have taken occasion, from thence, to reflect duly on life and immortality, and thereby to have put himself in a condition to regain true life and a happy immortality.—\text{Newton.}
For prospect, what well used had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him; but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him with new wonder now he views,
To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea, more,
A heaven on earth: for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was;™ by him in the east
Of Eden planted; Eden stretch'd her line
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings;
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordain'd:
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to Life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,
Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden™ went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Pass'd underneath engulf'd; for God had thrown
That mountain as his garden mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Water'd the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears;
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy errour under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise; which not nice art

™ Of God the garden was.
So the sacred text, Gen. ii. 8. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in
Eden," that is, eastward of the place where Moses wrote his history, though Milton
says, "in the east of Eden;" and then we have, in a few lines, our author's topography
of Eden.—Newton.

™ Southward through Eden.
This is, most probably, the river formed by the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris,
which flows southward, and must needs be a river large by the joining of two such
mighty rivers. Upon this river it is supposed, by the best commentators, that the
terrestrial Paradise was situated. Milton calls this river Tigris in b. ix. 71.—Newton.
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon
Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain;
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrownd'the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view:
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others, whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed;
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store;
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant: meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crown'd
Her crystal mirrour holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves; while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal spring. Not that fair field
Of Emna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyscan isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara, though this by some supposed

While universal Pan.

While universal Nature, linked with the graceful Seasons, danced a perpetual round, and throughout the earth, yet unpolluted, led eternal spring. All the poets favour the opinion of the world's creation in the spring. See Virgil, Georg. ii. 338, and Ovid, Met. i. 107. That the Graces were taken for the beautiful Seasons, in which all things seem to dance and smile with an universal joy, in plain from Horace, Od. iv. viii. 1., &c. And Homer joins both the Graces and Hours hand in hand with Harmony, Youth, and Venus, in his Hymn to Apollo.—Hume.

Mount Amara.

Mount Amara is the modern name of what the ancients called Pylæ, which are high hills in Ethiopia, under the Equator. Between these hills there is a plain abounding with the rich and beautiful productions of nature, and highly ornamented with the
True Paradise, under the Æthiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend
Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all;
And worthy seem'd: for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed;
Whence true authority in men: though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal, seem'd;
For contemplation he and valour form'd.
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses* wore
Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils; which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal'd;
Then was not guilty shame: dishonest shame
Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banish'd from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
Of God or angel, for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met;
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.

various operations of art. In this place the kings of Abyssinia keep their children wonderfully confined; and when a king dies, he that is to succeed him is brought thence and set upon the throne.—Massey.

* Under the Æthiop line.


* Golden tresses.

This sort of hair was most admired and celebrated by the ancients. Milton's widow had hair of this colour.—Newton.
Under a tuft of shade, that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side
They sat them down; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool zephyr, and made case
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper fruits they fell,
Nectarine fruits, which the complaint boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat reclined
On the soft downy bank damask'd with flowers.
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream:
Nor gentle purpose nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple, link'd in happy and nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking play'd
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den:
Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers,ounces, pards,
Gambol'd before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
Couch'd, and now fill'd with pasture gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hastening now with prone career
To the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale
Of heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Searce thus at length fail'd speech 1 recover'd sad:—

1. Under a tuft of shade.

Milton appears to me here to have obligations to a passage of the "Sarotis," of Masenius. I must also observe, that Milton, where he is undoubtedly to be traced, still abounds in "those masterly beauties, and that exquisite colouring," which in other poets is a certain index of originality. But I conceive that when Milton in his vast and extensive reading met with any poetical idea that was congenial to his own vivid and tasteful imagination, he boldly seized it and considered as his own, and worked upon it with the same noble confidence, unimpaired by that sense of plagiarism, and unrestrained by those shackles of servile imitation, that mark the common "pecus imitatorum."—DUSTER.

The truth is, that Milton almost always gave a new character to what he took. The similar passages so numerously pointed out by commentators are not similar in force and poetical spirit. Words simple or compound may be borrowed (as from Sylvester's "Du Bartas"), but the context and application are different. Just as the brick, which is taken from a cottage, may be worked into the walls of a palace; but is the architecture of the palace therefore taken from the cottage?—Many of the words used by Milton may be found in the most miserable poetasters of his predecessors.

1. Searce thus at length fail'd speech.
O hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not spirits, yet to heavenly spirits bright
Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that form'd them on their shape hath pour'd!
Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe;
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
Happy, but for so happy ill secured
Long to continue; and this high seat your heaven
Ill fenced for heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is enter'd; yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth: my dwelling haply may not please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
Accept, your Maker's work: he gave it me,
Which I as freely give: hell shall unfold, *a
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings: there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loth to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wrong'd,
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do; yet public reason just,
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged,
By conquering this new world, compels me now *v
To do, what else, though damn'd, I should abhor.
So spake the fiend and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd

the poet the better opportunity of enlarging his description of them. This is very beautiful.—Newton.

*a* Hell shall unfold.

Isaiah xiv. 9: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations."—Gillies.

*v* Compels me now.

Necessity, the tyrant's plea.—Newton.

The same plea is said to have been Cromwell's apology for the murder of the king: for it is related that, on the evening of the execution of Charles, the arch-hypocrite walked round the corpse, as it lay in one of the rooms at Whitehall, muffled up in a long black cloak, and repeating to himself "Dreadful necessity!" See "Europ. Mag." vol. xx. p. 106, and the "Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons," &c. vol. i. p. 254.—Todd.
Of those four-footed kinds; himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end;
Nearer to view his prey, and, unspied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn,
By word or action mark'd: about them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlièn two gentle fawns at play,
Straight couches close; then, rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Gripped in each paw: when Adam first of men,
To first of women Eve, thus moving speech,
Turn'd him all ear to hear new utterance flow:
Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample world,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite;
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
In all this happiness; who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge; * of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge, planted by the 'Tree of Life';
So near grows death to life, whatso'er death is;
Some dreadful thing no doubt: for well thou know'st
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree;
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Confer'd upon us; and dominion given
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights:
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty; following our delightful task
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;
Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.
To whom thus Eve replied:—O thou, for whom

* This one, this easy charge.

It was very natural for Adam to discourse of this; and this was what Satan wanted more particularly to learn: and it is expressed from God's command, Gen. ii. 16, 17. In like manner, when Adam says afterwards, "dominion given over all other creatures," it is taken from the divine commission, Gen. i. 28. These things are so evident, that it is almost superfluous to mention them. If we take notice of them, it is that every reader may be sensible how much of Scripture our author has wrought into this divine poem.—Newton.
And from whom I was form’d, flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head; what thou hast said is just and right:
For we to him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks: I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst no where find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself repos'd
Under a shade on flowers; much wondering where
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
Pure as the expanse of heaven: I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seem'd another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the watery gleam appear'd,
Bending to look on me: I started back,
It started back; but pleased I soon return'd,
Pleased it return'd as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love: there I had fix'd
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warn'd me: What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays

x That day I oft remember.

From this, as well as several other passages in the poem, it appears that the poet supposes Adam and Eve to have been created, and to have lived many days in Paradise before the Fall. See b. iv. 639, 680, 712, and b. v. 31, &c.—Newton.
The whole of this passage is exquisitely tender, beautiful, and picturesque, in expression, as well as in imagery and sentiment.

y To look into the clear

Smooth lake.

This account that Eve gives of her coming to a lake, and there falling in love with her own image, when she had seen no other human creature, is much more probable and natural, as well as more delicate and beautiful, than the famous story of Narcissus, in Ovid; from whom Milton manifestly took the hint, and has expressly imitated some passages: but has avoided all his puerilities, without losing any of his beauties; as the reader may easily observe by comparing both together (Met. iii. 457).—Newton.

I cannot help remarking how the story of Narcissus is improved by this application: the same might be said of almost every passage Milton has borrowed from the ancients. The improvement is so obvious in one main circumstance, that it seems needless to mention it: yet, as I do not remember that Mr. Addison has done it, I will just observe, that the want of probability, that Narcissus, who had lived in society, should be so far deceived as to take an image in the water for a reality, is here totally removed. We may apply to Milton on this occasion what Aristotle says of Homer, that he taught poets how to lie properly.—Stillington.

==I started back,==

How admirably expressed!
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces; he
Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race. What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,
Under a platane; yet, methought, less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turn'd:
Thou following criedst aloud, Return, fair Eve;
Whom fliest thou? whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life; to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear.
Part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim,
My other half: with that thy gentle hand
Seized mine: I yielded: and from that time see
How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

So spake our general mother: and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved
And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he, in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love; as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregn's the clouds
That shed May flowers; and press'd her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the devil turn'd
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plain'd:

Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two,

Imparadised in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss; while I to hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines.
Yet let me not forget what I have gain'd

* So spake our general mother.

What a charming picture of love and innocence has the poet given us in this paragraph! There is the greatest warmth of affection, and yet the most exact delicacy and decorum. One would have thought that a scene of this nature could not, with any consistency, have been introduced into a divine poem; and yet our author has so nicely and judiciously covered the soft description with a veil of modesty, that the purest and chastest mind can find no room for offence. The meek surrender, and the half-embrace ment, are circumstances inimitable. An Italian's imagination would have hurried him the length of ten or a dozen stanzas upon this occasion, and with its luxuriant wildness changed Adam and Eve into a Venus and Adonis.—Thyer.
From their own mouths; [all is not theirs] it seems:  
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge call’d, 
Forbidden them to taste: knowledge forbidden? b  
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord 
Envy them that? can it be sin to know? 
Can it be death: and do they only stand 
By ignorance? is that their happy state, 
The proof of their obedience and their faith?  
O fair foundation laid whereon to build 
Their ruin! hence I will excite their minds 
With more desire to know, and to reject 
Envious commands, invented with design 
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt 
Equal with Gods; aspiring to be such, 
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue? 
But first with narrow search I must walk round 
This garden, and no corner leave unspied; 
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet 
Some wandering spirit of heaven by fountain side 
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw 
What farther would be learn’d. Live while ye may,  
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return, 
Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed.  
So saying, his proud step he scornful turn’d, 
But with sly circumspection, and began 
Through wood, through waste, o’er hill, o’er dale, his roam. 
Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where heaven 
With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun 
Slowly descended, and with right aspect 
Against the eastern gate of Paradise 
Level’d his evening rays: it was a rock 
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds, 
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent 
Accessible from earth, one entrance high; 
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung 
Still as it rose, impossible to climb. 
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,  
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night; 
About him exercised heroic games 

a Knowledge forbidden. 

This is artfully perverted by Satan, as if some useful and necessary knowledge was forbidden: whereas our first parents were created with perfect understanding; and the only knowledge that was forbidden was the knowledge of evil by the commission of it. —Newton. 

b Live while ye may. 

This is one of those exclamations of Satan, while wavering in wickedness and half-repenting his malicious designs on the happiness of innocent beings.

c Gabriel sat. 

One of the archangels sent to show Daniel the vision of the four monarchies and the seventy weeks, Dan. vii. ix.: and to the Virgin Mary, to reveal the incarnation of our Saviour, Luke i. His name in Hebrew signifies the man of God, or the strength and power of God; well posted as chief of the angelic guards placed about Paradise.—Hume.
The unarm'd youth of heaven; but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high with diamond flaming and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and show the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds: he thus began in haste:
Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day at highth of noon came to my sphere
A spirit, zealous, as he seem'd, to know
More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly man,
God's latest image: I described his way
Bent all on speed, and mark'd his aery gait;
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discern'd his looks
Alien from heaven, with passions foul obscured:
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him: one of the banish'd crew,
I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise
New troubles; him thy care must be to find.
To whom the winged warrior thus return'd:
Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
Amid the sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
See far and wide: in at this gate none pass
The vigilance here placed, but such as come
Well known from heaven; and since meridian hour
No creature thence. If spirit of other sort,
So minded, have o'erleap'd these earthly bounds
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But if within the circuit of these walks
In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know.
So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
Return'd on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downwards to the sun, now fallen
Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither roll'd
Diurnal; or this less volubil earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there,
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.
Now came still evening on; and twilight gray

Now come still evening on.

This is the first evening in the poem; for the action of the preceding books lying out of the sphere of the sun, the time could not be computed. When Satan came first to the earth, and made that famous soliloquy at the beginning of this book, the sun
Had in her sober livery all things clad:
Silence accompanied: for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased: b now glow’d the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveil’d her peerless light,
And o’er the dark her silver mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: Fair consort, the hour
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
Mind us of like repose; since God hath set
Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
Successive; and the timely dew of sleep,
Now falling with soft slumbrous weight, inclines
Our eyelids: other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unemploy’d, and less need rest:
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be risen,
And at our pleasant labour, to reform

was “high in his meridian tower;” and this is the evening of that day; and surely there never was a finer evening:—words cannot furnish out a more lovely description. The greatest poets in all ages have, as it were, vied one with another in their description of evening and night; but, for the variety of numbers and pleasing images, I know of nothing parallel or comparable to this to be found among all the treasures of ancient or modern poetry.—Newton.

This praise is not too high: the imagery consists of the most extraordinary union of richness, nature, and simplicity; and this is equally true of the expression.

† Twilight gray.

Milton is very singular in the frequent and particular notice which he takes of the twilight, whenever he has occasion to speak of the evening. I do not remember to have met with the same in any other poet; and yet there is, to be sure, something so agreeable in that soft and gentle light, and such a peculiar fragrance attends it in the summer months, that it is a circumstance which adds great beauty to his description. I have often thought that the weakness of our poet’s eyes, to which this kind of light must be vastly pleasant, might be the reason that he so often introduces the mention of it.—Thyer.

The two following lines of Mason were much admired by Gray:

While from the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Mock Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners gray.

§ Her amorous descant sung.

Isaac Walton, in his “Complete Angler,” has the following passage on the nightingale:—“He that at midnight should hear, as I have often done, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of the nightingale’s voice, might well be lifted above earth.”—Todd.

b Silence was pleased.

This personification is taken, though it happens not to be observed by any of the commentators, from the “Hero and Leander” of Musæus, v. 280.—Jos. Warton.
Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon with branches overgrown,
That mock our scent manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth;
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsnought,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
Meanwhile, as nature wills, night bids us rest.

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adourn’d:

My author and disposer, what thou biddest
Unargued I obey’d; so God ordains.

God is thy law, thou mine;] to know no more
Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise.
With thee conversing, I forgot all time;
All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild; then silent night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glistening with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night,
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?

To whom our general ancestor replied:

Daughter of God and men, accomplish’d Eve,
Those have their course to finish, round the earth,
By morrow evening; and from land to land
In order, though to nations yet unborn,
Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;
Lest total darkness should by night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In nature and all things; which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
Of various influence foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue; on all kinds that grow

As Milton was an universal scholar, so he had not a little affectation of showing his learning of all kinds, and makes Adam discourse here somewhat like an adept in astrology, which was too much the philosophy of his own times. What he says after-
On earth, made hereby apter to receive  
Perfection from the sun’s more potent ray.  
These then, though unbecled in deep of night,  
Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,
That heaven would want spectators, God want praise:
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night. How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other’s note,
Singing their great Creator! oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,
[Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven.]
Thus talking, hand in hand alone they pass’d
On to their blissful bower: it was a place
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
All things to man’s delightful use: the roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf: on either side
Acanthus and each odoruous bushy shrub
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin,
Rear’d high their flourish’d heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
Croesus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider’d the ground, more colour’d than with stone
Of costliest emblem: other creature here,
Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none;
Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower
More sacred and sequester’d, though but feign’d,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept; nor nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,

wards of numberless spiritual creatures walking the earth unseen, and joining in praises to their great Creator, is of a nobler strain; more agreeable to reason and revelation, as well as more pleasing to the imagination; and seems to be an imitation and improvement of Hesiod’s notion of good genius, the guardians of mortal men, clothed with air, wandering everywhere through the earth.—Newton.

1 Celestial voices.

This notion of their singing thus by night is agreeable to the account given by Lucretius, iv. 583.

Quorum noctivagó strepitá, ludoque jocáni,
Adffírmant volgo tacítura silentia rumpí,
Chordarumque sonos fíeri dulcesque quercelas,
Tibia quas fundít digitis pulenta canentum. Newton.

See the present editor’s translation of this beautiful passage of Lucretius, thrown into a sonnet among his Poems, published March, 1785, 8vo.
Espoused Eve deck'd first her nuptial bed;
And heavenly quires the hymenaeus sung,
What day the genial angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorn'd,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endow'd with all their gifts; and, O! too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
Both turn'd, and under open sky adored
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole. Thou also madest the night,
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
Which we, in our appointed work employ'd,
Have finish'd happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordain'd by thee; and this delicious place,
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and unicort falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite; both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep.

This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure,
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and, ease'd the putting off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid; nor turn'd, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence;
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and man?
Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbecitting holiest place;
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition; nor in court-amours,
Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lull'd by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Shower'd roses, which the morn repair'd.
Sleep on, Blest pair; and, O! yet happiest; if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more!
Now had night measured with her shadowy cone
Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault;
And from their ivory port the cherubim,
Forth issuing at the accustom'd hour, stood arm'd
To their night-watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:
Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:
Our circuit meets full west. As flame they part,

k Whose bed is undefiled.
In allusion to Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." And Milton must have had a good opinion of marriage, or he would never have had three wives: and though this panegyricon upon wedded love may be condemned as a digression, yet it can hardly be called a digression, when it grows so naturally out of the subject, and is introduced so properly, while the action of the poem is in a manner suspended, and while Adam and Eve are lying down to sleep: and if morality be one great end of poetry, that end cannot be better promoted than by such digressions as this, and that upon hypocrisy at the latter part of the third book.—NEWTON.

l Mix'd dance, or wanton mask.
An apparent sarcasm on the dissolute court of Charles II.

m With her shadowy cone.

n Their ivory port.
We cannot conceive that here is any allusion to the ivory gate of sleep, mentioned by Homer and Virgil, from whence false dreams proceeded; for the poet could never intend to insinuate, that what he was saying about the angelic guards was all a fiction: as the rock was of alabaster, ver. 543, so he makes the gate of ivory, which was very proper for an eastern gate, as the finest ivory comes from the East;
India mittit ebur.—Virg. Georg. i. 57.
and houses and palaces of ivory are mentioned as instances of magnificence in Scripture, as are likewise doors of ivory in Ovid, Met. iv. 185.—NEWTON.

o Uzziel.
The next commanding angel to Gabriel: his name in Hebrew is the strength of God, as all God's mighty angels are.—HUME.

p As flame they part.
This break in the verse is excellently adapted to the subject. They part, as the flame divides into separate wreaths: a short simile, but expressive of their quickness and rapidity, and of the brightness and splendour of their armour at the same time. Homer, in the second book of the Iliad, compares the march of the Trojans to the
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.  
From these two strong and subtle spirits he call’d  
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:  
Ithuriel and Zephon with wing’d speed  
Search through this garden, leave unsearch’d no nook;  
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,  
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.  
This evening from the sun’s decline arrived,  
Who tells of some infernal spirit seen  
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped  
The bars of hell, on errand bad no doubt:  
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.  
So saying, on he led his radiant files,  
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct  
In search of him they sought: him there they found  
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,  
Assaying by his devilish art to reach  
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge  
Illusions as he list, phantasms, and dreams;  
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint  
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise  
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure; thence raise  
At least distemper’d, discontented thoughts,  
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,  
Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride.  
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear  
Touch’d lightly; for no falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper, but returns  
Of force to its own likeness: up he starts  
Discover’d and surprised. As when a spark  
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid  
Fit for the tun, some magazine to store  
Against a rumour’d war; the smutty grain,  
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;  
So started up in his own shape the fiend.  
Back stepp’d those two fair angels, half amazed  
So sudden to behold the grisly king;  
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon:  
Which of those rebel spirits adjudged to hell  
Comest thou, escaped thy prison? and, transform’d,  
Why sat’st thou like an enemy in wait,  
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?

flame; but this simile is better suited to those beings of whom the Scripture says,  
"He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."—NEWTON.

Ithuriel and Zephon.

Two angels having their names as indicative of their offices. Ithuriel, in Hebrew,  
the discovery of God: Zephon, in Hebrew, a secret, or searcher of secrets.—Hume.

Discover’d and surprised.  
This is a magnificent image, magnificently expressed.
Know ye not then, said Satan, fill’d with scorn,
Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar:
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn:—
Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminish’d brightness to be known,
As when thou stood’st in heaven upright and pure:
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee, and thou resembllest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul.

But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm.

So spake the cherub; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible: abash’d the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely;* saw, and pined
His loss: but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impair’d; yet seem’d
Undaunted. If I must contend, said he,
Best with the best, the sender not the sent,
Or all at once; more glory will be won,
Or less be lost. Thy fear, said Zephon bold,
Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee, wicked and thence weak.

The fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed rein’d, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb: to strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quell’d
His heart, not else dismay’d. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rouding guards
Just met, and closing stood in squadron join’d,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus call’d aloud:—

O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
And with them comes a third of regal port,
But faded splendour wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the prince of hell,
Nor likely to part hence without contest:

* Virtue in her shape how lovely.

What is said here of seeing "virtue in her shape how lovely," is manifestly borrowed from Plato and Cicero:—"Formam quidem ipsum et quasi faciem honesti vides, qua si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut alt Plato) excitaret sapientiae." Cic. de Off.—

NEWTON.
Stand firm; for in his look defiance lours.

He scarce had ended, when those two approach'd,
And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture couch'd.

To whom with stern regard thus Gabriel spake:
Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed¹
To thy transgressions? and disturb'd the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example? but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employ'd, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss.

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:
Gabriel, thou hadst in heaven the esteem of wise,
And such I held thee; but this question ask'd
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from hell,
Though thither doom'd? thou wouldst thyself no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight; which in this place I sought.
To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
But evil hast not tried: and wilt object
His will who bounds us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that darkurance: thus much what was ask'd.
The rest is true, they found me where they say;
But that implies not violence or harm.

Thus he in scorn. The warlike angel moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied;—
O loss of one in heaven to judge of wise!
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew;
And now returns him from his prison 'scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds in hell prescribed;
So wise he judges it to fly from pain
However, and to 'scape his punishment.
So judge thou still, presumptuous; till the wrath,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to hell,
Which taught thee yet no better, That no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.
But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
Came not all hell broke loose? is pain to them

¹ The bounds prescribed.

Milton means, as I suppose, that the bounds of hell were by God prescribed to Satan's transgressions, so that it was intended he should transgress nowhere else, but within those bounds; whereas he was now attempting to transgress without them.—Newton.
Less pain, less to be fled; or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief!
The first in flight from pain! hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive.

To which the fiend thus answer'd, frowning stern:—
Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest; when in battel to thy aid
The blasting vollahed thunder made all speed,
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before.
Argue thy inexperience what behoves
From hard assays and ill successes past
A faithful leader: not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried:

I therefore, I alone first undertook
To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
This new created world, whereof in hell
Fame is not silent; here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted powers
To settle here on earth, or in mid air;
Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against;
Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
And practised distances to cringe, not fight.

To whom the warriour angel soon replied:—
To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
Satan, and couldst thou faithful add? O name,
O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
Army of fiends, fit body to fit head.
Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to the acknowledged Power supreme?
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty! who more than thou
Once fawn'd, and cringed, and servilely adored
Heaven's awful monarch? wherefore but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I arreed thee now; Avaunt;
Fly thither whence thou fledst: if from this hour
Within these hallow'd limits thou appear,
Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chain'd,
And seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of hell too slightly barr'd.

So threaten'd he: but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied:—
Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
Proud liminary cherub; but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm; though heaven's King
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compere,
Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of heaven star-paved.

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
Turn'd fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears, as thick as when a field
Of Ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
Sways them; the careful plowman doubting stands,
Lost on the threshing floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarm'd,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood;
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reach'd the sky, and on his erest
Sat horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seem'd both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds
Might have ensued; nor only Paradise
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of heaven perhaps, or all the elements
At least had gone to wrack, disturb'd and torn
With violence of this conflict; had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in heaven his golden scales, yet seen
Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weigh'd,

\[\text{v Ride on thy wings.}\]

This seems to allude to Ezekiel's vision, where four cherubims are appointed to the four wheels: "And the cherubims did lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the Lord God of Israel was over them above." See chap. i. and x. and xi. 22.—Newton.

\[\text{v Dilated stood.}\]

One of the interesting features of the great adversary of God and man, as drawn by the poet, is resolution in danger: it therefore well admits the poetical decorations that follow.—Dunster.

\[\text{w His golden scales, yet seen.}\]

The breaking off the combat between Gabriel and Satan, by the hanging out of the golden scales in heaven, is a refinement upon Homer's thought, who tells us that before the battle between Hector and Achilles, Jupiter weighed the event of it in a pair of scales. The reader may see the whole passage in the 22d Iliad.

Virgil, before the last decisive combat, describes Jupiter in the same manner, as weighing the fates of Turnus and Æneas. Milton, though he fetched this beautiful circumstance from the Iliad and Æneid, does not only insert it as a poetical embellishment, like the authors above mentioned, but makes an artful use of it for the proper carrying on of his fable, and for the breaking off the combat between the two warriors, who were upon the point of engaging. To this we may farther add, that Milton is the more justified in this passage, as we find the same noble allegory in Holy Writ, where a wicked prince, some few hours before he was assaulted and slain, is said to have been "weighed in the scales, and to have been found wanting."—Annison.

The allusion, as Dr. Newton observes, to the heavenly sign, Libra, or the Scales, is a beauty that is not in Homer or Virgil, and gives a manifest advantage over both their descriptions.—Tomn.
The pendulous round earth with balanced air
In counterpoise; now ponders all events,
Battels, and realms: in these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight: *
The latter quick upflew and kick'd the beam;
Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the fiend:

Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;
Neither our own, but given: what folly then
To boast what arms can do! since thine no more
Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire: for proof look up,
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign;
Where thou art weigh'd, and shown how light, how weak,
If thou resist. The fiend look'd up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

* The sequel each of parting and of fight.

In Homer and Virgil the combatants are weighed one against another: but here only Satan is weighed; in one scale, the consequence of his retreating; in the other, of his fighting. And there is this farther improvement; that, as in Homer and Virgil the fates are weighed to satisfy Jupiter himself, it is here done to satisfy only the contending parties; for Satan to read his own destiny! So that when Milton imitates a fine passage, he does not imitate it servilely, but makes it, as I may say, an original of his own, by his manner of varying and improving it.—Newton.

y Where thou art weigh'd.

See Dan. v. 27. "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." So true it is, that Milton oftener imitates Scripture than Homer and Virgil, even where he is thought to imitate them most.—Newton.

I shall add to the particular notes an extract from Addison's observations on this book of the poem:

We may consider the beauties of the fourth book under three heads. In the first are those pictures of still-life, which we meet with in the description of Eden, Paradise, Adam's bower, &c.; in the next are the machines, which comprehend the speeches and behaviour of the good and bad angels; in the last is the conduct of Adam and Eve, who are the principal actors in the poem.

In the description of Paradise, the poet has observed Aristotle's rule of lavishing all the ornaments of diction on the weak inactive parts of the fable which are not supported by the beauty of sentiments and characters. Accordingly, the reader may observe, that the expressions are more florid and elaborate in these descriptions, than in most other parts of the poem. I must farther add, that though the drawings of gardens, rivers, rainbows, and the like dead pieces of nature, are justly censured in an heroic poem, when they run out into an unnecessary length; the description of Paradise would have been faulty, had not the poet been very particular in it; not only as it is the scene of the principal action, but as it is requisite to give us an idea of that happiness from which our first parents fell. The plan of it is wonderfully beautiful, and formed upon the short sketch which we have of it in Holy Writ. Milton's exuberance of imagination has poured forth such a redundancy of ornaments on this seat of happiness and innocence, that it would be endless to point out each particular.

I must not quit this head without farther observing, that there is scarce a speech of Adam or Eve in the whole poem, wherein the sentiments and allusions are not taken from this their delightful habitation. The reader, during their whole course of action, always finds himself in the walks of Paradise. In short, as the critics have remarked, that, in those poems wherein shepherds are the actors, the thoughts ought always to take a tincture from the woods, fields, and rivers; so may we observe, that our first parents seldom lose sight of their happy station in anything they speak or do; and if the reader will give me leave to use the expression, that their thoughts are always paradisical.

We are in the next place to consider the machines of the fourth book. Satan being now within prospect of Eden, and looking round upon the glories of the creation, is
filled with sentiments different from those which he discovered whilst he was in hell. The place inspires him with thoughts more adapted to it.

The thought of Satan's transformation into a cormorant, ver. 196, and placing himself on the Tree of Life, seems raised upon that passage in the Iliad, where two deities are described as perching on the top of an oak, in the shape of vultures. (See the seventh book, near the beginning.)

The description of Adam and Eve, as they first appeared to Satan, is exquisitely drawn, and sufficient to make the fallen angel gaze upon them with all that astonishment, and those emotions of envy, in which he is represented.

There is a fine spirit of poetry in the lines which follow, wherein they are described as sitting on a bed of flowers by the side of a fountain, amidst a mixed assembly of animals. The speeches of these first two lovers flow equally from passion and sincerity: the professions they make to one another are full of warmth; but at the same time founded on truth: in a word, they are the gallantries of Paradise. The part of Eve's speech, in which she gives an account of herself upon her first creation, and the manner in which she was brought to Adam, is, I think, as beautiful a passage as any in Milton, or perhaps in any other poet whatsoever. These passages are all worked off with so much art, that they are capable of pleasing the most delicate reader, without offending the most severe:

That day I oft remember, when from sleep, &c.

A poet of less judgment and invention than this great author would have found it very difficult to have filled these tender parts of the poem with sentiments proper for a state of innocence: to have described the warmth of love, and the profession of it, without artifice or hyperbole; to have made the man speak the most endearing things without descending from his natural dignity, and the woman receiving them without departing from the modesty of her character: in a word, to adjust the prerogatives of wisdom and beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper force and loveliness. This mutual subordination of the two sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole poem, as particularly in the speech of Eve I havebefore mentioned, and upon the conclusion of it: when the poet adds, that the devil turned away with envy at the sight of so much happiness, v. 492, &c.

We have another view of our first parents in their evening discourses, which is full of pleasing images and sentiments suitable to their condition and characters. The speech of Eve, in particular, is dressed up in such a soft and natural turn of words and sentiments, as cannot be sufficiently admired.

Satan's planting himself at the ear of Eve under the form of a toad, in order to produce vain dreams and imaginations, is a striking circumstance; as his starting up in his own form is wonderfully fine, both in the literal description, and in the moral which is concealed under it. His answer upon his being discovered, and demanded to give an account of himself, is conformable to the pride and intrepidity of his character.

Zephon's rebuke, with the influence it had on Satan, is exquisitely graceful and moral. Satan is afterwards led away to Gabriel, the chief of the guardian angels, who kept watch in Paradise. His disdainful behaviour on this occasion is so remarkable a beauty, that the most ordinary reader cannot but take notice of it: Gabriel's discovering his approach at a distance is drawn with great strength and liveliness of imagination.

The conference between Gabriel and Satan abounds with sentiments proper for the occasion, and suitable to the persons of the two speakers. Satan clothing himself with terror when he prepares for the combat is truly sublime, and at least equal to Homer's description of Discord, celebrated by Longinus; or to that of Fame, in Virgil; who are both represented with their feet standing upon the earth, and their heads reaching above the clouds.

I must here take notice, that Milton is everywhere full of hints, and sometimes literal translations, taken from the greatest of the Greek and Latin poets.—Addison.
BOOK V.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

This book consists of elements of the same character and of similar combinations as the fourth. Eve's dream, and the manner of relating it, are in a very high degree poetical; here the invention is perfect, both in imagery, sentiment, and language.

The approach of the angel Raphael, as viewed at a distance by Adam, is designed with all those brilliant circumstances, and those indefinable touches, which give the force of embodied reality to a vision. Milton never relates with the artifices, and attempts to excite attention, of a technical poet: what he creates stands before him as life: he does not struggle to embellish or exaggerate, but simply relates what he believes that he beholds or hears: but none could have beheld or heard these high things, except one inspired.

The hints of a great part of the incidents are taken from the Scriptures; but the invention is not on that account the less. To bring the dim general idea into broad light in all its lineaments is the difficulty, and requires the power.

The conversation between Raphael and Adam is admirably contrived on both sides. These argumentative portions of the poem are almost always grand: and poetical, because they are grand. Now and then, indeed, the bard indulges in the display of too much abstruse learning, or metaphysical subtleties.

As to this portion of the work, which occupies a large space, it is less easy to reconcile it to the general taste: but we must take it as part of the two essential divisions of an epic poem—character and sentiments. Taken by itself, separated from the story, much of it would not be poetical: as part of the story, it is primary essence. Without it, mere imagery would lose almost all its dignity, as well as its instructiveness, because it would lose its intellectual and spiritual charm.

In relating the cause of Satan's rebellion, Raphael sustains all the almost unutterable sublimity of his subject. The hero is drawn wicked and daring beyond prior conception; but mighty and awful as he is wicked. Language to express these high thoughts would have sunk before any other genius but Milton's: and as he had to convey the movements of heavenly spirits by earthly comparisons, the difficulty increased at every step.

To cite detached passages from other poets, as containing a supposed similitude to Milton, is very fallacious. These are patches—Milton's is a uniform, close-wove, massy web of gold. Numerous particles of the ingredients may be traced in other authors: it is the combination, and the design by which that combination is conducted, that makes the merit.

ARGUMENT.

MORNING approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: they come forth to their day-labours: their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render man inexusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise: his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; their discourse at table: Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the north, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosary steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, s'w'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep
Was aery-light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough: so much the more
His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve
With tresses discomposed and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest: he, on his side
Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes
Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus: Awake,
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever new delight!
Awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us: we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.
Such whispering waked her, but with startling eye
On Adam; whom embracing, thus she spake:
[O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,]  
My glory, my perfection; glad I see
Thy face, and morn return'd; for I this night (Such night till this I never pass'd) have dream'd.
If dream'd, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design;
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought
Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
With gentle voice; I thought it thine: it said,
Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full-orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,

*a* The only sound

Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan.

Aurora's fan is not in true taste, as fan is an artificial object, which degrades, not elevates: but *fuming rills* is full of poetry.

*b* For *this night*.

The breaks in Eve's narration are extremely beautiful, and adapted to the circumstance of one just awakened before the thoughts were well recollected.—STILLINGFLEET.

*c* *Full orb'd the moon.*

The poetical enchantment of the images here arises from the simplicity of the expression.
If none regard: heaven wakes with all his eyes,  
Whom to behold but thee, nature’s desire?  
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment  
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.  
I rose as at thy call; but found thee not;  
To find thee I directed then my walk;  
And on, methought, alone I pass’d through ways  
That brought me on a sudden to the tree  
Of interdicted knowledge: fair it seem’d,  
Much fairer to my fancy than by day:  
And, as I wondering look’d, beside it stood  
One shaped and wing’d like one of those from heaven  
By us oft seen; his dewy locks distill’d Ambrosia; on that tree he also gazed:  
And, O, fair plant, said he, with fruit surcharged,  
Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,  
Nor God, nor man? is knowledge so despised?  
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?  
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold  
Longer thy offer’d good: why else set here?  
This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm  
He pluck’d, he tasted; me damp horror chill’d  
At such bold words vouch’d with a deed so bold:  
But he thus, overjoy’d: fruit divine,  
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt;  
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit  
For gods, yet able to make gods of men;  
And why not gods of men, since good, the more  
Communicated, more abundant grows,  
The authour not impair’d, but honour’d more?  
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve,  
Partake thou also; happy though thou art,  
Happier thou mayst be, worthier canst not be:  
Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods  
Thyself a goddess; not to earth confined,  
But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes  
Ascend to heaven, by merit thine, and see  
What life the gods live there, and such live thou.  
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,  
Ev’n to my mouth of that same fruit held part  
Which he had pluck’d: the pleasant savoury smell  
So quicken’d appetite, that I, methought,  
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds  
With him I flew; and underneath beheld  
The earth outstretch’d immense, a prospect wide  
And various; wondering at my flight and change  
To this high exaltation, suddenly  
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,  
And fell asleep: but, O, how glad I waked  
To find this but a dream! Thus Eve her night  
Related, and thus Adam answer’d sad:
Best image of myself, and dearer half,  
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep  
Affects me equally; nor can I like  
This uncouth dream, of evil sprung I fear:  
Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,  
Created pure. But know, that in the soul  
Are many lesser faculties that serve  
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next  
Her office holds; of all external things,  
Which the five watchful senses represent,  
She forms imaginations, aery shapes,  
Which Reason, joining, or disjoicing, frames  
All what we affirm or what deny, and call  
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires  
Into her private cell, when nature rests.  
Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes  
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,  
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;  
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.  
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find  
Of our last evening's talk in this thy dream,  

a Mimic fancy wakes.

This account of dreams, Mr. Dunster remarks, is as just and philosophical as it is beautiful and poetical. Sir John Davies gives a similar but certainly less interesting account of the Phantasie, in his "Nosce Teipsum," 1608, p. 47. The curious reader may also compare Burton's elaborate account of the Phantasie, in his "Anatomic of Melancholy," to which, as Mr. Dunster also thinks, it is probable that Milton here adverted.—Todd.

In this thy dream.

We were told in the foregoing book, how the evil spirit practiced upon Eve as she lay asleep, in order to inspire her with thoughts of vanity, pride, and ambition. The author, who shows a wonderful art throughout his whole poem, in preparing the reader for the several occurrences that arise in it, founds upon the above-mentioned circumstance the first part of the fifth book. Adam, upon his first awaking, finds Eve still asleep, with an unusual discomposure in her looks. The posture, in which he regards her, is described with a tenderness not to be expressed; as the whisper, with which he awakens her, is the softest that ever was conveyed to a lover's ear.

I cannot but take notice, that Milton, in the conferences between Adam and Eve, had his eye very frequently upon the book of "Canticles," in which there is a noble spirit of eastern poetry, and very often not unlike what we meet with in Homer, who is generally placed near the age of Solomon. I think there is no question but the poet, in the preceding speech, remembered these two passages, which are spoken on the like occasion, and filled with the same pleasing images of nature. "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." His preferring the garden of Eden to that

Where the sapient king  
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse,  
shows that the poet had this delightful scene in his mind.

Eve's dream is full of those high conceits engendering pride, which, we are told, the devil endeavoured to instill into her: of this kind is that part of it where she fancies herself awakened by Adam in the following beautiful lines, ver. 38, &c.:—

Why sleep'st thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time, &c.

—— Heaven wakes with all his eyes,  
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire?
But with addition strange; yet be not sad:
Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go, so unapproved; and leave
No spot or blame behind: which gives me hope
(That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not dishaertenn'd then; nor cloud those looks,
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair morning first smiles on the world:
And let us to our fresh employments rise
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.
So cheer'd he his fair spouse, and she was cheer'd;
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair:
Two other precious drops, that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
Kiss'd, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse,
And pious awe that fear'd to have offended.

So all was clear'd, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring and the sun, who, scarce uprisen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landskip all the cast
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,
Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid

In various style; for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise

In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.

An injudicious poet would have made Adam talk through the whole work in such sentiments as these: but flattery and falsehood are not the courtship of Milton's Adam, and could not be heard by Eve in her state of innocence; excepting only in a dream produced on purpose to taint her imagination. Other vain sentiments of the same kind, in this relation of her dream, will be obvious to every reader. Though the catastrophe of the poem is finely presaged on this occasion, the particulars of it are so artfully shadowed, that they do not anticipate the story which follows in the ninth book. I shall only add, that though the vision of itself is founded upon truth, the circumstances of it are full of that wildness and inconsistency which are natural to a dream. Adam, conformable to his superior character for wisdom, instructs and comforts Eve upon this occasion.—Addison.

† Each morning duly paid.

As it is very well known that our author was no friend to set forms of prayer, it is no wonder that he ascribes extemporary effusions to our first parents; but even while he attributes strains unmeditated to them, he himself imitates the Psalmist.—Newton.

He has expressed the same notions of devotion, as Mr. Thyer has observed, in similar terms, b. iv. 736, &c. And it has been said of the poet, that he did not in the latter part of his life use any religious rite in his family: but, as Dr. Gillies remarks, unless the proofs be very clear; he who observes how careful Milton is to mention the worship of Adam and Eve, b. iv. 720, v. 137, ix. 107, and xi. 136, will not be easily induced to believe that he entirely neglected the worship of God in his family.—Todd.

29
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
More tunable than needed lute to harp
To add more sweetness; and they thus began:

These are thy glorious works; Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels; for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing: ye in heaven;
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet; praise him in thy sphere
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.

Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.

Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering fires, that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.
Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run

5 These are thy glorious works.

The Morning Hymn is written in imitation of one of those psalms, where, in the
overflowing of gratitude and praise, the psalmist calls not only upon the angels, but
upon the most conspicuous parts of the inanimate creation, to join with him in extolling
their common Maker. Invocations of this nature fill the mind with glorious ideas of
God's works, and awaken that divine enthusiasm which is so natural to devotion: but
if this calling upon the dead parts of nature is at all times a proper kind of worship, it
was in a particular manner suitable to our first parents, who had the creation fresh
upon their minds, and had not seen the various dispensations of Providence, nor conse-
quently could be acquainted with those many topics of praise which might afford
matter to the devotions of their posterity. I need not remark the beautiful spirit of
poetry which runs through the whole hymn, or the holiness of that resolution with
which it concludes.—ADDISON.

That in a four-fold mixture and combination run a perpetual circle, one element
occasionally changing into another, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus, borrowed
from Orphæus: "Et cum quattuor sint genera corporum, vicissitudine corum mundi con-
tinuata natura est: nam ex terra, aqua; ex aqua, ortur aer; ex aer, aether; deinde
retorsum vicissim ex aethere, aer: inde aqua; ex aqua, terra infima. Sic naturis his,
ex quibus omnia constant, sursus, deorsum, ulterius, citro commenatibus, mundi partium
conjunctio continetur." Cicero de Nat. Deor. ii. 33.—NEWTON.
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusty or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls: ye birds,
That singing up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still
To give us only good; and if the night
Have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.
So pray'd they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recover'd soon, and wonted calm.
On to their morning's rural work they haste,
Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row
Of fruit-trees over-woody reach'd too far
Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she, espoused, about him twines
Her marriageble arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them thus employ'd beheld
With pity heaven's high King, and to him call'd Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deign'd
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seventimes-wedded maid.
Raphael, said he, thou hear'st what stir on earth Satan, from hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf,
Hath raised in Paradise; and how disturb'd
This night the human pair; how he designs
In them at once to ruin all mankind:
Go therefore, half this day as friend with friend
Converse with Adam; in what bower or shade
Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired,
To respite his day-labour with repast,
Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
As may advise him of his happy state;
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free,
Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware
He swerve not, too secure: tell him withal
His danger, and from whom; what enemy,
Late fallen himself from heaven, is plotting now

The fall of others from like state of bliss;
By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
But by deceit and lies: this let him know,
Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend

Surprisal, unadmonish'd, unforewarn'd.

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfill'd
All justice: nor delay'd the winged saint;¹
After his charge received; but from among
Thousand celestal ardours, where he stood

Veil'd with his gorgeous wings, up springing light,

Flew through the midst of heaven: the angelic quires,
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all the empyreal road; till, at the gate
Of heaven arrived, the gate self-open'd wide

On golden hinges turning, as by work

Divine the sovrain Architect had framed.
From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed, however small, he sees,
Not unconfomable to other shining globes,

Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crown'd

Above all hills: as when by night the glass

Of Galileo, less assured, observes

Imagined lands and regions in the moon:
Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades

Delos or Samos first appearing, kens

A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight

¹ Nor delay'd the winged saint.

Raphael's departure from before the throne, and his flight through the choirs of angels, are finely imagined. As Milton everywhere fills his poem with circumstances that are marvellous and astonishing, he describes the gate of heaven as framed after such a manner, that it opened of itself upon the approach of the angel who was to pass through it.

Raphael's descent to the earth, with the figure of his person, is represented in very lively colours. Several of the French, Italian, and English poets have given a loose to their imaginations in the description of angels; but I do not remember to have met with any so finely drawn, and so conformable to the notions which are given of them in Scripture, as this in Milton. After having set him forth in all his heavenly plumage, and represented him as alighting upon the earth, the poet concludes his description with a circumstance which is altogether new, and imagined with the greatest strength of fancy:—

Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide.

Raphael's reception by the guardian angels; his passing through the wilderness of sweets; his distant appearance to Adam; have all the graces that poetry is capable of bestowing. The author afterwards gives a particular description of Eve in her domestic employments.—Addison.
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing:
Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air; till within soar
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phœnix, gazed by all as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his reliques in the Sun's
Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns
A seraph wing'd: six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine: the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipp'd in heaven; the third his feet
Shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail,
Sky-tintur'd grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
Of angels under watch; and to his state,
And to his message high, in honour rise:
For on some message high they guess'd him bound.
Their glittering tents he pass'd, and now is come
Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm;
A wilderness of sweets: for nature here
Wantou'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
Him through the spicy forest onward come
Adam discern'd, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun
Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs:
And Eve within, due at her hour prepared
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry, or grape: to whom thus Adam call'd:
Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold,
Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
Comes this way moving; seems another morn
Risen on mid-noon; some great behest from Heaven
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
Abundance, fit to honour and receive
Our heavenly stranger: well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestow'd, where nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare.

To whom thus Eve: Adam, earth's hallowed mould,
Of God inspired; small store will serve, where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our angel-guest, as he
Beholding shall confess, that here on earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in heaven.

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent:
What choice to choose for delicacy best;
What order, so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well join'd, inelegant; but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change:
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk,
Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
Alcinus reign'd; fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meath's
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels press'd
She tempers dulcet creams; nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strows the ground
With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.

Meanwhile our primitive great sire, to meet
His godlike guest, walks forth; without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections: in himself was all his state;
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led, and grooms besmear'd with gold,
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature bowing low,
Thus said: Native of heaven, for other place
None can than heaven such glorious shape contain;
Since, by descending from the thrones above,
Those happy places thou hast desir'd awhile
To want, and honour these; vouchsafe with us
Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
To rest; and what the garden choicest bears
To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
Be over, and the sun more cool decline.
Whom thus the angelic Virtue answer'd mild:
Adam, I therefore came: nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though spirits of heaven,
To visit thee: lead on, then where thy bower
O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
I have at will. So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,
With flowerets deck'd, and fragrant smells; but Eve,
Undeck'd save with herself, more lovely fair
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feign'd
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infrim
Alter'd her cheek. On whom the angel Hail—
Bestow'd; the holy salutation used
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:
Hail, mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heap'd this table! Raised of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample square from side to side
All autumn piled; though spring and autumn here
Danced hand in hand. Awhile discourse they hold;
No fear lest dinner cool; when thus began
Our author: Heavenly stranger, please to taste
These bounties, which our nourisher, from whom
All perfect good, unmeasur'd out, descend,
To us for food and for delight hath caused
The earth to yield; unsavoury food, perhaps,
To spiritual natures: only this I know,
That one celestial Father gives to all.
To whom the angel: Therefore what he gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part
Spiritual, may of purest spirits be found
No ingrateful food: and food alike those pure

\[1\] On whom the angel Hail

Bestow'd.

Though in this and other parts of the same book, the subject is only the housewifery of our first parent, it is set off with so many pleasing images and strong expressions, as make it none of the least agreeable parts in this divine work.

The natural majesty of Adam, and, at the same time, his submissive behaviour to the Superior Being who had vouchsafed to be his guest; the solemn Hail which the angel bestows upon the mother of mankind, with the figure of Eve ministering at the table: are circumstances which deserve to be admired.—Annsun.
Intelligent substances require,
As doth your rational; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting concoct, digest assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
For know, whatever was created needs
To be sustain'd and fed: of elements
The grosser feeds the purer; earth the sea;
Earth and the sea feed air; the air those fires
Etherereal; and as lowest first the moon;
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd.
Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher orbs.
The sun that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimental recompense
In humid exhalations, and at even
Sups with the ocean. Tho' in heaven the trees
Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn
We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
Cover'd with pearly grain; yet God hath here
Varied his bounty so with new delights,
As may compare with heaven; and to taste
Think not I shall be nice. So down they sat,
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
The angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of theologians; but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate: what redounds, transpires
Through spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by fire
Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Minister'd naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crown'd. O innocence
Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
Then had the sons of God excuse to have been
Enamour'd at that sight; but in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's hell.
Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
Not burden'd nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam, not to let the occasion pass,
Given him by this great conference, to know

\[k \quad \text{if ever then,} \]

*Then had the sons of God excuse.*

Some of the Rabbins say Eve was so beautiful, that the prince of angels fell in love with her, which occasioned his fall.—Upton.
Of things above his world, and of their being
Who dwell in heaven, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms,
Divine effulgence, whose high power, so far
Exceeded human; and his wary speech
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:

Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favour, in this honour done to man;
Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of angels, yet accepted so,
As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
At heaven's high feasts to have fed; yet what compare?

To whom the winged Hierarch replied:

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good; created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assign'd,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk; from thence the leaves
More aery; last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual; give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding: whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive or intuitive: discourse
Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come, when men
With angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare:
And from these corporeal nutriments perhaps
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time, and wing'd, ascend
Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,

1 Till body up to spirit work.

Newton says that this opinion is neither orthodox, nor philosophy. I leave it to be decided by theologians and metaphysicians.

and, wing'd, ascend
Ethereal, as we.

It is the doctrine of the ablest divines and primitive Fathers of the Catholic church,
Here or in heavenly Paradises dwell;
If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm his love entire,
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more.

To whom the patriarch of mankind replied:
O favourable spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge and the scale of nature set
From centre to circumference; whereon,
In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution join'd, If ye be found
Obedient? Can we want obedience then
To him, or possibly his love desert,
Who form'd us from the dust and placed us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?

To whom the Angel: Son of heaven and earth,
Attend: that thou art happy, owe to God;
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
This was that caution given thee; be advised.
God made thee perfect, not immutable:
And good he made thee, but to persevere
He left it in thy power; ordain'd thy will
By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity:
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitated; such with him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself, and all the angelic host, that stand
In sight of God, enthroned, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
On other surety none: freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
And so from heaven to deepest hell; O fall
From what high state of bliss, into what woe!

To whom our great progenitor: Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
Aereal music send: nor knew I not
To be both will and deed created free;
Yet that we never shall forget to love
Our Maker, and obey him whose command
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assured me, and still assure: though what thou tell'st
Hath pass'd in heaven, some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange,
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard;
And we have yet large day; for scarce the sun
Hath finish'd half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of heaven.
Thus Adam made request; and Raphael, a
After short pause assenting, thus began:
High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men,
Sad task and hard; for how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits
Of warring spirits? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once
And perfect while they stood? how last unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good
This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best; though what if earth b
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?
As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
Reign'd where these heavens now roll, where earth now rests
Upon her centre poised; when on a day,

a Raphael.

Raphael's behaviour is every way suitable to the dignity of his nature, and to that character of a sociable spirit with which the author has so judiciously introduced him. He had received instructions to converse with Adam, as one friend converses with another, and to warn him of the enemy who was contriving his destruction. Accordingly, he is represented as sitting down at table with Adam, and eating of the fruits of Paradise. The occasion naturally leads him to his discourse on the food of angels. After having thus entered into conversation with man upon more indifferent subjects, he warns him of his obedience, and makes a natural transition to the history of that fallen angel who was engaged in the circumspection of our first parents.—Addison.

b Though what if earth, &c.

In order to make Adam comprehend these things, the angel tells him that he "must liken spiritual to corporal forms," and questions whether there is not a greater similitude and resemblance between things in heaven and things on earth than is generally imagined; which is suggested very artfully; as it is, indeed, the best apology that could be made for those bold figures which Milton has employed, and especially in his descriptions of the battles of the angels. To the same purpose, says Mede, Discourse x.: "If the visible things of God may be learned, as St. Paul says, from the creation of the world, why may not the invisible and intelligible world be learned from the fabric of the visible? the one (it may be) being the pattern of the other."—Newton.
(For time, though in eternity, applied
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future) on such day
As heaven's great year\(^v\) brings forth, the empyreal host\(^a\)
Of angels, by imperial summons call'd,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
Forthwith, from all the ends of heaven, appear'd
Under their hierarchs in orders bright:
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchs, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
Orb within orb, the Father infinite,
By whom in bliss imbosom'd sat the Son,
Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:
Hear, all ye angels, progeny of light,
Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers;
Hear my decree,\(^v\)' which unrevoke'd shall stand:
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord.
Under his great vicegerent reign abide
United, as one individual soul,
For ever happy: him who disobey,
Me disobey, breaks union; and that day,
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep ingulf'd, his place
Ordain'd without redemption, without end.

\(^v\) As heaven's great year.

Our poet seems to have had Plato's great year in his thoughts. See also Virgil, Ecl. iv. 5 and 12.—Hume.

Plato's great year of the heavens is the revolution of all the spheres. Everything returns to where it set out when their motion first began. See Anson, Idyl. xviii. 15. A proper time for the declaration of the vicegerency of the Son of God. Milton has the same thought for the birth of the angels, v. 861, imagining such kind of revolutions long before the angels or the world were in being. So far back into eternity did the vast mind of this poet carry him.—Richardson.

\(^a\) The empyreal host.

See Job i. 6, and 1 Kings xxii. 19.—Newton: and Dan. vii. 10.—Toad.

\(^v\) Hear my decree.

We observe before, that Milton was very cautious, what sentiments and language he ascribed to the Almighty, and generally confined himself to the phrases and expressions of Scripture; and in this particular speech the reader will easily remark how much of it is copied from Holy Writ, by comparing it with the following texts: Psalm ii. 6, 7; Gen. xxii. 16; Philip. ii. 10, 11.—Newton. Also to Heb. i. 5.—Todd.
So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
All seem’d well pleased; all seem’d, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days they spent,
In song and dance about the sacred hill;
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fix’d, in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, interwoven, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smoothes her charming tones, that God’s own ear
(Listens delighted. Evening now approach’d;
(For we have also our evening and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need)
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous; all in circles as they stood.
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
With angels’ food; and rubied nectar flows
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold.
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of heaven.
On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crown’d,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds
Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who shower’d
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
Now when ambrosial night with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest heaven had changed
To grateful twilight, (for night comes not there
In darker veil) and roseat dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God* to rest;
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous earth in plain outspread,
(Such are the courts of God) the angelic throng,
Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
By living streams† among the trees of life,
Pavilions numberless and sudden rear’d,
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept
Fann’d with cool winds; save those, who, in their course,
Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
Alternate all night long: but not so waked
Satan; so call him now; his former name
Is heard no more in heaven: he of the first,
If not the first archangel, great in power,

* Unsleeping eyes of God.
So the Psalmist, Psalm cxxi. 4:—“He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” The author had likewise Homer in mind, II. ii. 1.—Newton.

† By living streams.
Rev. vii. 17:—“The Lamb shall lead unto living fountains of water.”—Todd.
In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honour'd by his great Father, and proclaim'd
Messiah King anointed, could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired. Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,

Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipp'd, unobey'd, the throne supreme,
Contemptuous; and his next subordinate
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:
Sleep'st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close
Thy eyelids? and remember'st what decree
Of yesterday, so late hath pass'd the lips
Of heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart:
Both waking we were one; how then can now
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
Now laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise
In us who serve, new counsels to debate
What doubtful may ensue: more in this place
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
And all who under me their banners wave,
Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
The quarters of the north; a there to prepare

a The quarters of the north.

See Sannazarius, de Partu Virginis, iii. 40. There are other passages in the same poem of which Milton has made use.—Jorrin.

Some have thought that Milton intended, but I dare say he was above intending here, a reflection upon Scotland; though being himself an independent, he had no great affection for the Scotch presbyterians. He had the authority, we see, of Sannazarius for fixing Satan's rebellion in "the quarters of the north;" and he had much better authority, the same that Sannazarius had,—that of the prophet, whose words, though applied to the king of Babylon, yet alluded to this rebellion of Satan, Isaiah xiv. 12:—

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north." St. Austin says, that the devil and his angels, being averse from the light and favour of charity, grew torpid as it were with an icy hardness; and are therefore, by a figure, placed in the north. See his Epist. ext. sect. 55. And Shakespeare called Satan "the monarch of the north," I Hen. VI. a. v., s. 3. I have seen too a Latin poem by Odorius Valeriana, printed at Vienna in 1627, and entitled "Daemonomachiae, sive de Bello Intelligientiarum super Divini Verbi Incarnatione." This poem is longer than the Iliad, for it consists of five-and-twenty books, but it equals the Iliad in nothing but in length, for the poetry is very indifferent: however, in some particulars the plan of this poem is very like "Paradise Lost:"

It opens with the exaltation of the Son of God; and thereupon Lucifer revolts, and draws a third part of the angels after him into the quarters of the north:—
Pars tertia in hvmam.

Hoc duce persequitur, gelobique, aquiline locatur.

It is more probable that Milton had seen this poem, than some others from which he is charged with borrowing largely. He was indeed a universal scholar, and read all
Fit entertainment to receive our King,
The great Messiah, and his new commands;
Who speedily through all the hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.
So spake the false archangel, and infused
Bad influence into the unwary breast
Of his associate: he together calls,
Or several one by one, the regent powers,
Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
That the Most High commanding, now ere night,
Now ere dim night had disinceumber'd heaven
The great hierarchal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies to sound
Or taint integrity: but all obey'd
The wanted signal and superior voice
Of their great potentate; for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in heaven:
His countenance, as the morning star\(^v\) that guides
The starry flock, allured them; and with lies
Drew after him the third part of heaven's host.\(^w\)
Meanwhile the eternal eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps\(^x\) that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising; saw in whom, how spread
Among the sons of morn,\(^y\) what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:—

sorts of authors, and took hints from the moderns as well as the ancients. He was a
great genius, but a great genius formed by reading; and, as it was said of Virgil, he
collected gold out of the dung of other authors.—Newton.

The commentators have not observed that there is still another poem, which Milton
seems to have copied, "L'Angelida di Erasmo di Valvasone," printed at Venice in
1599, describing the battle of the angels against Lucifer. I beg leave to add that
Milton seems also to have attended to a poem of Tasso, not much noticed, on the
Creation, "Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato," in 1607.—J. Warton.

This poem of Tasso is in blank verse: the measure, therefore, as well as the subject,
would particularly interest Milton. There is another poem, still less noticed, into which
also Milton might have looked, "Della Creazione del Mondo, Poema Sacro, del Signor
Gasparo Murtola, Giorni sette, Canti sedici," printed at Venice in 1608: the printer of
which informs the reader that this work had been expected by the learned with much
impatience.—Todd.

\(^v\) His countenance, as the morning-star.

This similitude is not so new as poetical. Virgil, in like manner, compares the
beautiful young Pallas to the morning-star, Æn. viii. 539, &c. But there is much
greater propriety in Milton's comparing Satan to the morning-star, as he is often
spoken of under the name of Lucifer, as well as denounced Lucifer, son of the morning.
—Newton.

\(^w\) The third part of heaven's host.

See Rev. xii. 3, 4.—Newton.

\(^x\) The golden lamps.

Alluding to the lamps before the throne of God, which St. John saw in his vision, Rev.
iv. 5:—"And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne."—Newton.

\(^y\) Sons of morn.

See Isaiah xiv. 12.—Todd.
Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, heir of all my might;[2] Nearly it now concerns us to be sure Of our omnipotence, and with what arms We mean to hold what anciently we claim Of deity or empire: such a foe Is rising, who intends to erect his throne Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north; Nor so content, hath in his thought to try In battel, what our power is, or our right. Let us advise, and to this hazard draw With speed what force is left, and all employ In our defence: lest unawares we lose This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill. To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear, Lightning divine, ineffable, serene, Made answer:—Mighty Father, thou thy foes Justly hast in derision, and, secure, Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain, Matter to me of glory, whom their hate Illustrates; when they see all regal power Given me to quell their pride, and in event Know whether I be dextrous to subdue Thy rebels, or be found the worst in heaven. So spake the Son: but Satan, with his powers, Far was advanced on winged speed: an host Innumerable as the stars of night, Or stars of morning, dew-drops,[a] which the sun Impearls on every leaf and every flower. Regions they pass'd, the mighty regencies Of seraphim, and potentates, and thrones, In their triple degrees; regions, to which All thy dominion, Adam, is no more Than what this garden is to all the earth, And all the sea, from one entire globose Stretch'd into longitude; which having pass'd, At length into the limits of the north They came; and Satan to his royal seat, High on a hill far blazing, as a mount Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold; The palace of great Lucifer, (so call That structure in the dialect of men

*[2] Heir of all my might.*

"For he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and appointed heir of all things."—Newton.

*[a] Or stars of morning, dew-drops.*

Innumerable as the stars, is an old simile; but this of the stars of morning, dew-drops, seems as new as it is beautiful: and the sun impearls them—turns them by his reflected beams to seeming pearls; as the morn was said before to sow the earth with orient pearl, ver. 2.—Newton.
Interpreted) which not long after, he,
Affecting all equality with God,
In imitation of that mount whereon
Messiah was declared in sight of heaven,
The mountain of the Congregation call’d;
For thither he assembled all his train,
Pretending so commanded to consult
About the great reception of their King,
Thither to come; and with calumnious art
Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:

Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers;
If these magnific titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by decree
Another now hath to himself engross’d
All power, and us eclipsed under the name
Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
This only to consult how we may best,
With what may be devised of honours new,
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
Too much to one! but double how endured,
To one, and to his image now proclaim’d?
But what if better counsels might erect
Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of heaven, possess’d before
By none; and if not equal all, yet free;
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason then, or right, assume
Monarchy over such as live by right
His equals? if in power and splendour less,
In freedom equal: or can introduce
Law and edict on us? who without law
Err not: much less for this to be our Lord,
And look for adoration; to the abuse
Of those imperial titles, which assert
Our being ordain’d to govern, not to serve.
Thus far his bold discourse without controul
Had audience; when among the seraphim,

\[a\] The mountain of the congregation.

Isaiah xiv. 13:—"I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north."—Newton.

\[b\] If not equal all, yet free.

Let those who talk of absolute equality, remember these words of one whom they must allow to have been a lover of freedom.—J. Warton.

\[c\] For this.

"For this," must be, "in right of law or edict."

31
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
The Deity, and divine commands obey’d,
Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
The current of his fury thus opposed:
O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!
Words which no ear ever to hear in heaven
Expected, least of all from thee, ingratitude,
In place thyself so high above thy peers.
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
That to his only Son, by right endued
With regal sceptre, every soul in heaven
Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? unjust, thou say’st,
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
And equal over equals to let reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give law* to God? shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and form’d the powers of heaven
Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
And of our good and of our dignity
How provident he is: how far from thought
To make us less, bent rather to exalt
Our happy state, under one head more near
United. But to grant it thee unjust,
That equal over equals monarch reign;
Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
Or all angelic nature join’d in one,
Equal to him Begotten Son? by whom,
As by his word, the mighty Father made†
All things, even thee; and all the spirits of heaven
By him created in their bright degrees;
Crown’d them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, dominations, princeoms, virtues, powers,
Essential powers; nor by his reign obscured,
But more illustrious made; since he the head
One of our number thus reduced becomes;
His laws our laws; all honour to him done
Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,

* Shalt thou give law?
From Rom. ix. 20:—“Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?”—Gillies.

† By whom,
As by his word, the mighty Father made.
From Col. i. 16, 17:—“For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” And the conclusion of this speech is taken from the conclusion of Psalm xi.—Newton.
And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
The incensed Father and the incensed Son,
While pardon may be found in time besought.

So spake the fervent angel; but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash: whereat rejoiced
The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:
That we were form'd then, say'st thou? and the work
Of secondary hand by task transferr'd
From Father to his Son? strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learn'd: who saw
When this creation was? Remember'st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us; self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native heaven, ethereal sons.
Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal: then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the almighty throne
Beseecching or besieg'ring. This report,
These tidings carry to the anointed King;
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.
He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applasce
Through the infinite host; nor less for that
The flaming seraph fearless, though alone,
Encompass'd round with foes, thus answer'd bold:
O alienate from God, O spirit accursed,

\[\text{While pardon may be found.}\]

From Isaiah iv. 6:—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."—Gillies.

\[\text{Who saw}\]

When this creation was?

Like the sublime question in Job xxxviii. 4:—"Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Milton, perhaps with a second reference to this passage, observes at v. 250, b. viii.—

For man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?—Todd.

\[\text{Our puissance is our own.}\]

See Psalm xii. 4:—"Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?"—Gillies.

\[\text{Our own right hand}\]

Shall teach us highest deeds.

From Psalm xlv. 4:—"Thine own right hand shall teach thee terrible things." And Virg. Æn. x. 773:—

\[\text{Dextra mihi deus, et telum quod missile libro.—Bentley.}\]

\[\text{As the sound of waters deep.}\]

"The voice of a great multitude" applauding, is in like manner compared to "the voice of many waters," Rev. xix. 6.—Newton.

See also Homer, Il. ii. 269, 394.—Stillingfleet.
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determined, and thy hapless crew, involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah; those indulgent laws
Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall:
That golden sceptre, which thou didst reject,
Is now an iron rod, to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise:
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted:¹ lest the wrath
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire:
Then who created thee lamenting learn;
When, who can uncreate thee, thou shalt know.

So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass’d,
Long way through hostile scorn; which he sustain’d
Superior, nor of violence fear’d aught;
And, with retorted scorn, his back he turn’d
On those proud towers™ to swift destruction doom’d.

¹These wicked tents devoted.
In allusion probably to the rebellion of Korah, &c., Numb. xvi. 26, where Moses exhorts the congregation, saying, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.”—Newton.

™Proud towers.
“Towers” may mean those troops that had scorned and insulted him.—Todd.
BOOK VI.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In the notes on the former books I have made long extracts from the beautiful essays of Addison on the Paradise Lost: I shall forbear to do it on the present occasion, because I find nothing relating to this book importantly different from the matter of the notes cited from other critics.

The battle of the rebellious angels is the grand feature of this book; it is generally regarded as one of the most admirable parts of the poem. I will frankly confess, that I cannot entirely subscribe to this opinion. In the first place, the introduction of the invention of artillery into the combat is objectionable:—in the war of spirits it is degrading, and almost ludicrous. In the whole mode of carrying on this mighty effort against heaven, there is too much of earth and materialism. It will be answered, that this was of necessity; for how was a war of spirits to be expressed? Perhaps such a difficulty was insurmountable; but then the subject should have been covered with a mantle: at least, the elements might have been made to contend;—a universal tempest of fire, wind, and water. Here everything is conducted almost in the ordinary manner, and with the technical skill of human warfare, except that the degree of force is more gigantic.

It will be pleaded, that Milton had the authority of the language of Holy Writ for such descriptions; and that he generally speaks in the very words of the Bible. It is true that he adapts these words with astonishing skill and genius; but he contrives to go into details which break up the spell of their mysteries. The phraseology of these Sacred Writings referred to is astonishingly sublime, picturesque, and poetical: if Milton could have stopped exactly where that stopped, he would have done better. This is a bold censure, but it is sincere. I think that the poet was sometimes led into this by his rivalry of Homer and Virgil, and the other ancient classics. He had a great advantage over them in his subject, and he should not have fallen from it: there is no poetry in Homer or Virgil like the poetry of the Bible.

I fully admit that such was the "height of Milton's argument," that all human or earthly imagery inevitably sunk below it; and that his task imposed upon him the evil "magna componere parvis." On many occasions of his work, these illustrations not only do not offend, but create beautiful poetry: the illustration derives reflected splendor from that which it is placed to illustrate.

Johnson says, that Milton "saw nature through the spectacle of books." As long as he enjoyed his sight, there is no doubt that he saw her by his own unaided eyes; and nothing can be more fresh than many of his descriptions of natural scenery: this is proved by the simplicity and nakedness of his language. He does not dress up the moon and the stars, the lakes and the valleys, into affected personifications.

The richness of his array, both of the magnificent and the fair, of embodied forms, is sometimes surprising; and he allows the intervention of no feeble words to weaken his imagery. The condensed collocation of his language is peculiar to himself. Its breaks—its bursts—the strong—the rough and the flowing—the concise and the gigantic—are mingled with a surprising skill, and eloquence, and magic. It is easy to find single gems in other authors; the galaxy is the wonder. Milton's splendor when it began to rise, did not stop till it blazed.

Even supposing his Book of Battles to be liable to the censure I have hazarded, still the manner in which it augments its force as it goes onward, is miraculous. The character of Satan combining the height of wickedness with grandeur of power and will, is supported in a state of progressive elevation; while the Deity, Father and Son, still retains his supremacy; and, to whatever sublimity the rebel angel is lifted, soars in
unapproached dominion above him. All this is displayed with marvellous splendour of genius in the close of the Sixth Book. The effects of Satan’s defeat are conceived and described with a superhuman strength of imagination.

I have already expressed an opinion very unpopular, that the argumentative parts of this composition are as noble in poetical merit as the descriptive. They spring from that visionary power which makes the poet, as the fresh and fragrant exhalations arise from the fruits and flowers of the productive earth. If they strike less at first, they longer retain their charm. But I would not forego the imagery: it is the union of both which makes the unrivalled and inimitable excellence of this work, so far surpassing all other mere human compositions. Nay, it must not be called merely human: it has all the marks of inspiration; and when such large parts of it are the words of Holy Writ, can this be wondered at?

ARGUMENT.

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his angels. The first fight described; Satan and his powers retire under night: he calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day’s fight, put Michael and his angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan; yet the tumult not so ending, God on the third day sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of heaven; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

All night the dreadless angel, unpursued,
Through heaven’s wide champain held his way; till Morn,
Waked by the circling hours, a with rosy hand
Unbarr’d the gates of light. There is a cave
Within the mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where light and darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns, b which makes through heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night:
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here: and now went forth the Morn,
Such as in highest heaven, array’d in gold
Empyreal: from before her vanish’d Night,
Shot through c with orient beams; when all the plain,
Cover’d with thick embattel’d squadrons bright,
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,

a The circling hours, with rosy hand.

How inferior is Gray’s imitation!—

1.0, where the rosy-bosom’d hours.

b Lodge and dislodge by turns.

The thought of light and darkness lodging and dislodging by turns, the one issuing forth, and the other entering, is plainly borrowed from a fine passage in Hesiod, Theog. 748.—Newton.

c Shot through.

Thyer objects to this as a quaint conceit below the dignity of Milton; on the contrary, it is correctly and beautifully poetical.
Reflecting blaze on blaze,\(^4\) first met his view:  
War he perceived, war in precinct; and found  
Already known what he for news had thought  
To have reported: gladly then he mix'd  
Among those friendly powers, who him received  
With joy and acclamations loud, That one,  
That of so many myriads fallen, yet one  
Return'd not lost. On to the sacred hill  
They led him high applauded, and present  
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,  
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:  
Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought  
The better fight, who single hast maintain'd  
Against revolted multitudes the cause  
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;  
And for the testimony of truth hast borne  
Universal reproach,\(^a\) far worse to bear  
Than violence; for this was all thy care,  
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds  
Judged thee perverse: the easier conquest now  
Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,  
Back on thy foes more glorious to return,  
Than scorn'd thou didst depart; and to subdue  
By force, who reason for their law refuse,  
Right reason for their law, and for their King  
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.  
Go, Michael,\(^b\) of celestial armies prince;  
And thou, in military prowess next,  
Gabriel, lead forth to battel these my sons  
Invincible; lead forth my armed saints,

\(^a\) Blaze on blaze.  
See 1 Maccabees, vi. 39. "Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glistered therewith, and shined like lamps of fire."—Todd.  

\(^b\) Universal reproach.  
This sentiment is very just, and not unlike what Florus says, in his character of Tarquin the Proud: "In omnes superbia, quae erudite gravior est bonus, grassatus," lib. i. c. 7. So also Spenser, F. Q. iv. iv. 4.  
For evil deeds may better than bad ones be bore.—Thyer.  

Beaumont and Fletcher express the same sentiment very well, "Beggar's Bush," a.ii.s.3.  
A good man bears a contently worse  
Than he would do an injury.—Newton.  

\(^c\) Go, Michael.  
As this battle of the angels is founded principally on Rev. xii. 7, 8.—"There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon: and the Dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven,——" Michael is rightly made by Milton the leader of the heavenly armies: and the name in Hebrew signifies the power of God. But it may be censured, perhaps, as a piece of wrong conduct in the poem, that the commission here given is not executed: they are ordered to drive the rebel angels "out from God and bliss," but this is effected at last by the Messiah alone. Some reasons for it are assigned in the speech of God, v. 680; and in that of the Messiah, v. 501, of this book.—Newton.  
This circumstance is, I believe, the most indefensible part of the whole poem. The commission is not only given, but the execution of it is in a certain degree foreshown. See v. 51, &c.—Dunster.
By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,  
Equal in number to that godless crew  
Rebellious: them with fire and hostile arms  
Fearless assault; and, to the brow of heaven  
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,  
Into their place of punishment, the gulf  
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide  
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.  
So spake the sovran voice, and clouds began\(^\text{a}\)  
To darken all the hill, and smoky to roll  
In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames,\(^b\) the sign  
Of wrath awakened; nor with less dread the loud  
Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow:  
At which command the powers militant,  
That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate join'd  
Of union irresistible, moved on  
In silence their bright legions, to the sound  
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed  
Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds  
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause  
Of God and his Messiah. On they move  
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,  
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides  
Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground\(^1\)  
Their march was, and the passive air upbore  
Their nimble tread: as when the total kind\(^3\)  
Of birds, in orderly array on wing,  
Came summon'd over Eden to receive  
Their names of thee; so over many a tract

\(^a\) And clouds began.
In this description the author manifestly alludes to that of God descending upon Mount Sinai. Exod. xix. 16, &c.—Newton.

\(^b\) Reluctant flames.

Dunster says this word reluctant is misunderstood by Newton: \textit{luctari} is to be interpreted "prorumpendi impetus," and that \textit{reluctari} is the highest degree of that "impetus." Here it is the most violent exertion of the fire to resist and break through the smoke.

\(^1\) For high above the ground.

Our author attributes the same kind of motion to the angels as the ancients did to their gods; which was gliding through the air without ever touching the ground with their feet, or, as Milton elsewhere elegantly expresses it (b, viii. 502), "smooth-sliding, without step;" and Homer, I. v. 778, compares the motions of two goddesses to the flight of doves, as Milton here compares the march of the angels to the birds coming on the wing to Adam to receive their names.—Newton.

\(^3\) As when the total kind.

Homer has used the simile of a flight of doves twice in his Iliad, to express the number and the motions, the order and the clamours, of an army. See II. ii. 459, iii. 2, as Virgil has done the same number of times in his Aeneid, vii. 699, x. 264. But this simile exceeds any of those: first, as it rises so naturally out of the subject, and was a comparison so familiar to Adam: secondly, the angels were marching through the air, and not on the ground, which gives it another propriety; and here I believe the poet intended the chief likeness: thirdly, the \textit{total kind} of birds much more properly expresses a prodigious number than any particular species, or a collection in any particular place. Thus Milton has raised the image in proportion to his subject. See an "Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients," p. 9.—Newton.
Of heaven they march'd, and many a province wide,  
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,  
Far in the horizon to the north appear'd  
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretch'd  
In battailous aspect, and nearer view  
Bristled with upright beams innumerable  
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields  
Various, with boastful argument portray'd,  
The banded powers of Satan hasting on  
With furious expedition; for they w'en'd  
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,  
To win the mount of God, and on his throne  
To set the envy of his state, the proud  
Aspirer: but their thoughts proved fond and vain  
In the mid way. Though strange to us it seem'd  
At first, that angel should with angel war,  
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet  
So oft in festivals of joy and love  
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,  
Hymning the Eternal Father: but the shout  
Of battle now began, and rushing sound  
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.  
High in the midst, exalted as a god,  
The apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,  
Idol of majesty divine, enclosed  
With flaming cherubim and golden shields;  
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now  
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,  
A dreadful interval; and front to front  
Presented stood in terrible array  
Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,  
On the rough edge of battle ere it join'd,  
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,  
Came towering, arm'd in adamantine gold.  
Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood  
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds;  
And thus his own undaunted heart explores:  
O heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest  
Should yet remain, where faith and reality  
Remain not: wherefore should not strength and might

k And nearer view.  
To the north appeared a fiery region, and nearer to the view appeared the banded powers of Satan. It appeared a fiery region indistinctly at first, but upon nearer view it proved to be Satan's rebel army.—Newton. This image is amazingly picturesque and magnificent.  

l Hosting.  
Hosting, the mustering of armed men.—Todd.  

m Idol.  
Idol must here mean representative.  

n A dreadful interval.  
A grand picture, nobly expressed.
There fail where virtue fails? or weakest prove
Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
I mean to try, whose reason I have tried
Unsound and false: nor is it aught but just,
That he, who in debate of truth hath won,
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor; though brutish that contest and foul,
When reason hath to deal with force; yet so
Most reason is that reason overcome.

So pondering, and, from his armed peers
Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incensed, and thus securely he defied:

Proud, art thou met? thy hope was to have reach'd
The highth of thy aspiring unopposed;
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandon'd, at the terour of thy power
Or potent tongue: fool! not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who out of smallest things could, without end,
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,
Unaided, could have finish'd thee, and whelm'd
Thy legions under darkness: but thou seest
All are not of thy train; there be, who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible, when I alone
Seem'd in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all: my sect thou seest; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.
Whom the grand foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answer'd:—Ill for thee, but in wish'd hour
Of my revenge first sought for, thou return'st
From flight, seditious angel! to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose
A third part of the gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert; who, while they feel
Vigour divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou comest
Before thy fellows, ambitions to win
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest: this pause between,

*There fail where virtue fails.
This is very sublime, both in thought and words.

v How few sometimes may know.
Clearly alluding to his own singular opinions on certain topics.
(Unanswer'd lest thou boast) to let thee know.—
At first I thought that liberty and heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve
Ministering spirits, train'd up in feast and song:
Such hast thou arm'd, the minstrelsy of heaven,
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.

To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied:
Apostate, still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote:
Unjustly thou depravest it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthral'd;
Yet lewdly darest our ministering upbraided.
Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
In heaven God ever bles'sd, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd:
Yet chains in hell, not realms, expect: meanwhile
From me return'd, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.
So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
Such ruin intercept; ten paces huge
He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstay'd: as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat,
Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel thrones, but greater rage, to see
Thus foil'd their mightiest; ours joy fill'd, and shout,
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battel: whereat Michael bid sound
The archangel trumpet: through the vast of heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous join'd
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,

q In hell, thy kingdom.
Design'd as a contrast to Satan's vaunt, in b. i. 263:—
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.—Newton.

r A mountain from his seat.
A more magnificent simile can scarcely be conceived.
And clamour such as heard in heaven till now
Was never; arms on armour clashing Bray’d
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots raged: dire was the noise
Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire.  
So under fiery cope together rush’d
Both battels main, with ruinous assault
And inextinguishable rage. All heaven
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth
Had to her centre shook. What wonder? when
Millions of fierce encountering angels fought
On either side, the least of whom could wield
These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions; how much more of power
Army against army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring; and disturb,
Though not destroy, their happy native seat:
Had not the eternal King omnipotent,
From his strong hold of heaven, high overruled
And limited their might: though number’d such,  
As each divided legion might have seem’d
A numerous host; in strength each armed hand
A legion; led in fight, yet leader seem’d
Each warriour, single as in chief; expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battel, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim war: no thought of flight,
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argued fear; each on himself relied,
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory:  

And flying vaulted either host with fire.

Our author has frequently had his eye upon Hesiod’s giant-war, as well as upon Homer, and has imitated several passages; but commonly exceeds his original, as he has done in this particular. Hesiod says that the Titans were overshadowed with darts, Theog. v. 716.

Though number’d such,

Each legion was in number like an army; each single warrior was in strength like a legion, and, though led in fight, was as expert as a commander-in-chief; so that the angels are celebrated; first, for their number; then, for their strength; and, lastly, for their expertness in war.—Newton.

In his arm the moment lay

Of victory.

The moment—the weight that turns the balance, as the word signifies in Latin; Terence, Andr. : “Dum in dubio est animus, paulo momento hue vel illue impellitur:” and, as he has employed here the metaphor of the weight, so of the scale, v. 245, using as a metaphor what Homer makes a simile of, II. xii. 433; and in several particulars.
Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
That war and various; sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight; then soaring on main wing,
Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
The battel hung; till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting seraphim confused, at length
Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and fell'd
Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway
Brandish'd aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting: such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and oppose the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
A vast circumference. At his approach,
The great archangel from his warlike toil
Surecessed; and glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in heaven, the arch-foe subdued
Or captive drags'd in chains, with hostile frown
And visage all inflamed, first thus began:
Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,
Unnamed in heaven; now plenteous as thou seest
These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
Though heaviest by just measure on thyself
And thy adherents: how hast thou disturb'd
Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought
Misery uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instill'd
Thy malice into thousands, once upright
And faithful, now proved false! But think not here
To trouble holy rest; heaven casts thee out
From all her confines: heaven, the seat of bliss,
Brooks not the works of violence and war.
Hence then, and evil go with thee along,
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, hell:
Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom;
Or some more sudden vengeance, wing'd from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.

he has had his eye upon Homer, and commonly exceeds his master. Homer says, that the Greeks and Trojans "fought like burning fire," Il. xiii.673; and how much stronger is it in Milton, that the war

Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then
Conflicting fire!

It would be entering into too minute a detail of criticism to mention every little circumstance that is copied from Homer: and, where he does not directly copy from Homer, his style and colouring are still very much in Homer's manner. Wonderful as his genius was, he could hardly have drawn the battles of the angels so well, without first reading those in the Iliad; and Homer taught him to excel Homer.—Newton.

*Author of evil.

J. C. Walker here refers to "Chron. de Monstrelet," i. 39.
So spake the prince of angels; to whom thus
The adversary;—Nor think thou with wind
Of aery threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turn'd the least of these
To flight? or if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquish'd, easier to transact with me
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
To chase me hence? err not, that so shall end
The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style
The strife of glory; which we mean to win,
Or turn this heaven itself into the hell
Thou fablest; here however to dwell free
If not to reign: meanwhile thy utmost force,
And join him named Almighty to thy aid,
I fly not; but have sought thee far and nigh.
They ended parle, and both address'd for fight
Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
Of angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such highth
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seem'd,
Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great heaven.
Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
Blazed opposite, while expectation stood
In horrour: from each hand with speed retired,
Where erst was thickest fight, the angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion; such as, to set forth
Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
Together both, with next to Almighty arm
Uplifted eminent, one stroke they aim'd
That might determine, and not need repeat,
As not of power at once; nor odds appear'd
In might or swift prevention: but the sword
Of Michael from the armoury of God
Was given him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stay'd,
But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared
All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
The griding sword with discontinuous wound
Pass'd through him: but the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible; and from the gash
A stream of nectarous humour issuing flow'd
Sanguine, such as celestial spirits may bleed,
And all his armour stain'd, meanwhile so bright.
Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
By angels many and strong, who interposed
Defence: while others bore him on their shields
Back to his chariot, where it stood retired
From off the files of war: there they him laid
Guishing for anguish, and despite, and shame,
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbled by such rebuke; so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power.
Yet soon he heal'd; for spirits that live throughout
Vital in every part, not as frail man
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
All heart they live,§ all head, all eye, all car,
All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
Meanwhile in other parts like deeds deserved
Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
And with fierce ensigns pierc'd the deep array
Of Moloch, furious king; who him defied,
And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of heaven
Refrain'd his tongue blasphemous; but anon,
Down cloven to the waist, with shatter'd arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing,
Uriel, and Raphael, his vaunting foe,
Though huge, and in a rock of diamond arm'd,
Vanquish'd Adramelech and Asmodai,
Two potent thrones, that to be less than gods
Disdain'd, but meeker thoughts learn'd in their flight,
Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow
Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
Of Ramiel scorch'd and blasted, overthrew.
I might relate of thousands,§ and their names

§ All heart they live, &c.

This is expressed very much like Pliny's account of God, Nat. Hist. 1, i. c. 7. "Quis-quis est Deus, si modo est alius, quaecunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus visus, totus auditus, totus animae, totus animi, totus sui."—Newton.

§ I might relate of thousands.

The poet here puts into the mouth of the angel an excellent reason for not relating more particulars of this first battle. It would have been improper, on all accounts, to have enlarged much more upon it; but it was proper that the angel should appear to know more than he chose to relate, or than the poet was able to make him relate.—Newton.
Eternize here on earth; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in heaven,
Seek not the praise of men: the other sort,
In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
Cancel'd from heaven and sacred memory,
Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell:
For strength from truth divided and from just,
Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
And ignominy; yet to glory aspires
Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
Therefore eternal silence be their doom.

And now, their mightiest quell'd, the battel swerved,
With many an inroad gored; deformed rout
Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shiver'd armour strown, and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd,
And fiery foaming steeds; what stood, recoil'd
O'erwearied, through the faint Satanic host
Defensive scarce; or with pale fear surprised,
Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain,
Pled ignominious, to such evil brought
By sin of disobedience; till that hour
Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
Far otherwise the inviolable saints,
In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire,
Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd;
Such high advantages their innocence
Gave them above their foes; not to have sinn'd,
Not to have disobey'd; in fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pain'd
By wound, though from their place by violence moved.

Now Night her course began, and, over heaven
Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
And silence on the odious din of war:
Under her cloudy covert both retired,
Victor and vanquish'd. On the foughten field
Michaël and his angels prevalent
Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
Cherubic waving fires: on the other part,

\* Till that hour.
It seems a very extraordinary circumstance attending a battle, that not only none of the warriors on either side were capable of death by wound, but on one side none were capable of wound, or even of pain. This was a very great advantage on the side of the good angels; but we must suppose that the rebel angels did not know their own weakness till this hour.—Newton.

\* Though from their place by violence moved.
This circumstance is judiciously added to prepare the reader for what happens in the next fight.—Newton.

\* Cherubic waving fires.
Their watches were "cherubic waving fires;" that is, cherubim like fires waving;
Satan with his rebellious disappeared, 
Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest, 
His potentates to council call’d by night; 
And in the midst thus undismay’d began: 
O now in danger tried, b now known in arms 
Not to be overpower’d, companions dear, 
Found worthy not of liberty alone, 
Too mean pretence! but what we more affect, 
 Honour, dominion, glory, and renown; 
Who have sustain’d one day in doubtful fight, 
(And if one day, why not eternal days?) 
What heaven’s Lord had powerfulest to send 
Against us from about his throne, and judged 
Sufficient to subdue us to his will, 
But proves not so: then fallible, it seems, 
Of future we may deem him, though till now 
Omniscent thought. True is, less firmly arm’d, 
Some disadvantage we endured, and pain 
Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemn’d; 
Since now we find this our empyreal form 
Incapable of mortal injury, 
Imperishable; and, though pierced with wound, 
Soon closing, and by native vigour heal’d. 
Of evil then so small, as easy think 
The remedy; perhaps more valid arms, 
Weapons more violent, when next we meet, 
May serve to better us, and worse our foes; 
Or equal what between us made the odds, 
In nature none: if other hidden cause 
Left them superior, while we can preserve 
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound, 
Due search and consultation will disclose. 
He sat; and in the assembly next upstood, 
Nisroch, c of principalities the prime; 

the cherubim being described by our author, agreeably to Scripture, as of a fiery substance and nature.—Newton.

b O now in danger tried.
This speech of Satan is very artful: he flatters their pride and vanity, and avails himself of the only comfort that could be drawn from this day’s engagement (though it was a false comfort), that God was neither so powerful nor wise as he was taken to be: he was forced to acknowledge that they had suffered some loss and pain, but endeavours to lessen it as much as he can; and attributes it not to the true cause, but to their want of better arms and armour, with which he therefore proposes that they should provide themselves, in order both to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies.—Newton.

The five lines in which the speech opens are splendidly magnificent. Instead of considering the language here used as assumed by Satan “to flatter the pride and vanity of his followers,” they may be appreciated as serving eminently to mark his own character, as more generally drawn by the poet in the course of this poem; the great features of which are unabounded ambition and undaunted resolution, still proudly hoping, and still daringly contending, even in the midst of adversities.—Dunster.

c Nisroch.
A god of the Assyrians, in whose temple Sennacherib was killed by his two sons, 2 Kings, xix. 37. It is not known who this deity was: he must have been a principal
As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
Sore toil'd, his riven arms to havoc hewn;
And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake:
Deliverer from new lords, leaders to free
Enjoyment of our right as gods; yet hard
For gods, and too unequal work we find,
Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
Against unpain'd, impassive; from which evil
Ruin must needs ensue; for what avails
Valour or strength, though matchless, quell'd with pain
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,
But live content, which is the calmest life:
But pain is perfect misery, the worst
Of evils,\(^a\) and, excessive, overturns
All patience. He who therefore can invent
With what more forcible we may offend
Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
No less than for deliverance what we owe.

Whereunto with look composed Satan replied:
Not uninvented that, which thou artight
Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
Which of us, who beholds the bright surface
Of this ethereal mould whereon we stand,
This continent of spacious heaven, adorn'd
With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems, and gold;
Whose eye so superficially surveys
These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep underground, materials dark and crude,
Of spirituous and fiery spume; till touch'd
With heaven's ray, and temper'd, they shoot forth
So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
These in their dark nativity the deep
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
Which, into hollow engines\(^c\) long and round,
Thick-ramm'd, at the other bore with touch of fire
Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
Such implements of mischief, as shall dash

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\(^a\) Pain—the worst of evils.

Nisroch is made to talk agreeably to the sentiments of Hieronymus and those philosophers who maintained that pain was the greatest of evils: there might be a possibility of living without pleasure, but there was no living in pain;—a notion suitable enough to a deity of the effeminate Assyrians.—Newton.

\(^c\) Hollow engines.

A description of artillery, of which the first invention is thus attributed to the author of all evil.
To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarm'd
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
Nor long shall be our labour; yet ere dawn,
Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
Abandon fear; to strength and counsel join'd
Think nothing hard, much less to be despair'd.

He ended; and his words their drooping cheer
Enlighten'd, and their languish'd hope revived:
The invention all admired, and each, how he
To be the inventor miss'd; 't so easy it seem'd
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
Impossible: yet, haply, of thy race
In future days, if malice should abound,
Some one, intent on mischief, or inspired
With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men.
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew:
None arguing stood; innumerable hands
Were ready; in a moment up they turn'd
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
The originals of nature in their crude
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art,
Concocted and adjusted they reduced
To blackest grain, and into store convey'd
Part hidden veins digg'd up (nor hath this earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.
So all ere dayspring, under conscious night,
Secret they finish'd, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.

Now when fair morn orient in heaven appear'd,
Up rose the victor-angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung: in arms they stood
Of golden panoply; refulgent host,

This is the definition Johnson gives of good writing.

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The matin trumpet sung: in arms they stood
Of golden panoply; refulgent host,

Admir'd, and each, how he
to be the inventor miss'd.

This is the definition Johnson gives of good writing.

In future days.

This speaking in the spirit of prophecy adds great dignity to poetry. It is in the same spirit that Dido makes the imprecation, Virg. Æn. iv. 625: "Exoriare aliquis," &c. This, here, very properly comes from the mouth of an angel.—NEWTON.

Sulphurous and nitrous foam.

See Valvasone, with Hayley's remarks, in "Conjectures on the Origin of Paradise Lost."

Panoply.

Armour from head to foot. Παράρτηον, Greek, armour at all points.—HUME.
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills;  
Look'd round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,  
Each quarter: to descry the distant foe,  
Where lodged, or whither fled; or if for fight,  
In motion or in halt: him soon they met  
Under spread ensigns moving high, in slow  
But firm battalion. Back with speediest sail,  
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,  
Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:  

Arm, warriors, arm for fight; the foe at hand,  
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit.  
This day, fear not his fight; so thick a cloud  
He comes: and settled in his face I see  
Sad resolution, and secure. Let each  
His adamantine coat gird well, and each  
Fit well his helm, grip fast his orb'd shield,  
Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,  
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,  
But rattling storm of arrows barb'd with fire.  

So war'd he them, aware themselves; and soon  
In order, quit of all impediment,  
Instant without disturb they took alarm,  
And onward moved embattel'd; when, behold!  
Not distant far with heavy pace the foe  
Approaching gross and huge; in hollow cube  
Training his devilish enginery, impaled  
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,  
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood  
Awhile; but suddenly at head appear'd  
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:  

Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold;  
That all may see, who hate us, how we seek  
Peace and composure, and with open breast  
Stand ready to receive them, if they like  
Our ouverture, and turn not back perverse:  
But that I doubt; however witness, heaven;  
Heaven, witness thou anon, while we discharge  
Freely our part: ye, who appointed stand,  
Do as you have in charge; and briefly touch  
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.  

So scowling in ambiguous words, he scarce  
Had ended; when to right and left the front  
Divided, and to either flank retired:

1 Dawning hills.

This epithet is usually applied to the light, but here very poetically to the hills; the dawn first appearing over them, and they seeming to bring the rising day; as the evening-star is said likewise first to appear on his hill-top, b. viii. 529.—Newton.

Thus the morning-sun always first dawns over the Alps.

2 Divided.

Nothing can be more distinct, picturesque, and grand, than this advance of Satan's army with his masked artillery.
Which to our eyes discover'd, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels; (for like to pillars most they seem'd,
Or hollow'd bodies made of oak or fir
With branches lopp'd, in wood or mountain fell'd)
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce: at each behind
A seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving tipp'd with fire; while we, suspense,
Collected stood, within our thoughts amused:
Not long; for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke, all heaven appear'd,
From those deep-throated engines belch'd, whose roar
Embowel'd with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chain'd thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes; which on the victor host
Level'd, with such impetuous fury smote,
That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks; but down they fell
By thousands, angel on archangel roll'd;
The sooner for their arms: unarm'd they might
Have easily, as spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation follow'd, and forced rout;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? if on they rush'd, repulse
Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter; for in view
Stood rank'd of seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire
Of thunder: back defeated to return
They worse abhorr'd. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision call'd:
O friends, why come not on these victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming; and when we,
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast, (what could we more?) propounded terms
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance; yet for a dance they seem'd
Somewhat extravagant, and wild, perhaps
For joy of offer'd peace: but I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.
To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:
Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home;  
Such as we might perceive amused them all,  
And stumbled many: who receives them right,  
Had need from head to foot well understand;  
Not understood, this gift they had besides,  
They show us when our foes walk not upright.  

So they among themselves in pleasant vein  
Stood scoffing, heighten’d in their thoughts beyond  
All doubt of victory; Eternal Might  
To match with their inventions they presumed  
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,  
And all his host derided while they stood  
Awhile in trouble: but they stood not long;  
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms  
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.  
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,  
Which God hath in his mighty angels placed!)  
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills,  
(For earth hath this variety from heaven  
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)  
Light as the lightning glimpse¹ they ran, they flew;  
From their foundations loosening to and fro,  
They pluck’d the seated hills with all their load,  
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops  
Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,  
Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,  
When coming towards them so dread they saw  
The bottom of the mountains upward turn’d;  
Till on those cursed engines’ triple row  
They saw them whelm’d, and all their confidence  
Under the weight of mountains buried deep;  
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads  
Main promontories flung, which in the air  
Came shadowing and oppressed whole legions arm’d.  
Their armour help’d their harm, crush’d in and bruised  
Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain  
Implacable and many a dolorous groan;  
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind  
Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light,  
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown;ᵐ  
The rest, in imitation, to like arms  
Betook them, and the neighbouring hills upore:  

¹ Light as the lightning glimpse.
See Ezek. i. 14. "And the living creatures ran and returned, as the appearance of a flash of lightning."—Dunster.

ᵐ Now gross by sinning grown.
What a fine moral does Milton here inculcate, and indeed quite through this book, by showing that all the weakness and pain of the rebel angels was the natural consequence of their sinning! And, I believe, one may observe in general of our author, that he is scarcely ever so far hurried on by the fire of his Muse, as to forget the main end of all good writing—the recommendation of virtue and religion.—Thyer.
So hills amid the air encounter'd hills,
Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire,
That under ground they fought in dismal shade;
Infernal noise! war seem'd a civil game
To this uproar; horrid confusion heap'd
Upon confusion rose: and now all heaven
Had gone to wrack  with ruin overspread,
Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
Shrined in his sanctuary of heaven secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advised:
That his great purpose he might so fulfil,
To honour his anointed Son avenged
Upon his enemies; and to declare
All power on him transferr'd: whence to his Son,
The Assessor of his throne, he thus began:
Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved;
Son, in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am;
And in whose hand what by decree I do,
Second Omnipotence: two days are pass'd,
Two days, as we compute the days of heaven,
Since Michael and his powers went forth to tame
These disobedient: sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was, when two such foes met arm'd:
For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st
Equal in their creation they were form'd,
Save what sin hath impair'd; which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom:
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War wearied hath perform'd what war can do,

Had gone to wrack.

It is remarked by the critics, in praise of Homer's battles, that they rise in horror
one above another to the end of the Iliad. The same may be said of Milton's battles.
In the first day's engagement, when they fought under a cope of fire with burning
arrows, it was said,

All heaven
Resounded; and, had earth been then, all earth
Had to her centre shook:

but now, when they fought with mountains and promontories, it is said “all heaven
gone to wrack;” had not the Almighty Father interposed, and sent forth his Son,
in the fulness of his divine glory and majesty, to expel the rebel angels out of heaven.
Compare Homer's Iliad, viii. 130.

And indeed within the compass of this one book we have all the variety of battles
that can well be conceived. We have a single combat and a general engagement. The
first day's fight is with darts and swords, in imitation of the ancients; the second day's
fight is with artillery, in imitation of the moderns; but the images in both are raised
proportionally to the superior nature of the beings here described; and, when the poet
has briefly comprised all that has any foundation in fact and reality, he has recourse to
And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins,
With mountains, as with weapons, arm'd; which makes
Wild work in heaven, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are therefore pass'd, the third is thine:
For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus far
Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immensc I have transfused—that all may know
In heaven and hell thy power above compare;
And, this perverse commotion govern'd thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be heir,
Of all things to be heir; and to be King
By sacred unction, thy deserved right.
Go then, thou mightiest in thy Father's might
Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That shake heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,
My bow and thunder; my almighty arms
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
Pursue these sons of darkness; drive them out
From all heaven's bounds into the utter deep:
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah his anointed King.
He said; and on his Son with rays direct
Shone full: he all his Father full express'd
Ineffably into his face received;
And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake:
O Father, O Supreme of heavenly thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best; thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son; I always thee,
As is most just: this I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou, in me well pleased, declar'est thy will
Fulfil'd, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume;
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee

the fiction of the poets in their description of the giants' war with the gods. And, when war hath thus performed what war can do, he rises still higher, and the Son of God is sent forth in the majesty of the Almighty Father, agreeably to Scripture; so much doth the sublimity of Holy Writ transcend all that is true, and all that is feigned, in description.—Newton.

v By sacred unction.
Psalm xlv. 7:—"God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
—GILLIES.

q My almighty arms.
Ps. xlv. 3, 4:—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously."—Newton.

r To glorify thy Son.

In reference to St. John xvii. 4, 5.—TODD.

s Thou shalt be all in all.
We may still observe, that Milton generally makes the divine persons talk in the
For ever; and in me all whom thou lovest:  
But whom thou hatest, I hate; and can put on  
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,  
Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,  
Arm'd with thy might, rid heaven of these rebell'd,  
To their prepared ill mansion driven down,  
To chains of darkness,¹ and the undying worm;²  
That from thy just obedience could revolt,  
Whom to obey is happiness entire.  
Then shall thy saints ummix'd, and from the impure  
Far separate, circling thy holy mount,  
Unfeigned halleluiahs to thee sing,  
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.  
So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose  
From the right hand of Glory where he sat;  
And the third sacred morn ³ began to shine,  
Dawning through heaven: forth rush'd with whirlwind sound ⁴  
The chariot of paternal Deity,  
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,—

style and language of Scripture. This passage is manifestly taken from 1 Cor. xv. 24 and 28. Immediately afterwards, when it is said,

I in thee  
For ever; and in me all whom thou lovest;  
this is an allusion to John xvii. 21 and 23. And when it is added,  
But whom thou hatest, I hate,  
the allusion is to Psalm cxxxix. 21.—NEWTON.

¹ To chains of darkness.
² Undying worm.
³ And the third sacred morn.

Milton, by continuing the war for three days, and reserving the victory upon the third for the Messiah alone, plainly alludes to the circumstances of his death and resurrection. Our Saviour's extreme sufferings on the one hand, and his heroic behaviour on the other, made the contest seem to be more equal and doubtful upon the first day; and on the second, Satan triumphed in the advantages he thought he had gained, when Christ lay buried in the earth, and was to outward appearance in an irrecoverable state of corruption. But as the poet represents the Almighty Father speaking to his Son, v. 699:—

Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;  
For thee I have ordain'd it; and thus far  
Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine  
Of ending this great war, since none but thou  
Can end it:  

which he most gloriously did, when “the third sacred morn began to shine,” by vanquishing with his own Almighty arm the powers of hell, and rising again from the grave; and thus, as St. Paul says, Rom. i. 4:—“He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”—GREENWOOD.

⁴ Forth rush'd with whirlwind sound.

Ezek. i. 4:—“And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself.” Or perhaps Milton here drew Isaiah likewise to his assistance, lxvi. 15:—“For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind.”—NEWTON.

⁵ Wheel within wheel undrawn.

As in Ezek. i. 5, 16, 19, 20:—“Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoy’d
By four cherubic shapes; four faces eachv
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between; 2
Over their heads a crystal firmament.a
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colours of the showery arch.
He, in celestial panoply b all arm’d
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-wing’d; beside him hung his bow
And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored;
And from about him fierce effusion roll’d
Of smoke,c and bickering flame, and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand saints,a
He onward came; far off his coming shone:
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand were seen,

four living creatures, and their appearance was it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel: and when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.”—Newton.

v Four faces each.

As in Ezek. i. 6:—“And every one had four faces.” again, ch. x. 12:—“And their whole body, and their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about.”—Newton.

2 The wheels,

Of beryl, and careering fires between.

The beryl is a precious stone of a sea-green colour, and careering fires are lightnings “darting out by fits,” a metaphor taken from the running in tilts. See Ezek. i. 16, and 13:—“The appearance of wheels and their work was like a beryl: and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightnings.”—Newton.

Milton has again described this part of the prophetic vision, and with additional sublimity, v. 848:—

One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accused.

This is like the bold and tremendous painting of Æschylus, Prom. Vinct. v. 356, ed. Schütz.

ʼΕξ ἀμμάτων ὑνατραπτε γοργων ὑλας.—Todd.

a A crystal firmament.

See Ezek. i. 22, 26, 27, 28:—“And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures, was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above: and above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain.”—Newton.

b He in celestial panoply.

An allusion to Ephes. vi. 11:—“Put on the whole armour (παροπλιαν) of God;” and to the contexture of gems in Aaron’s breast-plate, Exod. xxviii.—Todd.

c Fierce effusion roll’d

Of smoke.

See Psalm xviii. 8:—“There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured.” And see Psalm I. 3.—Hume.

d Ten thousand thousand saints.

See St. Jude, 14:—“Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints.” Psalm lxviii. 17:—“The chariots of God are twenty thousand.” Rev. vii. 1:—“I heard
He on the wings of cherub rode sublime
On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,
Illustrious far and wide; but by his own
First seen; them unexpected joy surprised,
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
Aloft by angels borne, his sign in heaven;
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
His army, circumfused on either wing,
Under their Head im-bodied all in one.
Before him Power Divine his way prepared:
At his command the uprooted hills retired.
Each to his place; they heard his voice and went
Obsequious: heaven his wonted face renew'd,
And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.
    This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,
And to rebellious fight rallied their powers,
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair:
In heavenly spirits could such perverseness dwell?
But to convince the proud what signs avail,
Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?
They, harden'd more by what might most reclaim
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy; and aspiring to his hight,
Stood re-embattel'd fierce, by force or fraud
Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
Against God and Messiah, or to fall
In universal ruin last; and now
To final battel drew, disdaining flight,
Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spake:
    Stand still in bright array, ye saints; here stand,
Ye angels arm'd; this day from battel rest:
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
the number of them." Let it be remarked, how much of his sublimity, even in the
sublimest parts of his works, Milton owes to Scripture.—Newton.

   * Wings of cherub rode.
See Psalm xviii. 10:—"He rode upon a cherub."—Greenwood.

   † His sign.
See Matth. xxiv. 50:—"There shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven."
    —Gillies.

   $ Under their head.
See Rom. xii. 5:—"We, being many, are one body in Christ." And Col. i. 18:—
   "He is the head of the body."—Greenwood.

   ‡ They heard his voice, and went.
Habakk. iii. 6:—"The everlasting mountains were scattered; the perpetual hills did
bow."—Todd.

   † Harden'd more.
As Pharaoh was, Exod. xiv.—Hume.

   ‡ Stand still.
As in Exod. xiv. 13, 14:—"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he
will show you to-day. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."—
    Gillies.
Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause:
And as ye have received so have ye done,
Invincibly: but of this cursed crew
The punishment to other hand belongs;
Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints:
Number to this day’s work is not ordain’d,
Nor multitude; stand only, and behold
God’s indignation on these godless pour’d
By Me; not you, but Me, they have despised,
Yet envied; against Me is all their rage,
Because the Father, to whom in heaven supreme
Kingdom and power, and glory appertains,
Hath honour’d Me according to his will.
Therefore to Me their doom he hath assign’d;
That they may have their wish, to try with Me
In battel which the stronger proves; they all,
Or I alone against them; since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.

So spake the Son; and into terror changed
His countenance, too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
At once the Four spread out their starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
Of his fierce chariot roll’d as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host,
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as night; m under his burning wheels

\( ^1 \text{Vengeance is his.} \)

See Deut. xxxii. 35:—“To me belongeth vengeance.” And Rom. xii. 19:—“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”—Newton.

\( ^1 \text{At once the four.} \)

Whenever he mentions the four cherubim, and the Messiah’s chariot, he still copies from Ezekiel’s vision. See ch. i. 9, 19, 24.—Newton.

\( ^m \text{Gloomy as night.} \)

From Homer, Il. xii. 462, where the translator uses Milton’s words:—

\[ \text{Νυκτὶ θοῖ τίρανναι ὑπῶξε.} \]

A similar expression, translated in these words of Milton, is also in Odys. xi. 609.—Newton.

\( ^m \text{Under his burning wheels.} \)

Job xxvi. 11:—The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.”—Hume.

This sublime passage owes part of its magnificence to another sacred description, Daniel, vii. 9, of the Ancient of Days:—“His throne was as the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.” Milton’s diction is here superior even to Hesiod’s celebrated lines, Theog. v. 841:—

\[ \text{Ποσὶ δὲ ἐν ὀμμάτοις μέγας πελεξίζετ’ Ὄλυμπος} \\
\text{’Ομορφόνιος ἀνακτός ἔπεταιναῖς ὁ ἀλα.} \]

The majesty of the exception, which Milton adds, affords to the whole passage a solemnity unparalleled and inimitable:—

Under his burning wheels
The stedfast empyrean shock throughout,
All but the throne itself of God.—Todd.
The stedfast empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived; in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infix’d
Plagues: they, astonish’d, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropp’d:
O’er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode
Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate;
That wish’d the mountains o now might be again
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows from the fourfold-visaged Four.
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
One spirit in them ruled; and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accursed, that wither’d all their strength,
And of their wonted vigour left them drain’d,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, p but check’d
His thunder in mid volley; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven:
The overthrown he raised; and as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together throng’d
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
With terrours and with furies q to the bounds
And crystal wall of heaven; which, opening wide,
Roll’d inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful deep: the monstrous sight
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse
Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of heaven: eternal wrath
Burn’d after them to the bottomless pit.
Hell heard the unsufferable noise; hell saw
Heaven ruiniug from heaven, and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell: confounded Chaos roar’d,

---

o That wish’d the mountains.

See Rev. vi. 16:—"They said to the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:" which is very applicable here, as they had been overwhelmed with mountains, v. 655. What was so terrible before, they wished as a shelter now.—Newton.

p Half his strength he put not forth.

This fine thought is somewhat like that of the Psalmist, lxxviii. 38:—"But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath."—Newton.

q With terrours and with furies.

See Job vi. 4:—"The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." And the fury of the Lord is a common expression in Scripture:—"They are full of the fury of the Lord," Isaiah li. 20.—Newton.
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy; so huge a rout
Incumber'd him with ruin: hell at last:
Yawning received them whole, and on them closed;
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
Disburden'd heaven rejoiced, and soon repair'd
Her mural breach, returning whence it roll'd.
Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turn'd:
To meet him, all his saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced; and as they went,
Shaded with branching palm each order bright,
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
Worthiest to reign: he, celebrated, rode
Triumphant through mid heaven, into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned
On high; who into glory him received,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.
Thus, measuring things in heaven by things on earth,
At thy request, and that thou mayst beware
By what is past, to thee I have reveal'd
What might have else to human race been hid;
The discord which befell, and war in heaven
Among the angelic powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebell'd
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,

This is a fine imitation of Isaiah v. 14:—"Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."—Todd.

To meet him.

Worthiest to reign.

Who into glory.

Thus, measuring things in heaven.

See Rev. xii. 10.—Stillingfleet.

He repeats the same kind of apology here in the conclusion, that he made in the beginning of his narration. See b. v. 572, &c. And it is indeed the best defence that can be made for the bold fictions in this book, which, though some cold readers perhaps may blame, yet the coldest, I conceive, cannot but admire. It is remarkable too with what art and beauty the poet, from the height and sublimity of the rest of the book, descends here, at the close of it, like the lark from her loftiest notes in the clouds, to the most prosaic simplicity of language and numbers; a simplicity, which not only gives it variety, but the greatest majesty; as Milton himself seems to have thought, by always choosing to give the speeches of God and the Messiah in that style, though these I suppose are the parts of this poem which Dryden censures as the flats which he often met with for thirty or forty lines together.—Newton.
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou mayst partake
His punishment, eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations; warn
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience, firm they might have stood,
Yet fell: remember, and fear to transgress.

"Thy weaker."

As St. Peter calls the wife, "the weaker vessel," 1 Pet. iii. 7.—Newton.
BOOK VII.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The seventh book is nothing but delight: all beauty, and hope, and smiles: it has little of the awful sublimity of the preceding books; and it has much less of that grand invention which sometimes astonishes with a painful emotion, but which is the first power of a poet: at the same time, there is poetical invention in filling up the details.

In every description Milton has seized the most picturesque feature, and found the most expressive and poetical words for it. On the mirror of his mind all creation was delineated in the clearest and most brilliant forms and colours; and he has reflected them with such harmony and enchantment of language as has never been equalled.

The globe, with all its rich contents, thus lies displayed before us, like a landscape under the freshness of the dewy light of the opening morning, when the shadows of night first fly away.

Here is to be found everything which in descriptive poetry has the greatest spell: all majesty or grace of forms, animate or inanimate; all variety of mountains, and valleys, and forests, and plains, and seas, and lakes, and rivers; the vicissitudes of suns, and of darkness; the flame and the snow; the murmur of the breeze; the roar of the tempest.

One great business of poetry is to teach men to see, and feel, and think upon the beauties of the creation, and to have gratitude and devotion to their Maker: this can best be effected by a poet's eye and a poet's tongue. Poets can present things in lights which can warm the coldest hearts: he who can create himself, can best represent what is already created.

ARGUMENT.

RAPHAEL, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created; that God, after the expelling of Satan and his angels out of heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of angels, to perform the work of creation in six days; the angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into heaven.

Descend from heaven,\(^a\) Urania,\(^b\) by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
The meaning, not the name I call; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of Old Olympus dwell'st; but heavenly-born,
Before the hills appear'd,\(^c\) or fountain flow'd,

\(^{2}\) Descend from heaven.

"Descende colo," Hor. Od. iii. 4. 1. He invokes the heavenly Muse as he had done before, b. i. 6: and as he had said in the beginning that he "intended to soar above the Aonian mount," so now he says very truly that he had effected what he intended, and "soars above the Olympian hill, above the flight of Pegasean wing;" that is, his subject was more sublime than the loftiest flight of heathen poets.—NEWTON.

\(^{b}\) Urania.

The word Urania, in Greek, signifies "heavenly."—NEWTON.

\(^{c}\) Before the hills appear'd.

From Prov. viii. 24, 25, and 30, where the phrase of Wisdom always "rejoicing" before God, is "playing," according to the Vulgate Latin; "ludens coram eo omni tempore."—NEWTON.
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up-led by thee,
Into the heaven of heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering: with like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element;
Lest from this flying steed unrein'd, (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere:
Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days;
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east: still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few:
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that vile rout that tore the Thracian bards
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
Say, goddess, what ensued, when Raphael,
The affable archangel, had forwarn'd
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, but what befell in heaven
To those apostates; lest the like befell
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,

Half yet remains unsung.

Half of the episode, not of the whole work, is here meant. The episode has two principal parts, the war in heaven, and the new creation.—Newton.

Though fallen on evil days.
The repetition and turn of the words is very beautiful: a lively picture this, in a few lines, of the poet's wretched condition. Though he was blind, "in darkness; and with dangers compass'd round, and solitude," obnoxious to the government, and having a world of enemies among the royal party, and therefore obliged to live very much in privacy and alone, he was not become hoarse or mute. And what strength of mind was it, that could not only support him under the weight of these misfortunes, but enable him to soar to such heights as no human genius ever reached before!—Newton.

Of Bacchus and his revellers.
It is not improbable that the poet intended this as an oblique satire upon the dissoluteness of Charles the Second and his court; from whom he seems to apprehend the
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obey'd amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was fill'd
With admiration and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange; things, to their thought
So unimaginable, as hate in heaven,
And war so near the peace of God and bliss,
With such confusion: but the evil, soon
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung; impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repeal'd
The doubts that in his heart arose; and now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him; how this world
Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began;
When, and whereof created; for what cause;
What within Eden, or without was done
Before his memory: as one, whose drouth
Yet scarce allay'd, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst exciteth,
Proceed thus to ask his heavenly guest:
Great things and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this world, thou hast reveal'd,
Divine interpreter! by favour sent
Down from the empyrean, to forewarn
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;
For which to the infinitely Good we owe
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
Receive, with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably his sovran will, the end
Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed
Gently, for our instruction, to impart
Things above earthly thought, which yet concern'd
Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seem'd;
Deign to descend now lower, and relate
What may no less perhaps avail us known;
How first began this heaven which we behold
Distant so high, with moving fires adorn'd
Innumerable; and this which yields or fills
All space, the ambient air wide interfused,
Embracing round this florid earth: what cause
Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
Through all eternity, so late to build

fate of Orpheus, who, though he is said to have charmed woods and rocks with his divine songs, was torn to pieces by the Bacchanalian women of Rhodope, a mountain of Thrace; nor could the Muse Calliope, his mother, defend him: "so fail not thou who thee implores." Nor was his wish ineffectual; for the government suffered him to live and die unmolested.—Newton.
In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon
Absolved; if unforbid thou mayst unfold
What we, not to explore the secrets, ask,
Of his eternal empire, but the more
To magnify his works, the more we know:
And the great light of day\(^\text{2}\) yet wants to run
Much of his race though steep; suspense in heaven,
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears;
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His generation, and the rising birth
Of Nature from the unapparent deep:
Or if the star of evening and the moon
Haste to thy audience, night with her will bring
Silence; and Sleep, listening to thee, will watch;
Or we can bid his absence, till thy song
End,\(^\text{b}\) and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
And thus the godlike angel answer’d mild:
This also thy request, with caution ask’d,
Obtain; though to recount almighty works
What words or tongue of scraper can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing; such commission from above
I have received, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain
To ask; nor let thine own inventions:\(^i\) hope
Things not reveal’d, which the invisible King,\(^j\)

\(\text{2\ And the great light of day.}\)

Mr. Thyer is of opinion that there is not a greater instance of our author’s exquisite skill in the art of poetry than this and the following lines. There is nothing more really to be expressed than Adam’s telling Raphael his desire to hear the continuance of his relation: and yet the poet, by a series of strong and noble figures, has worked it up into half a score of as fine lines as any in the poem. Lord Shaftesbury has observed, that Milton’s beauties generally depend upon solid thought, strong reasoning, noble passion, and a continued thread of moral doctrine; but in this place he has shown what an exalted fancy and mere force of poetry can do.—NEWTON.

Lord Shaftesbury had not a very accurate idea of Milton’s genius; which, if it had all the qualities here ascribed to it, was not less rich and gigantic in imagination and invention.

\(\text{b Bid his absence, till thy song}\)

End.

The sun did stand still at the voice of Joshua.—NEWTON.
Milton’s favourite Ovid touches upon the suspense of day:—

\(\text{et eantem multa loquendo}\)
\(\text{Detinit sermone diem.}\)

\(\text{i Thine own inventions.}\)

So in Psalm cvi. 29: “Thus they provoked him to anger with their own inventions.”
—PEARCE.

\(\text{j The invisible King.}\)

As God is styled, 1 Tim. i. 17, “The invisible King,” so this is the properest epithet that could have been employed here, when he is speaking of “things not revealed,
PARADISE LOST.

Only Omniscient, hath suppress'd in night,
To none communicable in earth or heaven;
Enough is left besides to search and know:
But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind. k

Know then, that, after Lucifer from heaven
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host
Of angels, than that star the stars among)
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep
Into his place, and the great Son return'd
Victorious with his saints, the Omnipotent
Eternal Father from his throne beheld
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:

At least our envious foe hath fail'd, who thought
All like himself rebellious; by whose aid
This inaccessible high strength, the seat
Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
Drew many, whom their place 1 knows here no more;
Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
Their station; heaven, yet populous, retains
Number sufficient to possess her realms
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
With ministeries due, and solemn rites:
But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm
Already done, to have dispeopled heaven,
My damage fondly deem'd, I can repair
That detriment, if such it be to lose.
Self-lost; and in a moment will create
Another world, out of one man a race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here; till by degrees of merit raised,
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tried;
And earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth,
One kingdom, joy and union without end.
Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye powers of heaven;
And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!

suppressed in night, to none communicable in earth or heaven," neither to men nor
gods; as it is said of the day of judgment, Matt. xxiv. 36: "Of that day and hour
knoweth no man: no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."—Newton.

k Nourishment to wind.
See St. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 1: "Knowledge puffeth up."—Todd.

1 Whom their place.
See Job vii. 10: "Neither shall his place know him any more."—Newton.
My overshadowing Spirit and Might with thee
I send along: ride forth, and bid the deep
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth;
Boundless the deep, because I Am, who fill
Infinitude; nor vacant the space;
Though I, unceaselessdcribed myself, retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not: necessity and chance
Approach not me, and what I will is fate.

So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake,
His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.
Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
Than time or motion; but to human ears
Cannot without process of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive.
Great triumph and rejoicing was in heaven,
When such was heard declared the Almighty's will;
Glory they sung to the Most High, good will
To future men, and in their dwellings peace:
Glory to him, whose just avenging ire
Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
And the habitations of the just; to him
Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd
Good out of evil to create; instead
Of spirits malign, a better race to bring
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
His good to worlds and ages infinite.

So sang the hierarchies: meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appear'd,
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crown'd
Of majesty divine: sapience and love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub and seraph, potentates and thrones,
And virtues, winged spirits, and chariots wing'd
From the armoury of God; where stand of old
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harness'd at hand,
Celestial equipage; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord: heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.
On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore

m My overshadowing Spirit.

They view’d the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn’d by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven’s height, and with the centre mix the pole.

Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace,
Said then the omnific Word; your discord end!
Nor stay’d; but, on the wings of cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;
For Chaos heard his voice; him all his train
Follow’d in bright procession, to behold
Creation and the wonders of his might.
Then stay’d the fervid wheels; and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God’s eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things:
One foot he centred, and the other turn’d
Round through the vast profundity obscure;
And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds;
This be thy just circumference, O world!
Thus God the heaven created, thus the earth,
Matter uniform’d and void: darkness profound
Cover’d the abyss; but on the watery calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purged
The black, tartarous, cold, infernal dregs,
Adverse to life: then founded, then conglobed
Like things to like; the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the air;
And earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.

Let there be light, said God; and forthwith light

They view’d.
Here is a most magnificent picture, breathing all the powers of poetry.

It is the same kind of beauty that Longinus admires in the Mosaic history of the creation: it is of the same strain with the same "Omnific Word’s" calming the tempest in the Gospel, when he said to the raging sea, "Peace, be still."—Mark iv. 39. And how elegantly has he turned the commanding words, silence and peace, making one the first and the other the last in the sentence, and thereby giving the greater force and emphasis to both!—Newton.

See Prov. viii. 27: "When he prepared the heavens I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the deep."—Richardson.

The reader will naturally remark how exactly Milton copies Moses in his account of the creation. The seventh book of Paradise Lost may be called a larger sort of paraphrase upon the first chapter of Genesis: Milton not only observes the same series and order, but preserves the very words as much as he can.—Newton.

Gen. i. 3.—"And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." This is the
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourned the while. God saw the light was good;
And light from darkness by the hemisphere
Divided: light the day, and darkness night
He named. Thus was the first day even and morn:
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the celestial quires, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld:
Birth-day of heaven and earth: with joy and shout.
The hollow universal orb they fill’d,
And touch’d their golden harps, and hymning praised
God and his works; Creator him they sung,
Both when first evening was, and when first morn.

Again, God said, Let there be firmament.
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters: and God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, element air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round; partition firm and sure,
The waters underneath from those above
Dividing: for as earth, so he the world
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos far removed; lest fierce extremes
Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
And heaven he named the firmament: so even
And morning chorus sung the second day.
The earth was form’d, but in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryon immature involved,
Appear’d not: over all the face of earth

Passage that Longinus particularly admires; and no doubt its sublimity is greatly
owing to its conciseness: but our poet enlarges upon it, endeavouring to give some
account how light was created the first day, when the sun was not formed till the
fourth day. He says that it was sphered in a radiant cloud, and so journeyed round
the earth in a cloudy tabernacle: and herein is he justified by the authority of some
commentators, though others think this light shone but imperfectly, and did not appear
in full lustre till the fourth day.—Newton.

With joy and shout.

Job. xxxviii. 4, 7. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth; when
the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”—Newton.

Let there be firmament.

See Gen. i. 6; “Firmament” signifies expansion.—Newton.

And heaven.

So Gen. i. 8. According to the Hebrews, there were three heavens. The first is the
air, wherein the clouds move, and the birds fly; the second is the starry heaven; and
the third is the habitation of the angels and the seat of God’s glory. Milton is speak-
ing here of the first heaven, as he mentions the others in other places.—Newton.
Main ocean flow'd, not idle; but, with warm
Prolific humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive,
Satiate with genial moisture; when God said,
Be gather'd now, ye waters* under heaven,
Into one place, and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds: their tops ascend the sky:
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters: thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd,
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry:
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct.
For haste; such flight the great command impress'd
On the swift floods: as armies at the call
Of trumpets (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard; so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain,
Soft ebbing: nor withstood them rock or hill;
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
With serpent errour wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore;
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
The dry land, earth:" and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters, he call'd seas:
Aud saw that it was good; and said, Let the earth
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the earth.
He scarce had said, when the bare earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd, x
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet: and these, scarce blown,
Forth flourish'd thick the clustering vine, forth crept
The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed

*Be gather'd now, ye waters.
See Gen. i. 9; and Psalm civ. 6, et seq.—Newton.

w The dry land, earth.
These are again the words of Genesis formed into verse, i. 10, 11. But when he comes to the descriptive part, he then opens a finer vein of poetry.—Newton.

x Sudden flower'd.
See Esdras vi. 44.—Todd.
Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemm’d
Their blossoms: with high woods the fields were crown’d,
With tufts the valleys, and each fountain-side;
With borders long the rivers: that earth now
Seem’d like to heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades: though God had yet not rain’d
Upon the earth, and man to till the ground
None was; but from the earth a dewy mist
Went up, and water’d all the ground, and each
Plant of the field; which, ere it was in the earth,
God made, and every herb, before it grew
On the green stem: God saw that it was good:
So even and morn recorded the third day.

Again the Almighty spake, Let there be lights
High in the expanse of heaven, to divide
The day from night; and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
And let them be for lights, as I ordain
Their office in the firmament of heaven,
To give light on the earth; and it was so.
And God made two great lights, great for their use
To man, the greater to have rule by day,
The less by night, alter’n; and made the stars,
And set them in the firmament of heaven
To illuminate the earth, and rule the day
In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying his great work, that it was good;
For of celestial bodies first the sun,
A mighty sphere, he framed, unlightsome first,
Though of ethereal mould: then formed the moon
Globose, and every magnitude of stars,
And sow’d with stars the heaven, thick as a field:
Of light by far the greater part he took,
Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed
In the sun’s orb, made porous to receive
And drink the liquid light; firm to retain
Her gather’d beams, great palace now of light.
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns;
By tincture or reflection they augment
Their small peculiar, though from human sight
So far remote, with diminution seen.
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
Regent of day, and all the horizon round
Invested with bright rays, jocund to run

[Book VII.]

PARADISE LOST.

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His longitude through heaven’s high road; the gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced, \(^1\)
Shedding sweet influence; \(^2\) less bright the moon,
But opposite in level’d west was set,
His mirrour, with full face borrowing her light
From him; for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,
Revolved on heaven’s great axle, and her reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars, that then appear’d
Spangling the hemisphere: then first adorn’d
With their bright luminaries, that set and rose,
Glad evening and glad morn crown’d the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters \(^a\) generate
Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:
And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings
Display’d on the open firmament of heaven.
And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
The waters generated by their kinds:
And every bird of wing after his kind;
And saw that it was good, and bless’d them, saying,
Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill:
And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth.
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,
Glide under the green wave, in sculls \(^b\) that oft
Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,

\(^1\) The Pleiades, before him danced.

These are beautiful images, and very much resemble the famous picture of the Morning by Guido, where the sun is represented in his chariot, with Aurora flying before him, shedding flowers, and seven beautiful nymph-like figures, dancing before and about his chariot, which are commonly taken for the hours, but possibly may be the Pleiades, as they are seven in number, and it is not easy to assign a reason why the Hours should be signified by that number particularly. The picture is on a ceiling at Rome; but there are copies of it in England, and an excellent print by J. C. Fry. The Pleiades are seven stars in the neck of the constellation Taurus, which, rising about the time of the vernal equinox, are called by the Latins “Vergiliani.” Our poet therefore, in saying that the Pleiades danced before the sun at his creation, intimates very plainly that the creation was in the spring, according to the common opinion, Virg. Georg. ii. 338, &c.—Newton.

\(^2\) Shedding sweet influence.

See Job xxxviii. 31:—“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?”—Hume.

\(^a\) And God said, Let the waters.

This, and eleven verses following, are almost word for word from Genesis, i. 20—22; the poet afterwards branches out his general account of the fifth day’s creation into the several particulars.—Newton.

\(^b\) Sculls is undoubtedly shools.
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold;  
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend  
Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food  
In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal  
And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk,  
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,  
Tempest the ocean: there Leviathan,  
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep  
Stretch’d like a promontory, sleeps or swims,  
And seems a moving land; and at his gills  
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.  
Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,  
Their brood as numerous hatch, from the egg that soon  
Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed  
Their callow young; but feather’d soon and fledge  
They sumn’d their pens; and, soaring the air sublime,  
With clang despised the ground, under a cloud  
In prospect; there the eagle and the stork  
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build:  
Part loosely wing the region; part, more wise,  
In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,  
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth  
Their aery caravan, high over seas  
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing  
Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane  
Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air  
Floats as they pass, fann’d with unnumber’d plumes:  
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song  
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings  
Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale  
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays:  
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed  
Their downy breast; the swan with arched neck,  
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows  
Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit  
The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower  
The mid aereal sky: others on ground  
Walk’d firm; the crested cock, whose clarion sounds  
The silent hours; and the other, whose gay train  
Adorns him, colour’d with the florid hue  
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus  
With fish replenish’d, and the air with fowl,  
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth day.

\[c\] On cliffs and cedar-tops.

See Job xxxix. 27, 28.—Newton.

\[d\] Intelligent of seasons.

See Jerem. viii. 7.—Newton.

\[e\] The solemn nightingale.

Milton’s fondness and admiration of the nightingale may be seen, as Newton has remarked, in ‘Il Penseroso,’ in his first sonnet, and again in ‘Paradise Lost,’ b. iii. 38;  
b. iv. 648, 771; b. v. 40; b. viii. 518.—Todd.
The sixth, and of creation last, arose  
With evening harps and matin; when God said,  
Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,  
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,  
Each in their kind. The earth obey’d, and straight  
Opening her fertile womb, teem’d at a birth  
Innumeros living creatures, perfect forms,  
Limb’d and full grown: out of the ground uprose,  
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wins  
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;  
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walk’d;  
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:  
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks  
Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung,  
The grassy clods now calved; now half appear’d  
The tawny lion, pawing to get free  
His hinder parts; then springs, as broke from bonds,  
And rampant shakes his brinded mane: the ounce,  
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole  
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw  
In hillocks: the swift stag from under ground  
Bore up his branching head: scarce from his mould,  
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved  
His vastness: fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,  
As plants; ambiguous between sea and land  
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.  
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,  
Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans  
For wings, and smallest lineaments exact  
In all the liveries deck’d of summer’s pride,  
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green;  
These as a line their long dimension drew,  
Streaking the ground with simious trace; not all  
Minims of nature; some of serpent kind,  
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved  
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept  
The parsimonious emmet, provident  
Of future; in small room large heart enclosed;  
Pattern of just equality, perhaps  
Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes  
Of commonalty: swarming next appear’d  
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone  
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells  
With honey stored: the rest are numberless,  
And thou their natures know’st, and gavest them names,  
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown

\[ Pattern \text{ of just equality.} \]

We see that Milton, upon occasion, discovers his principles of government. He enlarges upon the same thought in his ‘Ready Way to establish a free Commonwealth,’ Prose W. i. 591. He commends the ants or emmets for living in a republic, as the bees are said to live under a monarchy.—Newton.
The serpent, subllest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
Now heaven in all her glory shone, and roll'd
Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand
First wheel'd their course: earth in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walk'd,
Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remain'd:
There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends; thither, with heart, and voice, and eyes,
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not he
Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:
Let us make now man in our image, man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing thatcreeps the ground.
This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee, O man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express; and thou becamest a living soul.
Male he created thee; but thy consort
Female, for race: then bless'd mankind, and said,
Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth;
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on the earth.
Wherever thus created, (for no place
Is yet distinct by name,) thence as thou know'st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This garden, planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste;

Let us make now man.

The author keeps closely to Scripture in his account of the formation of man, as well as of the other creatures. See Gen. i. 26, 27, 28. There are scarcely any alterations but what were requisite for the verse, or were occasioned by the change of the person, as the angel is speaking to Adam. And what additions are made are plainly of the same original—Newton.
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
Gave thee: all sorts are here that all the earth yields,
Variety without end; but of the tree,
Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,
Thou mayst not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest:
Death is the penalty imposed; beware,
And govern well thy appetite; lest sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant, death.
Here finish'd he, and all that he had made
View'd, and behold all was entirely good;
So even and morn accomplish'd the sixth day:
Yet not till the Creator, from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up return'd,
Up to the heaven of heavens, his high abode;
Thence to behold this new-created world,
The addition of his empire how it show'd
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
Follow'd with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelic harmonies: the earth, the air
Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),
The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their station listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
Open, ye everlasting gates!

h Open, ye everlasting gates!
See Psalm xxiv. 7:—"Lift up your heads, 0 ye gates: and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." This hymn was sung when the ark of God was carried up into the sanctuary on Mount Sion, and is understood as a prophecy of our Saviour's ascension into heaven; and therefore is fitly applied by our author to the same Divine Person's ascending thither, after he had created the world.
—NEWTON.

In the seventh book the author appears in a kind of composed and sedate majesty; and though the sentiments do not give so great an emotion as those in the former book, they abound with magnificent ideas. The sixth book, like a troubled ocean, represents greatness in confusion; the seventh affects the imagination like the ocean in a calm; and fills the mind of the reader, without producing in it anything like tumult or agitation.

Longinus, among the rules which he lays down for succeeding in the sublime way of writing, proposes to his reader, that he should imitate the most celebrated authors who have gone before him, and have been engaged in works of the same nature; as in particular, that, if he writes on a poetical subject, he shall consider how Homer would have spoken on such an occasion. By this means one great genius often catches the flame from another, and writes in his spirit without copying servilely after him. There are a thousand shining passages in Virgil, which have been lighted up by Homer.

Milton, though his own natural strength of genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect work, has doubtless very much raised and emboldened his conceptions by such an imitation as that which Longinus has recommended.

In this book, which gives us an account of the six days' work, the poet received but very few assistances from heathen writers, who were strangers to the wonders of creation: but as there are many glorious strokes of poetry upon this subject in Holy Writ, the author has numberless allusions to them through the whole course of this book. The great critic I have before mentioned, though a heathen, has taken notice of the sublime manner in which the lawgiver of the Jews has described the creation in the first book of Genesis; and there are many other passages in Scripture, which rise up to the same majesty, where this subject is touched upon. Milton has shown his judgment
Open, ye heavens! your living doors; let in
The great Creator, from his work return'd
Magnificent, his six days' work, a world;
Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign
To visit oft the dwellings of just men,
Delighted; and with frequent intercourse
Thither will send his winged messengers
On errands of supernal grace. So sung
The glorious train ascending: he through heaven,
That open'd wide her blazing portals, led
To God's eternal house direct the way;
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest
Powder'd with stars. And now on earth the seventh
Evening arose in Eden, for the sun
Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
Forerunning night; when at the holy mount
Of heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne
Of Godhead, fix'd for ever firm and sure,
The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
With his great Father; for he also went
Invisible, yet stay'd, (such privilege
Hath Omnipresence,) and the work ordain'd,
Author and End of all things; and, from work
very remarkably in making use of such of these as were proper for his poem; and in
duly qualifying those high strains of Eastern poetry, which were suited to readers,
whose imaginations were set to a higher pitch than those of colder climates.
Adam's speech to the angel, where he desires an account of what passed within the
regions of nature before the creation, is very great and solemn. The lines in which he
tells that the day is not too far spent for him to enter upon such a subject, are exquisite
in their kind, v. 98.
The angel's encouraging our first parents in a modest pursuit after knowledge, and
the causes which he assigns for the creation of the world, are very just and beautiful.
The Messiah, by whom, as we are told in Scripture, the heavens were made, comes forth
in the power of his Father, surrounded with a host of angels, and clothed with such a
majesty as becomes his entering upon a work, which, according to our conceptions,
appears the utmost exertion of Omnipotence. What a beautiful description has our
author raised upon that hint in one of the prophets! "And behold there came four
chariots out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass:"
About his chariots numberless were poured, &c.
I have before taken notice of these chariots of God, and of these gates of heaven;
and shall here only add, that Homer gives us the same idea of the latter, as opening of
themselves; though he afterwards takes off from it by telling us that the Hours first
of all removed those prodigious heaps of clouds which lay as a barrier before them.
I do not know anything in the whole poem more sublime than the description which
follows; where the Messiah is represented at the head of his angels as looking down
into the chaos, calming its confusion, riding into the midst of it, and drawing the first
outline of the creation.
The thought of the golden compasses, v. 225, is conceived altogether in Homer's
spirit; and is a very noble incident in this wonderful description. Homer, when he
speaks of the gods, ascribes to them several arms and instruments, with the same great-
ness of imagination. Let the reader only peruse the description of Minerva's aegis, or
buckler, in the fifth book; with her spear which would overturn whole squadrons, and
her helmet that was sufficient to cover an army drawn out of a hundred cities. The
golden compasses in the above-mentioned passage appear a very natural instrument in
Now resting, bless'd and hallow'd the seventh day,  
As resting on that day from all his work.]  
But not in silence holy kept: the harp  
Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe,  
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,  
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,  
Temper'd soft tunings, intermix'd with voice  
Choral or unison; of incense clouds,  
Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.  
Creation and the six days' acts they sung.  
Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite  
Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue  
Relate thee? Greater now in thy return  
Than from the giant angels: thee that day  
Thy thunders magnified; but to create  
the hands of him, whom Plato somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician. As poetry delights in clothing abstracted ideas in allegories and sensible images, we find a magnificent description of the creation, formed after the same manner, in one of the prophets, wherein he describes the Almighty Architect as measuring the waters in the hollow of his hand, meting out the heavens with his span, comprehending the dust of the earth in a measure, weighing the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Another of them, describing the Supreme Being in this great work of creation, represents him as laying the foundations of the earth, and stretching a line upon it; and in another place, as garnishing the heavens, stretching out the north over the empty place, and hanging the earth upon nothing. This last noble thought Milton has expressed in the following verse:—  
And earth self-balanced on her centre hung.

The beauties of description in this book lie so very thick, that it is impossible to enumerate them in these remarks. The poet has employed on them the whole energy of our tongue: the several great scenes of the creation rise up to view, one after another, in such a manner, that the reader seems present at this wonderful work, and to assist among the choirs of angels, who are the spectators of it. How glorious is the conclusion of the first day! v. 252, &c. We have the same elevation of thought in the third day, when the mountains were brought forth, and the deep was made: we have also the rising of the whole vegetable world described in this day's work, which is filled with all the graces that other poets have lavished on their description of the spring, and leads the reader's imagination into a theatre equally surprising and beautiful. The several glories of the heavens make their appearances on the fourth day.  
One would wonder how the poet could be so concise in his description of the six days as to comprehend them within the bounds of an episode: and, at the same time, so particular, as to give us a lively idea of them. This is still more remarkable in his account of the fifth and sixth days, in which he has drawn out to our view the whole animal creation from the reptile to the behemoth. As the lion and the leviathan are two of the noblest productions in the world of living creatures, the reader will find a most exquisite spirit of poetry in the account which our author gives us of them. The sixth day concludes with the formation of man: upon which, the angel takes occasion, as he did after the battle in heaven, to remind Adam of his obedience, which was the principal design of his visit.  
The poet afterwards represents the Messiah returning into heaven and taking a survey of his great work. There is something inexpressibly sublime in this part of the poem, where the author describes the great period of time filled with so many glorious circumstances; when the heavens and earth were finished; when the Messiah ascended up in triumph through the everlasting gates; when he looked down with pleasure upon his new creation; when every part of nature seemed to rejoice in its existence; "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."  
The accounts which Raphael gives of the battle of angels and creation of the world, have in them those qualifications which the critics judge requisite to an episode: they are nearly related to the principal action, and have a just connexion with the fable.—

Addison.

This criticism of Addison is so beautiful, so just, and so perfect, that I know not that I can find anything to add to it.
Is greater than created to destroy.
Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound
Thy empire? easily the proud attempt
Of spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,
Thou hast repell'd; while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more thy might: his evil
Thou usest, and from thence createst more good.
Witness this new-made world, another heaven
From heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea;
Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
Of destined habitation; but thou know'st
Their seasons: among these the seat of men,
Earth with her nether ocean circumfused,
Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced!
Created in his image, there to dwell
And worship him; and in reward to rule
Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
And multiply a race of worshippers
Holy and just: thrice happy, if they know
Their happiness, and persevere upright!
So sung they, and the empyrean rung
With halleluiahs: thus was sabbath kept.—
And thy request think now fulfill'd, that ask'd
How first this world and face of things began,
And what before thy memory was done
From the beginning; that posterity,
Inform'd by thee, might know: if else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.
BOOK VIII.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

No praise can be deemed too high for this eighth book of Paradise Lost. Milton speaks as the historian of idealism; never as a rhetorician: he has never any factitious warmth; what he relates he first sees: the richness of his imagination is united with extreme and surprising simplicity: he rejects all adornment. The imagination, which creates a whole series of characters and actions, resulting from each other,—those actions at the same time springing from high minds and high passions,—performs the greatest and rarest work of genius: thus we are filled with the most delightful astonishment, when we read Milton’s picture of the creation of Adam and Eve: the beauty, the glow, the enthusiasm, the rapture running through all the senses, and all the veins; the unalloyed grandeur of the man, the celestial grace of the woman; the majesty of his movements, the delicacy of hers; the inconceivable happiness of thoughts and words with which their admiration of each other is expressed; the breaks, the turns of language, the inspired brilliance, and flow of the strains; yet the inimitable chastity and transparency of the whole style;—fill a sensitive reader with an unfeigned wonder and exaltation, which it would be vain to attempt adequately to record.

I need not say, that all the art and skill alone of all the poets of the earth would never have reached those thoughts, though natural and human, yet mixed with intellectual sublimity and exalted passion, which the poet ascribes to Adam and Eve; and in which his beautiful language could only be attained by following those thoughts in a congenial tone. This is the real secret of Milton’s great superiority in the true language of poetry: it is miserable, when flat thoughts are covered by sounding or gaudy words.

The mind of him who undertakes to write poetry can only be worked into a due temperament by the force of a warm and pregnant imagination: in that state he need not seek for phrases or ideas: these rise out of the ideal position to which his genius has transported him: they are not the results of slow reflection, or reasoning, or memory. Admit the circumstances, and nature points out the sentiments: but it is the great poet alone who can invent the circumstances; and of all men, Milton could invent them with the most fertility and splendor.

There is another consideration which makes Milton’s invention deserving of the most unlimited praise: he was bound down by his awe of religion, and his search after truth and wisdom. When imagination may indulge itself in wanton flights, it may easily blaze by its erratic courses: here the poet had to keep within a prescribed track: he had therefore all his mighty powers at command: he threw his light where it was required.

Again I must say something of the argumentative parts of the poem as applied to this eighth book: these are as profound and excellent as those in the former books. They are not, as Dryden has hinted, flat and unprofitable; but the reverse. They are exalted, closely-argued, nakedly but vigorously expressed, sagacious, moral, instructive, comprehensive, deep in the knowledge of life, consolatory, and fortifying. Whoever supposes them unpoetical, has a narrow and mean conception of poetry; they are never out of place, but result from the leading characters of the poem; and are quite as essential to it, even as its grand, or beautiful, and breathing imagery.
ARGUMENT.

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhortcd to search rather than think more worthy of knowledge: Adam ascends; and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation; his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve; his discourse with the angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix’d to hear;
Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied:
What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
Equal, have I to render thee, divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allay’d
The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed
This friendly condescension to relate
Things else by me unsearchable; now heard
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due
With glory attributed to the high
Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly frame, this world,
Of heaven and earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes; this earth, a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her number’d stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal), merely to officiate light
Round this opaques earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night; in all their vast survey
Useless besides; reasoning I oft admire,
How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand

a The angel ended.

This eighth book made a part of the seventh book in the first edition.

Milton has here imitated the graceful suspension in the narrative of Ulysses; see the eleventh book of the Odyssey: and Pope, when translating the passage, ingeniously framed his version of Milton’s own words:—

He ceased; but left so charming in their ear
His voice, that listening still they seem’d to hear.

b When I behold, &c.

Milton, after having given so noble an idea of the creation of the new world, takes a proper occasion to show the two great systems, usually called the Ptolemaic and the Copernican: one making the earth, the other the sun, to be the centre; and this he does by introducing Adam proposing very judiciously the difficulties that occur in the first, and which was the system most obvious to him. The reply of the angel touches on the expedients the Ptolemaics invented to solve those difficulties, and to patch up their system; and then intimates that perhaps the sun is the centre; and so opens that system, and withal the noble improvements of the new philosophy; not however determining for one or the other: on the contrary, he exhorts our progenitor to apply his thoughts rather to what more nearly concerns him, and is within his reach.—Richardson.
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated; while the sedentary earth,
That better might with far less compass move,
Served by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sunless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.
So spake our sire, and by his countenance seem'd
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve
Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
With lowliness majestic from her seat,
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
And, touch'd by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole auditress:
Her husband the relater she preferr'd
Before the angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
With conjugal caresses; from his lip
Not words alone pleased her. O! when meet now
Such pairs in love and mutual honour join'd?
With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended; for on her, as queen,
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt proposed,
Benevolent and facile thus replied:

Perceiving.

What a lovely picture has the poet here drawn of Eve! As it did not become her to bear a part in the conversation, she modestly sits at a distance, but yet within view: she stays as long as the angel and her husband are discoursing of things which it might concern her and her duty to know: but when they enter upon abstruser points, then she decently retires. This is preserving the decorum of character; and so Cephalus in Plato's 'Republic,' and Scevolus in Cicero's treatise 'de Oratore,' stay only as long as it was suitable for persons of their character; and are made to withdraw when the discourse was less proper for them to hear. Eve's withdrawing is juster and more beautiful than these instances. She rises to go forth with lowliness, yet with majesty and grace. What modesty and what dignity is here!—Newton.

A pomp of winning Graces.

Gray has imitated this in the opening of his poem, 'The Progress of Poesy.' Gray may be perpetually tracked in his imitations of Milton's expressions.
To ask or search, I blame thee not; for heaven
Is as the book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn
His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years:
This to attain, whether heaven move or earth,
Imports not, if thou reckon right: the rest
From man or angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be seann'd by them who ought
Rather admire; or if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their disputes; perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
And calculate the stars: how they will wield
The mighty frame: how build, unbuild, contrive,
To save appearances: how gird the sphere
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb:
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
That bodies bright and greater should not serve
The less not bright; nor heaven such journeys run,
Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
The benefit. Consider first, that great
Or bright infer not excellence: the earth,
Though, in comparison of heaven, so small,
Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the sun that barren shines;
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful earth; there first received,
His beams, inactive else, their vigour find.
Yet not to earth are those bright luminaries
Officious; but to thee, earth's habitant.
And for the heaven's wide circuit, let it speak
The Maker's high magnificence: who built
So spacious, and his line stretch'd out so far,
That man may know he dwells not in his own;
An edifice too large for him to fill,
Lodged in a small partition; and the rest

*This to attain.*

It imports not, it matters not, whether heaven move or earth, whether the Ptolemaic or Copernican system be true. This knowledge we may still attain;—the rest, other more curious points of inquiry concerning the heavenly bodies, God hath done wisely to conceal.—**NEWTON.**

See Psalm cxxxix. 5:—"Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it."—**DUNSTER.**

*That man may know he dwells not in his own.*

A fine reflection, and confirmed by the authority of the greatest philosophers, who seem to attribute the first notions of religion in man to his observing the grandeur of the universe. See Cicero, Tusci. Disp. lib. i. sect. 28, and De Nat. Deor. lib. ii. sect. 6.

—**STILLINGFLEET.**
Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known.
The swiftness of those circles attribute,
Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
That to corporeal substances could add
Speed almost spiritual: me thou think'st not slow,
Who since the morning hour set out from heaven
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden; distance inexpressible
By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
Admitting motion in the heavens, to show
Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
To thee, who hast thy dwelling here on earth.
God, to remove his ways from human sense,
Placed heaven from earth so far, that earthly sight
If it presume, might err in things too high,
And no advantage gain. What if the sun
Be centre to the world; and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds;
Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou seest; and what if seventh to these
The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move?
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
Moved contrary with thwart obliquities;
Or save the sun his labour, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of day and night; which needs not thy belief,
If earth industrious of herself, fetch day
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the sun's beam meet night, her other part
Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,
Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air
To the terrestrial moon be as a star,
Enlightening her by day, as she by night
This earth? reciprocal, if land be there,
Fields and inhabitants: her spots thou seest
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
Fruits in her soften'd soil, for some to eat

5 In six thou seest.

In the moon, and the "five other wandering fires," as they are called, b. v. 177.—Newton.

b Her spots thou seest

As clouds.

It seems by this, and by another passage, b. v. 419, as if our author thought that the spots in the moon were clouds and vapours: but the most probable opinion is, that they are her seas and waters, which reflect only part of the sun's rays, and absorb the rest. They cannot possibly be clouds and vapours, because they are observed to be fixed and permanent.—Newton.
Allotted there; and other suns perhaps,
With their attendant moons, thou wilt desire,
Communicating male and female light;
Which two great sexes animate the world,
Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live:
For such vast room in nature unpossess'd
By living soul, desert and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
Each orb a glimpse of light, convey'd so far
Down to this habitable, which returns
Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
But whether thus these things, or whether not;
Whether the sun predominant in heaven
Rise on the earth; or earth rise on the sun;
He from the east his flaming road begin,
Or she from west her silent course advance,
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle; while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air long;
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;
Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
Of other creatures, as him pleases best,
Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
And thy fair Eve; heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
Think only what concerns thee, and thy being;
Dream not of other worlds; what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition, or degree:
Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd,
Not of earth only, but of highest heaven.
To whom thus Adam, clear'd of doubt, replied:
How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure,
Intelligence of heaven, angel serene!
And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
The easiest way; nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us; unless we ourselves
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Uncheck'd, and of her roving is no end;
Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn,
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle; but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom: 1 what is more, is fume.

An excellent piece of satire this, and a fine reproof of those men who have all sense but common sense, and whose folly is truly represented in the story of the philosopher, who, while he was gazing at the stars, fell into a ditch. Our author, in these lines, as

---

1 Is the prime wisdom.
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence;
And renders us, in things that most concern,
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deign’d.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance; now, hear me relate
My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard:
And day is not yet spent; till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise;
Inviting thee to hear while I relate;
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply;
For, while I sit with thee, I seem in heaven;
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour at the hour
Of sweet repast; they satiate and soon fill,
Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.

To whom thus Raphael answer’d heavenly meek:
Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour’d
Inward and outward both, his image fair:
Speaking or mute, all comeliness and grace
Attends thee; and each word, each motion forms:
Nor less think we in heaven of thee on earth
Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with man:
For God, we see, hath honour’d thee, and set
On man his equal love: say therefore on;
For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,

Mr. Thyer imagines, might probably have in his eye the character of Socrates, who first attempted to divert his countrymen from their airy and chimerical notions about the origin of things, and turn their attention to that "prime wisdom," the consideration of moral duties, and their conduct in social life.—Newton.

See Johnson’s observations to the same effect, and as to the proper objects of study, in his ‘Life of Milton,’ speaking of the poet’s plans of education.

1 And sweeter thy discourse.

The poet had here probably in mind that passage in Virgil, Ecl. v. 45:—

Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
Quae sopor fessis in gramine; quae per aestum
Dulcis a qua saliente sita restinguere vivo.

But the fine turn in the last three lines of Milton is entirely his own, and gives an exquisite beauty to this passage above Virgil’s. See ‘An Essay upon Milton’s Imitations of the Ancients,’ p. 37.—Newton.

k For I that day was absent.

The sixth day of the creation: of all the rest, of which he has spoken, he might have been an eye-witness.—Richardson.
Far on excursion toward the gates of hell;
Squared in full legion, (such command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a spy,
Or enemy, while God was in his work;
Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,
Destruction with creation might have mix'd.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt:
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as Sovran King; and to inure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song;
Torment, and loud launent, and furious rage.
Glad we return'd up to the coasts of light
Ere sabbath evening: so we had in charge.
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine.

So spake the godlike power, and thus our sire:
For man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat; which with his beams the sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd,
And gazed awhile the ample sky; till, raised
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet: about me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these
Creatures that lived and moved, and walk'd or flew;
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled;
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.

That none thence issued.

As man was to be the principal work of God in the lower world, and (according to Milton's hypothesis) a creature to supply the loss of the fallen angels, so particular care is taken at his creation. The angels, on that day, keep watch and guard at the gates of hell, that none may issue forth to interrupt the sacred work: at the same time that this was a very good reason for the angel's absence, it is likewise doing honour to the man with whom he was conversing.—Newton.

All things smiled;

With fragrance and with joy.

By fragrance, Milton has endeavoured to give an idea of that exquisite and delicious joy of heart Homer so often expresses by idberat, a word that signifies the fragrance that flowers emit after a shower or dew. Milton has used a like expression in his treatise 'Of Reformation,' p. 2, ed. 1738. "Methinks a sovran and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears, and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbath his soul with the fragrance of heaven."—Richardson.

Mr. Richardson might have farther observed, that Milton himself had expressed the same thought with more beauty, if possible, in b. iv. 153, where, speaking of Satan's approach to the garden of Paradise, he says,
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Survey’d, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not: to speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
My tongue obey’d, and readily could name
Whate’er I saw. Thou sun, said I, fair light,
And thou enlighten’d earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye hills, and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?
Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent:
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore;
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know?
While thus I call’d, and stray’d I knew not whither,
From where I first drew air, and first beheld
This happy light; when answer none return’d,
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down: there gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seized
My drowsed sense; untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently moved
My fancy to believe I yet had being,
And lived: one came, methought, of shape divine,
And said, Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
First man, of men innumerable ordain’d
First father! called by thee, I come thy guide
To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.
So saying, by the hand, he took me raised,
And over fields and waters, as in air
Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
A woody mountain; whose high top was plain,
A circuit wide enclosed, with goodliest trees
Planted, with walks and bowers; that what I saw

And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair.—Thyer.

n So saying, by the hand.

It is said that "the Lord took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to
dress it and to keep it," Gen. ii. 15. Some commentators say, that man was not formed
in Paradise, but was placed there after he was formed, to show that he had no title to it
by nature, but by grace; and Milton poetically supposes that he was carried thither
sleeping, and was first made to see that happy place in vision. The poet had perhaps in
mind that passage of Virgil, where Venus lays young Ascælius asleep, and removes him
from Carthage to the Idalian fields, En. i. 691, &c.: or if he had Scripture still in view,
he had authority for such a removal of a person, Acts viii. 30, when "the Spirit of the
Lord caught away Philip, and he was found at Azæus."—Newton.
Of earth before scarce pleasant seem'd. Each tree,
Louden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
Had lively shadow'd: here had new begun
My wandering, had not He, who was my guide
Up hither, from among the trees appear'd,
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at his feet I fell
Submit: he rear'd me, and, Whom thou sought'st I am,
Said mildly; Author of all this thou seest
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee; count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
Of every tree that in the garden grows
Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
But of the tree, whose operation brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
Amid the garden, by the tree of life,
Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
Transgress'd, inevitably thou shalt die;  
From that day mortal; and this happy state
Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a world
Of woe and sorrow. Sternly he pronounced
The rigid interdiction, which resounds
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
Not to incur: but soon his clear aspect
Return'd, and gracious purpose thus renew'd:
Not only these fair bounds, but all the earth
To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
Possess it, and all things that therein live,
Or live in sea or air; beast, fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
After their kinds; I bring them to receive
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
With low subjection; understand the same
Of fish within their watery residence,
Not hither summon'd, since they cannot change
Their element, to draw the thinner air.

*But of the tree.*

This being the great hinge on which the whole poem turns, Milton has marked it strongly: "But of the tree;"—"remember what I warn thee." He dwells, expatiates upon it, from v. 323 to v. 336, repeating, enforcing, fixing every word: it is all nerve and energy.—Richardson.

v Inevitably thou shalt die.

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," as in Gen. ii. 17, that is, from that day thou shalt become mortal, as the poet immediately after explains it.—Newton.
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two; these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I named them as they pass'd, and understood
Their nature; with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension: but in these
I found not what methought I wanted still;
And to the heavenly vision thus presumed:
'O, by what name, for thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming; how may I
Adore thee, Author of this universe,
And all this good to man? for whose well-being
So amply, and with hands so liberal,
Thou hast provided all things: but with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness? who can enjoy alone;
Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?
Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
As with a smile more brighten'd, thus replied:
What call'st thou solitude? Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenish'd, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? Know'st thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly: with these
Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.
So spake the Universal Lord, and seem'd
So ordering: I, with leave of speech implored,
And humble deprecation, thus replied:
Let not my words offend thee, heavenly Power;
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferiour far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony, or true delight?

But in these

I found not.

The account given by Moses is very short here, as in all the rest. Gen. ii. 19, 20.
"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl
of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatso-
ever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave
names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for
Adam there was not found an help meet for him." And from this short account, our
author has raised, what a noble episode! and what a divine dialogue from the latter
part only!—Newton.

Know'st thou not

Their language and their ways?

That brutes have a kind of language among themselves is evident and undeniable. There
is a treatise in French of the language of brutes; and our author supposes that
Adam understood this language, and was of knowledge superior to any of his
descendants, and besides was assisted by inspiration. "with such knowledge God
endued his sudden apprehension." He is said by the school divines to have exceeded
Solomon himself in knowledge.—Newton.
Which must be mutual, in proportion due
Given and received; but, in disparity,*
The one intense, the other still remiss,
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike: of fellowship I speak,
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight; wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort: they rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.

Wherefore the Almighty answer'd, not displeased:
A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What think'st thou then of me, and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possess'd
Of happiness, or not? who am alone
From all eternity; for none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I then with whom to hold converse,
Save with the creatures which I made, and those
To me inferiour, infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?

He ceased; I lowly answer'd: To attain
The highth and depth of thy eternal ways†
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficiencie found: not so is man,
But in degree; the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help,
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already Infinite;
And through all numbers absolute, though One:
But man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective; which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.

* But in disparity.

But in inequality, such as is between brute and rational; "the one intense," man-high, wound up, and strained to nobler understanding, and of more lofty faculty; "the other still remiss," the animal, let down and slacker, grovelling in more low and mean perceptions; can never suit together. A musical metaphor, from strings, of which the stretched and highest give a smart and sharp sound, the slack a flat and heavy one.—Hume.

† Thy eternal ways.

See Rom. xi. 33:—"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"—Hume.
Thou in thy secrery, although alone,  
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not  
Social communication; yet, so pleased,  
Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt  
Of union or communion, deified:  
I, by conversing, cannot these ered  
From prone; nor in their ways complaceence find.  
Thus I embolden'd spake, and freedom used  
Permissive, and acceptance found: which gain'd  
This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:  
Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased;  
And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,  
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself;  
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,¹  
My image, not imparted to the brute;  
Whose fellowship therefore, unmeet for thee,  
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike:  
And be so minded still: I, ere thou spakest,²  
Knew it not good for man to be alone;  
And no such company as then thou saw'st  
Intended thee; for trial only brought,  
To see how thou coul'dst judge of fit and meet:  
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,  
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,  
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.  
He ended, or I heard no more; for now  
My earthy by his heavenly overpower'd,³  
Which it had long stood under, strain'd to the highth  
In that celestial colloquy sublime,  

¹ Spirit within thee free.

Milton is, upon all occasions, a strenuous advocate for the freedom of the human mind, against the narrow and rigid notions of the Calvinists of that age; and here, in the same spirit, supposes the very image of God, in which man was made, to consist in this liberty. The sentiment is very grand; and this sense of the words is, in my opinion, full as probable as any of those many which the commentators have put upon them; inasmuch as no property of the soul of man distinguishes him better from the brutes, or assimilates him more to his Creator. This notion, though uncommon, is not peculiar to Milton; for I find Clarinus, in his remark upon this passage of Scripture, referring to St. Basil the great, for the same interpretation. See Clarinus amongst the Critici Sacri.—TIVER.

² I, ere thou spakest.

As we read Gen. ii. 18. And then, ver. 19 and 20, God brings the beasts and birds before Adam, and Adam gives them names; “but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” as if Adam had now discovered it himself likewise; and from this little hint our author has raised this dialogue between Adam and his Maker. And then follows, both in Moses and in Milton, the account of the formation of Eve, and institution of marriage.—Newton.

³ By his heavenly overpower'd.

The Scripture says only, that “the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam,” Gen. ii. 21; and our author endeavours to give some account how it was effected. Adam was overpowered by conversing with so superior a Being, his faculties having been all strained and exerted to the highth; and now he sunk down quite dazzled and spent, and sought repair of sleep, which instantly fell on him, and closed his eyes. “Mine eyes he closed,” says he again, turning the words, and making Sleep a person, as the ancient poets often do.—Newton.
As with an object that excels the sense,  
Dazzled and spent, sunk down; and sought repair  
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call’d  
By nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.  
Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell  
Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,  
Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,  
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape  
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;  
Who stooping, open’d my left side, and took  
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,  
And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,  
But suddenly with flesh fill’d up and heal’d:  
The rib he form’d and fashion’d with his hands;  
Under his forming hands a creature grew,  
Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,  
That what seem’d fair in all the world, seem’d now  
Mean, or in her summ’d up, in her contain’d  
And in her looks; which from that time infused  
Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,  
And into all things from her air inspired  
The spirit of love and amorous delight.  
She disappear’d, and left me dark: I waked  
To find her, or for ever to deplore  
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:  
When out of hope, behold her, not far off,  
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn’d  
With what all earth or heaven could bestow  
To make her amiable; on she came,  
Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen,  

x Open left the cell.

Of fancy.

Balaam, before he prophesies the happiness of Israel, thus describes himself in the vision which communicated to him the divine word:—"The man, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open," Numb. xxiv. 4. On the latter part of which verse the gloss of the commentators Vatablus and Pagius is,—"dormitans, et tamen habens oculos mentis aperitos." This frequent recollection in Milton, not only of every applicable Scripture passage, but of every material comment on them, shows the wonderful extent of his reading and power of his memory.—Dunster.

y Abstract as in a trance.

"The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam," Gen. ii. 21. The word that we translate a deep sleep, the Greek interpreters render by trance or ecstasy, in which the person is abstract, is withdrawn as it were from himself, and still sees things, though his senses are all locked up. So that Adam sees his wife, as he did Paradise, first in vision.—Newton.

z She disappear’d, and left me dark.

She that was my light vanished, and left me dark and comfortless: for light is in almost all languages a metaphor for joy and comfort, and darkness for the contrary. As Dr. Pearce observes, it is something of the same way of thinking that Milton uses in his sonnet on his deceased wife: after having described her as appearing to him, he says,—

She fled, and day brought back my night.—Newton.

z Led by her heavenly Maker.

For the Scripture says,—"The Lord God brought her unto the man," Gen. ii. 22.
And guided by his voice; nor uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:
This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me: Woman is her name; of man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.
She heard me thus; and though divinely brought,
Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but, retired,
The more desirable; or, to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turn'd:
I follow'd her; she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
I led her blushing like the morn: all heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;

And Milton, still alluding to this text, says afterwards that she was "divinely brought," v. 500.—Newton.

b Bone of my bone.

That Adam, waking from his deep sleep, should, in words so express and prophetic, own and claim his companion, gave rise to that opinion, that he was not only asleep, but entranced too; by which he saw all that was done to him, and understood the mystery of it, God informing his understanding in his ecstacy.—Hume.

c With obsequious majesty approved.

How exactly does Milton preserve the same character of Eve in all places where he speaks of her! This "obsequious majesty" is the very same with the "coy submission, modest pride," in the fourth book; and both not unlike what Spenser has in his 'Epithalamion':

Behold how goodly my faire love does ly,
In proud humility.—Thyer.

a The earth

Gave sign of gratulation.

This is a copy from Homer, II. xiv. 347:—

Τῆς οὐδ᾽ ἔτοι Νὰθαν ἥτο φέρον νεόθηκαν ποίησιν, κ. τ. λ.

but Milton has greatly improved this, as he improves everything, in the imitation. In all his copies of the beautiful passages of other authors he studiously varies and disguises them, the better to give himself the air of an original, and to make, by his additions and improvements, what he borrowed the more fairly his own; the only regular way of acquiring a property in thoughts taken from other writers, if we may believe Horace, whose laws in poetry are of undoubted authority, 'De Art. Poet.' v. 131, &c. Milton, indeed, in what he borrows from Scripture, observes the contrary rule; and generally adheres minutely, or rather religiously, to the very words, as much as possible, of the original.—Newton.
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening-star
On his hill top, to light the bridal lamp.

Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss,
Which I enjoy; and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire; these delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
Walks, and the melody of birds: but here
Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmoved; here only weak
Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
Or nature fail'd in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain;
Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough; at least on her bestow'd
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.

For well I understand in the prime end
Of nature her the inferiour, in the mind
And inward faculties, which most excel:
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion given
O'er other creatures: yet, when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenance, and like folly shows;
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and, to consummate all,

*The evening star*

On his hill top.

The evening star is said to light the bridal lamp, as it was the signal among the ancients to light their lamps and torches, in order to conduct the bride home to the bridegroom. Catullus—"Vesper adest, juvenes consurgite," &c. "On his hill top," for when this star appeared eastward in the morning, it was said to rise on Mount Ida, Virg. En. ii. 801: when it appeared westward in the evening, it was said to be seen on Mount Oeta, Virg. Ecl. viii. 36. Milton therefore writes in classical language: he does not mention any mountain by name, but says only "the evening star on his hill top," as appearing above the hills.—Newton.
Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed.

To whom the angel with contracted brow:
Accuse not nature; she hath done her part,
Do thou but thine; and be not difficult
Of wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou
Dismiss not her, when most thou need’st her nigh,
By attributing overmuch to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceivest.
For, what admirest thou, what transports thee so?
An outside; fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;
Not thy subjection: weigh with her thyself;
Then value: oft-times nothing profits more
Then self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well managed; of that skill the more thou know’st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows:
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
So awful, that with honour thou mayst love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
Is propagated, seem such dear delight
Beyond all other; think the same vouchsafed
To cattle and each beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulged, if aught
Therein enjoy’d were worthy to subdue
The soul of man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thou find’st
Attractive, human, rational, love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true love consists not: love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause,
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.
To whom thus, half abash’d, Adam replied;
Neither her outside form’d so fair, nor aught
In procreation common to all kinds,

Thy cherishing, &c.

He makes use of these three words, agreeably to Scripture:—"So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nouriseth and cherisheth it," Ephes. v. 28, 29.
"Giving honour unto the wife," 1 Pet. iii. 7.—Newton.

Love refines.

Milton, in his ‘Apology for Smolettamus,’ speaks thus:—"Thus, from the laureat-fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato, and his equal Xenophon: where if I should tell ye what I learned of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so," &c.—Thyer.
(Though higher of the genial bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence I deem)
So much delights me, as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mix'd with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind,⁴ or in us both one soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
Yet these subject not: I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foil'd;
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing; yet, still free,
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To love, thou blamest me not; for love, thou sayst
Leads up to heaven, is both the way and guide;
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:
Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love
Express they? by looks only? or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?
To whom the angel, with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Answer'd: Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happy; and without love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st,
(And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
In eminence; and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace
Total they mix, union of pure with pure¹
Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need,
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more;² the parting sun,
Beyond the earth's green cape and verdant isles
Hesperian, sets; my signal to depart.

⁴ Union of mind.

So in his 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,' b. i. c. 2:—"And indeed it is a greater blessing from God, more worthy so excellent a creature as man is, and a higher end to honour and sanctifie the league of marriage, when as the solace and satisfaction of the mind is regarded and provided for before the sensitive pleasing of the body."—Todd.

¹ Union of pure with pure.

Raphael had said that spirits "Mix total;' that is one circumstance in which they differ from men; viz. they are so unrestrained, that they need no conveyance; that is, need not move to meet one another, as our flesh does to meet with other flesh, and one soul with another soul, mediate corpus.—Pearce.

² But I can now no more.

The conversation had now become of such a nature, that it was proper to put an end to it. And now the "parting sun beyond the earth's green cape," beyond Cape de Verd, the most western point of Africa; "and verdant isles," the islands of Cape de Verd; "Hesperian sets," sets westward, from Hesperus the evening star appearing there; "my signal to depart," for he was only to stay till the evening. See b. v. 376. And he very properly closes his discourse with those moral instructions, which should make the most lasting impression on the mind of Adam, and to deliver which was the principal end and design of the angel's coming.—Newton.
Be strong, live happy, and love! but, first of all,  
Him, whom to love is to obey," and keep  
His great command: take heed, lest passion sway  
Thy judgment to do aught, which else free will  
Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,  
The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!  
In thy persevering shall rejoice,  
And all the blest: stand fast; to stand or fall  
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.  
Perfect within, no outward aid require:  
And all temptation to transgress repel.  
So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus  
Follow'd with benediction:—Since to part,  
Go, heavenly guest, ethereal messenger,  
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!  
Gentle to me and affable hath been  
Thy condescension, and shall be honour'd ever  
With grateful memory: thou to mankind  
Be good and friendly still, and oft return!  
So parted they; the angel up to heaven  
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

k Him whom to love is to obey.  

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," 1 John v. 3. His "great command" everybody will understand to be the trial of Adam's obedience.—NEWTON.

The eighth book opens with a beautiful description of the impression which the discourse of the archangel Raphael made on our first parents. Adam afterwards, by a very natural curiosity, inquires concerning the motions of those celestial bodies which make the most glorious appearance among the six days' works. The poet here, with a great deal of art, represents Eve as withdrawing from this part of their conversation, to amusements much more suitable to her sex; he well knew that the episode in this book, which is filled with Adam's account of his passion and esteem for Eve, would have been improper for her hearing; and has therefore devised very just and beautiful reasons for her retiring.

The angel's returning a doubtful answer to Adam's inquiries was not only proper for the moral reason which the poet assigns; but because it would have been highly absurd to have given the sanction of an archangel to any particular system of philosophy: the chief points in the Ptolemaic and Copernican hypotheses are described with great conciseness and perspicuity, and at the same time dressed in very pleasing and poetical images.

Adam, to detain the angel, enter's afterwards upon his own history, and relates to him the circumstances in which he found himself upon his creation, as also his conversation with his Maker, and his first meeting with Eve. There is no part of the poem more apt to raise the attention of the reader than this discourse of our great ancestor; as nothing can be more surprising and delightful to us than to hear the sentiments that arose in the first man, while he was yet new and fresh from the hands of his Creator. The poet has interwoven everything which is delivered upon this subject in Holy Writ with so many beautiful imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived more just and natural than this whole episode; as our author knew this subject could not but be agreeable to his reader, he would not throw it into the relation of the six days' works, but reserved it for a distinct episode, that he might have an opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this part of the poem, I cannot but take notice of two shining passages in the dialogue between Adam and the angel: the first is that wherein our ancestor gives an account of the pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble moral, v. 210, &c.: the other I shall mention is that in which the angel gives a reason why he should be glad to hear the story Adam was about to relate, v. 229, &c. There is no question but our poet drew the image in what follows from that of Virgil's sixth book, where Aeneas and the Sibyl stand before the adamanite gates, which are described as shut upon the place of torments: and listen to the groans, the clank of chains, and the noise of iron whips, that were heard in those regions of pain and sorrow.
Adam then proceeds to give an account of his condition and sentiments immediately after his creation. How agreeably does he represent the posture in which he found himself, the delightful landscape that surrounded him, and the gladness of heart which grew up in him on that occasion! He is afterwards described as surprised at his own existence, and taking a survey of himself, and of all the works of nature: he also is represented as discovering by the light of reason, that he, and everything about him, must have been the effect of some being infinitely good and powerful; and that this Being had a right to his worship and adoration. His first address to the sun, and to those parts of the creation which made the most distinguished figure, is very natural and answering to the imagination: his next sentiment, when upon his first going to sleep he fancies himself losing his existence, and falling away into nothing, can never be sufficiently admired: his dream, in which he still preserves the consciousness of his existence, and his removal into the garden which was prepared for his reception, are also circumstances finely imagined, and grounded upon what is delivered in sacred story.

These, and the like wonderful incidents in this part of the work, have in them all the beauties of novelty, at the same time that they have all the graces of nature: they are such as none but a great genius could have thought of: though, upon the perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves from the subject of which he treats. In a word, though they are natural they are not obvious; which is the true character of all fine writing.

The impression which the introduction of the Tree of Life left in the mind of our first parent is described with great strength and judgment: as the image of the several beasts and birds passing in review before him is very beautiful and lively.

Adam, in the next place, describes a conference which he held with his Maker upon the subject of solitude. The poet here represents the Supreme Being as making an essay of his own work, and putting to the trial that reasoning faculty with which he had endued his creature. Adam urges, in this divine colloquy, the impossibility of his being happy, though he was the inhabitant of Paradise, and lord of the whole creation, without the conversation and society of some rational creature, who should partake those blessings with him: this dialogue, which is supported chiefly by the beauty of the thoughts, without other poetical ornaments, is as fine a part as any in the whole poem: the more the reader examines the justness and delicacy of the sentiments, the more he will find himself pleased with it. The poet has wonderfully preserved the character of majesty and condescending in the Creator, and at the same time that of humility and adoration in the creature, in v. 367, &c.

Adam then proceeds to give an account of his second sleep, and of the dream in which he beheld the formation of Eve: the new passion that was awakened in him at the sight of her is touched very finely:

Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Men-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
That what seemed fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summd up, &c.

Adam's distress upon losing sight of this beautiful phantom, with his exclamations of joy and gratitude at the discovery of a real creature who resembled the apparition which had been presented to him in his dream; the approaches he makes to her, and his manner of courtship; are all laid together in a most exquisite propriety of sentiments. Though this part of the poem is worked up with great warmth and spirit, the love which he describes in it is in every way suitable to a state of innocence. If the reader compares the description which Adam here gives of his leading Eve to the nuptial bower, with that which Mr. Dryden has made on the same occasion in a scene of his 'Fall of Man:' he will be sensible of the great care which Milton took to avoid all thoughts on so delicate a subject that might be offensive to religion or good manners. The sentiments are chaste, but not cold; and convey to the mind ideas of the most transporting passion and of the greatest purity. What a noble mixture of rapture and innocence has the author joined together in the reflection which Adam makes on the pleasures of love, compared to those of sense!

These sentiments of love in our first parent give the angel such an insight into human nature, that he seems apprehensive of the evils which might befall the species in general from the excess of this passion; he therefore fortifies him against it by timely admonitions, which very artfully prepare the mind of the reader for the occurrences of the next book: where the weakness of which Adam here gives such distant discoveries, brings about that fatal event which is the subject of the poem: his discourse, which follows the gentle rebuke he received from the angel, shows that his love, however violent it might appear, was still founded in reason, and consequently not improper for Paradise.

Adam's speech at parting from the angel has in it a deference and gratitude agreeable to an inferior nature: and at the same time a certain dignity and greatness suitable to the father of mankind in his state of innocence.—ADDITION.
BOOK IX.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The most extraordinary part of this story is Eve's perverse resolve to separate herself from Adam in her morning cultivation of the garden, contrary to Adam's remonstrances; and her so soon falling into the serpent's snare, though so very strongly warned: this is not consistent with the goodness which the poet before ascribed to her. To me it appears that there is a good deal of concealed satire in this: it was open to the poet to have represented her making a longer struggle; and not having before exposed herself, almost as if voluntarily, to the temptation. Eve ought to have been too happy in her favoured state to be seduced by the serpent's arguments, which were only calculated to mislead those who were oppressed, and saw pleasures around them, all of which they were restrained from tasting. The moment Eve partook of the poison, it produced an intoxication, which made it frightfully sensual; and I must confess, I think that Milton is not blameless, and has not his usual sanctity of strain, in the pictures he consequently draws: as poetry, it is exquisite; as morality, it is dangerous,—almost disgusting. Allow the story to take this turn, and the bard almost exhibits himself in richness: the remorse, sickness, and despondence which follow, are nobly exhibited; and here, perhaps, it will be contended, lies the moral: but the parties have deserved their fate; and this lessens our pity for them: for Adam ought not so easily to have yielded to Eve's persuasions,—fully aware as he was of the consequences. All this, I must venture to say, is an outrage upon the probable. The mutual crimination and recrimination is drawn with perfect mastery; but Eve's reproach to Adam, as being the more offending person because he had indulged her, is a little too provoking.

The descriptive parts glow with a uniform freshness, splendour, and nature; with a compactness of imagery, and a simple and naked force of language, which make all pictures of other poets fade away before them. There never appears a superfluous word, or one which is not pregnant with thought and matter. The sentiments have a weight and a profundity of wisdom which seem like inspiration: out of every incident arise such reflections as have the spell of oracles.

As Milton lived in visions, all his dialogues were pertinent to his characters; and it is by these dialogues that the imagery, as connected with them, is made to have a double force. The inanimate material world derives almost all its interest from its conjunction with human intellectuality: for this reason Gray expressed an opinion that a merely descriptive poem was an imperfect work. The charm of Gray's 'Elegy' is, that all his imagery has a moral adjunct; but the moral of Milton is deeper, more extended, and more reflective, than of others: his illustrations are drawn from all the founts of knowledge, learning, and wisdom, sacred and profane: he has the art of making us see features and colours in the forms of nature, which we did not see before.

The ninth book is that on which the whole fate and fall of man turns; and so far is the most important. It is called the most tender. If the submission to sensual human passions be tenderness, it is so; taking the resistance to those passions to be loftiness. The serpent himself appears to have been enamoured of Eve's beauty and loveliness of soul, and for a moment to have repented of the evil he was plotting to bring upon her.

All that we know from the Mosaic history is, that the serpent tempted Eve, and Eve tempted Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit; but we do not know by what wiles this sin was brought about. We may suppose that by the serpent the operation of the evil passions of contradiction, disobedience, rebellion, and scepticism was meant: just as we may suppose that Eve persisted in roaming alone in spite of Adam's dissuasions, merely because her pride was thwarted by her husband's fear that "some harm should befall her" in his absence.

Critics will say, that had she been more purely virtuous, Heaven would not have decreed the loss of Paradise; and therefore that it was of the essence of the story to repre-
sent her thus guilty. It may be deemed highly presumptuous in me to suggest that Milton might have represented her equally guilty, with more probability and more spirituality. He might have painted mental delusions rather than the intoxicating pleasures of the senses: it was open to him to follow his own course in the inventions of his overflowing imagination; but it could never be necessary to Milton's genius to dwell on matter rather than on spirit. The luxuriance of description has made this a favorite book of the poem: it is this luxuriance which I think misplaced in so holy a work.

ARGUMENT.

Satan having compassed the earth, with meditated guile, returns, as a mist, by night into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping: Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart; Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her found alone: Eve, both to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength: Adam at last yields: the serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking; with much flatery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech, and such understanding, not till now: the serpent answers, that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both: Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the tree of knowledge forbidden; the serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat; she, pleased with the taste, deliberates awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof: Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her; and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit: the effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk* where God or angel guest

With man, as with his friend, familiar used

* No more of talk.

These prologues, or prefaces of Milton to some of his books, speaking of his own person, lamenting his blindness, and preferring his subject to those of Homer and Virgil, and the greatest poets before him, are condemned by some critics; and it must be allowed that we find no such digression in the "Iliad" or "Aeneid:"--it is a liberty that can be taken only by such a genius as Milton, and I question whether it would have succeeded in any hands but his. As Voltart says upon the occasion, I cannot but own that an author is generally guilty of an unpardonable self-love, when he lays aside his subject to descant upon his own person;--but that human frailty is to be forgiven in Milton; nay, I am pleased with it. He gratifies the curiosity he has raised in me about his person.--when I admire the author, I desire to know something of the man; and he, whom all readers would be glad to know, is allowed to speak of himself. But this, however, is a very dangerous example for a genius of an inferior order, and is only to be justified by success. See Voltaire's "Essay on Epic Poetry," p. 111. But as Mr. Thyer adds, however some critics may condemn a poet's sometimes digressing from his subject to speak of himself, it is very certain that Milton was of a very different opinion long before he thought of writing this poem: for, in his discourse of the "Reason of Church Government," &c., apologizing for saying so much of himself as he does, he adds,—"For, although a poet, soaring in the high region of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might, without apology, speak more of himself than I mean to do; yet for me, sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many renders of no empyreal conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me," vol. i. p. 59, ed. 1738.—Newton.

b God or angel guest.

Milton, who knew and studied the Scripture thoroughly, and continually profits himself of its vast sublimity, as well as of the more noble treasures it contains, and to which his poem owes its greatest lustre, has done it here very remarkably.—Richardson.

The poet says that he must now treat no more of familiar discourse with either god or angel; for Adam had held discourse with God, as we read in the preceding book; and the whole foregoing episode is a conversation with the angel.—Newton.
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast; permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic: foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of man, revolt
And disobedience: on the part of Heaven
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
That brought into this world a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger: sad task! yet argument
Not less, but more heroic, than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia dispossessed;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, so long
Perplex'd the Greek, and Cytherea's son;
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse:
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late; a
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument e
Heroic deem'd; chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights,
In battles feign'd: the better fortitude

Those notes to tragic.

As the author is now changing his subject, he professes likewise to change his style agreeably to it: the reader therefore must not expect such lofty images and descriptions as before. What follows is more of the tragic strain than of the epic:—which may serve as an answer to those critics who censure the latter books of the "Paradise Lost," as falling below the former.—Newton.

a Long choosing and beginning late.

Milton intended pretty early to write an epic poem, and proposed the story of "King Arthur" for the subject: but that was laid aside, probably, for the reasons here intimated. The "Paradise Lost" he designed at first as a tragedy: it was not till long after that he began to form it into an epic poem; and, indeed, for several years he was so hotly engaged in the controversies of the times, that he was not at leisure to think of a work of this nature; and did not begin to fashion it in its present form, till after the Salmasian controversy which ended in 1655; and probably did not set about the work in earnest till after the Restoration: so that he was "long choosing, and beginning late."—Newton.

e The only argument.

The three species of the epic poem are morality, politics, and religion: these have been occupied by Homer, Virgil, and Milton. Here then the grand scene is closed, and all farther improvements of the epic at an end.—Newton.

A cruel sentence indeed, and a very severe statute of limitation; enough, if it had any foundation, to destroy any future attempt of any exalted genius that might arise. But, in truth, the assertion is totally groundless and chimerical. Each of the three poets might change the stations here assigned to them: Homer might assume to himself the province of politics; Virgil, of morality: and Milton, of both; who is also a strong proof that human action is not the largest sphere of epic poetry.—Jos. Warton.
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung; or to describe races and games,\(^1\)
Or tilting furniture, imblazon'd shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases\(^2\) and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshall'd feast
Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:
The skill of artifice or office mean,
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem. Me, of these
Nor skill'd nor studious, higher argument
Remains; sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold\(^b\)
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depress'd; and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.
The sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night; \(^1\)' and now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veil'd the horizon round;
When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless return'd.
By night he fled, and at midnight return'd
From compassing the earth; cautious of day
Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried
His entrance, and forwarn'd the cherubim
That kept their watch; thence full of anguish driven,

\(^1\) Races and games.
As the ancient poets have done; Homer in the twenty-third book of the "Iliad," Virgil in the fifth book of the "Aeneid," and Statius in the sixth book of his "Thebais," or tilts and tournaments, which are often the subject of the modern poets, as Arie Spenser, and the like.—Newton.

\(^2\) Bases.
Bases signify the mantle which hang down from the middle to about the knees, or lower, worn by knights on horseback.—Todd.

\(^b\) An age too late, or cold.
He has a thought of the same kind in his "Reason of Church-Government," b. ii. speaking of epic poems:—"If to the instinct of nature, and the imboldening of art, aught may be trusted; and that there be nothing adverse in our climate, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories."—Or years damp, &c. For he was near sixty when this poem was published: and it is surprising that, at that time of life, and after such troublesome days as he had passed through, he should have so much poetical fire remaining.—Newton.

\(^1\) Short arbiter
'Twixt day and night.
This expression was probably borrowed from the beginning of Sidney's "Arcadia," where, speaking of the sun about the time of the equinox, he calls him "an indifferent arbiter between the night and the day."—Newton.
The space of seven continued nights\(^1\) he rode
With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line
He circled; four times cross'd the ear of night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure;\(^2\)
On the eighth return'd; and, on the coast averse
From entrance or cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the change,
Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot underground; till part
Rose up a fountain by the tree of life:
In with the river sunk, and with it rose,
Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
Where to lie hid: sea he had search'd, and land
From Eden over Pontus,\(^1\) and the pool
Maotis, up beyond the river Ob;
Downward as far antarctic; and in length,
West from Orontes to the ocean barr'd\(^m\)
At Darien; thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus: thus the orb he roam'd
With narrow search; and with inspection deep
Consider'd every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found
The serpent subtlest beast of all the field.\(^f\)
Him, after long debate irresolute
Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose;
Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
To enter; and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight; for, in the wily snake
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceding; which, in other beasts observed,
Doubt might beget of diabolic power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolved; but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus pour'd:

\(^1\) Seven continued nights.

Satan was three days compassing the earth from east to west, and four days from north to south, but still kept always in the shade of night; and, after a whole week's peregrination in this manner, on the eighth night returned by stealth into Paradise.—Newton.

\(^2\) Each colure.

The colures are two great circles, intersecting each other at right angles in the poles of the world, and encompassing the earth from north to south, and from south to north again.—Newton.

\(^1\) From Eden over Pontus.

As we had before an astronomical, so here we have a geographical account of Satan's peregrinations.—Newton.

\(^m\) Ocean barr'd.

See Job xxxviii. 10:—"And set cars to the sea."—Newton.

\(^f\) The serpent, subtlest beast.

So Moses, Gen. iii. 1:—"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field."
O earth, how like to heaven, if not preferr'd.  
More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built  
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!  
For what God, after better, worse would build?  
Terrestrial heaven, danced round by other heavens  
That shine, yet bear their bright effluous lamps,  
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems;  
In thee concentring all their precious beams  
Of sacred influence! As God in heaven  
Is centre, yet extends to all; so thou,  
Centring, receivest from all those orbs; in thee,  
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears  
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth  
Of creatures animate with gradual life,  
Of growth, sense, reason, all summ'd up in man.  
With what delight could I have walked thee round,  
If I could joy in aught! sweet interchange  
Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,  
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crown'd,  
Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these  
Find place or refuge; and the more I see  
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel  
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege  
Of contraries: all good to me becomes  
Bane, and in heaven much worse would be my state.  
But neither here seek I, no, nor in heaven  
To dwell, unless by mastering heaven's Supreme:  
Nor hope to be myself less miserable  
By what I seek, but others to make such  
As I, though thereby worse to me redound:  
For only in destroying I find ease  
To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroy'd,  
Or won to what may work his utter loss,  
For whom all this was made; all this will soon

\[o\] If not preferr'd.

I reckon this panegyric upon the earth among the less perfect parts of the poem. The beginning is extravagant, and what follows is not consistent with what the author had said before, in his description of Satan's passage among the stars and planets, which are said then to appear to him as other worlds inhabited. See b. iii. 566. The imagination, that all the heavenly bodies were created for the sake of the earth, was natural to human ignorance; and human vanity might find its account in it, but neither of these could influence Satan.—Heylin.

It is common for people to undervalue what they have forfeited and lost by their folly and wickedness, and to overvalue any good that they hope to attain: so Satan is here made to question whether earth be not preferable to heaven; but this is spoken of earth in its primitive and original beauty before the Fall.

Satan was willing to insinuate imperfection in God, as if he had mended his hand by creation, and as if all the works of God were not perfect in their kinds, and in their degrees, and for the ends for which they were intended.—Newton.

\[v\] Of growth, sense, reason.

The three kinds of life, rising as it were by steps, the vegetable, animal, and rational; of all which man partakes, and he only: he grows as plants, minerals, and all things inanimate; he lives as all other animal creatures; but is over and above endued with reason.—Richardson.
Follow, as to him link'd in weal or woe:
In woe then; that destruction wide may range.
To me shall be the glory sole among
The infernal powers, in one day to have marr'd
What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
Continued making; and who knows how long.
Before had been contriving? though perhaps
Not longer than since I, in one night, freed
From servitude inglorious well nigh half
The angelic name, and thinner left the throng
Of his adorers; he, to be avenged,
And to repair his numbers thus impair'd,
Whether such virtue spent of old now fail'd
More angels to create, if they at least
Are his created;* or, to spite us more,
Determined to advance into our room
A creature form'd of earth; and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With heavenly spoils, our spoils: what he decreed,
He effect'd; man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,
Him lord pronounced; and, O indignity!
Subjected to his service angel-wings,
And flaming ministers to watch and tend
Their earthly charge: of these the vigilance
I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapp'd in mist
Of midnight vapour glide obscure; and pry
In every bush and brake, where hap may find
The serpent sleeping: in whose mazy folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
With gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a beast; and, mix'd with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the hight of deity aspired!
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soar'd; obnoxious, first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils:*
Let it; I reck not,* so it light well aim'd,

* If they at least

He questions whether the angels were created by God: he had before asserted that they were not, to the angels themselves, b. v. 859.—Newton.

* Back on itself recoils.

The same sentiment as in 'Comus,' v. 593:—
But evil on itself shall back recoil.—Todd.

* Let it; I reck not.

A truly diabolical sentiment. So he can but be any way revenged, he does not value, though his revenge recoil on himself.—Newton.
Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite;
Whom, as the more to spite, his Maker raised
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid.

So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight search, where soonest he might find
The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
Fearless unform'd he slept: in at his mouth
The devil enter'd; and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
With act intelligent; but his sleep
Disturb'd not, waiting close the approach of morn.

Now, when as sacred light 1 began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
Their morning incense, a when all things that breathe,
From the earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
And join'd their vocal worship to the quire
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs:
Then commune, how that day they best may ply
Their growing work; for much their work outgrew
The hands' dispatch of two, gardening so wide;
And Eve first to her husband thus began:
Adam, well may we labour, still to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
Our pleasant task conjoin'd; but, till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,

I have often wondered that this speech of Satan's escaped the particular observation of Addison. There is not in my opinion any one in the whole book that is worked up with greater judgment, or better suited to the character of the speaker. There is all the horror and malignity of a fiend-like spirit expressed; and yet this is so artfully tempered with Satan's starts of recollection upon the meanness and folly of what he was going to undertake, as plainly show the remains of the archangel, and the ruins of a superior nature.—Thyer.

1 Now when as sacred light.

This is the morning of the ninth day, as far as we can reckon the time in this poem; a great part of the action lying out of the sphere of day. The first day we reckon that wherein Satan came to the earth; the space of seven days after that he was coasting round the earth; he comes into Paradise again by night; and this is the beginning of the ninth day, and the last of man's innocence and happiness. The morning is often called "sacred" by the poets, because that time is usually allotted to sacrifice and devotion, as Eustathius says, in his remarks on Homer.

a Their morning incense.

Incense of the breathing spring.—Pope.
Incense-breathing morn.—Gray.
Luxurious by restraint: what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides,
Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present;
Let us divide our labours; thou, where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs; whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb: while I,
In yonder spring of roses intermix'd
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon:
For, while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
Casual discourse draw on; which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearn'd?
To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd:
Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear!
Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts employ'd
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assign'd us; nor of me shalt pass
Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food;
Love, not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
He made us, and delight to reason join'd.
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk; till younger hands ere long
Assist us: but if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee sever'd from me; for thou know'st
What hath been warn'd us; what malicious foe,
Envying our happiness, and of his own

The repetition, so near, is extremely beautiful; and naturally comes in here, as the chief intent of Eve's speech was to persuade Adam to let her go from him: she therefore dwells on so near, as the great obstacle to their working to any purpose.—Stillingfleet.
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder;
Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need:
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God; or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoy'd by us excites his envy more;
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.
    To whom the virgin majesty of Eve, w
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied:
    Offspring of heaven and earth, and all earth's lord!
That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
And from the parting angel overheard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
    Just then return'd at shut of evening flowers. x
But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not; being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is then thy fear; which plain infers
Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced;
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?

w The virgin majesty of Eve.

The ancients used the word virgin with more latitude than we; as Virgil calls Pasiphae virgin after she had three children, Ecl. vi. 47; and Ovid calls Medea "adultera virgo," Epist. Hyposip. Jas. v. 133. It is put here to denote beauty, bloom, sweetness, modesty, and all the amiable characters which are usually found in a virgin; and these with matron majesty: what a picture!—Richardson.

x Evening flowers.

What a natural notation of evening is this! And a proper time for her, who had gone "forth among her fruits and flowers," b. viii. 41, to return. But we must not conceive that Eve is speaking of the evening last past, for this was a week ago. Satan was caught tempting Eve in a dream and fled out of Paradise that night; and with this ends book the fourth. After he had fled out of Paradise, he was ranging round the world seven days; but we have not any account of Adam and Eve, excepting only on the first of those days, which begins with the beginning of book the fifth, where Eve relates her dream: that day at noon the angel Raphael comes down from heaven; the angel and Adam discourse together till evening, and they part at the end of book the eighth. There are six days therefore passed in silence; and we hear no more of Adam and Eve till Satan has stolen again into Paradise.—Newton.
To whom with healing words Adam replied:
Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve!
For such thou art; from sin and blame entire:
Not diffident of thee, do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight; but to avoid
The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
The tempted with dishonour foul; supposed
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
Against temptation: thou thyself with scorn
And anger wouldst resent the offer'd wrong,
Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,
If such affront I labour to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
Or daring, first on me the assault shall light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn:
Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
Angels; nor think superfluous others' aid.
I, from the influence of thy looks, receive
Access in every virtue: in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
Shame to be overcome or over-reach'd,
Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.
Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?
So spake domestic Adam in his care
And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
Less attributed to her faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renew'd:
If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit straiten'd by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued
Single with like defence, wherever met;
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin: only our foe,
Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity: his foul esteem
Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns
Foul on himself; then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd
By us? who rather double honour gain
From his surmise proved false; find peace within,
Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event.
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassay'd
Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?
Let us not then suspect our happy state
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
As not secure to single or combined.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so;
And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed.
To whom thus Adam fervently replied:
O woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordain'd them: his creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that he created: much less man,
Or aught that might his happy state secure,
Secure from outward force: within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
Against his will he can receive no harm:
But God left free the will; for what obeys
Reason, is free; and reason he made right,
But bid her well be ware, and still erect;
Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins,
That I should mind thee oft: and mind thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve;
Since reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborn'd,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warn'd.
Seek not temptation then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not: trial will come unsought.
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy? approve
First thy obedience; the other who can know?
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think trial unsought may find
Us both secure; than thus warn'd thou seem'st, Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more; 2

1 Thus Adam fervently.
What Eve had just now said required some reprimand from Adam, and it was necessary to describe him as in some degree displeased; but what extreme delicacy has our author shown in choosing the word fervently to express it by! A term, which, though it implies some emotion, yet carries nothing in its idea inconsistent with that subserviency of the passions which subsisted before the Fall. In the two foregoing speeches he had made Adam address himself to her in the affectionate terms of “sole Eve, associate sole,” and “Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve;” but here with great judgment he changes those endearing words for these more authoritative.— O woman!” I should think that Milton in this expression alluded to what our Saviour said to the Virgin Mary.— “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” were not I satisfied that he could not with his learning take these words in the vulgar mistaken sense, which our translation naturally leads ignorant readers into; and must very well know that Φυλα, amongst the Greeks, is a term of great respect. Indeed, throughout this whole conversation, which the poet has in every respect worked up to a faultless perfection, there is the most exact observance of justness and propriety of character. With what strength is the superior excellency of man’s understanding here pointed out, and how nicely does our author here sketch out the defects peculiar in general to the female mind; and after all, what great art has he shown in making Adam, contrary to his better reason, grant his spouse’s request, beautifully verifying what he had made our general ancestor a little before observe to the angel! b. viii. 546, &c.—Thyer.

2 Go: for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.
It is related of Milton’s first wife, that she had not cohabited with him above a
Go in thy native innocence, rely
On what thou hast of virtue; summon all:
For God towards thee hath done his part; do thine.
So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve Persisted; yet submit, though last, replied:
With thy permission then, and thus forwarn’d.
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touch’d only; that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepared;
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
Thus saying, from her husband’s hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and, like a wood-nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia’s train,
Betook her to the groves; but Delia’s self
In gait surpass’d, and goddess-like deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver arm’d,
But with such gardening-tools as art, yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had form’d, or angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn’d,
Likest she seem’d; Pomona, when she fled
Vertumnus; or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.\(^a\)
Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated: she to him as oft engaged
To be return’d by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon’s repose.
Oh, much deceived,\(^b\) much failing, hapless Eve,
Of thy presumed return! event perverse!
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Found’st either sweet repast or sound repose;
Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
Waited with hellish rancour imminent
To intercept thy way, or send thee back

month before she was very desirous of returning to her friends in the country, there to spend the remainder of the summer. We may suppose that, upon this occasion, their conversation was somewhat of the same nature as Adam and Eve’s; and it was upon some such consideration as this, that, after much solicitation, he permitted her to go. It is the more probable that he alluded to his own case in this account of Adam and Eve’s parting: as, in the account of their reconciliation, it will appear that he copied exactly what happened to himself.—Newton.

\(^a\) Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

A virgin, not having yet conceived Proserpina, who was begot by Jove.—Warburton.

\(^b\) Oh, much deceived.

That is, much failing of thy presumed return. These beautiful apostrophes and anticipations are frequent in the poets, who affect to speak in the character of prophets, and like men inspired with the knowledge of futurity. See Virg. Æn. x. 501, &c., and Homer, Il. xvii. 497.—Newton.
Despoil'd of innocence, of faith, of bliss!
For now, and since first break of dawn, the fiend,
Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come;
And on his quest, where likeliest he might find
The only two of mankind, but in them
The whole included race, his purposed prey.
In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
Their tendance, or plantation for delight;
By fountain or by shady rivulet
He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find
Eve separate; he wish'd, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustain'd; them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
Imborder'd on each bank, the hand of Eve:
Spot more delicious than those gardens feign'd
Or of revived Adonis, or renown'd
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son;
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
Much he the place admired, the person more.
As one who, long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more;
She most, and in her look sums all delight:
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone: her heavenly form
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,

c Or that, not mystic.

The garden of Solomon.—Todd.
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture, or least action, overawed
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good; of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge:
But the hot hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure, not for him ordain'd: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects; and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:
Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported, to forget
What hither brought us? hate, not love; nor hope
Of Paradise for hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy,
Save what is in destroying: other joy
To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass
Occasion which now smiles; behold alone
The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband (for I view far round) not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
Foe not formidable! exempt from wound,
I not; so much hath hell debased, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in heaven.
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods!
Not terrible, though terror be in love
And beauty, not approach'd by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of love well feign'd;
The way which to her ruin now I tend.

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, innate bad! and toward Eve
Address'd his way: not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd
Fold above fold, a surging maze! his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;

\[a\] From his own evil.
This passage is pre-eminently beautiful, and of extraordinary originality.

\[b\] Fold above fold.
We have the description of such a sort of serpent in Ovid, Met. iii. 32:—
Cristis præsignis et auro;
Igne micant oculi.
Ille volubilibus squamosos nexitibus orbes
Torquet, et immensos saltu simulater in arcus:
Ac media plus parte leves erectas in aurias,
Despicit omne nemus, &c.
With burnish’d neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape
And lovely; never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus, or the god
In Epidaurus; nor to which transform’d
Ammonian Jove or Capitoline was seen;
He with Olympus; this with her who bore
Scipio, the birth of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but fear’d
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river’s mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curl’d many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
To such disport before her through the field,
From every beast; more duteous at her call,
Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
He, bolder now, uncall’d before her stood,
But as in gaze admiring: oft he bow’d
His turret crest, and sleek enamel’d neck,
Fawning; and lick’d the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turn’d at length
The eye of Eve, to mark his play; he, glad
Of her attention gain’d, with serpent-tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air.
His fraudulent temptation thus began:

Wonder not, soyran mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole wonder! much less arm
Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiated! I thus single; nor have fear’d
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things shine
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld! there best beheld,
Where universally admired; but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern

1 Hermione and Cadmus.
The serpents that changed Hermione and Cadmus into themselves.

2 Organic, or impulse of vocal air.
That the devil moved the serpent’s tongue and used it as an instrument to form that tempting speech he made to Eve, is the opinion of some; that he formed a voice by impression of the sounding air, distant from the serpent, is that of others; of which Milton has left the curious to their choice.—Hume.
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
A goddess among gods, adored and served
By angels numberless, thy daily train.
   So glazed the tempter, and his proem tuned:
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:
   What may this mean? language of man pronounced
By tongue of brute, and human sense express'd?
The first, at least, of these I thought denied
To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day,
Created mute to all articulate sound:
The latter I demur; for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endued:
Redouble then this miracle, and say,
How camest thou speakable of mute; and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due.
   To whom the guileful tempter thus replied:
Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st; and right thou shouldst be obey'd:
I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food; nor aught but food discern'd,
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
Till, on a day roving the field, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant to behold
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix'd,
Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze;
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,
Unsuck'd of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;
For, high from ground, the branches would require
Thy utmost reach or Adam's: round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour,  
At feed or fountain, never had I found.  
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive  
Strange alteration in me, to degree  
Of reason in my inward powers; and speech  
Wanted not long; though to this shape retain'd.  
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep  
I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind  
Consider'd all things visible in heaven,  
Or earth, or middle; all things fair and good:  
But all that fair and good in thy divine  
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,  
United I beheld; no fair to thine  
Equivalent or second! which compell'd  
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come  
And gaze, and worship thee, of right declared  
Sovran of creatures, universal dame!  
So talk'd the spirited sly snake; and Eve,  
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:  
Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt  
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:  
But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?  
For many are the trees of God that grow  
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown  
To us; in such abundance lies our choice,  
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouch'd  
Still hanging incorruptible, till men  
Grow up to their provision, and more hands  
Help to disburden Nature of her birth.  
To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad:  
Empress, the way is ready, and not long;  
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,  
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past  
Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept  
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.  
Lead then, said Eve. He, leading, swiftly roll'd  
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,  
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy  
Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,  
Compact of uctuous vapour, which the night  
Condenses, and the cold environs round,  
Kindled through agitation to a flame,  
Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,  
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,  
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way  
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;  
There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far:

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Milton has shown more art in taking off the common objections to the Mosaic history of the temptation, by the addition of some circumstances of his own invention, than in any other theological part of his poem.—Warburton.
So glist'rd the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe;
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake:
   Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee;
Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects!
But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;
God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice: the rest, we live
Law to ourselves;¹ our reason is our law.
To whom the tempter guilefully replied:
Indeed!² hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?
To whom thus Eve, yet sinless: Of the fruit
Of each tree in the garden we may eat;
But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
   She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on; and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely and in act
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renown'd,
In Athens, or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourish'd, since mute, to some great cause address'd,
Stood in himself collected; while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue;
Sometimes in highth began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,
The tempter, all impassion'd, thus began:
   O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science! now I feel thy power
Within me clear; not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deem'd however wise.

¹ Law to ourselves.
² Indeed.

See Rom. ii. 14: “These having not the law, are a law unto themselves.”—Richardson.

See Gen. iii. 1: “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”
In which our author has followed the Chaldee paraphrase, interpreting the Hebrew particle indeed. Is it true that God has forbidden you to eat of the fruits of Paradise? as if he had forbidden them to taste, not of one, but of all the trees; another of Satan’s sly insinuations. The Hebrew particle yea, or indeed, plainly shows that the short and summary account which Moses gives of the serpent’s temptation has respect to some previous discourse, which could, in all probability, be no other than what Milton has pitched upon.—Hume.
Queen of this universe! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die;¹
How should you? by the fruit? it gives you life
To knowledge; by the threatener? look on me,
Me, who have touched and tasted; yet both live,
And life more perfect have attain'd than fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
Is open? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass? and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,
Deterr'd not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil;
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunn'd?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just:
Not just, not God; not fear'd then, nor obey'd:
Your fear itself of death m removes the fear.
Why then was this forbid? why, but to awe?
Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers? He knows, that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your eyes, that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Open'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
That ye shall be as gods, since I as man,
Internal man, is but proportion meet;
I, of brute, human; ye, of human, gods.
So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on gods; death to be wish'd,
Though threaten'd, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are gods, that man may not become
As they, participating godlike food?
The gods are first, and that advantage use
On our belief, that all from them proceeds:
I question it; for this fair earth I see,
Warm'd by the sun, producing every kind;
Them, nothing: if they all things; who enclosed
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
The offence, that man should thus attain to know?

¹ Ye shall not die.

See Gen. iii. 4: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." And it is very artfully contriv'd by Milton to make the serpent give an instance in himself.—Newton.

m Your fear itself of death.

Justice is inseparable from the very being and essence of God: so that could he be unjust, he would be no longer God, and then neither to be obey'd nor feared; so that the fear of death, which does imply injustice in God, destroys itself, because God can as well cease to be, as to be just: a Satanic syllogism.—Hume.
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
Impart against his will, if all be his?
Or is it envy? and can envy dwell
In heavenly breasts? These, these, and many more
Causes import your need of this fair fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste.

He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
Into her heart too easy entrance won:
Fix'd on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye; yet first
Pausing awhile, thus to herself she mused:

Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired;
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.
Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
Forbids us then to taste: but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want:
For good unknown sure is not had; or, had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!
How dies the serpent? he hath eaten and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? or to us denied
This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first
Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy
The good befallen him, authour unsuspect,
Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then? rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good or evil,
Of God or death, of law or penalty?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise: what hinders then
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?
[So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck’d, she eat!
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent, and well might; for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seem’d,
In fruit she never tasted; whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge: nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she ingorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death: satiate at length,
And highten’d as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself⁴ she pleasingly began:
O sovan, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise! of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offer’d free to all;
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know
Though others envy what they cannot give:
For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
Best guide: not following thee, I had remain’d
In ignorance; thou open’st wisdom’s way,

⁴ Thus to herself.

As our author had, in the preceding conference betwixt our first parents, described, with the greatest art and decency, the subordination and inferiority of the female character in strength of reason and understanding; so, in this soliloquy of Eve’s, after tasting the forbidden fruit, one may observe the same judgment, in his varying and adapting it to the condition of her fallen nature. Instead of those little defects in her intellectual faculties before the fall, which were sufficiently compensated by her outward charms, and were rather softenings than blemishes in her character; we see her now running into the greatest absurdities, and indulging the wildest imaginations. It has been remarked that our poet, in this work, seems to court the favour of his female readers very much: yet I cannot help thinking, but that in this place he intended a satirical as well as a moral hint to the ladies, in making one of Eve’s first thoughts, after her fatal lapse, to be how to get the superiority and mastery over her husband. There is, however, I think, a defect in this speech of Eve’s, that there is no notice taken of the serpent in it. Our author very naturally represents her, in the first transports of delight, expressing her gratitude to the fruit, which she fancied had wrought such a happy change in her; and next to “experience, her best guide;” but how is it possible that she should, in these rapturous acknowledgments, forget her guide and instructor, the serpent, to whom, in her then notion of things, she must think herself the most indebted? I do not doubt that Milton was sensible of this; but, had he made Eve mention the serpent, he could not have avoided too making her observe that he was slunk away; which might have given her some suspicions, and would consequently have much altered the scene which follows between Adam and her.—Thyer.
And givest access, though secret she retire.
And I perhaps am secret: * Heaven is high,
High, and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on earth; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our Great Forbinder, safe with all his spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me; or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without copartner? so to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal; and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior; for, inferior, who is free?
This may be well: but what if God have seen,
And death ensue? then I shall be no more!
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
A death to think! Confirm'd then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life.
So saying, from the tree her step she turn'd;
But first low reverence done, as to the power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
Into the plant sciential sap, derived
From nectar, drink of gods. Adam the while,
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labours crown;
As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen.
Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delay'd:
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
Misgave him; he the faltering measure felt;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took
That morn when first they parted: by the tree
Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
New gather'd, and ambrosial smell diffused.
To him she hasted; in her face exense
Came prologue, and apology too prompt;
Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:
Hast thou not wonder'd, Adam, at my stay?

*And I perhaps am secret.

She questions even God's Omniscience, and flatters herself that she is still in secret like other sinners, who say, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." Psalm xciv. 7.—Newton.
Thee I have miss'd, and thought it long, deprived
Thy presence; agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Opening the way; but of divine effect
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste;
And hath been tasted such: the serpent, wise,

The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Opening the way; but of divine effect
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste;
And hath been tasted such: the serpent, wise,
Or not restrain'd as we, or not obeying,
Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become,
Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth
Endued with human voice and human sense.

Reasoning to admiration;
And with me persuasively hath so prevail'd,
That I have also tasted, and have also found
The effects to correspond: opener mine eyes,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
And growing up to godhead; which for thee
Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.

For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;
Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.

Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
May join us, equal joy, as equal love;
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce Deity for thee, when fate will not permit.

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
But in her cheek distemper flushing glow'd.

On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd;
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropp'd, and all the faded roses shed:
Speechless he stood and pale; till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke:

O fairest of creation, last and best
Of all God's works! creature, in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,
Defaced, deflower'd, and now to death devote!
Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance? how to violate
The sacred fruit forbidden? some cursed fraud
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown;
And me with thee hath ruin'd: for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die.
How can I live without thee? how forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn? A
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford; yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart: no, no! I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.
   So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturb'd
Submitting to what seem'd remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turn'd:
   Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinance;
Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God omnipotent, nor fate: yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not die; a perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,
Profaned first by the serpent, by him first
Made common, and unhallow'd, ere our taste:
Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives;
Lives, as thou said'st, and gains to live, as man,
Higher degree of life: inducement strong
To us, as likely tasting to attain
Proportional ascent; which cannot be
But to be gods, or angels, demigods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all his works; which in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose;
Not well conceived of God, who, though his power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
Us to abolish, lest the adversary
Triumph, and say,—Fickle their state, whom God
Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
He ruin'd, now mankind; whom will he next?—

p Woods forlorn.

How vastly expressive are these words of Adam's tenderness and affection for Eve; as they imply that the mere imagination of losing her had already converted the sweets of Paradise into the horrors of a desolate wilderness!—Thyer.

a Perhaps thou shalt not die.

How just a picture does Milton here give us of the natural imbecility of the human mind, and its aptness to be warped into false judgments and reasoning, by passion and inclination!—Thyer.
Matter of scorn, not to be given the foe.
However, I with thee have fix'd my lot,
Certain to undergo like doom: if death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
So forcible within my heart I feel.
The bond of nature draw me to my own;
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine:
Our state cannot be sever'd; we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.
So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:
O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate; but, short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
Shall separate us, link'd in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else
So eminently never had been known.
Were it I thought death menaced would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee; rather die
Deserted than oblige thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace; chiefly, assured
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful, love unequall'd: but I feel
Far otherwise the event; not death, but life
Augmented, open'd eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touch'd my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds.
So saying, she embraced him, and for joy
Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompense, (for such compliance bad
Such recompense best merits) from the bough
She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge; not deceived,
Not deceived.

According to the historical relation of Moses, he did not plead for himself that he
But fondly overcame with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lour'd, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original: while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass fear'd, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society; that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breathing wings,

Wherewith to scour the earth: but that false fruit
Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming: he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn;
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:
Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of sapience no small part;
Since to each meaning savour we apply,
And palate call judicious: I the praise
Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain'd
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be
In things to us forbidden, it might be wish'd,
For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come, so well refresh'd, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare;
For never did thy beauty, since the day
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorn'd
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever; bounty of this virtuous tree!
So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent; well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seized; and to a shady bank,
Thick over-head with verdant roof embower'd,
He led her nothing loath: flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth; earth's freshest, softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,

was deceived, the excuse of Eve cheated by the serpent; but rather enticed and persuaded by her. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," Gen. iii. 12. Whence St. Paul, "Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression," 1 Tim. ii. 14. Overcome with female charms, which the holy page styles "hearkening unto the voice of his wife," Gen. iii. 17.
The solace of their sin; till dewy sleep
Oppress'd them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhaled; and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumber'd, now had left them; up they rose
As from unrest; and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how open'd, and their minds
How darken'd; innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty shame: he cover'd, but his robe
Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong,
Hereculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue: silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute:
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd,
At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd:
O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice; true in our fall,
False is our promised rising; since our eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil; good lost, and evil got:
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know;
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonded ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
Ev'n shame, the last of evils: of the first
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shape
Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscured; where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening! cover me, ye pines!*

* Cover me, ye pines.

This beautifully poetical address of Adam to the pines and cedars to shelter him from the face of God and angel must be referred to Scripture; and we cannot doubt that Milton here has taken his general idea from the description of the end of the world and the day of wrath, in the Revelations: 'And the kings of the earth and the great men hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more!
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other, that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen;
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sew'd,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts; that this new-comer, Shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.

So counsel'd he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood; where soon they choose
The fig-tree, not that kind for fruit renown'd;
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother-tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade: those leaves
They gather'd, broad as Amazonian targe;
And, with what skill they had, together sew'd,
To gird their waist; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! Oh, how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feather'd cincture; naked else, and wild
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep; nor only tears
Rain'd at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise; high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now lest and turbulent:
For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore; both in subjection now
the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi. 13, 14, 15.—Dunster.

1 The fig-tree.

Instead of a variety of references to books,—a remote satisfaction: the reader will compare at once the passage from Pliny, which has received the advantage of Milton's versification:

"Pecus ibi exilia poma habet. Ipsa se semper fereus, vastis diffunditur ramis: quorum pondera adeo in terram curruntur, at anno spatio infangentur, novamque sibi propaginem faciunt circa parentem in orbis quodam opere topiario. Intra sepem eam vestivant pastores, opacam pariter et munitam vallo arborias, decora specie subter intuentes, producunt fornicate ambita. Foliorum latitudo pelte effigiem Amazonicam habet."—Plinius, lib. xii. 5, de Iecu Indica.
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovran reason claim'd
Superiour sway: from thus distemper'd breast,
Adam, estranged in look and alter'd style,
Speech intermitt'd thus to Eve renew'd:
Would thou hadst hearken'd to my words, and stay'd
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possess'd thee; we had then
Remain'd still happy: not, as now, despoil'd
Of all our good; shamed, naked, miserable!
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.
To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:
What words have pass'd thy lips, Adam, severe?
Imputest thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happen'd, thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou said'st?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay;
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fix'd in thy dissent.
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with me.
To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:
Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingratitude Eve? express'd
Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I;
Who might have lived, and joy'd immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint; what could I more?
I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold
The danger and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this, had been force;
And force upon free will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on; secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial: and perhaps
I also err'd, in overmuch admiring
What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee; but I rue
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him, who, to worth in woman∗ overtrusting,
Let's her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contest appear’d no end.

I have corrected this inaccuracy, and inserted woman in the present text; not in deference to the assertion of Dr. Bentley, or the inclination of Bishop Newton; but to the more decisive authority of Milton himself, in another passage of the same book; where Adam is also the speaker:—

for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote. v. 232, et seq.

Both passages speak alike of woman in the abstract; both alike use the same pronoun, "her," to this antecedent.

The ninth book is raised upon that brief account in Scripture, wherein we are told that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field; that he tempted the woman to eat of the forbidden tree; that she was overcome by this temptation; and that Adam followed her example. From these few particulars Milton has formed one of the most entertaining fables that invention ever produced: he has disposed of these several circumstances among so many agreeable and natural fictions of his own, that his whole story looks only like a comment upon Sacred Writ, or rather seems to be a full and complete relation of what the other is only an epitome. I have insisted the longer on this consideration, as I look upon the disposition and contrivance of the fable to be the principal beauty of the ninth book, which has more story in it, and is fuller of incidents than any other in the whole poem. Satan's traversing the globe, and still keeping within the shadow of the night, as fearing to be discovered by the angel of the sun, who had before detected him, is one of those beautiful imaginations with which he introduces this his second series of adventures. Having examined the nature of every creature, and found out one who was the most proper for his purpose, he again returns to Paradise; and, to avoid discovery, sinks by night with a river that ran under the garden, and rises up again through a fountain that issued from it by the Tree of Life. The poet, who, as we have before taken notice, speaks as little as possible in his own person, and after the example of Homer, fills every part of his work with manner and characters, introduces a soliloquy from this infernal agent, who was thus restless in the destruction of man. He is then described as gliding through the garden, under the resemblance of a mist, in order to find out that creature in which he designed to tempt our first parents. This description has something in it very poetical and surprising.

The author afterwards gives us a description of the morning, which is wonderfully suitable to a divine poem, and peculiar to that first season of nature. He represents the earth, before it was cursed, as a great altar, breathing out its incense from all parts, and sending up a pleasant savour to the nostrils of its Creator; to which he adds a noble idea of Adam and Eve as offering their morning worship, and filling up the universal concert of praise and adoration.

The dispute which follows between our two first parents, is represented with great art; it proceeds from a difference of judgment, not of passion; and is managed with reason, not with heat; it is such a dispute as we may suppose might have happened in Paradise had man continued happy and innocent. There is a great delicacy in the moralities which are interspersed in Adam's discourse, and which the most ordinary reader cannot but take notice of; that force of love which the father of mankind so finely describes in the eighth book, shows itself here in many fine instances—as in those regards he casts towards Eve at her parting from him; in his impatience and annoyance during her absence; but particularly in that passionate speech, where, seeing her irrecoverably lost, he resolves to perish with her, rather than lead the life without her.

The beginning of this speech, and the preparation to it, are animated with the same spirit as the conclusion.

The subtle wiles which are put in practice by the tempter, when he found Eve sepa-
rated from her husband,—the many pleasing images of nature which are intermixed in this part of the story, with its gradual and regular progress to the fatal catastrophe,—are so very remarkable, that it would be superfluous to point out their respective beauties.

I have avoided mentioning any particular similitudes in my remarks on this great work, because I have given a general account of them in my observations on the first book; there is one, however, in this part of the poem, which I shall here notice, as it is not only very beautiful, but the closest of any in the whole poem; I mean that where the serpent is described as rolling forward in all his pride, animated by the evil spirit and conducting Eve to her destruction, while Adam was at too great a distance from her to give her his assistance.

That secret intoxication of pleasure, with all those transient flushings of guilt and joy, which the poet represents in our first parents upon their eating the forbidden fruit, to those flaggings of spirit, damps of sorrow, and mutual accusations which succeed it, are conceived with a wonderful imagination and described in very natural sentiments. When Dido, in the fourth Æneid, yielded to that fatal temptation which ruined her, Virgil tells us, the earth trembled, the heavens were filled with flashes of lightning, and the nymphs howled upon the mountain tops. Milton, in the same poetical spirit, has described all nature upon Eve's eating the forbidden fruit: upon Adam's falling into the same guilt, the whole creation appears a second time in convulsions. As all nature suffered by the guilt of our first parents, these symptoms of trouble and consternation are wonderfully imagined, not only as prodigies, but as marks of her sympathizing in the fall of man.—Addison.
BOOK X.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Certainly Milton has in this book shown to an amazing extent all the variety of his powers in striking contrast with each other: the sublimity of the celestial persons; the gigantic wickedness of the infernal; the mingled excellence and human infirmities of Adam and Eve; and the shadowy and terrible beings of Sin and Death. Of any other poet, the imagination would have been exhausted in the preceding books: in Milton, it still gathers strength, and grows bolder and bolder, and darts with more expanded wings. When Sin and Death deserted the gates of hell, and made their way to earth, the conception and expression of all the circumstances are of a supernatural force.

For my part, I see no adequate reason why the whole of an epic poem should not consist of allegorical or shadowy beings; nor do I see even why they should not be mixed in action with those imaginary persons who represent realities; certainly the poetical parts of the Scriptures everywhere embody such shadowy existences.

Sin and Death might have flown through the air from hell to earth as shadowy personifications, without the aid of a bridge of matter, but this ought not to have prohibited the poet from picturing a bridge of matter, if his imagination led him to that device. It was intended to typify the facility of access contrived by Sin and Death from hell to this terrestrial globe, not only for themselves, but for all their ministers and innumerable followers. The moral is obvious: what is intended to be conveyed is, though figuratively told, in perfect concurrence with our faith, instead of shocking it. We must cut away all the most impressive parts of poetry, if we do not allow these figurative inventions.

It may be admitted that it requires a rich mind duly to enjoy and appreciate these grand and spiritual agencies; they therefore who have cold conceptions, eagerly catch hold of these censures to justify their own insensibility; they can understand illustrations drawn from objects daily in solid forms before their eyes. But it is not only in the description of forms and actions that the bard has a strength and brilliance so wonderful: he is equally happy in the sentiments he attributes to each personage: all speak in their own distinct characters, with a justness and individuality which meet instant recognition, and awaken an indescribable assent and pleasure. Thus Adam and Eve, when they know the displeasure of the Almighty, and are overwhelmed with fear and remorse, each express themselves according to their separate casts of mind, disposition, and circumstances: their moans are deeply affecting. To my taste, this book is much more lofty and much more pathetic than the ninth; as the subject was much more difficult, so it is executed with much more miraculous vigour and originality.

The representation of the manner in which God's judgment upon earth was executed by changing the seasons, putting the elements into contest, and deteriorating all nature, fills the imagination with wonder, and brings out new touches of poetry with a magical effect.

In others the poetical language seems a sort of cover,—a gilding; in Milton it is a part and essence of the thought. The primary image is poetical; the poetry does not depend upon the illustration; though sometimes there is a union, and it is thus to be found in both: but if the secondary has it, the first never wants it.

The characters of Milton are all compound and reflective; they are not merely intuitive like Shakspeare's: they have therefore more of that invention which is comprehensive, and requires study to appreciate. The whole of 'Paradise Lost' from beginning to end is part of one inseparable web; and however beautiful detached parts may appear, not half their genius or wisdom can be felt or understood except in connexion with the whole. There are congruities and allusions in every word, which are lost, unless we attend to their essential relation to the whole scheme.
It is this intensity and inseparability of the web which is among the miracles of Milton's execution. Grace, strength, splendour, depth, all depend upon its unity. As no texture was ever before produced out of particles drawn from such an extent of space, and such a variety of mines; so the amalgamation of all into one perfect whole is the more astonishing.

Such is the erudition applied to this most wonderful work, that nothing less than the conjointed attempts of a whole body of learned men for a century has been able to explain its inexhaustible allusions; and even yet the task is not completed.

Little comparative invention is required for a fable drawn from history, observation, and experience; but Milton had to travel into other worlds of higher natures, and superior powers: he had to imagine on subjects out of the human track, not only according to probability, but limited both by authority and religious awe, where nothing wanton, fantastic, or unsolenn could be endured.

It is more easy to make the fictitious resemblance of an ideal conception agreeable and brilliant at first, than of a severe abstract truth. After deep study and long examination, we find the superior grandeur and merit of the latter. Such was the praise to which Milton aspired, and to which he is entitled. There are vapours in the sky, shot through by golden beams, at which we gaze for a moment with delight; but which dissolve away, and leave us disappointed in the dark: there are ignes fatui raised by some idle wanderings of nature's conflicts, which have neither heat, nor solace, nor nutriment. That which finds a clear and responsive mirror in the intellect is truth.

There are certain predispositions in the human mind to poetical visionariness: we love to view things more fair or more majestic than reality presents. By imagination we can see into the souls of characters far better than cold history instructs us: we behold thus all the loveliness of beauty, all the mightiness of strength, all the splendour of mind, all the tenderness of the heart, in their essences. But this high creativeness can only be produced by one of those purest of beings who is endued with the positive faculties of the Muse.

The spacious firmament on high,  
And all the blue ethereal sky,  
when pointed out by a poet's hand, fills with astonishment and devotion those who before beheld them dimly and with indifference. Thus the charms of the new world, in which Adam and Eve were placed, were unheeded till they were delineated by Milton's song.

But it is in the associations that the grand art of impressiveness lies. In this tenth book the story is as thick wove as it is grand.

ARGUMENT.

Man's transgression known, the guardian-angels forsee Paradise, and return up to heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressours; who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then in pity clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in hell but to follow Satan their sire up to the place of man: to make the way easier from hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then, preparing for earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates with boastings his success against man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but for the present commands his angels to make several alterations in the heavens and the elements. Adam more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the consolation of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him; then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not; but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be
revenge on the serpent; and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and despiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in heaven; for what can 'scape the eye
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,
Hinder'd not Satan to attempt the mind
Of man, with strength entire, and free-will arm'd
Complete to have discover'd and repulsed
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remember'd,
The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,
Incurr'd (what could they less?) the penalty;
And, manifold in sin,* a deserved to fall.
Up into heaven from Paradise in haste
The angelic guards ascended, mute and sad
For man; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle fiend had stolen
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From earth arrived at heaven-gate, displeased
All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare b
That time celestial visages, yet, mix'd
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new arrived in multitudes
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all belov'd: they towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approved; when the Most High
Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
Amidst, in thunder utter'd thus his voice:
Assembled angels, and ye powers return'd
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismay'd,
Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent;
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this tempter cross'd the gulf from hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed

* And, manifold in sin.

Every sin is complicated in some degree; and the divines, especially those of Milton's communion, reckon up several sins as included in this one act of eating the forbidden fruit; namely, pride, uxoriousness, wicked curiosity, infidelity, disobedience, &c.; so that, for such complicated guilt he deserved to fall from his happy state in Paradise.—Newton.

b Dim sadness did not spare.

What a just and noble idea does Milton here give us of the blessedness of a benevolent temper: and how proper, at the same time, to obviate the objection that might be made of sadness dwelling in heavenly spirits!—TAYLER.
On his bad errand; man should be seduced,
And flatter'd out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker; no decree of mine
Concurring, to necessitate his fall,
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
His free-will, to her own inclining left
In even scale. But fallen he is; and now
What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, death denounced that day?
Which he presumes already vain and void,
Because not yet inflicted, as he fear'd,
By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.
Justice shall not return as bounty scorn'd.
But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferr'd
All judgment, whether in heaven, or earth, or hell.
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice; sending thee,
Man's friend, his Mediator, his design'd
Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
And destined man himself to judge man fallen.
So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blazed forth unclouded deity: he full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Express'd, and thus divinely answer'd mild:
Father Eternal, thine is to decree;
Mine, both in heaven and earth, to do thy will
Supreme: that thou in me, thy Son beloved,
Mayst ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On earth these thy transgressours; but thou know'st,
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
When time shall be; for so I undertook
Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me derived: yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgment but the judged,
Those two; the third best absent is condemn'd.

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*c Because not yet inflicted.

So, in Eccles. viii. 11: — "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."—Todd.

*d To thee I have transferr'd.

From John v. 22: — "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son."—Hume.

*e Colleague with justice.

See Psalm lxxxv. 10.
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:
Conviction to the serpent none belongs.

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral glory. Him thrones, and powers,
Princedoms, and dominations ministrant,
Accompanied to heaven-gate; from whence
Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.
Down he descended straight; the speed of gods
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes wing'd.
Now was the sun in western cadence low:
From noon; and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the earth now waked, and usher in
The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool,
Came the mild Judge and Intercessour both,
To sentence man. The voice of God they heard
Now walking in the garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears while day declin'd; they heard,
And from his presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God
Approaching, thus to Adam call'd aloud:
Where art thou, Adam, shalt with joy to meet
My coming seen far off? I miss thee here;
Not pleased, thus entertain'd with solitude,
Where obvious duty erewhile appear'd unsought:
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!
He came; and with him Eve, more loth, though first
To offend; discomptentenced both and discomposed:
Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other; but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate and guile.
Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answer'd brief:
I heard thee in the garden; and of thy voice
Afraid, being naked, hid myself. To whom
The gracious Judge without revile replied:
My voice thou of hast heard, and hast not fear'd,
But still rejoiced; how is it now become
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who
Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree,
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?
To whom thus Adam sore beset replied:

† The sun in western cadence low.
This beautiful description is founded upon this verse—"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees in the garden." Gen. iii. 8.—Newton.

‡ Where art thou, Adam?
See Gen. iii. 9, &c. It is curious to observe how the poet paraphrases and enlarges upon the divine historian.—Newton.
O heaven! in evil strait this day I stand
Before my Judge; either to undergo
Myself the total crime, or to accuse
My other self, the partner of my life;
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
I should conceal, and not expose to blame
By my complaint: but strict necessity
Subdues me, and calamitous constraint;
Lost on my head both sin and punishment,
However insupportable, be all
Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.
This woman, whom thou madest to be my help,
And gavest me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill;
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seem'd to justify the deed;
She gave me of the tree and I did eat.

To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied:
Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,
And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd
Hers in all real dignity? Adorn'd
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
Were such, as under government well seem'd:
Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.
So having said, he thus to Eve in few:
Say, woman, what is this which thou hast done?
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelm'd,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abash'd replied:

h O heaven! in evil strait.

Nothing shows Milton's judgment more than keeping to the very words of Scripture, as far as possible, in the preceding conference between God and Adam; but the poet thought himself here obliged to deviate from his rule of adhering strictly to the sacred text, in order to keep up some dignity in Adam, by putting an apology into his mouth for the accusation that was to follow.—Stillingfleet.

1 This woman.

Milton still preserves all that is in Scripture, though he intermixes other things that were likely enough to have been said and done. Adam speaks of Eve much in the same strain as he had done before to the angel, b. viii. 549:—

What she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, &c.

and his unwillingness to accuse his wife, and yet the necessity of doing it, are finely imagined.—Newton.

See Gen. iii. 13.
The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.
Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgment he proceeded on the accused
Serpent, though brute; unable to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation: justly then accursed,
As vitiated in nature: more to know
Concern'd not man (since he no farther knew),
Nor alter'd his offence; yet God at last
To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied;
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:
And on the serpent thus his curse let fall:
Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed
Above all cattle, each beast of the field:
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the woman I will put
Emnity; and between thine and her seed:
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.
So spake this oracle, then verified,¹
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from heaven,
Prince of the air; then, rising from his grave,
Spoil'd principalities and powers, triumph'd
In open show; and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurp'd;
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;
Ev'n he, who now foretold his fatal bruise:
And to the woman thus his sentence turn'd:
Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will

² Because thou hast done this.

¹ Oracle, then verified.

Here is a manifest indication, that, when Milton wrote this passage, he thought Paradise was chiefly regained at our Saviour's resurrection. This would have been a copious and sublime subject for a second poem. The wonders then to be described, would have erected even an ordinary poet's genius; and, in episodes, he might have introduced his conception, birth, miracles, and all the history of his administration while on earth: and I much grieve, that, instead of this, he should choose for the argument of his 'Paradise Regained' the fourth chapter of Luke, the temptation in the wilderness—a dry, barren, and narrow ground to build an epic poem on. In that work he has amplified his scanty materials to a surprising dignity; but yet, being cramped down by a wrong choice, without the expected applause.—Bentley.

² Save Satan fall.

See Luke, 18, in ver, 184; Ephes. ii. 2; Col. ii. 15; Psalm lxviii. 18; Ephes. iv. 8; Rom. xvi. 20.—Todd.

² And to the women.

Milton is exact in reporting the sentences pronounced on our first parents. See Gen. iii. 16—19.—Newton.
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:
Because thou hast hearken'd to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree, concerning which
I charged thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat thereof;
Cursed is the ground for thy sake: thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life;
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field:
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken; know thy birth;
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return.

So judged he man, both Judge and Saviour sent;
And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,
Removed far off: then, pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, that now
Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,º
As when he wash'd his servants' feet; so now,
As father of his family, he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts,⁰ or slain,
Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies:
Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, cover'd from his Father's sight
To him with swift ascent he up return'd,
Into his blissful bosom reassumed,
In glory, as of old: to him appeased,
All, though all-knowing, what had pass'd with man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinn'd and judged on earth,
Within the gates of hell sat Sin and Death,
In counterview within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the fiend pass'd through,
Sin opening; who thus now to Death began:

O son, why sit we here each other viewing
Idly, while Satan, our great authour, thrives
In other worlds, and happier seat provides
For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be
But that success attends him; if mishap,

º Servant to assume.

See Phil. ii. 7; John xiii. 5.

⁰ Skins of beasts.

See Gen. iii. 21.

ᵃ Robe of righteousness.

See Isaiah lxi. 10.
Ere this he had return'd, with fury driven
By his avengers; since no place like this
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and dominion given me large,
Beyond this deep: whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
Powerful at greatest distance to unite
With secret amity things of like kind,
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
Inseparable, must with me along;
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But, lest the difficulty of passing back
Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
Impassable, impervious; let us try
Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found a path
Over this main from hell to that new world,
Where Satan now prevails; a monument
Of merit high to all the infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct.
Whom thus the meagre shadow answer'd soon:
Go, whither fate, and inclination strong,
Leads thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things that there live;
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.
So saying, with delight he snuff'd the smell
Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battle, to a field,
Where armies lie encamp'd, come flying, lured
With scent of living carcasses design'd
For death, the following day, in bloody fight:
So scented the grim feature, and upturn'd
His nostril wide into the murky air;
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both from out hell gates, into the waste
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great)
Hovering upon the waters, what they met

\*As when a flock.

Dr. Newton thinks that Lucan's description of the ravenous birds that followed the Roman camp, and scented the battle of Pharsalia, gave occasion to Milton's simile. See Pharsal. viii. 331.—Todd.
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tost up and down, together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling towards the mouth of hell:
As when two polar winds,* blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich
Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident, smote, and fix'd as firm
As Delos, floating once; the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move;
And with asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of hell the gather'd beach
They fasten'd and the mole immense wrought on,
Over the foaming deep high-arch'd, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immoveable of this now fenceless world,
Forfeit to Death: from hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to hell.
So, if great things to small may be compared,
Xerxes,† the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea; and, over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd,
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical, a ridge of pendant rock,
Over the vex'd abyss, following the track
Of Satan to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos, to the outside bare

* As when two polar winds.

Sin and Death, flying into different parts of Chaos, and driving all the matter they
meet there in shoals towards the mouth of hell, are compared to two polar winds, north
and south, blowing adverse upon the Cronian sea, the northern frozen sea; ("A Thule
unius diei navigatione mare concretum a nonnullis Cronium appellantur." Plin. Nat.
Hist. lib. iv. cap. 16) and driving together mountains of ice, that stop the imagined
way, the north-east passage as it is called, which so many have attempted to discover;
beyond Petsora eastward, the most north-eastern province of Muscovy; to the rich
Cathaian coast, Cathay, or Catay, a country of Asia, and the northern part of China.—
NEWTON.

† So—Xerxes.

This simile is very exact and beautiful; as Sin and Death built a bridge over Chaos
to subdue and enslave mankind; so Xerxes, to bring the free states of Greece under
his yoke, came from Susa, the residence of the Persian monarchs, called Memnonia by
Herodotus; and, building a bridge over the Hellespont, the narrow sea by Constanti-
nople that divides Europe from Asia, to march his large army over it, "Europe with
Asia join'd, and scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves;" alluding to the
madness of Xerxes, in ordering the sea to be whipped for the loss of some of his ships:
"indignant waves, scorning and raging to be so confined." as Virgil says, Æn. viii. 728:
"Ponente indigiamque Araxes;" and Georg. ii. 162:

Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus equor.—NEWTON.
Of this round world: with pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast; too fast they made
And durable! And now in little space

The confines met of empyrean heaven,
And of this world; and, on the left hand, hell
With long reach interposed; three several ways
In sight, to each of these three places led.

And now their way to earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending; when, behold!
Satan, in likeness of an angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose:
Disguised he came; but those his children dear
Their parent soon discern'd, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
Into the wood fast by; and changing shape,
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband: saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures; but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified:
He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun
The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath
Might suddenly inflict; that past, return'd:
By night, and listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gather'd his own doom; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to hell he now return'd:
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontiffice, unhoped
Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendous bridge, his joy increased.
Long he admiring stood; till Sin, his fair
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:
O parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy trophies! which thou view'st as not thine own:
Thou art their authour, and prime architect:
For I no sooner in my heart divined
(My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, join'd in connexion sweet)
That thou on earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks

a Betwixt the Centaur.

Alluding to a ship steering her course betwixt two islands: so Satan directed his way between these two signs of the zodiac upwards: the zenith is overhead.—Richardson.

Satan, to avoid being discovered (as he had been before, b. iv. 569, &c.) by Uriel, regent of the sun, takes care to keep at as great a distance as possible; and therefore while the sun rose in Aries, he steers his course directly upwards, betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion, two constellations which lay in a quite different part of the heavens from Aries.—Newton.
Now also evidence, but straight I felt,  
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt  
That I must after thee, with this thy son;  
Such fatal consequence unites us three.  
Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,  
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure  
Detain from following thy illustrious track:  
Thou hast achiev'd our liberty, confined  
Within hell-gates till now; thou hast impower'd  
To fortify thus far, and overlay,  
With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.  
Thine now is all the world; thy virtue hath won  
What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gain'd  
With odds what war hath lost; and fully avenged  
Our foil in heaven: here thou shalt monarch reign,  
There didst not; there let him still victor sway,  
As battel hath adjudged; from this new world  
Retiring, by his own doom alienated;  
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide  
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,  
His quadrature, from thy orbicular world;  
Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.  
Whom thus the prince of darkness answer'd glad:  
Fair daughter, and thou son and grandchild both;  
High proof ye now have given to be the race  
Of Satan (for I glory in the name,  
Antagonist of heaven's Almighty King;)  
Amply have merited of me, of all  
The infernal empire, that so near heaven's door  
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,  
Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm,  
Hell and this world, one realm, one continent  
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore,—while I  
Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,  
To my associate powers, them to acquaint  
With these successes, and with them rejoice;—  
You two this way, among these numerous orbs,  
All yours, right down to Paradise descend;  
There dwell and reign in bliss; thence on the earth  
Dominion exercise and in the air,  
Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declared:  
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.  
My substitutes I send ye, and create  
Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might  
Issuing from me; on your joint vigour now  
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,  
Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.  
If your joint power prevail, the affairs of hell  
No detriment need fear: go, and be strong!  
So saying, he dismiss'd them; they with speed  
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan; And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse Then suffer'd. The other way Satan went down The causey to hell-gate: on either side Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaim'd, And with rebounding surge the bars assail'd, That scorn'd his indignation: through the gate, Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd, And all about found desolate; for those, Appointed to sit there, had left their charge, Flown to the upper world; the rest were all Far to the inland retired, about the walls Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat Of Lucifer; so by allusion call'd Of that bright star to Satan paragon'd: There kept their watch the legions, while the grand In council sat, solicitous what chance Might intercept their emperour sent; so he Departing gave command, and they observed, As when the Tartar from his Russian foe, By Astracan, over the snowy plains, Retires; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns

Ovid's description of the journey of Envy to Athens, and Milton's of Sin and Death to Paradise, have a great resemblance: but whatever Milton imitates, he adds a greatness to it; as in this place, he alters Ovid's flowers, herbs, people, and cities, to stars, planets, and worlds.—Ovid, Met. ii. 793:—

See an 'Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients,' p. 42.—Newton.

So Tasso, speaking of Alecto, Gier. Lib. c. ix. st. 1:—

Si parte, e dove passai campi lieti
Socca, e pallido il sol sì fa repente.—Thyer.

We say of a thing, when it is blasted and withered, that it is planet-struck; and that is now applied to the planets themselves. And what a sublime idea doth it give us of the devastations of Sin and Death!—Newton.

A considerable part of the Czar's dominions, formerly a Tartarian kingdom, with capital city of the same name, near the mouth of the river Volga, at its fall into the Caspian sea; or Bactrian Sophi, the Persian emperor, named of Bactria, one of the greatest and richest provinces of Persia; from the horns of Turkish crescent, his Turkish enemies, who bear the crescent in their ensigns; leaves all waste beyond the realm of Aladule, the Greater Armenia, called Aladule of its last king Aladules, slain by Selimus the First, in his retreat to Tauris, a great city of Persia; now called Ecbatana, sometime in the hands of the Turks, but retaken in 1603 by Abas, King of Persia; or Casbren, one of the greatest cities of Persia, towards the Caspian sea, where the Persian monarchs made their residence after the loss of Tauris, from which it is distant sixty-five German miles to the south-east.—Hume.
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen; so these, the late
Heaven-banished host, left desart utmost hell
Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
Round their metropolis; and now expecting
Each hour their great adventurer, from the search
Of foreign worlds: he through the midst unmark'd,
In show plebeian angel militant
Of lowest order, pass'd; and from the door,
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne; which, under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
Was placed in regal lustre. Down awhile
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen:
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appear'd, or brighter; clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter: all amazed
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspect, and whom they wish'd beheld,
Their mighty chief return'd: loud was the acclaim;
Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting peers,
Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approach'd him; who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention, won:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For in possession such, not only of right,</td>
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<tr>
<td>I call ye, and declare ye now; return'd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triumphant out of this infernal pit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,</td>
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<tr>
<td>And dungeon of our tyrant: now possess,</td>
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<td>As lords, a spacious world, to our native heaven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little inferiour, by my adventure hard</td>
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<tr>
<td>With peril great achieved. Long were to tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have done, what suffer'd; with what pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded deep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of horrible confusion; over which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To expedite your glorious march; but I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forced to ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The untractable abyss, plunged in the womb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* He through the midst.

This account of Satan's passing unmark'd through the midst of the angels: and ascending his throne invisible; and seeing there about him, himself unseen; and then bursting forth, as from a cloud, in glory; seems to be copied from a like adventure of Æneas, Virg. Æn. i. 439.—Newton.

b Thrones, dominations.

It is common with Homer to make use of the same verse several times, and especially at the beginning of his speeches.—Newton.
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild;
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting fate supreme; thence how I found
The new-created world, which fame in heaven
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful
Of absolute perfection! therein man
Placed in a Paradise, by our exile
Made happy: him by fraud I have seduced
From his Creator; and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple; he, thereat
Offended, worth your laughter! hath given up
Both his beloved man and all his world,
To Sin and Death a prey; and so to us,
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
To range in, and to dwell, and over man
To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
True is, me also he hath judged, or rather
Me not, but the brute serpent, in whose shape
Man I deceived: that which to me belongs
Is enmity, which he will put between
Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head.
A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account
Of my performance: what remains, ye gods,
But up, and enter now into full bliss?
So having said, awhile he stood expecting
Their universal shout, and high applause,
To fill his ear: when, contrary, he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn: he wonder'd, but not long
Had leisure, wondering at himself now more:
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare;
His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell:
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain; a greater Power

* Supplanted down he fell.

We may observe here a singular beauty and elegance in Milton's language, and that
is his using words in their strict and literal sense, which are commonly applied to a
metaphorical meaning; whereby he gives peculiar force to his expressions, and the
literal meaning appears more new and striking than the metaphor itself: we have an
instance of this in the word *supplanted*, which is derived from the Latin "supplanto,"
to trip up one's heels, or overthrow, "a planta pedis subtus emota:" and there are
abundance of other examples in several parts of this work; but let it suffice to have
taken notice of it here once for all.—Newton.

* A monstrous serpent.

Milton, in describing Satan's transformation into a serpent, had no doubt in mind the
transformation of Cadmus in the fourth book of the Metamorphoses, to which he had
alluded before in b. ix. 963. See Ovid. Met. iv. 575.—Newton.
Now ruled him, punish'd in the shape he siun'd,  
According to his doom. He would have spoke,  
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue  
To forked tongue; for now were all transform'd  
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories  
To his bold riot: dreadful was the din  
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now  
With complicated monsters head and tail,  
Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbaena dire,  
Cerastes horn'd, hydrus, and eloops drear,  
And dipsas (not so thick swarm'd once the soil  
Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle  
Ophiusa); but still greatest he the midst,  
Now dragon grown, larger than whom the sun  
Ingender'd in the Pythian vale on slime,  
Huge Python, and his power no less he seem'd  
Above the rest still to retain. They all  
Him follow'd, issuing forth to the open field,  
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,  
Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array;  
Sublime with expectation when to see  
In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief.  
They saw, but other sight indeed! a crowd  
Of ugly serpents; horrour on them fell,  
And horrid sympathy; for what they saw,  
They felt themselves, now changing: down their arms,  
Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast;  
And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form  
Catch'd, by contagion; like in punishment,  
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant  
Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame  
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood  
A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,  
His will who reigns above, to aggravate  
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that  
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve  
Used by the tempter: on that prospect strange  
Their earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining  
For one forbidden tree a multitude  
Now risen, to work them farther woe or shame;  
Yet, parch'd with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,  
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain;  
But on they roll'd in heaps, and, up the trees  
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks  
That curl'd Megera. Greedily they pluck'd  
The fruitful fair to sight, like that which grew  
Near that bituminous lake* where Sodom flamed;

* Near that bituminous lake.

The Dead Sea, or the lake Asphaltites, so called from the bitumen which it is said to have cast up; near which Sodom and Gomorrah were situated. Josephus mentions the apples of Sodom as dissolving into ashes and smoke at the first touch: but our country-
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived: they fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chew'd bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd,
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugg'd as oft,
With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws,
With soot and cinders fill'd; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as man
Whom they triumph'd once lapsed. Thus were they plagued,
And worn with famine long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed;
Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain number'd days,
To dash their pride and joy for man seduced.
However, some tradition they dispersed
Among the heathen of their purchase got;
And fabled how the serpent, whom they call'd
Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Diictean Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived; Sin, there in power's before,
Once actual; now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,
Close following, pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse,\(^{b}\) to whom Sin thus began:

Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!
What think'st thou of our empire now, though carn'd
With travail difficult? not better far,

men, Sandys and Mandevelle, who visited the Holy Land, are inclined to disbelieve that such fruit existed. Cotovius, describing Sodom, &c., positively asserts the same particulars of these apples, which the Jewish historian mentions, and to which the poet very minutely alludes: "Hinc quoque arbores hillie species visu pulcherrimas, et poma viridantia producentes, adpectu ridentia et nitida, et quae edendi generent spectantibus cupiditatem, sed intusfavilla etcinereplena; quae ipsa etiam, si carpas, fatscantum, et in cinerem resolvantur, et quasi adhuc arderent, funnum excitant." Itin. Hierosol. p. 312. See also Sir John Mandevelle's Travels, ed. 1725, p. 122, where he is speaking of this delusive fruit.—Todd.

\(^{f}\) Once lapsed.

When being once lapsed, they triumphed;—in opposition to themselves, who often fell into the same illusion.

\(^{6}\) Sin, there in power.

The sense is, that, before the Fall, Sin was in power, or potentially in Paradise; that once, viz., upon the Fall, it was actually there, though not Bodily: but that now, upon its arrival in Paradise, it was there in body, and dwell there as a constant inhabitant. The words, in body, allude to what St. Paul says, Rom. vi. 6, "that the body of sin might be destroyed."—Pearce.

\(^{b}\) Not mounted yet

On his pale horse.

Milton has given a fine turn to this poetical thought by saying that Death had not mounted yet on his pale horse: for, though he was to have a long and all-conquering power, he had not yet begun, neither was he for some time to put it in execution.—Greenwood.
Than still at hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?
Whom thus the sin-born monster answer'd soon:
To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is hell, or Paradise, or heaven;
There best, where most with ravine I may meet:
Which here, though piteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast un-hidebound corpse.
To whom the incestuous mother thus replied:
Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl;
No homely morsels: and whatever thing
The scythe of Time mows down, devour unspared;
Till I, in man residing, through the race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect;
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.
This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing,
From his transcendant seat the saints Among,
To those bright orders utter'd thus his voice:
See, with what heat these dogs of hell's advance
To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
So fair and good created; and had still
Kept in that state, had not the folly of man
Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
Folly to me; so doth the prince of hell
And his adherents, that with so much case
I suffer them to enter and possess
A place so heavenly; and, conniving, seem
To gratify my scornful enemies,
That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
At random yielded up to their misrule;
And know not that I call'd, and drew them thither,
My hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
Which man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure; till, cram'md and gorged, nigh burst
With suck'd and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,

1 Too little seems.
Compare Prov. xxvii. 30. "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied."—Todd.

i Un-hidebound.
Not tight-bound, as when creatures are swoln and full.—Newton.

k Dogs of hell.
Newton thinks some of the expressions in this description too coarse: they are particularly so from ver. 630, but they have a worse fault; they are the expressions of mere human indignation and scorn; and are therefore unsuitable to the Deity. The difficulty, however, of assigning to the divine displeasure terms of language according with his purity, as well as anger, is hardly surmountable.
Both Sin, and Death, and yawning grave,¹ at last, 635
Through Chaos hurl’d, obstruct the mouth of hell.²
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then heaven and earth renew’d shall be made pure
To sanctity, that shall receive no stain:
Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes.

He ended, and the heavenly audience loud
Sung halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung: Just are thy ways,³
Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works:
Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,
Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom
New heaven and earth shall to the ages rise,
Or down from heaven descend. Such was their song;
While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty angels, gave them several charge,
As sorted best with present things. The sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the earth with cold and heat
Scarcely tolerable, and from the north to call
Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
Solstitial summer’s heat. To the bland moon
Her office they prescribed; to the other five
Their planetary motions, and aspects,
In sextile,⁴ square, and trine, and opposite,
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbeneign; and taught the fix’d
Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous: to the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
With terrou through the dark æereal hall.

¹ Death, and yawning grave.

Death and the grave, meaning the same, is a pleonasm; which adding force, and
energy, and calling forth the attention, is a beauty common in the best writers; but not
for that reason only has Milton used it: the Scripture has thus joined Death and the
grave, Hos. xiii. 11; Cor. xv. 55; and Rev. xx. 13; where the word rendered ‘hell’ sig-
nifies also the grave.—Richardson.

² Obstruct the mouth of hell.

Mr. Boyd, the learned and elegant translator of Dante’s “Inferno,” is of opinion that
the sublime imagination of Dante,—“that the earthquake which attended the cruci-
fixon, overthrew the infernal ramparts, and obstructed the way to hell,”—gave the hint
to Milton, that Sin and Death first built the infernal bridge, whose partial ruin at least
was the consequence of the resurrection. See the “Inferno,” c. xiii.—Todd.

³ Just are thy ways.

The same song, says Dr Newton, that they are represented singing in Revelations,
Rev. xv. 3; xvi. 7; as in the foregoing passage, which is remarked also by Addison, he
alludes to Rev. xix. 6.—Todd.

⁴ In sextile.

If an unnecessary ostentation of learning be, as Addison observes, one of Milton’s
faults; it certainly must be an aggravation of it, where he not only introduces but
countenances, such enthusiastic, unphilosophical notions, as this jargon of the astrolo-
gers is made up of.—Thyer.
Some say, he bid his angels\(^v\) turn askance
The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the sun's axle; they with labour push'd
Oblique the centric globe: some say, the sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like-distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the tropic Crab: thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime; else had the spring
Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers
Equal in days and nights, except to those
Beyond the polar circles; to them day
Had unbenighted shone; while the low sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or cast or west; which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland,\(^a\) and south as far
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
The sun, as from Thyestean banquet,\(^v\) turn'd
His course intended; else, how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced
Like change on sea and land; sidereal blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent: now from the north
Of Norumbega,\(^a\) and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, arm'd with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
Boreas, and Cecias,\(^v\) and Argestes loud,
And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn;

\(^v\) Bid his angels.

It was "eternal spring," b. iv. 268, before the Fall; and he is now accounting for the change of seasons after the Fall, and mentions the two famous hypotheses.—Newton.

\(^a\) Estotiland.

A great tract of land in the north of America, towards the Arctic circle and Hudson's Bay; as Magellan is a country in South America, which, together with its straits, took their name of Ferdinandus Magellanus, a Portuguese, who in the year 1520 first discovered them.—Hume.

\(^v\) Thyestean banquet.

The bloody banquet given by Atreus to his brother Thyestes, at which the flesh of his own children was served up among the festive meats; an implantable resentment of an adulterous injury. This feast was the master and leading horror of classical antiquity; it drew retributive vengeance upon the head of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus; followed by the paricide of Orestes: but all these horrors are summed up in the prophetic ravings of Cassandra, as given by the daring Eschylus, in his "Agamemnon."

\(^v\) Of Norumbega.

Norumbega, a province of the northern Armenia; Samoieda, in the north-east of Muscovy, upon the frozen sea.—Hume.

\(^v\) Boreas and Cecias.

In this account of the winds, is a needless ostentation of learning, and a strange mix-
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus, and Afer black with thunderous clouds
From Serradionia: thwart of these, as fierce,
Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libeccio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:
Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish: to graze the herb a all leaving,
Devour'd each other; nor stood much in awe
Of man, but fled him; or, with countenance grim,
Glared on him passing. These were from without v
The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within;
And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:
O miserable of happy! is this the end
Of this new glorious world, and me so late
The glory of that glory? who now become
Accursed, of blessed, hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth
Of happiness: Yet well, if here would end
The misery; I deserved it, and would bear
My own deservings; but this will not serve:
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
Delightfully, Increase and multiply;
Now death to hear! for what can I increase
Or multiply, but curses on my head?
Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My head? Ill fare our ancestor impure!
For this we may thank Adam! but his thanks
Shall be the execration: so, besides

a To graze the herb.

Whether Milton's notion was right or not, is another question; but certainly it was
his notion, that beast, fowl, and fish grazed the herb before the Fall.—Newton.

v These were from without.

The transition to Adam here is very easy and natural, and cannot fail of pleasing
the reader. We have seen great alterations produced in nature, and it is now time to see
how Adam is affected with them; and whether the disorders within are not even
worse than those without.—Newton.
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound;
On me, as on their natural centre, light
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear-bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust;
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received; unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy justice seems: yet, to say truth, too late
I thus contest; they should have been refused
Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed:
Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? and, though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
Prove disobedient, and, reproved, retort,
Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not:
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return:
O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive?
Why am I mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be earth
Insensible! How glad would lay me down,
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more

w From my clay.
See Isaiah's animated expostulation, xiv. 9:—"Shall the clay say to him that fash-
ioneth it, What makest thou?"—Todd.

x Thou didst.
"The change of persons, sometimes speaking of himself in the first, and sometimes to
himself in the second, is very remarkable in this speech, as well as the change of pas-
sions: and in like manner he speaks sometimes of God.—Newton.

y His dreadful voice.
"Perhaps suggested by Job xxxvii. 5:—"God thundereth marvellously with his voice."
—Todd.
Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod: then in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sin'd; what dies but what had life
And sin? The body properly hath neither.
All of me then shall die: let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no farther knows:
For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? Be it, man is not so,
But mortal doom'd. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on man, whom death must end?
Can he make deathless death? That were to make
Strange contradiction, which to God himself
Impossible is held; as argument
Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite,
In punish'd man, to satisfy his rigour,
Satisfied never? That were to extend
His sentence beyond dust and nature's law,
By which all causes else, according still
To the reception of their matter, act;
Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward; which I feel begun
Both in me, and without me; and so last
To perpetuity:—ay, me! that fear
Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
On my defenceless head; both death and I
Am found eternal, and incorporate both:

See Gen. ii. 7.

By which all causes else.

All other agents act in proportion to the reception or capacity of the subject matter, and not to the utmost extent of their own power; an allusion to an axiom of the schools:
—"Omne efficientis agit secundum vires recipientis, non suas."—Newton.

That fear

The thought is fine as it is natural. The sinner may invent never so many arguments in favour of the annihilation and utter extinction of the soul: but, after all his subterfuges and evasions, the fear of a future state, and the dread of everlasting punishment, will still pursue him: he may put it off for a time, but it will return with dreadful revolution; and, let him affect what serenity and gayety he pleases, will, notwithstanding, in the midst of it all, come thundering back on his defenceless head.—Newton.
Nor I on my part single;* in me all
Postery stands cursed: fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons! O, were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
So disinherited, how would you bless
Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind,
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned,
If guiltless! But from me what can proceed,
But all corrupt; both mind and will depraved,
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? How can they then acquitted stand
In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain,
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction: first and last
On me, me only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;
So might the wrath! Pond wish! couldst thou support
That burden, heavier than the earth to bear;
Than all the world much heavier, though divided
With that bad woman? Thus, what thou desirest,
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example* and future:
To Satan only like both crime and doom.
O conscience! into what abyss of fears
And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!
Thus Adam to himself lamented loud,
Through the still night;* not now, as ere man fell,
Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air
Accompanied; with damps and dreadful gloom;
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terror: on the ground
Outstretch'd he lay, on the cold ground; and oft
Cursed his creation; death as oft accused
Of tardy execution, since denounced
The day of his offence. Why comes not death,

* Nor I on my part single.
And this curse was the patrimony which he was to leave to his sons. The author had in view 2 Esdr. vii. 48:—"O thou Adam, what hast thou done? for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee."—Newton.

* Beyond all past example.
As Adam is here speaking in great agonies of mind, he aggravates his own misery, and concludes it to be greater and worse than that of the fallen angels, or all future men; as having in himself alone the source of misery for all his posterity; whereas both angels and men had only their own to bear. Satan was only like him, as being the ringleader; and this added very much to his remorse; as we read in b. i. 605.—Newton.

* Through the still night.
This, we conceive, must be some other night than that immediately after the Fall.—Newton.
Said he, with one thrice-acceptable stroke
To end me? Shall truth fail to keep her word,
Justice divine not hasten to be just?
But death comes not at call; justice divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song.
Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed;
But her with stern regard he thus repell'd:
Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best
Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false
And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
Like his, and colour serpentine, may show
Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended
To hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee
I had persisted happy: had not thy pride
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdain'd
Not to be trusted; longing to be seen,
Though by the devil himself, him overweening
To over-reach; but, with the serpent meeting,
Fool'd and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee,
To trust thee from my side; imagined wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;
And understood not all was but a show,
Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib
Crook'd by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister, from me drawn;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found. O! why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and not fill the world at once
With men, as angels, without feminine;
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall; innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex: for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
By parents; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.
He added not, and from her turn'd; but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness, Heaven,
What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unwee ting have offended,
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant,
I beg, and clasp thy knees: bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress
My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace; both joining,
As join'd in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assign'd us,
That cruel serpent: on me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befallen;
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable! both have sinn'd; but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee;
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe;
Me, me only, just object of his ire!
She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,
Immoveable, till peace obtain'd from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration: soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight.

Soon his heart relented.

This picture of Eve's distress, her submissive tender address to her husband, and his generous reconciliation to her, are extremely beautiful.—I had almost said beyond anything in the whole poem; and that reader must have a very sound and unfriendly turn of mind, whose heart does not relent with Adam's, and melt into a sympathizing commiseration towards the mother of mankind; so well has Milton here followed Horace's advice,—

Si vis me flere, doleam dext
Primum ipsi tibi.

Milton with great depth of judgment observes, in his "Apology for Smectymnuus," that, "he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition of the best and honourablest things; and have in himself the experience and practice of all which is praiseworthy." Of the truth of which observation he himself is, I think, a shining instance in this charming scene now before us; since there is little room to doubt but that the particular beauties of it are owing to an interview of the same nature which he had with his own wife; and that he is only here describ ing those tender and generous sentiments which he then felt and experienced.—Thyer.
Now at his feet submissive in distress;
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid:
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost;
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:
Unwary, and too desirous, as before
So now, of what thou know'st not, who desirest
The punishment all on thyself; alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited;
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me exposed.
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden, in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denominated, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil;
A long day's dying, to augment our pain;
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.
To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:
Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous; thence by just event
Found so unfortunate: nevertheless,
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,
Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
Tending to some relief's of our extremes,
Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.
If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devour'd
By Death at last; and miserable it is,
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring

*Tending to some relief.*

Adam had said before, that the death denounced upon them, as far as he could see, would prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil, a long day's dying, and would likewise be derived to their posterity. Eve therefore proposes, to prevent its being derived to their posterity, that they should resolve to remain childless; or, if they found it difficult to do so, that then, to prevent a long day's dying to themselves and seed, at once, they should make short, and destroy themselves. The former method she considers as some relief of their extremes, the latter as the end. And, as Dr. Greenwood observes, Milton might possibly take the hint of putting these proposals into the mouth of Eve, from Job's wife attempting to persuade her husband in his afflictions to "curse God, and die," Job ii. 9, 10.—NEWTON.
Into this cursed world a woful race,
That after wretched life must be at last
Food for so foul a monster; in thy power
It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art, childless remain: so Death
Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love’s due rites, nuptial embraces sweet;
And with desire to languish without hope,
Before the present object languishing
With like desire; which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread;
Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short—
Let us seek death; or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves.
Why stand we longer shivering under fears,
That show no end but death; and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy?
She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest; so much of death her thoughts
Had entertain’d, as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing sway’d,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had raised; and thus to Eve replied:
Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent, than what thy mind contemns;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence thought in thee; and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounced; doubt not but God
Hath wiselier arm’d his vengeful ire, than so
To be forestall’d; much more I fear lest death,
So snatch’d, will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live: then let us seek
Some safer resolution, which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise

h Let us seek death.

Eve’s speech, as Dr. Gillies observes, breathes the language of despair; Adam’s the sentiments of a mind enlightened and encouraged by the Word of God.—Todd.
The serpent's head; piteous amends! unless
Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contrived
Against us this deceit: to crush his head
Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolved, as thou propoest; so our foe
Shall 'scape his punishment ordain'd, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mention'd then of violence
Against ourselves; and wilful barrenness,
That cuts us off from hope; and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard, and judged,
Without wrath or reviling: we expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee
Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
And bringing forth; soon recompensed with joy,
Fruit of thy womb: on me the curse aslope
Glanced on the ground; with labour I must earn
My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse:
My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold
Or heat should injure us, his timely care
Hath, unbesought, provided; and his hands
Clothed us, unworthy, pitying while he judged;
How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
And teach us farther by what means to shun
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow!
Which now the sky, with various face, begins
To show us in this mountain; while the winds
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair-spreading trees; which bids us seek
Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
Our limbs benumm'd, ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gather'd beams
Reflected may with matter sere foment;
Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds
Justling, or push'd with winds, rude in their shock,
Time the slant lightning; whose thwart flame, driven down,
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,
And sends a comfortable heat from far,
Which might supply the sun: such fire to use,
And what may else be remedy or cure
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
He will instruct us praying, and of grace
Beseeching him; so as we need not fear
To pass commodiously this life, sustain'd
By him with many comforts, till we end
In dust, our final rest and native home.
What better can we do, than, to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent; and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure; in whose look serene,
When angry most he seem'd and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?
So spake our father penitent; nor Eve
Felt less remorse: they, forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent; and both confess'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd; with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

As Addison's remarks on this book are longer than usual, I am compelled to abridge
them.

He remarks, that this tenth book contains a greater number of persons in it than any
other in the whole poem; and that here are introduced all who had any concern in the
action; these he divides into the celestial, the infernal, the human, and the imaginary
persons. The first are very finely laid together in the beginning of this book.

Satan's first appearance in the assembly of fallen angels is worked up with circum-
stances which give a delightful suspense to the reader; but there is no incident in the
whole poem which does this more than the transformation of the whole audience, that
follows the account their leader gives them of his expedition. The unexpected hiss,
which arises in this episode; the dimensions and bulk of Satan, with the annual change
which the spirits are supposed to undergo, are circumstances very striking. The
beauty of the diction too is remarkable in this whole episode. Milton's skill is no-
where more shown than in conducting the parts of Adam and Eve.

The imaginary persons are Sin and Death. This allegory is one of the finest com-
positions of genius; but Addison deems it not agreeable to the nature of an epic poem.
Homer and Virgil, he says, are full of imaginary persons, who are very beautiful when
they are shown without being engaged in any series of action; but when such persons
are introduced as principal actors, and engaged in a series of adventures, they take too
much upon them, and are by no means proper for an heroic poem, which ought to
appear credible in its principal parts. "I cannot forbear therefore thinking," he adds,
"that Sin and Death are as improper agents in a work of this nature, as Strength and
Necessity in one of the tragedies of Æschylus, who represented those two persons nail-
ing down Prometheus to a rock; for which he has been justly censured by the greatest
critics."
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Addison observes, that this eleventh book of "Paradise Lost" is not generally reckoned among the most shining books of the poem. How is it possible that every book where the splendour is so excessive, should blaze equally? Probably there is less invention in this book; but the descriptive parts are not less powerful, nor less important, instructive, and awful in their topics. The Deluge was a trial of strength with the Ancients, since it forms so important a feature in Ovid's poems. So far as there is invention in this book, it lies in the selection of circumstances, in picturesque epithets, and in moral, political, and religious reflections; its intellectual compass is vast and stupendous. Such a view opened upon Adam of the fate of his posterity, could only be conceived and comprehended by the splendid force of the poetical eye of Milton. Wonderful as is the liveliness and truth of shape and tint of each part, still the greater wonder is in the united brilliance of the whole.

It is truly said, that Milton everywhere follows the great ancients, and improves upon them: he despises all the petty gildings and artifices, which are so much boasted in modern poetry. His object is, to convey images and ideas—not words; and the plainer the words, so that they do not disgrace the thought, the better! He would never sacrifice the force of the language to the metre. The mark of this, is, that when he had occasion to use the terms of the Scripture, he would not derogate them for the sake of the rhythm.

On that which pleases us individually, without consulting the feelings and opinions of others, we cannot rely: but when what delights us has made the same impression on gifted persons of all ages, and under all different circumstances, then we may be sure that its charms are intrinsic, and such as it is important to bring out, and render more impressive. Thus Milton is full of imagery, which makes the spell of Homer and Virgil.

There are those who think that poetry is not of the essence of intellectual cultivation; they think so because they have no idea of the nature of true poetry; without which there can be no due conception of the wonders and charms of the creation.

Smooth verses are indeed but childish amusements to the ear, which would be better fed by common and unpolished sounds conveying useful knowledge through the sense to the mind.

ARGUMENT.

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them: God accepts them, but declares they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of cherubim to dispossess them; but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs; he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him; the angel denounces their departure; Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits: the angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood.

Thus they, in lowest plight, repentant stood,  
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above  
Prevenient grace descending had removed  
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh  
Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breathed.  

\( ^{2} \text{Sighs now breathed.} \)

See Rom. viii. 26:—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know
Unutterable; which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and wing'd for heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory: yet their port b
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seem'd their petition, than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drown'd, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor miss'd the way, by envious winds:
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then clad
With incense, c where the golden altar fumed,
By their great Intercessour, came in sight
Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began:

See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in man; these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mix'd
With incense, I thy priest before thee bring;
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
From innocence. Now therefore bend thine ear
To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute:
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him; me, his Advocate
And propitiation; all his works on me,
Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me; and, in me, from these receive
The smell of peace toward mankind: let him live
Before thee reconciled, at least his days
Number'd, though sad; till death, his doom, (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse)
To better life shall yield him; where with me

not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Hume.

b Yet their port.

The poet could not have thought of a more apt similitude to illustrate his subject
(than that of Deucalion and Pyrrha), and he has plainly fetched it from Ovid, Met. i. 318, &c. Milton has been often censured for his frequent allusions to the heathen mythology, and for mixing fables with sacred truths; but it may be observed in favour of him, that what he borrows from the heathen mythology, he commonly applies only by way of similitude; and a similitude from thence may illustrate his subject as well as from anything else.—Newton.

Ovid, who was a favourite with Milton, might be so, among other reasons, from so many of his subjects being in a certain degree founded on Scripture, or at least having a palpable relation thereto; as the creation, deluge, foreshowing of the destruction of the world by fire, &c.—Dunster.

c With incense.

See Psalm cxlii. 2:—"Let my prayer be set before thee as incense."—Todd.
All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss;
Made one with me, as I with thee am one.

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:
All thy request for man, accepted Son,
Obtain; all thy request was my decree:
But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The law I gave to nature him forbids:
Those pure immortal elements, that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off,
As a distemper gross, to air as gross,
And mortal food; as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him endow'd; with happiness,
And immortality: that fondly lost,
This other served but to eternize woe;
Till I provided death: so death becomes
His final remedy; and, after life,
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
By faith and faithful works, to second life,
Waked in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with heaven and earth renew'd.
But let us call to synod all the bless'd,
Through heaven's wide bounds: from them I will not hide
My judgments; how with mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant angels late they saw;
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirm'd.
He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watch'd: he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more,
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
Fill'd all the regions: from their blissful bowers
Of amaranthine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the sons of light
Hasted, resorting to the summons high;
And took their seats: till from his throne supreme
The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will:
O sons, like one of us man is become,
To know both good and evil, since his taste
Of that defended fruit; but let him boast
His knowledge of good lost, and evil got;
Happier, had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself, and evil not at all.
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
My motions in him; longer than they move,
His heart I know how variable and vain,
Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
Reach also of the tree of life, and eat,
And live for ever, dream at least to live
For ever, to remove him I decree,
And send him from the garden forth to till
The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
Michael, this my behest have thou in charge:
Take to thee from among the cherubim
Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the fiend,
Or in behalf of man, or to invade
Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
Without remorse drive out the sinful pair;
From hallowed ground the unholy; and denounce
To them, and to their progeny, from thence
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
At the sad sentence rigorously urged,
(For I behold them soften’d, and with tears
Bewailing their excess) all terror hide.
If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten; intermix
My covenant in the woman’s seed renew’d;
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace:
And on the east side of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubic watch; and of a sword the flame
Wide-waving; all approach far off to fright,
And guard all passage to the tree of life;
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
To spirits foul, and all my trees their prey;
With whose stolen fruit man once more to delude.
He ceased; and the archangelic power prepared
For swift descent; with him the cohort bright
Of watchful cherubim: four faces each *
Had, like a double Janus; all their shape
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,
Charm’d with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
To resalute the world with sacred light,
Leucothea waked, and with fresh dews embalm’d

* Four faces each.

Ezekiel says that “every one had four faces,” x. 14; see also x. 12:—“And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, were full of eyes round about.”—Newton.

† Leucothea.

The white goddess, as the name in Greek imports: the same with Matuta in Latin.
The earth; when Adam and first matron Eve
Had ended now their orisons, and found
Strength added from above; new hope to spring
Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet link'd;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renew'd:
Eve, easily may faith admit, that all
The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;
But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
So prevalent, as to concern the mind
Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer,
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
Ev'n to the seat of God: for since I sought
By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
Kneel'd, and before him humbled all my heart,
Methought I saw him placable and mild
Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
That I was heard with favour; peace return'd
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe;
Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
Eve, rightly call'd mother of all mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee
Man is to live; and all things live for man.
To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour, meek:
Ill-worthy I, such title should belong
To me transgressour; who, for thee ordain'd
A help, became thy snare; to me reproach
Rather belong, distrust, and all disgrace:
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
The source of life; next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsafest,
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
Though after sleepless night: for see! the morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress smiling: let us forth;
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoin'd
Laborious till day droop: while here we dwell,
What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
Here let us live, though in fallen state, content.
So spake, so wish'd, much-humbled Eve; but fate
Subscribed not: nature first gave signs, impress'd

Matuta is the early morning, that ushers in the Aurora rosy with the sunbeams, according to Lucretius, v. 653; and from Matuta is derived matutinus, "early in the morning." This is the last morning in the poem; the morning of the fatal day wherein our first parents were expelled out of Paradise.—Newton.
On bird, beast, air; air suddenly eclipsed,
After short blush of morn: nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove, stoop’d from his aery tour,
Two birds of gayest plume* before him drove;
Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind:
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.
Adam observed; and with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake:
O Eve, some farther change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven by these mute signs in nature shows
Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn
Us, haply to secure of our discharge
From penalty, because from death released
Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more?
Why else this double object in our sight,
Of flight pursued in the air, and o’er the ground,
One way the self-same hour? why in the east
Darkness ere day’s mid-course, and morning-light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O’er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?
He err’d not; for by this the heavenly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;
A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimm’d Adam’s eye.
Not that more glorious, when the angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilion’d with his guardians bright;
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appear’d
In Dothan, cover’d with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,

* Two birds of gayest plume.

Such omens are not unusual in the poets; see Virg. Æn. i. 393; and Æn. xii. 247.
But these omens have a singular beauty here, as they show the change that is going to
be made in the condition of Adam and Eve; and nothing could be invented more appo-
site and proper for this purpose:—an eagle pursuing two beautiful birds, and a lion
chasing a fine hart and hind; and both to the eastern gate of Paradise; as Adam and
Eve were to be driven out by the angel at that gate,—Newton.
These two incidents are indeed inimitably beautiful and affecting.

h Not that more glorious.

That was not a more glorious apparition of the angels, which appeared to Jacob in
Mahanaim, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2; nor that which appeared on the flaming mount in Dothan,
against the king of Syria, when he levied war against a single man, not like a generous
enemy, but like a base assassin, endeavoured to take him by surprise; namely, Elisha,
for having disclosed the designs of the king of Syria to the king of Israel, 2 Kings, vi.
13, &c.—Newton.
War unproclaim'd. The princely hierarch
In their bright stand there left his powers, to seize
Possession of the garden: he alone,
To find where Adam shelter'd, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,
While the great visitant approach'd, thus spake:
   Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observ'd: for I desery;
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the heavenly host; and, by his gait,
None of the meanest: some great potentate,
Or of the thrones above; such majesty
Invests him coming: yet not terrible,
That I should fear; nor sociably mild,
As Raphael, that I should much confide;
But solemn and sublime: whom, not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.
   Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs:
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days,
Given thee of grace; wherein thou mayst repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
Mayst cover: well may then thy Lord, appeased,
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim:
But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not: to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth, to till
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.

i War unproclaim'd.
The severe censure on this makes me fancy that Milton hinted at the war with Hol-
land, which broke out in 1664, when we surprised and took the Dutch Bordeaux fleet
before war was proclaimed; which the whigs much exclaimed against.—Warburton.

1 Livelier than Meliboean.
Meliboea, a city of Thessaly, famous for its dyeing the noblest purple. Sarra, the
dye of Tyre.—Hume.
He added not; for Adam, at the news
Heart-struck, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound: Eve, who unseen,
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discover’d soon the place of her retire:
O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods? where I had hope to spend,
Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow;
My early visitation, and my last
At Even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names!
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
Thee lastly, nuptial bower! by me adorn’d
With what to sight or smell was sweet! from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild? how shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustom’d to immortal fruits?
Whom thus the angel interrupted mild:
Lament not, Eve; but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost; nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine:
Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound:
Where he abides, think there thy native soil.

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scatter’d spirits return’d,
To Michael thus his humble words address’d:
Celestial, whether among the thrones, or named
Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem
Prince above princes! gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us; what besides
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring;
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess, and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes: all places else
In hospitable appear, and desolate;
Nor knowing us, nor known: and, if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will

* Must I leave thee?*

These sentiments of Eve exceed, both in pathos and variety, the farewell of Philoctetes to his cave, which Milton probably had in view. Sophoc. Philoct. v. 1487; ed. P. Stephan.

There is nothing in all poetry more beautiful and affecting than this passage.
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary him with my assiduous cries:
But prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me; that departing hence,
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
His blessed countenance: here I could frequent
With worship place by place where he vouchsafed
Presence Divine; and to my sons relate;—
On this mount he appear'd; under this tree
Stood visible; among these pines his voice
I heard; here with him at this fountain talk'd:—
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre turf, from the brook, in memory
Or monument to ages; and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or footstep trace?
For though I fled him angry, yet, recall'd
To life prolong'd and promised race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory; and far off his steps adore.
To whom thus Michael with regard benign:
Adam, thou know'st heaven his, and all the earth;
Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air; and every kind that lives,  
Fomented by his virtual power and warn'd:
All the earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift; surmise not then
His presence to these narrow bounds confined
Of Paradise, or Eden: this had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations; and had hither come

1 So many grateful altars.

Besides the beauty of the sentiments, there seems to be a propriety in this passage
which the commentators have not remarked. From the desire which mankind have
had in all ages of preserving the memory of important and interesting transactions,
many expedients were employed to transmit knowledge to succeeding ages, before the
invention of writing; groves and altars, tombs, pillars, and heaps of stones, were the
representative symbols of past transactions, and memorials to instruct posterity. With-
out mentioning many other particular instances, which are enumerated by different
writers, we find from various parts of the book of Genesis, that the patriarchs raised
altars where God had appeared to them. See ch. xi. 7, xxvi. 25.—To this custom of the
primitive and patriarchal ages Milton seems to have alluded.—Bishop Burgess.

2 Every kind that lives.

Esto Dei sedes nisi terra, et ponas, et aer,
Et cælum, et virtus? Superos quid quarrimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcumque vides, & c. Newton.

See Jeremiah xxiii. 24. "Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."—Todd.
From all the ends of the earth to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:
Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain,
God is, as here; and will be found alike
Present; and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, his face
Express, and of his steps the track divine.
Which that thou mayst believe, and be confirm'd
Ere thou from hence depart, know, I am sent
To show thee what shall come in future days
To thee and to thy offspring: good with bad
Expect to hear, supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow; equally inured
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
This hill; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes)
Here sleep below, while thou to foresight wakest;
As once thou slept'st, while she to life was form'd.

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:
Ascend; I follow thee, safe guide, the path
Thou lead'st me; and to the hand of Heaven submit,
However chastening; to the evil turn
My obvious breast; arming to overcome
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
If so I may attain. So both ascend
In the visions of God. It was a hill,
Of Paradise the highest; from whose top,
The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,
Stretch'd out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
Not higher that hill," nor wider looking round,
Whereon, for different cause, the tempter set
Our second Adam, in the wilderness;
To show him all earth's kingdoms, and their glory.
His eye might there command wherever stood
City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls

See Dan. v. 14.—Todd.

* Know, I am sent.

Whereon the devil set our Saviour, the second man, the "last Adam," I Cor. xv. 45, 47; "to show him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," Matt. iv. 8. The prospects are well compared together; and the first thought of the one might probably be taken from the other; and as the one makes part of the subject of 'Paradise Lost,' so doth the other of 'Paradise Regained.'—Newton.
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
To Paquin of Sinaean kings; and thence
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,
Down to the Golden Chersonese; or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan; or where the Russian ksar
In Moscow; or the sultan in Bizeance,
Turcsthan-born: nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus to his utmost port
Ercoco, and the less maratim kings,
Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm
Of Congo, and Angola farthest south;
Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,
Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabali; and yet unspoil'd
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred; then purged with euphrosy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see;
And from the well of life three drops instill'd.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Ev'n to the immost seat of mental sight,
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced;
But him the gentle angel by the hand
Soon raised, and his attention thus recall'd:

\[ 7 \] Of Cambalu.

Thus he surveys the four different parts of the world, but, it must be confessed, more with an ostentation of learning than with any additional beauty to the poem. But Mr. Thyer is of opinion that such little sallies of the Muse agreeably enough diversify the scene; and observes, that Tasso, whose 'Godfrey' is no very imperfect model of a regular epic poem, has in his fifteenth canto employed thirty or forty stanzas together in a description of this sort, which had no necessary connexion with his general plan.

—NEWTON.

To me it appears that this long enumeration of sounding names fills the mind, though somewhat vaguely, with an infinity of stirring imagery.

\[ 8 \] Yet unspoil'd

Guiana.

I suppose Milton alluded to the many frustrated voyages which had been made in search of this golden country. If I remember right, this was the famous place that Sir Walter Raleigh was to have brought such treasures from.—THYER.

\[ 9 \] Nobler sights.

Nobler sights, being not only of cities and kingdoms, but of the principal actions of men to the final consummation of all things.—NEWTON.
Adam, now ope thine eyes; and first behold
The effects, which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee; who never touch'd
The excepted tree; nor with the snake conspired;
Nor sinn'd thy sin: yet from that sin derive
Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds.
His eyes he open'd, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
New-reap'd; the other part sheep-walks and folds:
In the midst an altar as the landmark stood
Rustic, of grassy sord: thither anon
A sweaty reaper, from his tillage brought
First-fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
Uncull'd, as came to hand; a shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best; then, sacrificing,
laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strow'd,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed:
"His offering soon propitious fire from heaven
Consumed with nimble glance and grateful steam;
The other's not, for his was not sincere;
Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talk'd,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life: he fell; and, deadly pale,
Groan'd out his soul with gushing blood effused.
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismay'd, and thus in haste to the angel cried:
O teacher, some great mischief hath befallen
To that meek man, who well had sacrificed:
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?
To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:
These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins; the unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother's offering found
From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact
Will be aveng'd; and the other's faith approved,
Lose no reward; though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore. To which our sire:
Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!
But have I now seen death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!
To whom thus Michael: Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on man; but many shapes
Of death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave, all dismal; yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance, than within.

See Gen. iv. 2.
Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die;
By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear; that thou mayst know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men. Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark;
A lazar-house it seem'd; wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans;
Despair Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born; compassion quell'd
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrain'd excess;
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renew'd:
O miserable mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!
Better end here unborn. Why is life given
To be thus wrested from us? rather, why
Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down;
Glad to be so dismiss'd in peace. Can thus
The image of God in man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debased
Under inhuman pains? Why should not man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?
Their Maker's image, answer'd Michael, then,
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungodly appetite; and took
His image whom they served, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own;
Or if his likeness, by themselves defaced;
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves.
I yield it just, said Adam, and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust?
There is, said Michael, if thou well observe
The rule of—Not too much: by temperance taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st; seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight;
Till many years over thy head return,
So mayst thou live; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd; for death mature:
This is old age; but then, thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty; which will change
To wither'd, weak, and gray; thy senses then,
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life. To whom our ancestor:
Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest, of his cumbersome charge;
Which I must keep till my appointed day
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution. Michael replied:
Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest
Live well; how long, or short, permit to heaven:
And now prepare thee for another sight.
He look'd and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hue; by some, were herds
Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved
Their stops and chords was seen; his volant touch

This is old age.

The tender comparison here made between youth and age may receive its best illustration from another of the same nature in Shakespeare, which in all probability suggested that before us, from ver. 538 to 546 inclusive:

Thou hast nor youth nor age;
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the ulns
Of palied eld; and when thou art old and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limbs, or beauty,
To make thy riches pleasant.—Meas. for Meas. act iii.

Appointed day.

See Job xiv. 14.

49
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
In other part stood one who, at the forge
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
Had melted (whether found where casual fire
Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,
Down to the veins of earth; thence gliding hot
To some cave's mouth; or whether wash'd by stream
From under ground;) the liquid ore he drain'd
Into fit moulds prepared; from which he form'd
First his own tools; then, what might else be wrought
Fusil or graven in metal. After these,
But on the hither side, a different sort
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,
Down to the plain descended; by their guise
Just men they seem'd and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works
Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve
Freedom and peace to men: they on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when from the tents, behold!
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on.
The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till, in the amorous net
Fast caught, they liked; and each his liking chose.
And now of love they treat, till the evening star,
Love's harbinger, appear'd; then, all in heat,
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:
With feast and music all the tents resound.
Such happy interview, and fair event
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
And charming symphonies, attach'd the heart
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
The bent of nature; which he thus express'd:
True opener of mine eyes, prime angel blest;
Much better seems this vision, and more hope

 After these.

As being the descendants of the younger brother, but on the hither side, Cain having been banished into a more distant country; a different sort, the posterity of Seth. wholly different from that of Cain; from the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat, having their habitation in the mountains near Paradise; down to the plain descended, where the Cainites dwelt; by their guise just men they seem'd, and all their study bent to worship God aright, the Scripture itself speaks of them as the worshippers of the true God; and know his works not hid, and Josephus and other writers inform us, that they were addicted to the study of natural philosophy, and especially of astronomy; nor those things last which might preserve, nor was it their last care and study to know those things which might preserve, freedom and peace to men. Though this account of the Sethites be, in the general, agreeable to Scripture; yet the particulars of their living in the mountains near Paradise, and of their descending thence into the plain, and their corrupting themselves in that manner with the daughters of Cain, Milton seems to have taken from the Oriental writers, and particularly from the annals of Eutychius.—Newton.
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past: 600
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
Here nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends.
To whom thus Michael: Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to nature seeming meet;
Created as thou art, to nobler end
Holy and pure, conformity divine,
Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
Who slew his brother; studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventors rare;
Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye;—
To these that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,
Ere long to swim at large; and laugh, for which
The world ere long a world of tears must weep.
To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:
O pity and shame, that they, who to live well
Enter'd so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!
But still I see the tenor of man's woe
Holds on the same from woman to begin.
From man's effeminate slackness it begins,
Said the angel, who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts received.
But now prepare thee for another scene.
He look'd, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between;
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise;

w That sober race of men.

As we read in Gen. vi. 2: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose." It is now generally agreed that this passage is to be understood of the sons of Seth, the worshippers of the true God, making matches with the idolatrous daughters of wicked Cain; and Milton puts this construction upon it here, though elsewhere he seems to give in to the old exploded conceit of the angels becoming enamoured of the daughters of men. See b. iii. 468; and b. v. 447; and Par. Reg. b. ii. 178, &c.—Newrox.
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle ranged
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood:

One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow-ground; or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,
Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray:
With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
Where cattle pastured late, now scatter'd lies
With carcases and arms the ensanguined field,
Deserted: others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamp'd; by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting: others from the wall defend
With dart and javelin, stones and sulphurous fire;
On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds.

In other part the sceptred heralds call
To council, in the city-gates; anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriours mix'd,
Assemble, and harangues are heard, but soon
In factious opposition; till at last
Of middle age one rising,* eminent
In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
And judgment from above: him old and young,
Exploded, and had seized with violent hands;
Had not a cloud descending snatch'd him thence,
Unseen amid the throng: so violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting turn'd full sad: O, what are these,
Death's ministers, not men? who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousand-fold the sin of him who slew
His brother: for of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren; men of men?
But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?

To whom thus Michael: These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st;
Where good with bad were match'd, who of themselves
Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mix'd,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these giants, men of high renown;
For in these days might only shall be admired,

* Of middle age one rising.

Enoch, said to be of middle age, because he was translated when he was but 365 years old; a middle age then. Gen. v. 23.—Richardson.
And valour and heroic virtue call'd.
To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory; and for glory done
Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors,
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods;
Destroyers rightlier call'd, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth;
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheldst
The only righteous in a world perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just,
And utter odious truth, that God would come
To judge them with his saints; him the Most High,
Wrapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds,
Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God
High in salvation, and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death; to show thee what reward
Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;
Which now direct thine eyes, and soon behold.

He look'd, and saw the face of things quite changed:
The brazen'd, and saw the face of things quite changed:
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
All now was turn'd to jollity and game,
To luxury and riot, feast and dance;
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declared,
And testified against their ways: he oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
Triumphs or festivals; and to them preach'd
Conversion and repentance, as to souls
In prison, under judgments imminent;
But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceased
Contending, and removed his tents far off:
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and hight;
Smear'd round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contrived; and of provisions laid in large,
For man and beast: when, lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens and pairs, and enter'd in as taught
Their order: last the sire and his three sons,

\[ Conversion and repentance. \]

This account of Noah's preaching is founded chiefly on St. Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; as what follows of his desisting, when he found his preaching ineffectual, and of removing into another country, is taken from Josephus, Antiq. Jud. lib. i. c. 3.—Newton.
With their four wives; and God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the south wind rose, and with black wings
Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove
From under heaven; the hills to their supply
Vapour, and exhalation, dusk and moist,
Sent up amain: and now the thicken’d sky
Like a dark ceiling stood; down rush’d the rain
Impetuous; and continued, till the earth
No more was seen: the floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with peaked prow
Rode tilting o’er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelm’d, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water roll’d: sea cover’d sea,
Sea without shore; and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reign’d, sea-monsters whelp’d
And stabled; of mankind, so numerous late,
All left in one small bottom swum embark’d.
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation! Thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drown’d,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently rear’d
By the angel, on thy feet thou stood’st at last,
Though comfortless; as when a father mourns
His children all in view destroy’d at once;
And scarce to the angel utter’dst thus thy plaint:
O visions ill foreseen! better had I
Lived ignorant of future; so had borne
My part of evil only, each day’s lot
Enough to bear; those now, that were dispensed
The burden of many ages, on me light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold, what shall befall
Him or his children; evil he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel,
Grievous to bear: but that care now is past;
Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped
Famine and anguish will at last consume,
Wandering that watery desert: I had hope,
When violence was ceased, and war on earth,
All would have then gone well; peace would have crown’d
With length of happy days the race of man;
But I was far deceived; for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus? unfold, celestial guide,
And whether here the race of man will end.
To whom thus Michael: Those, whom last thou saw’st
In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void;
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey;
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquer'd also, and enslaved by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose
And fear of God; from whom their piety feign'd
In sharp contest of battel found no aid
Against invaders; therefore, cool'd in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolve, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy; for the earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried:
So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved;
Justice and temperance, truth and faith forgot;
One man except, the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurement, custom, and a world
Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish; and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe,
And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence; and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observed
The one just man alive: by his command
Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheldst,
To save himself and household, from amidst
A world devote to universal wreck.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged,
And shelter'd round, but all the cataracts
Of heaven set open on the earth shall pour
Rain, day and night; all fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds; till inundation rise

*Freedom lost.*

Milton everywhere shows his love of liberty; and here he observes very rightly, that the loss of liberty is soon followed by the loss of all virtue and religion. There are such sentiments in several parts of his prose works, as well as in Aristotle, and other masters of politics.—Newton.

*Piety feign'd.*

I conceive this to be unquestionably political. Milton was, it has been supposed, well aware of the *feign'd piety* of many of his own party, whom he had once considered as saints; and whose temporizing at the Restoration completed in his mind the hypocrisy of their character. Hypocrisy, it may be observed, Milton, in various parts of his poem, has branded as the most abominable of crimes.—Dunster.
Above the highest hills: then shall this mount  
Of Paradise, by might of waves be moved  
Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,  
With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees adrift,  
Down the great river to the opening gulf;  
And there take root, an island salt and bare,  
The haunt of seals, and ores, and sea-mew's clang;  
To teach thee that God attributes to place  
No sanctity, if none be thither brought  
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.  
And now, what farther shall ensue, behold.  
He look'd, and saw the ark hull on the flood,  
Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,  
Driven by a keen north wind, that, blowing dry,  
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decay'd;

Then shall this mount  
Of Paradise.

It is the opinion of many learned men, that Paradise was destroyed by the deluge; and Milton describes it in a very poetical manner:—Push'd by the horned flood: so that it was before the flood became universal; and while it poured along like a vast river; for rivers, when they meet with anything to obstruct their passage, divide themselves, and become horned, as it were; and hence the ancients have compared them to bulls.—

NEWTON.

Ores, a species of whale.—Todd.

No sanctity.

Milton omits no opportunity of lashing what he thought superstitions. These lines may serve as one instance; and I think he plainly here alludes to the manner of consecrating churches used by archbishop Laud, which was prodigiously clamoured against by people of our author's way of thinking, as superstitions and popish.—Thyer.

Wrinkled the face of deluge.

The circumstances of this description of the abating of the flood are few, but selected with great judgment, and expressed with no less spirit and beauty. In this respect it must be owned, Milton greatly excels the Italians, who are generally too prolix in their descriptions, and think they have never said enough while anything remains unsaid. When once enough is said to excite in the reader's mind a proper idea of what the poet is representing; whatever is added, however beautiful, serves only to tease the fancy, instead of pleasing it; and rather cools than improves that glow of pleasure which arises in the mind upon its first contemplation of any surprising scene of nature well painted out.—Thyer.

Again I have to observe, that Mr. Addison's remarks upon the book before us are similar to such as are to be found in the notes of subsequent commentators already copied: it is probable that the originality lay with Addison, who, not having produced them detached, but as parts of one critique, has given them in a more popular form. Still, when the matter of them is so anticipated, I must forbear to repeat them at length: I shall, however, notice them in a summary way. He observes, that the acceptance of the prayers of Adam and Eve at the beginning of this eleventh book is formed upon that beautiful passage in Holy Writ:—"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God." He then notices the poetical beauty of the vision of the angels to Ezekiel, where "every one had four faces; all their shape spangled with eyes:" next, the assembly of the angels to hear the judgment passed upon man; then the conference of Adam and Eve, and the subsequent morning notice of the signs of the changes about to take place in all the creation surrounding them. The next striking passage is the description of the appearance of the archangel Michael, sent to expel them from Paradise.
And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep; who now had stopt
His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fix'd.
And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear;
With clamour thence the rapid currents drive,
Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies;
And, after him, the surer messenger,
A dove, sent forth once and again to spy
Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign:
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends, with all his train:
Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new:
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth:
O thou, who future things canst represent
As present, heavenly instructor! I revive
At this last sight; assured that man shall live,
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroy'd, than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect, and so just,
That God vouchsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say, what mean those colour'd streaks in heaven
Distended, as the brow of God appeased?
Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lost it again dissolve, and shower the earth?
To whom the archangel: Dextrously thou aim'st;
So willingly doth God remit his ire,
Though late repenting him of man depraved;
Grieved at his heart, when looking down he saw

Addison gives the full measure of praise to Eve's complaint on receiving the notice
that she must quit Paradise, and the more masculine and elevated speech of Adam.
The critic then commends that noble part, where the angel leads Adam to the highest
mount of Paradise, and lays before him a whole hemisphere, as a proper stage for those
visions which were to be represented on it. The image of death in the second vision
is represented in all its varieties and attitudes: then, by way of contrast, comes a scene
of mirth, love, and Jollity. The deluge is drawn with the most powerful and masterly
hand.
The whole earth fill'd with violence, and all flesh
Corrupting each their way; yet, those removed,
Such grace shall one just man find in his sight,
That he relents, not to blot out mankind;
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The earth again by flood; nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds; nor rain to drown the world,
With man therein or beast; but, when he brings
Over the earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-colour'd bow, whereon to look,
And call to mind his covenant: day and night,
Seed time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course; till fire purge all things new,
Both heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell.
BOOK XII.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The present twelfth book being only one half of the original and then concluding tenth, the revelations of the archangel Michael were to be continued from the flood, at which the eleventh book closes; and indeed it was a fortunate circumstance that Milton, previously to the division, had changed the medium of impression from vision to narration; because it bestows a feature of novelty and distinction upon his concluding book.

It is therefore with some surprise that we meet with any objection to this arrangement of the poet, and the wish that he had imparted all his disclosures in the way of picture and vision, in which they commenced: but Mr. Dunster goes at once to the "heart of the mystery," and inquires whether all the coming subjects were equally suited to the specular mount? The plagues of Egypt, as he observes, so represented, must have been tedious. How was the delivery of the law to have been represented, under all its sublime circumstances, in vision? How could the great miracle (related with concise sublimity) of the heavenly bodies standing still at the command of Joshua, be exhibited in vision? Could the nativity, the life and death of our blessed Lord, or his resurrection (each related in a few lines of exquisite beauty) have been so clearly or adequately displayed in picture? or could his ascension, and resumption of his heavenly seat, and his coming again to judge the world, have been adequately exhibited at all?

The pictures even of the eleventh book were of necessity accompanied by some verbal explanations. In the remainder of the history, as Mr. Dunster remarks, "the accruing materials come too thick to be represented in visions: the task would have been laborious to the artist, who would have fatigued and disgusted those whom he wished to inform and delight." Here, therefore, the poet judiciously reversed his plan.

But there is another topic of remark which the concluding book of Milton's divine poem suggests; it is his comparative affluence of invention. The sentence upon Adam might have been attended by immediate expulsion: but how gracious is the divine condescension, to allow some interval of reflection; and, previously to ejectment, to fortify the minds of the repentant pair with anticipated knowledge and distant consolation! Thus the interest of the poem is kept alive with the reader to the last line. The whole of the twelfth book closely relates to Adam and his posterity; and so delightfully are these soothing hopes of happiness administered by the archangel, that we, equally with Adam, forget that we are to quit Paradise; and are, like him, heart-struck by the sudden warning, that "the hour is come, the very minute of it," and attend the "hastening angel; to the gates of exclusion, with all the sad and lingering acquiescence of our first parents."

* The first edition was in ten books. In the second edition, the seventh and the tenth books, being greatly beyond the rest in the number of the verses, were divided each into two; so that the seventh became the eighth also; the eighth of the first edition then stood ninth; the ninth, tenth; and the tenth of the first edition became of course, when divided, the present eleventh and twelfth.
ARGUMENT.

The angel Michael continues, from the Flood, to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall; his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise; the fiery sword waving behind them, and the cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who on his journey bates at noon,
Though bent on speed; so here the archangel paused
Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restored,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes:
Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end;
And man, as from a second stock, proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgment past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
With some regard\(^a\) to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace;
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock,
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
With large wine-offerings\(^b\) pour'd, and sacred feast,
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed; and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule: till one shall rise\(^c\)
Of proud ambitious heart; who not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserved
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and law of nature from the earth;
Hunting, (and men not beasts shall be his game,)

\(^a\) With some regard.

This answers to the silver age of the poets; the paradisiacal state is the golden one; that of iron begins soon, v. 21.—Richardson.

\(^b\) Wine-offerings.

See Exodus, xxix. 40.—Todd.

\(^c\) Till one shall rise.

It is generally agreed that the first governments in the world were patriarchal, "by families and tribes;" and that Nimrod was the first who laid the foundation of kingly government among mankind. Milton, therefore, (who was no friend to kingly government at the best,) represents him in a very bad light, as a most wicked and insolent tyrant; but he has great authorities, both Jewish and Christian, to justify him for so doing.—Newton.
With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous:
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
Before the Lord; as in despite of Heaven,
Or from Heaven, claiming second sovranity;
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion others he accuse.
He with a crew, whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannise,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find
The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurgle
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of hell:
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
A city and tower, whose top may reach to heaven,
And get themselves a name; lest, far dispersed
In foreign lands, their memory be lost;
Regardless whether good or evil fame.
But God, who oft descends to visit men
Unseen, and through their habitations walks
To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
Obstruct heaven-towers; and in derision sets
Upon their tongues a various spirit, to raise
Quite out their native language; and, instead,
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud,
Among the builders; each to other calls,
Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,
As mock'd they storm: great laughter was in heaven,
And looking down, to see the hubbub strange,
And hear the din: thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work Confusion named.\(^4\)

Whereo thus Adam, fatherly displeased;
O execrable son! so to aspire
Above his brethren; to himself assuming
Authority usurp'd, from God not given:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,

\(^4\) Though of rebellion.
This was added by our author, probably not without a view to his own time; when himself and those of his own party were stigmatised as the worst of rebels.—Newton.

\(^5\) Marching from Eden.
See Gen. xi. 2, &c.: "And it came to pass as they journeyed in the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."—Newton.

\(^4\) See their city.
See Gen. xi. 5, &c. The Scripture speaks after the manner of men: so the heathen gods are often represented as coming down to observe human actions, as in the stories of Lycaon, Bauils and Philemon, &c.

\(^5\) Confusion named.
Babel in Hebrew signifies confusion.—Newton.
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his dominion; but man over men
He made not lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free,\(^b\)
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on man; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance: wretched man! what food
Will he convey up thither, to sustain
Himself and his rash army; where thin air
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
And famish him of breath, if not of bread?

To whom thus Michael: Justly thou abhorrest
That son, who on the quiet state of men
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty; yet know withal,
Since thy original lapse, true liberty\(^1\)
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twin'd, and from her hath no individual being:
Reason in man obscured, or not obey'd,
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart passions catch the government
From reason; and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom: tyranny must be;
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annex'd,
Deprives them of their outward liberty;
Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son
Of him who built the ark; who for the shame
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,

Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse; till God at last,
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
His presence from among them, and avert
His holy eyes; resolving from thenceforth
To leave them to their own polluted ways;
And one peculiar nation to select
From all the rest, of whom to be invoked,

\(^b\) From human free.

Left mankind in full and free possession of their liberty.—Hume.

\(^1\) True liberty.

So Milton in his sonnet:—

For who loves that must first be wise and good.
BOOK XII.]  PARADISE LOST.

A nation from one faithful man to spring:
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship: 3 O, that men
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch lived k who 'scape the flood,
As to forsake the living God, and fall
To worship their own work in wood and stone
For gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes
To call by vision, from his father's house,
His kindred, and false gods, into a land
Which he will show him; and from him will raise
A mighty nation, and upon him shower
His benediction so, that in his seed
All nations shall be blest: he straight obeys: 1
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes:
I see him, m but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldaea, n passing now the ford
To Haran; after him a cumbrous train o
Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude;
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains; I see his tents

3 Bred up in idol-worship.
We read in Josh. xxiv. 2: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old
time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served
other gods." Now as Terah, Abraham's father, was an idolater, I think we may be
certain that Abraham was bred up in the religion of his father, though he renounced it
afterwards, and in all probability converted his father likewise; for Terah removed with
Abraham to Haran, and there died. See Gen. xi. 31, 32.—Newton.

k While yet the patriarch lived.
It appears from the computations given by Moses, Gen. xi. that Terah, the father of
Abraham, was born two hundred and twenty-two years after the flood, but Noah lived
after the flood three hundred and fifty years, Gen. ix. 28; and we have proved from
Joshua, that Terah, and the ancestors of Abraham, "served other gods;" and from the
Jewish traditions we learn farther, that Terah, and Nachor his father, and Serug his
grandfather, were statuaries and carvers of idols: and therefore idolatry was set up in
the world, while yet the patriarch lived who 'scape the flood.—Newton.

1 He straight obeys.

m I see him.
Milton, sensible that this long historical description might grow irksome, has varied
the manner of representing it as much as possible; beginning first with supposing
Adam to have a prospect of it before his eyes; next, by making the angel the relater of
it; and, lastly, by uniting the two former methods, and making Michael see it as in
vision, and give a rapturous enlivened account of it to Adam. This gives great ease
to the languishing attention of the reader.—Thyer.

n Ur of Chaldaea.
See Gen. xi. 31. Chaldaea, a province of Asia, lying east of the Euphrates, and west
of the Tigris; Ur, a city of Chaldaea, the country of Abraham and Terah.—Newton.

o A cumbrous train.
The poet here has an opportunity of introducing the picturesque description of Abra-
ham, with his long train of flocks, herds, family and servants, passing in procession the
river, which description I consider as a fortunate application of the account given of
Jacob's returning from Mesopotamia into Canaan, Gen. xxxii. 13, 16, 22, 23.—Dunster.
Pitch'd about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain
Of Moreh; there by promise he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that land,
From Hamath northward to the Desert south;
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed)
From Hermon east to the great western sea;
Mount Hermon; yonder sea:—each place behold
In prospect, as I point them; on the shore,
Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream,
Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
This ponder, that all nations of the earth
Shall in his seed be blessed: by that seed
Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
The serpent's head; whereof to thee anon
Plainlier shall be reveal'd. This patriarch blest,
Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,
A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves;
Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown;
The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs
From Canaan, to a land hereafter call'd
Egypt, divided by the river Nile;
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
Into the sea: to sojourn in that land
He comes, invited by a younger son
In time of dearth; a son, whose worthy deeds
Raise him to be the second in that realm
Of Pharaoh: there he dies, and leaves his race
Growing into a nation; and now grown
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
Inhospitably, and kills their infant males:
Till by two brethren (these two brethren call
Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
His people from enthralment, they return,
With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies
To know their God, or message to regard,
Must be compell'd by signs and judgments dire;
To blood unshed the rivers must be turn'd;
Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill
With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;
His cattle must of rot and murren die;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
And all his people; thunder mix'd with hail,
Hail mix'd with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;
What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;
Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born
Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
The river-dragon\(^p\) tamed at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn heart: but still, as ice
More harden'd after thaw; till, in his rage
Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the sea
Swallows him with his host; but them lets pass,
As on dry land, between two crystal walls;
Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
Divided till his rescued gain their shore:
Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend,
Though present in his angel; who shall go
Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire;
By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire;
To guide them in their journey, and remove
Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues:
All night he will pursue; but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning watch;
Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud,
God looking forth will trouble all his host,
And craze their chariot-wheels: when by command
Moses once more his potent rod extends
Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;
On their embattel'd ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war: the race elect\(^q\)
Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance
Through the wild Desert; not the readiest way,
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarm'd,
War terrify them inexpert, and fear
Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude; for life
To noble and ignoble is more sweet
Untrain'd in arms, where rashness leads not on.
This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness; there they shall found
Their government, and their great senate choose
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws, ordain'd:
God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself

\(^p\) The river-dragon.

The river-dragon, as Addison has observed, is Pharaoh, in allusion to Ezekiel, xxix.

3.—Todd.

\(^q\) The race elect.

It is remarkable that here Milton omits the moral cause, though he gives the poetical,
of the Israelites wandering forty years in the wilderness; and this was their poltron
mutiny on the return of the spies. He omitted this with judgment; for this last
speech of the angel was to give such a representation of things as might convey com-
fort to Adam; otherwise the story of the brazen serpent would have afforded noble
imagery.—Warburton.
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound,
Ordain them laws;* part, such as appertain
To civil justice; part, religious rites
Of sacrifice; informing them, by types
And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech
That Moses might report to them his will,
And terour cease: he grants what they besought,
Instructed that to God is no access
Without mediator; whose high office now
Moses in figure bears, to introduce
One greater, of whose day he shall foretell;
And all the prophets in their age the times
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites
Establish'd, such delight hath God in men,
Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
Among them to set up his tabernacle;—
The Holy One with mortal men to dwell:
By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein
An ark, and in the ark his testimony,
The records of his covenant; over these
A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
Of two bright cherubim; before him burn
Seven lamps, as in a zodiac; representing
The heavenly fires; over the tent a cloud
Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night;
Save when they journey,¹ and at length they come,

* Ver. 230, &c.

By these passages Milton seems to have understood no more of the Jewish institution
than he saw in the small presbyterian systems; otherwise the true idea of the theocracy
would have afforded some noble observations.—Warburton.

Milton speaks of the civil and the ritual, the judicial and the ceremonial precepts
delivered to the Jews; but why did he omit the moral law contained in the ten com-
mandments? possibly his reason might be, because this was supposed to be written
originally in the heart of man, and therefore Adam must have been perfectly acquaint-
ed with it; but however I think, this should have been particularly mentioned, as it
was published at this time in the most solemn manner by God from Mount Sinai; and
as it was thought worthy to be written with his own finger upon two tables of stone,
when the rest was conveyed to the people by the writing and preaching of Moses, as a
mediator between God and them.—Greenwood.

¹ Seven lamps, as in a zodiac.

That the seven lamps signified the seven planets, and that therefore the lamps stood
slope-wise, as it were to express the obliquity of the zodiac, is the gloss of Josephus,
from whom probably Milton borrowed it. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. vi. and viii., and
De Bel. Jud. lib. v. c. 5. See likewise Mede's discourse x. upon the seven archangels.
Mr. Hume quotes likewise the Latin of Philo to the same purpose. See Cornelius à
Lapide, upon Exod. xxv. 31. Newton.

¹ Save when they journey.

See Exod. xl. 34, &c.: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the
glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent
of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled
the tabernacle: and when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the chil-
Conducted by his angel, to the land
Promised to Abraham and his seed: the rest
Were long to tell; how many battles fought;
How many kings destroy'd, and kingdoms won;
Or how the sun shall in mid heaven stand still
A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
Man's voice commanding,—Sun, in Gibeon stand
And thou, moon, in the vale of Aialon
Till Israel overcome!—so call the third,
From Abraham, son of Isaac; and from him
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win.
Here Adam interposed: O sent from Heaven,
Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast reveal'd; those chiefly, which concern
Just Abraham and his seed; now first I find
Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased;
Erewhile perplex'd with thoughts, what would become
Of me and all mankind: but now I see
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest;
Favour unmerited by me who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not; why to those,
Among whom God will deign to dwell on earth,
So many and so various laws are given:
So many laws argue, so many sins
Among them: how can God with such reside?
To whom thus Michael: Doubt not but that sin
Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
And therefore was law given them, to evince
Their natural pravity by stirring up
Sin against law to fight; that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove,

The serpule of our first father, and the reply of the angel, are grounded upon St. Paul's epistles, and particularly those to the Ephesians, Galatians, and Hebrews, as the reader, who is at all conversant with these sacred writings, will easily perceive. Compare the following texts with the poet: Gal. iii. 19. Rom. vii. 7, 8. Rom. iii. 20. Heb. ix. 13, 14. Heb. x. 4, 5. Rom. iv. 22, 23, 24. Rom. v. 1. Heb. vii. 18, 19. Heb. x. 1. Gal. iii. 11, 12, 23. Gal. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 15. Milton has here, in a few verses, admirably summed up the sense and argument of these and more texts of Scripture. It is really wonderful how he could comprise so much divinity in so few words, and at the same time express it with so much strength and perspicuity.—Newton.
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats; they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for man;
Just for unjust; that in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed they may find
Justification towards God and peace
Of conscience; which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease; nor man the moral part
Perform; and, not performing, cannot live.
So law appears imperfect; and but given
With purpose to resign them in full time,
Up to a better covenant; disciplined
From shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit;
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear
To filial; works of law to works of faith.
And therefore shall not Moses, \(^v\) though of God
Highly beloved, being but the minister
Of law, his people into Canaan lead;
But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call;
His name and office bearing, \(^w\) who shall quell
The adversary serpent, and bring back
Through the world’s wilderness long-wander’d man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies;
From whom as oft he saves them penitent
By judges first, then under kings; of whom
The second, both for piety renown’d
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
Irrevocable, that his regal throne
For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
All prophecy, that of the royal stock
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
A son, the woman’s seed to thee foretold,
Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
All nations; and to kings foretold of kings
The last; for of his reign shall be no end.
But first a long succession must ensue;
And his next son for wealth and wisdom famed,

\(^v\) And therefore shall not Moses.
Moses died in Mount Nebo, in the land of Moab, from whence he had the prospect of the Promised Land, but not the honour of leading the Israelites to possess it; which was reserved for Joshua; Deut. xxxiv. Josh. i.—Hume.

\(^w\) His name and office bearing.
Joshua was in many things a type of Jesus; and the names are the same, “Joshua” according to the Hebrew, and “Jesus” in Greek. The Seventy always render “Joshua” by “Jesus;” and there are two passages in the New Testament, where “Jesus” is used for “Joshua;” once by St. Stephen, Acts vi. 43, and again by St. Paul, Heb. iv. 8. And the name Joshua, or Jesus, signifies a Saviour.—Newton.
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him as shall be register'd
Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll:
Whose foul idolatries, and other faults
Heap'd to the popular sum, will so incense
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,
With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
To that proud city whose high walls thou saw'st
Left in confusion; Babylon thence call'd.
There in captivity he lets them dwell
The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
To David, establish'd as the days of heaven.
Return'd from Babylon by leave of kings
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
They first re-edi fy; and for a while
In mean estate live moderate; till, grown
In wealth and multitude, factions they grow:
But first among the priests dissension springs,
Men who attend the altar, and should most
Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings*
Upon the temple itself: at last they seize
The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
Anointed King Messiah might be born
Barr'd of his right; yet at his birth a star,
Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come;
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:
His place of birth a solemn angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night:
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire
Of squadron'd angels hear his carol sung.
A virgin is his mother, but his sire
The power of the Most High; he shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens.
He ceased; discerning Adam with such joy
Surcharged, as had like grief been dew'd in tears,
Without the vent of words, which these he breathed:
O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope; now clear I understand

* Their strife pollution brings.

For it was chiefly through the contests between Jason and Menelaus, high priests of the Jews, that the temple was polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes. See 2 Maccab. v., and Prideaux. At last they seize the sceptre; Aristobulus, eldest son of Hyrcanus, high-priest of the Jews, was the first who assumed the title of king after the Babylonish captivity; before Christ 107. And regard not David's sons, none of that family having had the government since Zerubbabel. Then lose it to a stranger; to Herod, who was an Idumean, in whose reign Christ was born. See Josephus and Prideaux.—Newton.
What oft my steadiest thoughts have search’d in vain;
Why our great Expectation should be call’d
The seed of woman: virgin mother, hail,
High in the love of Heaven; yet from my loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
Of God Most High; so God with man unites.
Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain: say where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor’s heel?
To whom thus Michael: Dream not of their fight,
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
Satan, whose fall from heaven a deadlier bruise,
Disabled not to give thee thy death’s wound:
Which he, who comes, thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan but his works,
In thee, and in thy seed: nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the law of God, imposed
On penalty of death; and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
So only can high justice rest appaid.
The law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience, and by love, though love
Alone fulfil the law; thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death;
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption; and that his obedience,
Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits
To save them, not their own, though legal works.
For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemn’d
A shameful and accursed, nail’d to the cross
By his own nation; slain for bringing life:
But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
The law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind with him there crucified,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction: so he dies,
But soon revives; death over him no power
Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
[Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems]
His death for man, as many as offer’d life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works: this godlike act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
In sin for ever lost from life; this act
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength, 430
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms;
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,
Or theirs whom he redeems; a death, like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life. 435
Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on earth, than certain times to appear
To his disciples, men who in his life
Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learn'd
And his salvation: them who shall believe
Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
All nations they shall teach; for, from that day,
Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
Salvation shall be preach'd, but to the sons
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world;
So in his seed all nations shall be blest. 450
Then to the heaven of heavens he shall ascend
With victory triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
The serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
Then enter into glory, and resume
His seat at God's right hand exalted high
Above all names in heaven; and thence shall come
When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power to judge both quick and dead;
To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in heaven or earth; for then the earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days. 465
So spake the archangel Michael; then paused,
As at the world's great period; and our sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied: 470
O, goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done, and occasion'd; or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;
To God more glory, more goodwill to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to heaven 490
Must reascend, what will betide the few
His faithful left among the unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
His people, who defend? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?
Be sure they will, said the angel; but from Heaven
He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them; and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth; and also arm
With spiritual armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts;
What man can do against them, not afraid,
Though to the death: against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompensed,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors; for the Spirit,
Pour'd first on his apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the nations, then on all
Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: at length,
Their ministry perform'd, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power;² though feigning still to act

² Though not but by the Spirit understood.

I do not think Milton, in all his writings, ever gave a stronger proof of his enthusiastic spirit than in this line.—WARRBURTON.

² Secular power.

On this subject he had been particularly copious in the tract of 'Reformation in England,' Prose Works, i. p. 294. ed. 1698:—"If the life of Christ be hid to this world, much more is his sceptre unoperative, but in spiritual things. And thus lived for two or three ages the successors of the apostles. But when, through Constantine's lavish superstition, they forsook their first love, and set themselves up too in God's stead, Mammon and their belly: then, taking advantage of the spiritual power, which they had on men's consciences, they began to cast a longing eye to get the body also, and bodily things, into their command: upon which, their carnal desires, the Spirit daily quenching and dying in them, knew no way to keep themselves up from falling to nothing,
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike, and given
To all believers; and, from that pretence,
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; laws which none shall find\(^a\)
Left them inroll'd, or what the Spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
But force the Spirit of grace itself, and bind
His consort Liberty?\(^b\) what but unbuild
His living temples,\(^c\) built by faith to stand,
Their own faith, not another's? for on earth
Who against faith and conscience can be heard
Infallible? yet many will presume:
Whence heavy persecution shall arise
On all who in the worship persevere
Of spirit and truth; the rest, far greater part,
Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
Religion satisfied; truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of faith
Rarely be found: so shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign;
Under her own weight groaning; till the day
Appear of respiration to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
The woman's seed; obscurely then foretold,
Now ampler known thy Saviour and thy Lord:
Last, in the clouds,\(^d\) from heaven to be reveal'd
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world; then raise
From the conflagrant mass purged and refined,
New heavens, new earth,\(^e\) ages of endless date,

but by bolstering and supporting their inward rottenness by a carnal and outward strength."—Todd.

\(^a\) Laws which none shall find.

Laws, as Hume and Dr. Newton observe, neither agreeable to revealed or natural religion; neither to be found in Holy Scripture, or written on their hearts by the Spirit of God; laws contrary to his promise, who has said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts," Jer. xxxi. 33.—Todd.

\(^b\) His consort liberty.

"For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17.—Newton.

\(^c\) His living temples.

Christians are called "the temples of God." 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; and vi. 19.—Newton.

See also Milton's Prose Works, vol. i. p. 231, ed. 1698;—"As if the touch of a lay Christian, who is nevertheless God's living temple, could profane dead Judahism."—Todd.

\(^d\) Last, in the clouds.

"Coming in the clouds of Heaven," Matt. xxvi. 64.—"The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father," Matt. xvi. 27.—Gillies.

\(^e\) New heavens, new earth.

The very words of St. Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 13;—"Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This notion of the heavens and earth being renewed after the conflagration, and made the
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love;
To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.

He ended; and thus Adam last replied:
How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest,
Measured this transient world, the race of time,
Till time stand fix'd! Beyond is all abyss,
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God; to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
Subverting worldly strong; and worldly wise
By simply meek: that suffering for truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory;
And, to the faithful, death the gate of life;
Taught this by his example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.

To whom thus also the angel last replied:
This having learn'd, thou hast attain'd the sum
Of wisdom: hope no higher, though all the stars
Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers.
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,

habit of angels and just men made perfect, was very pleasing to Milton, as it was to Dr. Burnet; and must be to every one of a fine and exalted imagination: and Milton has enlarged upon it in several parts of his works, and particularly in this poem, b. iii. 333, &c.; b. x. 633; b. xi. 65, 900; b. xii. 462.—Newton.

Compare with this poetic passage Milton's animated description in prose of Christ's "universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly, that, by their labours, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive, above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones, into their glorious titles; and in supereminence of beatific vision progressing the dateless and irrevocable circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss in over-measure for ever."
See the end of his "Reformation in England."—Tonn.

Subverting worldly strong.

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." 1 Cor. i. 27. And so in the rest there is the sense of Scripture if not the very words: as, to obey is best:—"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," 1 Sam. xv. 22. And, on him sole depend:—"Casting your care upon him, for he careth for you," 1 Pet. v. 7. And merciful over all his works:—"His mercies are over all his works," Psalm cxlv. 5.—Newton.

Though all the stars.

The turn of the sentence resembles, as Mr. Stillingfleet observes, when St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 2:—"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing."—Tonn.
And all the rule, one empire: only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
By name to come call'd charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee, happier far.
Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of speculation; \( h \) for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards,
By me encamp'd on yonder hill, expect
Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword,
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;
Her also I with gentle dreams have calm'd,
Portending good, and all her spirits composed
To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard;
Chiefly, what may concern her faith to know,
The great deliverance by her seed to come
(For by the woman's seed) on all mankind;
That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,
With cause, for evils past; yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happy end.
He ended, and they both descend the hill:
Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before; but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:
Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep; \(^1\) and dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling: thou to me
Art all things under heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banish'd hence.
This farther consolation yet secure

Of speculation.

From this hill of prophecy and prediction. \( Speculation, \) a watching on a tower or high place; thence a discovery, and therefore applied to the prophets in the sacred page, who are called "seer" and "watchmen," speculators, of \( specula, \) Latin, a "watch-tower." See Ezekiel, iii. 17; and also chap. xxxiii. 3—7.—Hume.

\(^1\) For God is also in sleep.

See Numb. xii. 6: "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and I will speak unto him in a dream." And thus Homer, Il. i. 63: — \( Καὶ γίνοντες ἡμέρας ἔνων ἐν καθοδὸς ἐκπέλανος. \) And the application is very elegant in this place, as Adam's was a vision, and Eve's a dream; and God was in the one as well as in the other.—Newton.
I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am vouchsafed,
By me the promised Seed shall all restore.
So spake our mother Eve, and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answer'd not: for now, too nigh
The archangel stood; and from the other hill
To their fix'd station, all in bright array
The cherubin descended; on the ground
Glinging meteorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
The brandish'd sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adjust,
Began to parch that temperate clime: whereat
In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy scat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms.¹
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon:
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

¹ Waved over by that flaming brand.

Of brand for sword take the following explanation from Hickes:—"In the second part of the 'Edda Islandica,' among other appellations, a 'sword' is denominated 'brand,' and 'glad,' or 'glad,' that is, 'titio, torris, pruna ignita,' and the ball of Odin is said to be illuminated by drawn swords only. A writer of no less learning than penetration, N. Salanus Westmannus, in his dissertation, entitled, 'Glaudios Scythieus,' p. 6, 7, observes, that the ancients formed their swords in imitation of a flaming fire; and thus from 'brand,' a 'sword,' came our English phrase, to 'brandish a sword,' 'gladium strictum vibrando curucare facere.'"—T. Warton.

The poetical imagery of this passage is splendid, sublime, and at the same time pathetic; and of a majestic conciseness.

The eleventh and twelfth books are built upon the single circumstance of the removal of our first parents from Paradise; but though this is not in itself so great a subject as that in most of the foregoing books, it is extended and diversified with so many surprising incidents and pleasing episodes, that these last two books can by no means be looked upon as unequal parts of this divine poem.

Milton, after having represented in vision the history of mankind to the first great period of nature, despatches the remaining part of it in narration.

In some places the author has been so attentive to his divinity that he has neglected his poetry; the narrative, however, rises very happily on several occasions, where the subject is capable of poetical ornaments; as particularly in the confusion which he describes among the builders of Babel, and in his short sketch of the plagues of Egypt.

—The storm of hail and fire, and the darkness that overspread the land for three days, are described with great strength: the beautiful passage which follows is raised upon noble hints in Scripture:
PARADISE LOST.

Thus with ten wounds
The river-dragon mused, at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, &c.

The river-dragon is an allusion to the crocodile, which inhabits the Nile, from whence Egypt derives her plenty. This allusion is taken from that sublime passage in Ezekiel:

"Thus saith the Lord God. Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lyeth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is my own, and I have made it for myself." Milton has given us another very noble and poetical image in the same description, which is copied almost word for word out of the history of Moses:

All night he will pursue, but his approach
Darkness defends between, till morning watch.

As the principal design of this episode was to give Adam an idea of the Holy Person who was to reinstate human nature in that happiness and perfection from which it had fallen, the poet confines himself to the line of Abraham, from whence the Messiah was to descend. The angel is described as seeing the patriarch actually travelling towards the Land of Promise, which gives a particular liveliness to this part of the description, from ver. 138 to ver. 149.

The poet has very finely represented the joy and gladness of heart which rises in Adam upon his discovery of the Messiah. As he sees his day at a distance through types and shadows, he rejoices in it; but when he finds the redemption of man completed and Paradise again renewed, he breaks forth in rapture and transport:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce, &c.

Milton's poem ends very nobly. The last speeches of Adam and the archangel are full of moral and instructive sentiments. The sleep that fell upon Eve, and the effects it had in quieting the disorders of her mind, produce the same kind of consolation in the reader; who cannot peruse the last beautiful speech which is ascribed to the mother of mankind, without a secret pleasure and satisfaction. The following lines, which conclude the poem, rise in a most glorious blaze of poetical images and expressions.—Addison.

It is difficult to add anything to Addison's Essays on the 'Paradise Lost;' but still I must extract a few additional encomiums from other critics, and first from Beattie:

In the concluding passage of the poem there is brought together, with uncommon strength of fancy, and rapidity of narrative, a number of circumstances wonderfully adapted to the purpose of filling the mind with ideas of terrific grandeur:—the descent of the cherubim; the flaming sword; the archangel leading in haste our first parents down from the heights of Paradise, and then disappearing; and, above all, the scene that presents itself on their looking behind them:

They, looking back, all the eastern side behold
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms:

to which the remaining verses form the most striking contrast that can be imagined. The final couplet renews our sorrow; by exhibiting, with picturesque accuracy, the most mournful scene in nature; which yet is so prepared, as to raise comfort, and dispose to resignation. And thus, while we are at once melting in tenderness, elevated with pious hope, and overwhelmed with the grandeur of description, the divine poem concludes.—Beattie.

If ever any poem was truly poetical, if ever any abounded with poetry, it is 'Paradise Lost.' What an expansion of facts from a small seed of history! What worlds are invented, what embellishments of nature upon what our senses present us with! Divine things are more nobly, more divinely represented to the imagination, than by any other poem; a more beautiful idea is given of nature than any poet has pretended to:—nature, as just come out of the hand of God, in all its virgin loveliness, glory, and purity; and the human race is shown, not, as Homer's, more gigantic, more robust, more valiant: but without comparison more truly amiable, more so than by the pictures and statues of the greatest masters; and all these sublime ideas are conveyed to us in the most effectual and engaging manner. The mind of the reader is tempered and prepared by pleasure; it is drawn and allured; it is awakened and invigorated, to receive such impressions as the poet intended to give it. The poem opens the fountains of knowledge, piety, and virtue; and pours along full streams of peace, comfort, and joy, to such as can penetrate the true sense of the writer, and obediently listen to his song. In reading the Iliad or Æneid we treasure up a collection of fine imaginative pictures, as when we read 'Paradise Lost;' only that from thence we have (to speak like a connoisseur) more Rafaelles, Correggios, Guidos, &c. Milton's pictures are more sublime.
and great, divine and lovely, than Homer's or Virgil's, or those of any other poets, ancient or modern.—Richardson.

Throughout the whole of 'Paradise Lost' the author appears to have been a most critical reader and passionate admirer of Holy Scripture: he is indebted to Scripture infinitely more than to Homer and Virgil, and all other books whatever. Not only the principal fable, but all his episodes are founded upon Scripture: the Scripture has not only furnished him with the noblest hints, raised his thoughts, and fired his imagination; but has also much enriched his language, given a certain solemnity and majesty to his diction, and supplied him with many of his choicest, happiest expressions. Let men, therefore, learn from this instance to reverence the Sacred Writings: if any man can pretend to deride or despise them, it must be said of him, at least, that he has a taste and genius the most different from Milton's that can be imagined. Whoever has any true taste and genius, we are confident, will esteem this poem the best of modern productions, and the Scriptures the best of all ancient ones.—Newton.

Johnson's criticism, inserted in his 'Life of Milton,' is so universally known that I shall not repeat it here: it shows the critic to have been a master of language, and of perspicuity and method of ideas; it has not, however, the sensibility, the grace, and the nice perceptions of Addison: it is analytical and dry. As it does not illustrate any of the abstract positions by cited instances, it requires a philosophical mind to feel its full force: it has wrapped up the praises, which were popularly expressed by Addison, in language adapted to the learned. The truth is, that Johnson's head was more the parent of that panegyric than his heart: he speaks by rule; and by rule he is forced to admire. Rules are vain, to which the heart does not assent. Many of the attractions of Milton's poem are not at all indicated by the general words of Johnson. From Addison's critique, we can learn distinctly its character and colours; we can be taught how to appreciate; and can judge by the examples produced, how far our own sympathies go with the commentator: we cannot read therefore without being made converts, where the comment is right. It is not only in the grand outline that Milton's mighty excellence lies; it is in filling up all the parts even to the least minutiae; the images, the sentiments, the long argumentative passages, are all admirable, taken separately; they form a double force, as essential parts of one large and magnificent whole. The images are of two sorts; inventive and reflective: the first are, of course, of the highest order.

If our conceptions were confined to what reality and experience have impressed upon us, our minds would be narrow, and our faculties without light. The power of inventive imagination approaches to something above humanity: it makes us participant of other worlds and other states of being. Still mere invention is nothing; unless its quality be high and beautiful. Shakespeare's invention was in the most eminent degree rich; but still it was mere human invention. The invention of the character of Satan, and of the good and bad angels, and of the seats of bliss, and of Pandæmonium, and of Chaos and the gates of hell, and of Sin and Death, and other supernatural agencies, is unquestionably of a far loftier and more astonishing order.

Though the arts of composition, carried one step beyond the point which brings out the thought most clearly and forcibly, do harm rather than good; yet up to this point they are of course great aids: and all these Milton possessed in the utmost perfection: all the strength of language, all its turns, breaks, and varieties, all its flows and harmonies, and all its learned allusions, were his. In Pope there is a monotony and technical mellifluence: in Milton there is strength with harmony, and simplicity with elevation. He is never stifled, never gilded with tinsel; never more cramped than if he were writing in prose; and, while he has all the elevation, he has all the freedom of unshackled language. To render metre during a long poem unfatiguing, there must be an infinite diversity of combinations of sound and position of words, which no English bard but Milton has reached. Johnson, assuming that the English heroic line ought to consist of iambics, has tried it by false tests: it admits as many varied feet as Horace's Odes: and so scanned, all Milton's lines are accentuated right.

If we consider the 'Paradise Lost' with respect to instruction, it is the deepest and the wisest of all the uninspired poems which ever were written: and what poem can be good, which does not satisfy the understanding? Of almost all other poems it may be said, that they are intended more for delight than instruction; and instruction in poetry will not do without delight; yet when the highest delight is added the most profound instruction, what fame can equal the value of the composition? Such unquestionably is the compound merit of the 'Paradise Lost.' It is a duty imperious on him who has an intellect capable of receiving this instruction, not to neglect the cultivation of it; in him who understands the English language, the neglect to study this poem is the neglect of a positive duty: here is to be found in combination what can be learned nowhere else.

There is a mode of presenting objects to the imagination, which purifies, sharpens,
and exalts the mind: there may be mere sports of the imagination, which may be innocent, but fruitless. Such is never Milton’s produce; he never indulges in mere ornament or display: his light is fire, and nutriment, and guidance: like the dawn of returning day to the vegetation of the earth, which dispels the noxious vapours of night, and pierces the incumbrant weight of the air; it withdraws the mantle of dim shadows from common minds, and irradiates them with a shining lamp. As to what are called the figures of poetry, in which Pope deals so much, they are never admitted by the solid and stern richness of Milton.

The generality even of the better classes of poetry is not the food of the mind, but its mere luxury; Milton’s is its substance, its life, its essence: he introduces the gravest, the most abstruse, the most learned topics into his poetry; and by a spiritual process, which he only possesses, converts them into the very essence of poetical inspiration. I assert, in defiance of Dryden, that there are no flats in Milton: inequalities there are; but they are not flats, in Dryden’s sense of the word. Dryden was a man of vigorous talent, but he was an artist in poetry: if active and powerful talent is genius, then he had genius; otherwise not: a clear perception and vigorous expression is not genius. Dryden had not a creative mind; Milton was all creation: we want new ideas, not old ones better dressed. Dryden thought that what was not worked up into a pointed imaginary complect was flat: he valued not the ore; he deemed that the whole merit lay in the use of the tool, and the skill of its application. Milton said, “I am content to draw the pure golden ore from the mine, and I will not weaken it by over-polish.”

The merit of Milton was, that he used his gigantic imagination to bring into play his immense knowledge. Heaven, Hell, Chaos, and the Earth, are stupendous subjects of contemplation: three of them we can conceive only by the strength of imagination; the fourth is partly exposed to our senses, but can be only dimly and partially viewed except through the same power. Who then shall dare to say, that the genius most fitted to delineate and illustrate these shadowy and evanescent wonders, and who has executed this work in a manner exceeding all human hope, has not performed the most instructive, as well as the most delightful of tasks? and who shall dare to deny that such a production ought to be made the universal study of the nation which brought it forth?

Before such a performance all technical beauties sink to nothing. The question is,—are the ideas mighty, and just, and authorized; and are they adequately expressed? If this is admitted, then ought not every one to read this poem next to the Bible? So thought Bishop Newton. But Johnson has the effrontery to assert, that though it may be read as a duty, it can give no pleasure: for this, Newton seems to have pronounced by anticipation the stigma due to him. Is any intellectual delight equal to that which a high and sensitive mind derives from the perusal of innumerable passages in every book of this inimitable work of poetical fiction?—The very story never relaxes: it is thick-woven with incident, as well as sentiment, and argumentative grandeur: and how it closes, when the archangel waves the “flaming-brand” over the eastern gate of Paradise; and, on looking back, Adam and Eve saw the “dreadful faces” and “fiery arms” that “throng’d” round it!—In what other poem is any passage so heart-rending and so terrible as this?