THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON:

EDITED,

WITH INTRODUCTIONS, NOTES,

AND AN ESSAY ON MILTON'S ENGLISH,

BY

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PREFACE.

In taking leave of these volumes, the preparation of which has extended over not a few years, I may be permitted a word or two regarding the several portions of their contents.

The Text of the Poems has been prepared, with the utmost study of accuracy, from the original and other authoritative editions. Accounts of these, and of the surviving manuscripts of some of the Poems, with other relative bibliographical information, are given in the Introductions; where also the endeavour has been to elucidate, as fully and exactly as possible, and with the due amount of accompanying criticism, the circumstances, motives, and intention, of each of the Poems individually. If read in their chronological order, indeed, these Introductions will be found to constitute, after their fashion, a continuous, and rather minute, Literary Biography of the Poet. The Notes are partly expository, partly philological, and partly critical; and the principles on which they have been prepared, and the amount of use made in them of the Notes of previous Editors, are explained at pp. 101–106, p. 281, and pp. 341, 342, of Volume III. In the prefixed General Essay on Milton's English what may be called the Philology of the Poems is presented, for vol. I.
the residuary legatee, making no mention of any children. The natural inference is that John, the old physician's son, alive and a widower in 1638, had meanwhile died. Again, a few months afterwards, the same Theodore, on the death of his other uncle, Charles Diodati, described as "late of St. Mary Magdalen, Old Fish Street, London, bachelor," administers to his estate as next of kin (Aug. 13, 1651). After that he seems to have lived on in London in good medical practice. He was admitted an Honorary Fellow of the College of Physicians in London in 1664; and he was alive, with the style of "Doctor of Medicine and Merchant," till 1680.—

These new particulars of the Diodati family history, all ascertained by Colonel Chester, will add precision to the information on the subject given in the Introductions to the Elegia Prima, the Elegia Sexta, and the Epitaphium Damonis. They oblige one correction: viz. the substitution of "John" for "Theodore" as the name of young Charles Diodati's brother at p. 325 and pp. 373, 374 of Volume II.; and they partly supersede the note to line 149 of the Epitaphium Damonis. For the rest, they confirm our main narrative of the facts, and especially the conjecture, which I had risked, of some alienation of Milton's friend and his brother from their father's household before 1638, caused by the old physician's second marriage. In 1638, when Milton was abroad on his Italian journey, the two brothers, it appears, had quitted their father's house in Little St. Bartholomew, and were living in Blackfriars,—John married, and apparently in a house of his own; Charles unmarried, and boarding, it seems, with his sister (?) Philadelphia, at the house of a Mr. Dollam.
From that house they were both carried to their graves, victims perhaps of some epidemic, within three weeks of each other, in August 1638, the wife of John having died only some weeks before. Milton was then in Florence; and not till his return home in the following autumn did he learn all the sad details. Reading his *Epitaphium Damonis* now, we can see Mr. Dollam's house in Blackfriars, and the burial thence, Aug. 27, 1638, distinctly in his mind as he wrote the passionate lamentation; and that house, we may be sure, was never afterwards passed by Milton, while he could behold anything in this world, without peculiar memories and musings. So well, even at such a distance, may fit research recover interesting particulars of forgotten place and time!

**Edinburgh : September, 1874.**
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**Paradise Lost:**—

**Introduction: Bibliographical, Biographical, and Expository.**

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**Text of the Poem.**

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GENERAL ESSAY ON MILTON'S ENGLISH.

While much on this subject will be gathered best from the special Notes to the Poems, there are certain pervading characteristics and recurring peculiarities of which it may be well to take some account collectively in a general Essay. It is to be understood that the following remarks relate to Milton's Poetry only, any references to his Prose being but incidental. The remarks may arrange themselves under six heads:—

I. Milton's Vocabulary.
II. Spelling and Pronunciation.
III. Peculiarities of Grammatical Inflection.
IV. Syntax and Idiom.
V. The Punctuation.
VI. Milton's Versification, and his Place in the History of English Verse.

I. MILTON'S VOCABULARY.

From the tolerably complete verbal Indexes that have been prepared for Milton's Poetical Works,¹ it has been computed that Milton's total vocabulary in these works, to the exclusion of his prose-writings, consists of about 8,000 words. In this computation all separate parts of speech are counted as distinct words, but inflections of any one part of speech are not so counted. By a similar computation, on the same

¹ The chief of these Indexes are:—(1) The "Verbal Index to the Poetry of Milton" which accompanied Todd's Second, or 1809, edition of Milton's Poetical Works, and which was also printed in the same year in a separate volume, containing Todd's "Account of the Life and Writings of the Poet." This Index included the Greek, Latin, and Italian poems, as well as the English. (2) "A Complete Concordance to Milton's Poetical Works, by G. Lushington Prendergast," published in twelve quarto parts at Madras in 1857-9. (3) "A Complete Concordance to the Poetical Works of John Milton, by Charles Dexter Cleveland, L.L.D.," published in London in 1867: being an improvement on a Verbal Index, based on Todd's, which Mr. Cleveland had prepared for an American edition of the Poetical Works in 1853.
plan, it is found that Shakespeare's vocabulary in his Plays and Poems consists of about 15,000 words. The greater extent of Shakespeare's poetical vocabulary, as compared with Milton's, may be accounted for partly by the greater bulk of the poetical matter from which the vocabulary is gathered; but it is, doubtless, owing in part also to the greater multifariousness of that aggregate of things and notions amid which Shakespeare's imagination moved for the purposes of his dramas.

An interesting question with respect to any English writer the extent of whose total vocabulary may have been ascertained is the question what proportion of that vocabulary consists of words of the old native English or "Anglo-Saxon" stock, and what of words derived from the Latin or other non-Saxon sources that have contributed to our matured and composite English. "In the vocabulary of the English Bible," says Mr. Marsh (Lect. on Eng. Lang., 4th American edit. pp. 123, 124), "sixty per cent. are native; in that of Shakespeare the proportion is very nearly the same; while of the stock of words employed in the poetical works of Milton less than thirty-three per cent. are Anglo-Saxon." In other words, while about two-fifths of Shakespeare's vocabulary, or about 6,000 words out of the total 15,000 which he uses, are of non-Saxon derivation, the non-Saxon element in Milton's poetical vocabulary amounts to about two-thirds, or to about 5,300 words out of the total 8,000. Milton's draught upon the Latin and other so-called "foreign" constituents of our speech for the purposes of his poetry would thus appear to have been relatively, but not absolutely, larger than Shakespeare's.

But the proportions of the "Saxon" and the "non-Saxon" elements in a writer's total vocabulary would by no means indicate the proportions of the same elements in his habitual style. The vocabulary gives the words, so to speak, in a state of quiescence, or as lying in the writer's cabinet for use; but in actual speech or writing some words are in such constant demand that they are continually being taken out of the cabinet and put back again, while others are not called out more than once or twice in a year or in a whole literary life-time. In order, therefore, to ascertain the proportion of Teutonic and non-Teutonic in a writer's habitual style, a very different plan must be adopted from that of merely counting the Teutonic and non-Teutonic words in his vocabulary. Specimens of different length must be taken from his text; and every word in these specimens must be counted, not once only but every time that it occurs. Of various critics who have applied this method to the styles of the more important English writers, no one has taken greater pains than Mr. Marsh; and the result of his investigations has been in some cases to set aside previous conceptions on the subject. He finds, for example (Lect. on Eng. Lang., pp. 124—126), that even in the last century, when the style of our writers was highly Latinized, the proportion of Saxon to non-Saxon words in any extensive and characteristic
passage from the writings of the best authors very rarely falls beneath 70 per cent.—Swift, in the case of one Essay, falling as low as 68 per cent., but usually ranging higher; and Johnson’s proportion being 72 per cent., Gibbon’s 70 per cent., and Hume’s 73 per cent. He finds, moreover, that, in spite of the additons to our Dictionary since that time, mainly of words from non-Teutonic sources, the proportion of Teutonic in the style of our best-known writers of the present century has risen rather than fallen. Macaulay he rates at 75 per cent. (one non-Saxon word in four), and other recent prose-writers at about the same, while from examinations of long passages in Tennyson, Browning, and Longfellow, it actually appears that the proportion of Saxon in our poetry is hardly less at this day than it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or even earlier. Thus, Tennyson’s *Lotus Eaters* yields 87 per cent. of Saxon, and his *In Memoriam* 89 per cent.; Browning’s figure is 84 per cent., and Longfellow’s 87 per cent.; while Spenser, from the examination of a Canto, is rated at 86 per cent., Shakespeare at from 88 to 91 per cent., and even Chaucer only once reaches 93 per cent. and is usually nearer 89 or 90. Milton’s place in the list is assigned from these computations as follows:—

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From examinations of various passages in *Paradise Lost*, I am inclined to believe that Mr. Marsh’s estimate of 80 per cent. of Saxon words will be found about right for the whole poem, if, with him, we always omit the proper names in counting. In various passages of some length, counting the proper names as well, I have found the average to come out at about 75 per cent. But, just as the percentage of Saxon words in *Paradise Lost* is less than in *Il Penseroso* and much less than in *L’Allegro*, so within *Paradise Lost* itself the rate varies according to the poet’s mood and the nature of his matter at particular moments. Passages may be hit on, or may be selected—and not those only which abound in proper names—where the percentage of Saxon falls as low as 70 or lower. The principle, in short, is that it depends on the thought of a writer in any particular passage, on the class of *things* and *notions* with which he is there concerning himself, whether the expression shall show more or less of the Saxon.

There is one way in which a verbal index to a writer might be made a key to his mind. It might be noted not only that a word did occur, but also how many times it occurred; and from the relative degrees of frequency thus noted in the occurrence of words instructive inferences might be drawn. The frequency or infrequency of a word in any writer depends on a composition of causes. Some objects and notions are, in their nature, so much nearer or easier, than others to the human apprehension in general that the words denoting them, or asso-

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ciated with them, may fairly be expected to occur in any writer with the corresponding greater degree of frequency. All men, for example, think more frequently of fire than of the Zodiac. Again, the particular bent of an individual writer, the prevalent direction of his thoughts, and the nature of his theme or purpose, occasion a more than average frequency of recourse to certain words and classes of words. For example, one would expect the words Angels and Heaven oftener in Paradise Lost than in most other poems. In the third place, the mere form of a particular work may be such as to preclude, or at least discourage, the use in it of words perfectly well-known to the writer and used by him on other occasions. There are words, for example, which, from their pronunciation or structure, as well as from their intellectual associations, will not so readily be brought into verse as into prose. Lastly, a word which is common now may have been far less common at a former period in the history of the language, so that, though it is occasionally to be found in a writer of that period, it is not found so often as we should expect from the nature of its meaning.

A thorough application of these remarks to the vocabularies of Shakespeare and Milton would yield curious results. As respects Milton, an indication or two must here suffice:—Just as, from the mere statement that Milton's poetical vocabulary consists of but about 8,000 words, it is evident that thousands of words, not only in our present English Dictionary, but even in the English Dictionary of his day, were never used by him even once, but, so far as his poems were concerned, were allowed to lie about ungrasped, so it may be expected that, of the words which he did use, there were very many which he used only once. What are called the ἀπαξ λεγομενα of any writer, indeed—i.e. the words used by him only once in the whole course of his writings—will be found on examination greatly more numerous than might have been supposed beforehand. Mr. Marsh incidentally quotes the following as instances of ἀπαξ λεγομενα in Shakespeare—abrupt, ambiguous, artless, congratulate, improbable, improper, improve, impure, inconvenient, incredible. But it would only be necessary to run the finger down the columns of the Concordance to Shakespeare to add hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of other words to the list—of which hundreds, or thousands, scores at least would be as remarkable as any of the ten cited. Milton's ἀπαξ λεγομενα are probably even more numerous proportionally than Shakespeare's. Of the ten Shakespearian words mentioned, three are also ἀπαξ λεγομενα in Milton's poetry—to wit abrupt, congratulate (in the form congratulant) and inconvenient; four occur three or four times each—to wit ambiguous, improve, impure, and incredible; and three do not occur even once—to wit artless, improbable, and improper. It may throw light upon this subject if I give a list of the principal ἀπαξ λεγομενα of Milton's poems under one of the letters of the Alphabet. Under A I find, by the Concordances, without including strictly proper names,
the following:—ability, abrupt, abruptly, absolutely, abstemious, absurd, accessible, accomplishment, accusation, ache, acquit, acquittance, activity, actual, adamantine, adjourn, adjust, admonishment, adjut, advantageous, adventurer, adversities, adulterous, adultery, advocate, adjut, affection, afield, afloat, afresh, afternoon, agape, agate, agent, aggravation, aggregate (v), agitation, agreeable, aidless, alacrity, alchemist, alchemy, alimental, allegoric, allow, allusion, alms, Alpine, altern, alternate, ambrosia, (the adjective ambrosial is not unfrequent), amerced, American, amice, ammireal (admiral), ammunition, anarchy, anchor (n.), ancienly, annex, annihilate, announce, antarctic, antipathy, antiquity, apathy, Apocalypse, apology, apostle, appellant, appertain, appetite, applaud, appointment, apprehensive, approbation, April, aqueduct, arable, arbitrary, arbitrate, arborets, arborous, arch, arichivate, ardent, argent, arraign, arrowy, arsenal, articulate, artifice, artillery, ashore, ashy, aslope, aspirer, assaiant, assassin, assoiud, assimilate, asthma, astronomer, atheous, athwart, atonement, atrophy, attach, attend, attrite, attrite, avaint, avarice, aver, avow, austerity, auxiliar. Here, under one letter of the alphabet, are at least 118 words that occur only once in all Milton’s poems; and there are places in the vocabulary where the proportion of such words is even greater. Thus, of about 375 words beginning with the letters Un which I find in Todd’s Index to Milton’s Poems, I have counted no fewer than 241 as occurring only once—the reason being that so many of those words are negative adjectives. Undecorated, unattempted, unbecoming, unbound, unbroken, unclouded, undesirable, uneven, unfasten, ungoverned, ungraceful, unhurt, unkindness, unlimited, unpaid, unreal, unsafe, unskilful, unclouded, unsteady, unsuccessful, unwelcome, unwilling, and unvoined are a few of such negatives only once used in Milton’s poems. Altogether I should not be surprised if between 2,000 and 3,000 of the 8,000 words of Milton’s total poetical vocabulary were found to be οπαξ ρεγομενα.

Passing from words used only once to those used twice, thrice, or seldom, we might have in this class also a list of hundreds. Hence, again, we might rise to the class of occasionally-used words; hence again to words used pretty frequently; and hence again to those occurring very frequently. In this last class I have noted such words as these:—Adam, air, all, alone, age, angel, arms, battle, beam, beast, beauty, better, birth, black, bliss, bold, bright, bring, call, care, cause, celestial, change, cloud, come, command, create, darkness, day, death, deep, delight, divine, doubt, dread, earth, end, enemy, equal, eternal, eye, fair, faith, fall, false, far, fate, father, fear, field, fierce, find, fire, firm, first, flower, foe, force, foul, free, fruit, full, garden, gentle, give, glory, glorious, go, God, gold, good, grace, great, green, grove, ground, hand, happy, hard, head, hate, heart, Heaven, Hell, help, high, hill, holy, honour, hope, host, hour, human, ill, immortal, joy, just, King, know, knowledge, land, large, last, law, lead, light, long, Lord, lost, loud, love, love, make, man, might, mild, mind, moon, morn, mortal, move, mount and mountain, name, nature, new, night,
old, pain, Paradise, part, past, peace, place, power, praise, pride, pure, race, reason, reign, rest, right, rise, sacred, sad, Satan, say, sea, seat, see, seem, sense, serpent, serve, shame, side, sin, sing, sit, soft, son, song, sky, sleep, solemn, sorrow, soul, sound, speak, spirit, stand, star, state, strength, sun, sure, sweet, thing, think, thought, throne, time, tree, true, truth, vain, virtue, voice, walk, war, water, way, well, wide, wild, will, wind, wing; wise, wo, woman,1 wonder, wood, word, work, world. Not only some of the verbs but also some of the nouns and adjectives in this list occur so very often (Earth, Heaven, God, man, high, free, good, fair, glory, happy, large, love, hard, soft, new, old, thing, eye, and death, are examples) that they may be registered as next in frequency to those mere particles and auxiliaries—and, the, but, not, to, for, from, we, our, their, that, which, could, did, will, is, are, were, though, on, ever, &c. &c.—which are scattered innumerably over the pages of every writer.

One question more respecting Milton's vocabulary in his poems. Is any proportion of it obsolete? On the whole, whether from the judiciousness with which Milton chose words that had a strong force of vitality in them, or from the power of such a writer to confer future popularity on the words adopted by him, the number of words in Milton's poems that are now obsolete or even archaic is singularly small. Mr. Marsh's estimate (Lect. on Eng. Lang., pp. 264, 265) on this subject is that, while about five or six hundred of Shakespeare's words have gone out of currency or changed their meaning, there are not more than a hundred of Milton's words in his poetry which are not as familiar at this day as in that of the poet himself. How far Mr. Marsh is right may appear from the following list of the words or verbal forms in Milton's poetry which I have noted as either obsolete or unusual now—aquiseit (acquisition, S. A. 1755), adamanétan, admonishment, advantaged, adust (burnt, P. L., XII. 635), aidless, alack, alimental, altern (alternate, P. L., VII. 348), amerced, ammrial (admiral, P. L., I. 294), appaid (paid, P. L., XII. 401), arboret, arborous, arrowy, astonied, atheous (atheist, godless, P. R., I. 487), attent (attentive, attentively, P. R., I. 385), attrite (rubbed, P. L., X. 1073), ay (ah!), azurn (azure, Comus, 893), battailous (battle-full or battle-like, P. L., VI. 81), bearth (produce, P. L., IX. 624), bicker (to fight, P. L., VI. 766), blane (white, P. L., X. 656), burdenous (burdensome, S. A. 567), cataphracts, cedarn, Chineses, circumfluos, colure (an old astronomical term), concoctive, conflagrant, conglobed, congratulat, consolatories (pieces of consolation, S. A. 657), contrarious, corny, cressets, daffadillies, debel (to war down, P. R., IV. 605), democracy,
Spelling and Pronunciation.

demonian, disallied, disglorified, disordinate, dispatchful, displode, duelled, enterprise (v.), etherous, exculerate, far-fet (P. R., II. 401), feastful, feverous, fledge (adj.), frore (frozen, P. L., II. 595), frounced, fuelled, giantship, glibbed, glistcr, gofalon, guiding, grisamber, grunsel, gulph, gurge (whirlpool, P. L., XII. 41), gymnic, hale (to haul, P. L., II. 596), haut (haughty, Psalm LXXX. 35), heroically, huddled, hutched, hyaline, idolism, idolist, illaudable, imbathe, immanacled, immedicable, imp (v. to mend), imparadised, impregn, inabstinence, increase, inly, innumerous, inteligential, interlunar, intervolved, jaculation, kerchief, laver, limitary, lucent, madding (maddening), magnific, margent (margin), marish (marsh), meath (mead), meteorous, misdeem, misthought, moory, myrrhine, nard, notheless, nectarous, nocent, nulled, oary (P. L., VII. 460), obturd, omnific, oracle (v.), oraculous, overcloy, paronymph, petrific, plenipotent, pontifice (a bridge, P. L., X. 348), propense, ramp (v. to move or bound vehemently, P. L., IV. 343, and S. A. 139), rathe, ravin, rebeck, remediless, rined (adj. skinned, P. L., V. 342), robustious, sciential, scrannel (Lyc. 124), serenate (serenade), spet (spit, flood, Comus, 132), sphery, spume, statists, stubs, swage, surcease, swinked, tedded, terrene, tiar, tine (to kindle, P. L., X. 1975), trine, uncreate, unburned, un-hidebound, unrased, unvoyageable, unwothdrawing, vant-brass (S. A. 1121), villatic, volant, volubil, yealning.

Here we have upwards of 150 words which are more or less out of common use now. A good many of them, however, have been used by recent poets; and there is no poet of the present day who would not use some of the others if they occurred to him, or who would not feel himself at liberty to invent similarly unusual words for himself. The indisputably obsolete words of the list are few; and of these some were, doubtless, inventions of Milton's ear for the moment, not intended to last.

II. SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION.

Before we discuss this subject it will be proper to present to the reader's own eye (1) Some Specimens of the Spelling, &c., in the original printed editions of the Poems, and (2) Some Specimens of the preserved Manuscript Drafts of a considerable portion of them.

The following are passages from the Poems as they were printed in the original editions. For the orthography, &c., of the passages from the First edition of the Minor Poems (1645) Milton is directly responsible; but for all the rest he is only indirectly responsible, the care of the press having devolved, in consequence of his blindness, on the printers, or on such friends as could take his instructions.
How soon hath Time the suttle theef of youth,  
Stoln on his wing my three and twentieth yeer!  
My hasting dayes flie on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,  
That I to manhood am arriv'd so near,  
And inward ripenes doth much less appear,  
That som more timely-happy spirits indu'th.  
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure eev'n,  
To that same lot, however mean, or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great task Masters eye.

"COMUS:" LINES 170—243.  
The Lady enters.  
This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,  
My best guide now, me thought it was the sound  
Of Riot, and ill manag'd Merriment,  
Such as the jocond Flute, or gamesom Pipe  
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd Hinds,  
When for their teeming Flocks, and granges full  
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,  
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath  
To meet the rudenesse, and swill'd insolence  
Of such late Wassailers; yet O where els  
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet  
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd Wood?  
My Brothers when they saw me wearied out  
With this long way, resolving here to lodge  
Under the spreading favour of these Pines,  
Stept as they se'd to the next Thicket side  
To bring me Berries, or such cooling fruit  
As the kind hospitable Woods provide.  
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Eev'n  
Like a sad Votarist in Palmers weed  
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phæbus wain.  
But where they are, and why they came not back,  
Is now the labour of my thoughts, 'tis likeliest
They had ingag'd their wandring steps too far,  
And envious darknes, e're they could return,  
Had stole them from me, els O theevish Night  
Why shouldst thou, but for som fellonious end,  
In thy dark lantern thus close up the Stars,  
That nature hung in Heav'n, and fill'd their Lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misled and lonely Travailer?  
This is the place, as well as I may guess,  
Whence eev'n now the tumult of loud Mirth  
Was rife, and perfet in my list'ning ear,  
Yet nought but single darknes do I find.  
What might this be?  A thousand fantasies  
Begin to throng into my memory  
Of calling shapes, and beckning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues, that syllable mens names  
On Sands, and Shoars, and desert Wildernesses.  
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound  
The vertuous mind, that ever walks attended  
By a strong siding champion Conscience. . . . .  
O welcom pure ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,  
Thou hovering Angel girt with golden wings,  
And thou unblemish't form of Chastity,  
I see ye visibly, and now beleev  
That he, the Supreme good, t'whom all things ill  
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
Would send a glistring Guardian if need were  
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.  
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?  
I did not err, there does a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,  
And casts a gleam over this tufted Grove.  
I cannot hallow to my Brothers, but  
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest  
Ile venter, for my new enliv'nd spirits  
Prompt me ; and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen  
Within thy airy shell  
By slow Meander's margent green,  
And in the violet-imbroider'd vale  
Where the love-lorn Nightingale  
Nightly to thee her sad Song mourneth well.
Milton's English:

Canst thou not tell me of a gentle Pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O if thou have
Hid them in som flowry Cave,
Tell me but where
Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear,
So maist thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies.

"LYCIDAS:" LINES 112—151.

He shook his Miter'd locks, and stern bespake,
How well could I have spar'd for thee young swain.
Anow of such as for their bellies sake,
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck'ning make,
Then how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouthes! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A Sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought els the least
That to the faithfull Herdmans art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scannel Pipes of wretched straw,
The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim Woolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed,
But that two-handed engine at the door,
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams; Return Sicilian Muse,
And call the Vales, and bid them hither cast
Their Bels, and Fourets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low where the milde whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart Star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enameld eyes,
That on the green terf suck the honied showres,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowres.
Bring the rathe Primrose that forsaken dies.
The tufted Crow-toe, and Pale Gessamine,
The white Pink, and the Pansie freakt with jeat,
The glowing Violet.
The Musk-rose, and the well attir'd Woodbine,
Spelling and Pronunciation.

With Cowslips wan that hang the pensive hed,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And Daffadalies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the Laureat Herse where Ly Eid lies.

From the First (1667) Edition of "Paradise Lost."

BOOK I.: LINES 1—74.

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
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 Heavnly 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 Heavn's and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion Hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.
And chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great Argument
I may assert th' Eternal Providence,1
And justifie the wayses of God to men.

Say first, for Heavn hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what cause
Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy State,
Favour'd of Heavn so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his Will
For one restraint, Lords of the World besides?
Who first seduc'd them to that fowl revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile

1 Among the Errata prefixed to the volume is this direction: "Lib. I. Vers 25, for th' Eternal, Read Eternal."
Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd
The Mother of Mankinde, what time his Pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host
Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the most High,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruine and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.
Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe
Confounded though immortal: But his doom
Reserv'd 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
Mint with obdurate pride and stedfast hate:
At once as far as Angels kenn he views
The dismal Situation waste and wilde,
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd 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
Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed
With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd
For those rebellious, here their Prison ordain'd
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
As from the Center thrice to th' utmost Pole.

BOOK I. LINES 283—330.

He scarce had ceas't when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb
Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views
At Ev'ning from the top of Fesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands,
Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the Mast
Of some great Ammial, were but a wand,
He walkt with to support uneasie steps
Over the burning Marle, not like those steps
On Heavens Azure, and the torrid Clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with Fire;
Nathless he so endur'd, till on the Beach
Of that inflamed Sea, he stood and call'd
His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't
Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High overarch't imbowr; or scatterd sedge
Afloat, when with fierce Winds Orion arm'd
Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves o'rethrew
Busiris and his Memphian Chivalrie,
While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
The Sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating Carkases
And broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown
Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,
Under amazement of their hideous charge.
He call'd so loud, that all the hollow Deep
Of Hell resounded. Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the Flowr of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can sieze
Eternal spirits; or have ye chos'n this place
After the toyl of Battel to repose
Your weared virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the Vales of Heav'n?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conquerour? who now beholds
Cherube and Seraph rowling in the Flood
With scatter'd Arms and Ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heav'n Gates discern
Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked Thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this Gulfe.
Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n.
So saying he caught him up, and without wing
Of Hippogriff bore through the Air sublime
Over the Wilderness and o’re the Plain;
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy City lifted high her Towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple rear’d
Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount
Of Alabaster, top’t with Golden Spires:
There on the highest Pinacle he set
The Son of God; and added thus in scorn:
There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill; I to thy Fathers house
Have brought thee, and highest plac’t, highest is best,
Now shew thy Progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thy self down; safely if Son of God:
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels, in thir hands
They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.
To whom thus Jesus: also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood.
But Satan smitten with amazement fell
As when Earths Son Anteus (to compare
Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
With Jove Alcides, and oft foil’d still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joyn’d,
Thrott’ld at length in the Air, expir’d and fell;
So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.
And as that Theban Monster that propos’d
Her riddle, and him, who solv’d it not, devour’d;
That once found out and solv’d, for grief and spight
Cast her self headlong from th’ Isemnian steep,
So strook with dread and anguish fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hop’t success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell and strait a fiery Globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy Vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasie station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe Air,
Then in a flowry valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spred
A table of Celestial Food, Divine,
Ambrosial, Fruits fetcht from the tree of life,
And from the fount of life Ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
Or thirst, and as he fed, Angelic Quires
Sung Heavenly Anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.

"SAMSON AGONISTES," 1660—1707.

Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
Among thy slain self-kill'd
Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold,
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
Then all thy life had slain before.

Semichor. While thir hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with Idolatry, drunk with Wine,
And fat regorg'd of Bulls and Goats,
Chaunting thir Idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In Silo his bright Sanctuary:
Among them he a spirit of phrenzie sent,
Who hurt thir minds,
And urg'd them on with mad desire
To call in hast for thir destroyer;
They only set on sport and play
Unweetingly importun'd
Thir own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men
Fall'n into wrath divine,
As thir own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

Semichor. But he though blind of sight,
Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
With inward eyes illuminated
His feric vertue rouz'd
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an ev'ning Dragon came,
Assailant on the perched roosts,
And nests in order rang'd
Of tame villatic Fowl; but as an Eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on thir heads.
So vertue giv'n for lost,
Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,
Like that self-begott'n bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows nor third
And lay e'rewhile a Holocaust,
From out her ashie womb now teem'd,
Revives, refLOURishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deem'd,
And though her body die, her fame survives,
A secular bird ages of lives.

From the Second (1673) Edition of the Minor Poems.

SONNET "ON THE LATE MASSACHER IN PIEMON'T."

Avenge O Lord thy slaughter'd Saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our Fathers worship't Stocks and Stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groanes
Who were thy Sheep and in their antient Fold
Slayn by the bloody Piomentese that roll'd
Mother with Infant down the Rocks. Their moans
The Vales redoubl'd to the Hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes so
O're all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant: that from these may grow
A hunder'd-fold, who having learnt thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian wo.

These specimens are sufficiently representative of the Printed Editions; and we now annex some specimens of the preserved Manuscript Drafts. The first seven of the following pages of fac-simile are after photographs taken, by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, from the precious volume of Milton's MSS. described at pp. 175—180 of Vol. II. of this work; the last page is copied, by permission, from the late Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton, p. 196.
Arcades
Part of an entertainment at

Loose, spry, and shepherds lack
What sudden death of majesty
Is that we were from hence divide
too divine to be mistook
This thy is she
To whom we our bowes e_widget bend
Here our solemnse reach hubb and

Fame that her high worth to raise
Shall rest so long the e_prof of
Now seems guilty of exile
And distraction from her praise
Here the whole the hath express his finesse
Entire bid e_widget the rest

his e may justly now accuse
Of attachment from his praise
Consequence of "At a Solemn Music" (1630 or 1631) in three successive States before the final one.

First and Second States.

That we believe may become a heart of grace from

may rightly to answer that melodious noise

by leaving out these harsh chromatick jars

of sin that all our musick marry

in our lives, in our song

may keep in tune with heading till God is long

to his celestial consort we unite

To live a song with him in ever endlesse light & most glorios unskipisld

whereby dwels what light is endles

more of light

in never parting light

on earth

that we with understanding heartly back

may rightly to answer that melodious noise

by leaving out those harsh chromatick jars ill sounding

of sin that all our musick marry

in our lives, in our song

may keep in tune with heading till God is long

to his celestial consort we unite

To live a song with him in ever endlesse light & most glorios unskipisld

whereby dwels what light is endles

more of light

in never parting light
Third State (followed by a fourth, transcribing the same more neatly).

that was on Earth with unswerving voice
may rightly answer that melodious noise
as long as vice could, till disputation's sin
sordidSounds against nature's chime & with continuing din
broke the faire music with all creature made
to shire great Lord, who's love thir mohon sweat
in glad Adipasion whilst they stood
in first obidence to thir state of good
Oh may wee some time that song
keeps in tune with hearem, till God on long
to his celestial comfort my mind
so live & sing with him in sweet light more of light
Sonnet to Fairfax, 1648.

Fairfax, whose name i comes through Europe ring,
Filling each mouth with envy, or with pride;
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze
And rumors loud and loud, that daunt remotest kings,

Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions rise;
This Hydra heads, & the false North displaces
Her brothin league, to stipe their serpent wings,

O yet a noble task awaits my hand:
For what can Warr, but endless Warr still breed,
Till Truth, a light from Violence be freed,
And the Public Faith cleared from the shamefull brand
Of Public Fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed
While Avarice, a Rapine share the land.
Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but distractions rude,
Guided by faith & matchless fortitude.
To peace & truth thy glorious way hast plough'd.

Cyrinach, this three years day these eyes though clear
To outward view, at blemish or of spoile,
Berets of light their seeing have forgot.

I saw my late espoused saint-
Brought to me like shephtis from the grave
Whom loves great son to her glad husband gave
Rescued from death by force though pale and faint.
First lines of “Paradise Lost,” as in the manuscript for Press.


Paradise lost.
First book.

Of man's first disobedience, & the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, & all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restores us, & regain the blissful state,
Fing heavenly muse, that, on the forest top
Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught thechosen people,
In the beginning how the Heavens & Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion-hill
While the foregoing pages of specimens from the original printed editions and from the preserved MS. copies may be interesting as curiosities, they will serve also as practical data for an inquiry into the subject of Milton's Orthography and Orthoepy; and perhaps the mere aspect of them may already have conveyed some preliminary impressions on that subject. The inquiry, however, is a very extensive and minute one, needing a far larger array of data than can be presented in any mere series of selected specimens. Accurate conclusions are possible only after patient and systematic examination of the original texts entire, with actual chase of representative words and sounds through all the individual cases of their occurrence in those texts. The results of my own investigations in this way I will state as succinctly as may be compatible with the production of instances sufficient for proof. Though Milton is directly concerned, and it is only with respect to him that the conclusions are here offered, they will bear, I believe, on the question of the style of spelling that ought to be adopted in all modern editions, for general use, of our English classics back to the time of Elizabeth. How far, and with what modifications, they may be applied to the question of the best form of the reproduction of the texts of still older English writers, I do not at present venture to say. That is a question, however, which scholars, I am perfectly sure, will sooner or later find reason for deciding very differently from the practice now generally in fashion, and all the sooner if some portions of the marvelously abundant and exact science of Mr. A. J. Ellis's great work on Early English Pronunciation should be brought to bear upon it. On this side of the adoption of a Universal Glossic, theoretically perfect (see Mr. Ellis's work, Part III., pp. xiii.—xx.), what seems really necessary is a candid and minute study of the actual history of English spelling, with a view to sound rules for the editorial use of our existing alphabet. Meanwhile, our business being with Milton, the facts as regards his spelling may be expressed, definitely enough, in two propositions:—

I. Milton's spelling, whether by his own hand, or through his printers, was very much the spelling of his day.

Everyone is familiar with the main differences of that spelling from the spelling now in use; and it is easier to remember them in general effect as seen in old books than to enumerate them individually.—One was the frequent use of the silent e final where we have now abandoned it, as faire, vaine, soone, urne, doe (do), keepe, tooke, crowne, deepe, ruine, forlorn, goddesse; with the corresponding extension es in the plural of nouns, as armes, aires, dayes. On the other hand, the e was occasionally omitted where we retain it, as fals, vers, els, leavs, tast (taste), hast (haste).—So our final y was frequently represented by ie, as starrie, majestie, guiltie, happie, flie, crië, descrie; while, on the other hand, y did service from which it has now been released, as in ayr, voyce, tyme, tyger, lye, poysone, ycë (icy), jubily.—For our word than the almost con-
stant spelling is the older form *then*: e.g. "Less *then* half we find express*" (Arcad. 12); and for our word *lest* we find also the old form *least*. Reversely, we may expect to find *lest* for our *least*, e.g. "The first at *lest* of these I thought deni'd" (P. L., IX. 555), and occasionally even *than* for our *then*: e.g. "Full little thought they *than*, That the mighty Pan" (Od. Nativ. 88; where, however, it is the rhyme that induces it).—Whereas we distinguish the possessive case sing. and plur. in nouns by the use of an apostrophe, there was no such constant practice in old writing and printing; and, accordingly, we find *mans* where we should now write *man's*, *fathers* where we should now write *men's*, *Javans* issue for *Javan's* issue, *joves* court for *jove's* court, and as *Angels* *kenn* (P. L., I. 59), where it is doubtful whether the meaning is *Angel's* *ken*, *Angels'* *ken*, or *Angels* *ken* (the verb). On the other hand, the apostrophe often occurs before *s* when we do not expect it: e.g. *myrtle's* (plur.), *hero's* (plur.), "*Juno dare's* not give her odds" (Arcad. 23), "Of dire chimera's and enchanted Isles" (Com., 517), and "*Gorgons* and *Hydra's*, and *Chimera's* *dire*" (P. L., II. 628).—Again, the letters used for some of the common vowel-sounds, beyond the *y* and *ie* group, were often different from those on which we have now fixed; and so we find such spellings as *mee*, *hee*, *shee*, *wee*, *yee*, *sed* and *sed* (said), *eternity*, *sphear*, *vertue*, *neather* (neither), *seaven* (seven), *weild*, *feild*, *preist*, *friends*, *dieties* (deities), *theefe*, *deceave*, *heer*, *peirc'd*, *spreds*, *threads*, *dores*, *sease* (seize), *rowzd*, *evo'n*, *spight*, *shoars*, *rere*, *yoak*, *raign*, *beleeve*, *travailer* (traveller), *woolf*, *flourds*, *extremes*, *foul* (foul), *jeat* (jet), *o're* (o'er), *shepheards*, *warriers*, *wraught*, *unsaught*, *wrauth*, *thrust* (thirst), &c.—Add. by way of miscellaneous variations from our present spelling, such frequent or occasional forms as these—*mortall*, *celestiall*, *battel*, *sollemne* (solemn), *center*, *scepter*, *compell*, *committ*, *goddes* (goddess), *endles* (endless), *ripenes*, *saphire*, *sittle* (subtle), *welcom*, *musick*, *ore* and *ore* (o'er), *Ile* (I'll), *flowres*, *showres*, *laureat*, *farewel*, *warr*, *farr*, *carr*, *persues* (pursues), *onely*, *sents* (scents), *swingdes* (swinges), *allarm*, *pittie* (pity), *large-lim'd* (large-limbed), *veede* (wheel). All these spellings, and many more not now customary, occur in Milton's MSS. or his original printed editions; and, with the peculiarities already mentioned, and the use of capital letters at the beginning not only of proper names but also of names of all important objects, and generally also of Italic letters for foreign or classical words, they help to impart to his original printed editions that slight look of uncouthness which ordinary readers find in all books of his period.

II. Just because Milton's spelling was in the main the spelling of his day, one of its most marked characteristics is its variability or want of uniformity; and, on examination, it is found that this variability or want of uniformity affects precisely and chiefly those spellings which differ from ours, and that, in almost every such case, our present
Spelling and Pronunciation. xxxv

spelling was actually used as one of the variations, and had its chance in the competition.

Our present system of English spelling, bad enough as it is from the point of view of Phonology, is at least fixed and steady in all save a few particulars. Not so in the seventeenth century. The subject of English spelling had been much discussed; and there had been attempts and movements towards a Spelling Reform, like that advocated by more recent Phonologists, on the principle of bringing the visible characters into strict accordance with the spoken sounds, or on some tolerable compromise between that principle and respect for etymology. Among the most recent of those Spelling Reformers in Milton's time had been his own teacher Alexander Gill the elder, head-master of St. Paul's School, in his "Logonomia Anglica" or Latin treatise on English Grammar, published in 1619, and Charles Butler, M.A., of Magdalen College, Oxford, in his "English Grammar, or the Institution of Letters, Syllables, and Words in the English Tongue," published from the Oxford University Press in 1633. Still nothing like uniformity had been attained. Within a certain range every author or printer might spell according to his own whim at the moment—the choice between a longer and a shorter form of spelling often determined, in the case of a printer, by the number of types he could get in at the end of a line; and so author differed from author, printer from printer, printers from authors, nay the same author or printer from himself yesterday or two minutes ago. Take a passage from the above-mentioned Butler in 1633 on this very point. "So certaine," he says, "is the Orthographie of the Hebrew, Greeke, and Latin; that all Nations, though never so far distant in place, and different in speeche, doe write them alike: whereas many words in our language are written diversly, even at home: neither our new writers agreeing with the old; nor either new or old among themselves. Which gave occasion to Sr John Price (wheither more tartly or truely I know not) taxing our Orthographie to preferre his own [the Welsh]: where he saith, "that foure good Secretaries, writing a sentence in English from his mouth, differed all, one from another, in many letters: whereas so many Welch, writing the same in their tongue, varied not in any one letter."

Our first extant specimens of Milton's hand-writing are of about the date when Butler wrote this passage; and the next forty years, to which belong the rest of his extant MSS. and all his volumes printed in his life-time, do not seem to have made much change in the respect now considered. How wavering and unstable was the spelling through these forty years will be best seen if we take the words collected, or the groups suggested, in last section, and exhibit the varieties of spelling of these very words, or in these groups, that are to be gathered from Milton's MSS. and the printed editions of his Poems.

(1.) Faire, vaine, soone, urne, doe, keepe, tooke, crowne, deepe, ruine, for-d 2
lorne, goddesse, with armes, aires, dayes: this was the first group I gave, to illustrate the frequency of the silent e final in cases where we have now dropt it. Well, without much search, I find in the MSS. and printed editions these alternatives—fair, vain, soon, urn, do, keep, took, crown, deep, ruin, forlorn, goddess and goddes, arms, airs, days. So general in the printed editions is the dropping of the final e in this class of words that, though they do occasionally retain it, I may note this as one of the differences between those editions and Milton's own MSS. Thus, the word urn occurs but once in Milton's poetry (Lycid. 20); and in the edition of 1645 it is printed urn, while Milton's MS. gives urne.

(2.) Take next the group of words given as exemplifying the omission of the final e where we insert it: viz. fals, vers, els, leaves, tast, hast. For these forms I find easily our present false, verse, else, leaves, taste, haste—the printed editions here again, I think, agreeing with our modern practice more than the MSS. do. The two last words in the list may be prosecuted more particularly.—In the original edition of Paradise Lost the second line of the poem is distinctly printed,

"Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast."

So in Sonnet XX., as first printed in 1673—

"Of Attic tast, with wine."

So also twice in the plural—

"Of all tastes else to please thir appetite;"—P. L., VII. 49.

and

"With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling."—P. R., IV. 347.

Hence some have argued that the word taste in Milton's time must have been pronounced tast, like last or past. But that the inference was hasty and illegitimate would have been seen if the word had been traced through other passages. Four times, as we have seen, it is tast or tastes; but it occurs sixty-two times in all in the poetry, as noun or verb, and in fifty-eight of these cases with our ordinary spelling taste, e.g.—

"To quench the drouth of Phoebus, which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst)."—Com. 66, 67.

"so contriv'd as not to mix
Tastes, not well joynd, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change."—P. L., V. 334—336.

Similarly with the word haste. On its first occurrence in Paradise Lost (I. 357) it is spelt hast; but the word, as noun or verb, occurs thirty-seven times besides in Milton's poetry; and in twenty-five of these places (sixteen of them in Par. Lost) we have the normal spelling haste, while in twelve (P. L., X. 17, XI. 104; P. R., III. 223, 303, 437;
The next group was the y and ie group. Here also there is instability; for I find starry as well as starrie, majesty as well as majestie, and our present forms guilty, happy, fly, cry, descray, as well as guiltie, happe, flie, cri, cle, descrie. Thus I have traced every occurrence of guilty in the poems, with this result: in the 1645 edition of the Minor Poems it occurs but once, and then in our present form guilty; in Paradise Lost it occurs five times, and is always spelt guiltie in the original edition; in the Second or 1673 edition of the Minor Poems it occurs twice, and each time with a relapse into the form guilty. So, on the other hand, while we have ayr, voyce, tyme, tyger, lye, poysone, ycie, and jubily, these words come up also in their more familiar forms as air, voice, time, tiger, lie, poison, ice, and jubilee. The word poison occurs but twice in Milton's poetry—once as poysone (Com. 47), and once as poison (Com. 526); unless we choose to add the adjective poisonous in Sams. Ag. 563, where the spelling in the original edition is poysouns. The adjective icy occurs only once, in the compound ycie-pearled (Death of a Fair Infant, 15); but the noun ice occurs six times, and always as ice. The rarer word jubilee occurs three times, once as jubily (Sol. Mus. 9), once as jubilee (P. L., III. 348), and once as jubilie (P. L., VI. 884).

Than, then; least, lest.—As far as my observation goes, then is constantly kept as equivalent to our conjunction than ("O worse then chains," in Sams. Ag. 68, is one of the latest instances); while the same spelling then is uniform for our adverb then, except in such a case of deviation into than for the rhyme's sake as that noted in last section.—But least and lest are unstable. In the first six occurrences of the conjunction lest in Paradise Lost, the spelling in the original edition is least (e.g. "least bad men should boast"); but in the next two occurrences of the word (V. 396 and 731) the spelling is lest, as now ("No fear lest Dinner coole," and "lest unawares we lose"); after which, in twenty-seven recurrences of the word in the rest of the poem it is invariably again least. To make amends, however, the spelling is again lest in each of eleven occurrences of the word in Par. Reg. and Sams. Ag.; while it is so also in three occurrences in Comus (156, 406, 940), both in the 1645 edition of the Minor Poems and in that of 1673—though this last edition prints the word least in three places in pieces first published in it (Sonnet XIX. 6, Ps. II. 25, and Ps. VII. 4). Again, in forty-seven occurrences of the adjective least in the total body of the poems, the normal form least is kept forty-three times; but the form lest happens four times (P. L., IX. 460, 555, and X. 875, 951).

I have noted the general defect in Milton, as in other old printing, of our apostrophe marking the possessive case, as in man's, men's, father's, and the ambiguity sometimes arising from that defect. Butler
in his Grammar has no apostrophe in the possessive, but gives a man's wisdom, a horse's strength, chickens meat, knives edges, as examples of the case singular and plural. Occasionally, however, in Milton's original editions we do have the apostrophe: e.g. P. L., I. 466 "Gas a's frontier bounds," Pens. 29 "Of woody Ida's inmost grove," Com. 232 "By slow Meander's margent green." In the Second (or 1673) edition of the Minor Poems I find man's work (Sonnet XIX. 10), Assembly's ears (Vac. Ex. 28) and other instances of our present form.

(6.) Vowel-sounds generally, and their Spellings.—Here we may systematize a little.—On a rough analysis, which satisfies most grammarians, though it stops short of the perfect one proposed by Mr. Ellis and others, there are twelve or thirteen simple vowel-sounds in English, and four diphthongs proper. Let us go over them one by one, inquiring into Milton's practice with respect to each:

The Short A sound (as in man).—This sound is represented in chief by the letter a, but also occasionally by e (clerk, serjeant, Derby, Berkshire).—Milton's usage for the sound is ours; but in the prose heading of his Arcades, both in 1645 and 1673, the heroine of the piece is called "The Countess Dowager of Darby." The words clerk and serjeant do not occur in the poetry; but clerk, spelt so, occurs in his prose-writings.

The Long A sound (as in far, father).—Its representative in chief is a; but it is also represented by al, as in alms, palm, psalm.—These three words are always spelt so in Milton, save that palm twice, out of eight times, becomes palme. His usage of balm is more peculiar. He begins (Com. 674, 991) with balm and balmy, spelt as now; the noun appears next in Par. Lost, and there as Baune (I. 774); in five subsequent appearances in the same poem it is balone, while the adjective, four times repeated, is balmie; finally, in Sams. Ag., where we have the noun twice, it is again balm.

The Short E sound (as in met).—Its representative in chief is e; but it is also represented by a, ea, ai, ie, ei, ea, ay, ey: e.g. amy, Thames, bread, said, friend, their (unemphatic), jeopardy, foray, they (unemphatic).—We have noted the occurrence in Milton of such spellings for this sound as spreds, sed and se'd (for said), seaven, and freind. Well, these are unstable; for he gives us also spreads, said (for which sed or se'd is but a rare freak with him, for the look of the rhyme: L'All. 103, Hobs. I. 17, Lyc. 129), seven and friend, just as now. Threads occurs but twice, and both times as threads. Jet occurs but once, and then as jeat, but rhyming to violet (Lyc. 144). Thir frequently occurs for the unemphatic their (e.g. the last line of P. L., "Through Eden took thir solitary way"); but the form their is also common enough. We have ern and hearbs in the same page of L'Allegro; but our present spellings earn and herb are the normal ones in the poetry.

The Long E sound proper, often called the Long A sound (as in there).—This is, however, seldom represented in English by e: more frequently
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by a, ai, ay, ei, ey, ea, eig, eigh—e.g. name, main, say, vein, prey, yea, reign, weight.—Take, in this group, these spellings in Milton: strein (for strain: Od. Nat. 17), raign, ayr. These are unusual now; but in Milton too they are mere casual deviations from the more usual strain, reign, air. The spelling strein was merely suggested by vein to which it rhymes, and which, though there and generally spelt vein, is sometimes veine. He has the spellings ayr and air within eighteen lines of each other (Pens.), and both aires and airs for the plural.

The Short I sound (as in thin, him): chief representative i; but represented also by y, e, ee, ie, and ui; e.g. hymn, pity, me (unemphatic), been (unemphatic), pierce, pitted, build. In this group Milton's spellings are ours, with allowance for such occasional forms as guiltie, majestic, &c., already noticed, and for a stray word like peirc'd. These are simply occasional, however, for he has guilty, majesty, &c., when he likes, and lets peirc'd in other places become pierc'd.—In nineteen passages which I have looked at in the original editions the usual form been occurs eleven times, while eight times there is the slighter form bin. Pure caprice seems to have determined the variation; for, though once or twice been may be a little emphatic, it occurs also when there is no more emphasis than bin would have conveyed.

The Long I sound proper (though hardly the mere i of thin lengthened): generally called the long E sound (as in clique, pique).—It is rarely represented by i: more frequently by e, ee, ea, ei, ie, and sometimes by a, aw, ey, and ay: e.g. me, see, head, deceive, believe, Caesar, Phæbus, key, quay.—The usage in the poems for this sound is rather complicated. It was common in Milton's time to spell monosyllabic words containing this sound with a double e: thus, mee, hee, shee, wee, yee, bee (the verb, as well as the noun). Butler, however, who adopts the habit, and recommends the double e generally for this long sound, notes that such words were still often written with the single e as now: me, he, she, we, ye, be. Now Milton has both forms of spelling, sometimes me, &c., and sometimes mee, &c.: whether on any principle may be inquired hereafter. Certainly no principle can be detected in such spellings of his for the same sound as sphear, neather (neither), weild, feild, preist, dieties (deities), theefe, deceit, heer, neer, sease (seize), eev'n, beleeve, extreams. He keeps indeed, I think, to sphear or spheare (though I find sphere in the plural: At a Vac. Ex. 40); but he is as ready as any one now would be to write words of this class in our present forms, and so gives us neither, wield, field, priest, deities, thief, deceit, here, near, seize, even, believe, extremes. He has even more than two ways of spelling some of these and similar words: thus seize, siëze, sease, sease.

A Short O sound (as in God, not): represented chiefly by o, but sometimes by a, au, and oe: e.g. salt, want, vault, does (3rd pers. sing. of the verb do). I have noted nothing peculiar in Milton's spelling here.

The same sound prolonged, and therefore capable of being called the long O sound, though not usually called so (as in broad). It is not
represented by o singly, but by oa, ough, a singly (whence it is sometimes called the open A sound), au, aw, ave, augh: e.g. broad, thought, all, fall, wrath, hault, awe, daws, bawd, naught. — Milton has wrath, but also wrath; naught, but also nought; wrath, but also wrought; aw, but also awe; haut once, from stress of rhyme (Ps. LXXX. 33), but also haughty and haughtie.

Another Long O sound, usually so called, though distinct from the former (as in go, shore, note). — The chief representative of this sound is o; but it is represented also by oa, oe, oo, ow, o'e, eo, ew, ough: e.g. boast, woe, door, soul, low, o'er, yeoman, sew, though. — In Milton, we have seen, there are such spellings as dores, shoars, rare, yoak. He has done and dores uniformly, I think, through Paradise Lost; but he gives door and doors elsewhere (LyCID. 130, SAMS. AG. 77). So also we have shores, roar and yoke, as in our ordinary spelling. The word goal occurs twice, once as gole and once as goall. He has oke, but also oak and oake.

—The contraction o'er, for over, is generally, so far as I have observed, spelt o're with the apostrophe in the wrong place, or ore without any apostrophe: but I can find no meaning in this perversity. — Two interesting words in this long O group are show and roll. Milton's practice with respect to them will be discussed hereafter; meanwhile it is enough to state that he spells them first in his poetry both show and shew, and that for the second he gives us only once roll (in the form roll'd), and in every other case the occurrence of the word, i.e. thirty-seven times, rowl, rowle, roul, or roule, either so or in the related forms of rowl'd, rould, rowling, rolling, &c. The inquiry will involve words of similar sound, as scroll, control, fold, &c.

The Short U sound proper (as in full, put). — It is represented chiefly by u; but also by o, oo, ou, oul, ough: e.g. woman, book, you (unemphatic), could, and through (unemphatic). — So far as I have observed Milton's practice in such words conforms to the present.

The Long U sound proper (as in truth). — It is represented by u; but also by ue, ui, o, oo, oe, ou, ew: e.g. true, fruit, move, soothe, shoe, youth, brew. — Here also Milton's spelling in the main conforms to ours. He has remov'd, but also remov'd; crue (the noun), but generally crew; boosom'd, but also bosom'd; woollf, but also wolf; turneys, but also tournament; &c.

The Short U sound (as in but). — Though represented by u, it is represented also by o, oo, ou: e.g. son, blood, young. — There is an interchangeability between this sound and the two last u sounds, some provincial speakers pronouncing put as if it rhymed to hut, and Dr. Johnson himself having preserved his provincial pouch for punch. I have found no evidences that this was other than a provincial habit in Milton's time. — He has com and welcom, but also come and welcome; jocond, but also jocund; som, but also some; dou, but also done; curb once (P. L., XI. 643), but curb five times; floud, but also flood; yonger, but also younger, &c.
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A nondescript E sound, intermediate between short i and short u (as in her, minster).—This is represented also by i, y, if not sometimes by u: e.g. sir, virtue, myrrh, surname; and indeed the combinations er, ar, ir, or, ur, re, have a tendency in common habit in certain cases to this one sound: e.g. baker, beggar, stir, stationery, stationary, sailor, ardour, murmur, sepulchre.—In Milton virtue and virtuous are, I think, nearly always spelt vertue or vertu and vertuous, as was common in his time; but virtue does occur (e.g. P. R., II. 431, 455), and virtual, which occurs but twice, is both times so. I find warriors and persecuters in his text, but also warriors and warriors. Beggary occurs once (S. A., 69), and sepulcher or sepulchers twice; but in the main the spellings even for this obscure sound are ours.

The Four Diphthongs proper.—These are heard in the words fine, thou, oil, muse. The first, still often called the long i sound, is represented not only by that letter, but also by y, ie, ye, ay, is, ig, igh, eye, uy, ais, eigh: e.g. cry, die, dye, ay, isle, sign, high, eye, buy, aisle, height. The second, represented by ou, is represented also by ow, oug: e.g. owl, plough. The third, represented by oi, is represented also by oy and uoy: e.g. boy, buoy. The fourth, still often called the long U sound, is represented not only by u, but also by eu, ew, ewe, iew, ue, ui, eau, ieu: e.g. rheum, few, ewe, view, sue, suit, beauty, lieu.—Some of Milton’s spellings in these diphthong groups have already been noted. We may add a few more instances. (1) He has both isle and ile, island and island, rites and rights, spite and spight (within some lines of each other, P. L., II. 385—393), eye and ey, lie and lye, nigh and ny (Sonnet I. 10). He has aries at least once for arise. The word rime, though spelt so in the prose preface to Par. Lost, is spelt once rhyme in the poetry (Lyc. 11), and rhyme in the only other case where it occurs there (P. L., I. 16). We have die and di’d for ‘colour’ and ‘coloured;’ but, to make up, there is a slip once or twice into dye and dy’d for our verb of mortality. (2) Plowman occurs twice, and each time in that form; but in the MS. of the Sonnet to Cromwell we have plough’d. Bought and boughs or boughes is normal in the text, but once at least there is bowes. The adjective foul, for ‘unclean,’ which is a frequent word, occurs in Par. Lost first as fowl (I. 33), and the very next time (I. 135) as foul. The word flower is very unstable. I find it, in the singular, in no fewer than six forms—flower, flowr, flowre, flour, flower, and flour; and it is about the same in the plural. Similarly we have tower in three forms—tower, towre, tower (all three forms occurring within eight lines of each other, P. L., XII. 44—52); and so with shower, hour, and other words. (3) In this diphthong group we have indifferently choice and choyce, voice and voyce, &c. (4) In this group Milton has lewd and leud, hue and hew (noun), blue, blu, and blew (all for the colour), eue and eus (the animal), suite and suitable, &c.

Consonantal and Miscellaneous Spellings.—A promiscuous assemblage of examples will suffice to prove that here too the spellings in Milton are
variable, and that, even where his text has a different spelling from ours in one or in several places, it accepts ours in others:—warr, dinn, lipps, mortall, celestiall, faithfull, musicall, committ, compell, farewel, mattin, sollemne, &c., found also as war, din, lips, mortal, celestial, faithful, musical, commit, compels, farewell, matin, solemn, &c.; endless, darkness, sweetnes, &c., found also as endless, darkness, sweetness, &c. (ripenesse in Sonnet III. in Milton's own MS. appearing as ripenes in the same when printed under his own eye); musick, majestick, &c., found also as music, majestic, &c.; linked found also as linked; sulfurous and sulphurous; patriark and patriarch in two consecutive pages (P. L., 117—151); murtherer, but also murder, and murd'rous; chrystall, but also crystal; authoritie, but also authority and authority.

Ample proof has now been furnished of both parts of our proposition—i.e. not only of the general fact that Milton's spelling, like the spelling of most of his contemporaries, was unstable and variable, but also of the more special fact that, in the cases where he varied his spelling, it was most frequently a mere accident, a mere turn of the wrist, whether he should give us a spelling that we now think odd or the one now adopted and authorized. Neither part of the proposition has been sufficiently attended to by Milton inquirers and literary and linguistic archæologists; but perhaps the second less than the first. Yet it is not unimportant.

"Would it not be well," it might be asked, "in reprinting Milton's Poems, to retain punctiliously his own spelling?" Now, whatever may be the propriety, for philological purposes, of having plenty of exact reprints of our old English books, or of portions of such, and exact representations in type of the spelling of old English MSS., common sense seems to have settled that, in modern editions of such great authors as Bacon, Shakespeare, and Milton, just as in all modern editions of the authorized English Bible for general use, the spelling of our own time ought to be adopted, except in cases where there is something significant, etymologically or phonetically, in an archaic spelling in the original editions. Messrs. Clark and Aldis Wright, in their Preface to the Cambridge Edition of Shakespeare, have given their reasons for following this plan in that work; and their reasoning applies to Milton's Poetry. Though we have used again and again the phrase "Milton's spelling," it is impossible to say what Milton's spelling really is. There is an extant mass of his own manuscript, containing the drafts of a portion of his earlier English Poems. There, certainly, so far as the mass goes, we have Milton's own spelling. But then the spelling there differs in numberless particulars from the spelling of the same pieces when printed in 1645. The spelling in the volume of that year may be called Milton's own too, inasmuch as he had then the use of his eyesight, and it is to be taken for granted that he revised the proofs. But which is most Milton's spelling—that of the MSS. so far as they go, or that of the printed volume? Farther, for all the later poetry, in-
including *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, we have neither a spelling set up by the printers from Milton's own manuscript, nor a spelling passed by Milton's personal revision after the printers, but only the discordant spellings of different printers, set up from the discordant spellings of no one knows how many different amanuenses to whom a blind man had dictated, and revised of course not by the blind man himself, but only by the readers of the printing offices, or by friends reading the proofs aloud for his benefit, with perhaps a shot of correction now and then from his own mouth when his quick ear detected anything wrong. How, in such a complexity of circumstances, shall we determine Milton's own spelling for his Poetical Works collectively? We have, it is true, the original editions of his English Prose Pamphlets, all of which as far as 1649 may be assumed to have been set up from his own manuscripts, or at least revised by himself for the press. Might not these assist us in an attempt for the recovery of Milton's own spelling for his poems? Very little. In the first place, there is no reason to believe that the spelling of these pamphlets, even if it were uniform, is the spelling of the MSS. from which they were set up. The spelling of many pieces in the 1645 edition of the poems, as we have seen, differs incessantly from the spelling of the same pieces in the extant MSS.; and the spelling of the First Book of *Paradise Lost* in the original edition differs incessantly, we may now add, from that of the same Book in the preserved MS. copy in the hand of an amanuensis from which the printers set up the text. In the very first page we find *blissful seate* in the printed edition substituted for *blisfull seate* in the press-copy, *mortal* for *mortall*, *loss* for *losse*, *Brook* for *brooke*, *soar* for *soare*, *pursues* for *persues*, *chiefly* for *cheifly*, *dark* for *darke*, &c. How are we to know that the printers of the Prose Pamphlets were more strict to the manuscript copies? If it is replied that Milton at all events adopted the spelling of the printers of those pamphlets, and so made it his, that only brings out afresh the fact that, within a certain range, he did not mind how words were spelt. For the same instability is to be detected in the spelling of the prose pamphlets as in that of the poems. There were different printers; they differed from each other; and each differed from himself from page to page and moment to moment. In short, Milton's own spelling of his poems, in any definite sense of the term, is not a real and recoverable existence anywhere in nature, but at best a vortex of verbal forms, with certain steadyish main features amid a fringing confusion of incompatible atoms, whirling in the Cambridge, Horton, and London air of the seventeenth century, and modified in London by cross-gusts between divers printing-offices, and between those offices and Milton's houses in Bread Street, St. Bride's Churchyard, Aldersgate Street, Barbican, High Holborn, Jewin Street, Bunhill Fields, and other places.

"Well, but," it may be said, "no ideal reconstruction is necessary. Why not accept the original printed editions in their series? Why not
reproduce these page after page, and vote the spelling in its totality, with all its variations, to be Milton's?"—This may seem plausible; but it breaks down on consideration. The simple fact that we are in possession of a mass of Milton's English poetry in his own handwriting, the spelling of which differs from that of the same pieces as printed in the First and Second editions of his Minor Poems, falls like a crushing blow on the proposal. Could we recover Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, some of his Sonnets, and his Hamlet or Midsummer Night's Dream, in his own handwriting, what a joy there would be! Should we then adhere to the quartos, even if it could be proved that Shakespeare revised the proofs? Would not the cry be "No intervention of printers here: let us have every jot and title of the great hand, as it paralleled and descended the paper, and the ink fell from the pen's point!" Why should it be otherwise with Milton's extant MSS.? If we are to have the original spelling and nothing else, why should not these, as far as they will serve, be followed, rather than the printed copies? Then, again, have we not Lawes's printed copy of Comus in 1637, and the Bridgewater MS. of the same, and have we not Lycidas in its original form in the Cambridge volume of Memorial Verses on King published in 1638? What are the claims of these, and of one or two other fragments, orthographically?

Suppose, however, in this absolute impossibility of getting at a standard spelling, we were to agree to adopt the spelling of Milton's original printed editions enumerated above, and vote it to be the standard. What, even with that violent solution of the difficulty, ought to be the policy in a modern edition of Milton's poems? Apart from the interest that might attach to an exact orthographic reprint regarded as a bibliographical curiosity, the sole purpose it would serve would be to exhibit that very phenomenon of variability of spelling which we have been illustrating. A standard spelling in the original editions! There is no such thing. There is utter instability, incessant change, causeless and yet conscious inconsistency. In view of all else that we expect and require in a modern edition of Milton, is it worth while to refabricate a collective edition of the poems expressly to exhibit the phenomenon of the variability, in Milton's case as in others, of the seventeenth century spelling? The phenomenon is certainly interesting, and worthy of exhibition. But, in the interest of the phenomenon itself, there are better and more economic means. For scholars who want to study the phenomenon, access to copies of the original editions is not too difficult; and for most people, or in the main for scholars too, a series of specimens of literal reprint will amply suffice. There ought to be such specimens, and all that is essential in the phenomenon may be elicited from a moderate number of them. With such material, and with an Essay on the subject, collecting and specifying instances, the phenomenon in question might be better brought out in all its bearings than in a collective reprint from the
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original editions merely; where, in fact, the phenomenon eludes notice by its very diffusion. Then, that matter having been provided for, a collective edition of the poems for general use may fairly consist, like our copies of the authorized English Bible, or our standard editions of Bacon and Shakespeare, of the most authentic text from the original editions made to conform to our now authorized orthography, except in cases where an archaic form ought to be preserved for some etymological or phonetic significance which our present spelling would conceal. Should there be any doubt in the matter still, it will be removed, I think, by recollecting that it is more than mere variability of spelling that has been proved concerning the original editions. What has been proved is variability, at every point where we select a word and trace it, between two spellings, or among a certain number of competing spellings, of which our own present authorized spelling is generally one. Hardly a modern spelling of an English word but is an authorized spelling in Milton’s original editions, if not in one passage, yet in another or others; and in most cases the most microscopic scrutiny can detect no reason why the spelling ever varies from this, except the fact that people did not then care for orthographic uniformity. Now, as we do care for it, we do no wrong to an author of that time by fixing him to one of his own spellings, or to a spelling to which we are sure, from strictly analogous instances in his own text, he would have had no objection. Because Milton’s original editions give us flower, but also five variations from it, flowr, flowre, flour, floure, and flouer, did he mean to tie down his readers in all time coming to the sextuple spelling rather than the single? At the utmost, would he not have asked, in the interest of the history of English orthography, that the fact that the sextuple spelling was allowed in his day should be remembered in a footnote or the like, begging posterity at the same time to fix him to one of the spellings in the text if they found reason for it, on the single condition that they should not tamper at any point with sound or meaning, vocable or metre?

This brings us to another branch of our inquiry. Are there any peculiarities of Milton’s spelling which are really significant, and ought therefore to be noted or preserved? There are, and we proceed now to take account of them:

I. Peculiarities which may be Noted, but need not be Preserved.

Mee, hee, shee, wee, yee.—That Milton had an intention in spelling these pronouns sometimes with a single e and sometimes with a double may be inferred from the fact that, in the Errata prefixed to the First edition of Par. Lost, he directs the word we in Book II. 414 to be changed into wee. On turning to the passage, it is seen that the reason
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was that the word *we* there has to be pronounced emphatically. In general, therefore, we may assume that he meant *mee, hee, &c.*, to be the forms when the words were emphatic, and *me, he, &c.*, when they were not. But, in fact, his own texts are not consistent to this practice (see note P. L., 160—165), and it is needless.

Then for *than.*—Though, as far as I have observed, the original texts keep to *then*, as writings of that date generally do, it seems unnecessary to recur to a spelling so strange to our present habits—the rather because our form *than* was used in Milton’s time, and is a good old one in pre-Elizabethan English.—As to *least* for *lest* we need be in no doubt. Milton himself yields to *lest*, and may be fixed to it.

**Hunderd and Childern.**—Among the Errata prefixed to the First edition of *Par. Lost* is the direction “Lib. I. v. 760 for *hundreds r. hunderds*”; which may be taken as vouching that Milton’s ear preferred the latter pronunciation. Perhaps one ought to have obliged him here, especially as in the only three other occurrences of the word in his poetry (*Arcades 22, Sonnet XIII. and Par. Reg., III. 287*) it is *hunderd* or *hunder’d*. Todd has, but Keightley has not; and the reasons seem to be that *hundred* or *hundreth* is the old English form, that Milton himself has *hundreda* in Latin, and that people who still pronounce *hunderd* are accustomed to the spelling *hundred*.—The form *childern* for *children* occurs four times in *Par. Lost*, and is worth noting; but, as we have *children* for *children’s* in the same poem (I. 395), and *children* twice in *Comus*, once in *Par. Reg.*, and once in *Sams. Ag.*, there is no need to revive *childern*.

**Ventrous and Adventrous.**—The first occurs three times, spelt so or *ventrous*; the second six times, spelt so or *adventurous*. Now, as Milton once has the verb in the form *venter (Comus, 228)*, and again in the form *ventring*, one might have kept these spellings, as perhaps significant of a neglect of the *u* in the pronunciation. But not only has Milton in other places *venture* and *adventure* (this uniformly) and *adventurer*; he has also the form *venturing* (*S. A. 1373*). Hence for *ventrous* and *adventrous* we may print *venturous* or *adventurous* without objection.

**Furder and Fardest.**—Milton, I think, never has the form *farther* in his poetry, and never the form *furthest*; but out of fifteen times in which he uses the word *further* he prints it three times *furder*, and in seven occurrences of *farthest* it is thrice *fardest*. No reason can be detected in the several cases for the change from the *th* to the *d*; and, as the *th* is most frequent with himself, that may be the rule.

**Wardrope.**—The word *wardrobe* occurs twice (*Lyc. 47, and Vac. Ex. 18*). In the first case it is spelt *wardrop* in print, but *wardrope* in the Cambridge MS.; in the second *wardrope*. This may have been a pronunciation of the time; but it is erroneous, ungraceful, and not worth keeping.
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Liveless for lifeless.—As the word occurs but three times, and always so, it might be kept, if only as a companion to our word livelong, which Milton also has twice; but it is hardly worth while.

Alabaster for alabaster.—The word occurs three times—twice with the l (Com. 660, and P.L., IV. 544), and once without it (P.R., IV. 548). As the proper word is alabaster, and is as old as Chaucer in that form, the insertion of the l was but a temporary freak.

Maister for master.—In the MS. of Milton's Sonnet II. in his own hand the last line runs thus—"as ever in my great task-maisters eye;" whence, and also because in the First edition of Par. Lost we have the forms mastring and maistrie for mastering and mastery (IX. 125, II. 899, and IX. 29), it might be inferred that Milton meant to keep up the earlier form of spelling. But, as in the printed copy of Sonnet II. in the Edition of 1645 the spelling is task Masters, and we have the spelling master or masters, six times besides in the original printed texts (Od. Nat. 34; Com. 501, 725; P. L., VII. 505; S. A. 1215, 1404), Milton himself authorizes our modern form.

Perfet and Imperfet: Verdit.—One of the most noticeable peculiarities of Milton's spelling is his oscillation between perfect and perfet, imperfect and imperfet:—The word perfect occurs thirty-one times in his poetry, thirty times as the adjective, and only once as the verb (P. L., XI. 36). In eleven occurrences of the adjective the spelling is perfect, as now; in the remaining nineteen occurrences of the adjective, and in the single occurrence of the verb, the spelling is perfet. The spelling perfect predominates in the Minor Poems, occurring five times, while perfet occurs but twice (Com. 203, Lyc. 82); in the first two occurrences of the word in Par. Lost it is perfect (I. 550, II. 764), but uniformly through the rest of the poem, or sixteen times, it is perfet; in Par. Reg. it occurs five times, with a relapse into perfect in the first four, but a return to perfet the last time (IV. 468); and in Sams. Ag. it occurs but once, and then in the form perfet.——The negative adjective occurs four times in all—three times in Par. Lost, as imperfet (IX. 338, 345, and XII. 300), and once as imperfect (Vac. Ex. 3).—There seems not the least doubt, therefore, that Milton preferred, at least occasionally, the French form (parfet, imparfet) to the direct Latin (perfectus, imperfectus). The French form indeed seems to have been the older; for we have parfet, parfite, and parfitly in our texts of Chaucer. All in all, as Milton's oscillation between the two forms is curious, it might not have been amiss to have kept both in the text; but, if there was to be uniformity, the predominance of perfect in the Minor Poems, the setting out with it in Par. Lost, and the return to it in Par. Reg., co-operated in its favour with present custom.——There are no such reasons additional to present custom in the similar case of the French form verdit for verdit. Milton has the word twice only (S. A. 324, 1228); and in both cases the original gives verdit.
Show or shew.—At present, either spelling of the word is legitimate, though show is the more common. There is little doubt, however, that shew is the more ancient spelling, that the word was pronounced correspondingly (like shoe), and that the spelling show came in with the fixing of pronunciation to our present practice. It is, accordingly, a very interesting word in Milton. If I am right in my counting, it occurs seventy-two times in all in his poetry—fourteen times as the noun, singular or plural, and fifty-eight times as the verb in various forms, including the past participle. Now, out of these seventy-two times, we have the ew spelling fifty-eight times, and the ow spelling fourteen times. In each of these cases of the ow spelling it may, of course, stand; and, indeed, in Sonnet XXI. 12, Arc. 79, Ps. CXIV. 5, it must stand, on account of the rhymes there (show—know; show—go; and shown—known). There is no doubt, therefore, that the pronunciation show was already familiar. There is room for doubt, however, whether it was yet universal. For, out of the fifty-eight instances of the ew spelling, there are five in which that spelling is essential for the rhyme: viz. II Pens. 171 (shew rhyming to dew), Com. 51 (shew rhyming to true), Ps. LXXXV. 26 (shew rhyming to renew), Ps. LXXXVI. 54 (shew again rhyming to true), Sonnet II. 4 (shew’th rhyming to youth, truth, and indu’th). In these places, of course, the ew spelling ought to stand. The question is about the remaining fifty-three instances of the ew spelling. Are we to assume that the ew pronunciation was intended in all these, or that the ow pronunciation was intended, or is permissible, in them all, or in some of them? On the whole, I believe we should not err in using both the ow spelling and the ow pronunciation in all these fifty-three cases of ew in the originals. But, if once or twice in these cases the printer does slip into the ew spelling, the inconsistency will matter the less inasmuch as, though the ow pronunciation is now universal, the ew spelling is not obsolete.

The word “Roll” and its symphonies.—As I have already noted (ante, p. xxxii.) the word roll occurs thirty-eight times in the poetry, our present spelling appearing only once among them, in the form rolld, while all the other thirty-seven times we have rowl, rowle, roul, or roule, with rolld, roul’d, rowling, roul ing, &c. Now, there can be no doubt that Milton knew and used our present pronunciation of the words roll, rolled. The single occurrence of the spelling rolld in the Piedmontese Sonnet would prove this, even if the word did not rhyme there with cold, old, and fold, spelt so. Besides which, we have the word enroll five times in the poetry—twice, it is true, as enrowle and inroul’d (Ps. LXXXVII. 23, and P. L., XII. 523), but three times in the unmistakeable forms of enroll’d (S. A. 653, 1736) and enrot’d (S. A. 1224). The question is, however, whether, when the word occurs with the ow or ou spelling, it is always or ever to be pronounced as that spelling would now suggest. In many cases, I can vouch, a reader of the original editions, coming on the spellings rowle, rowl, roul, rolld,
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rowling, &c., is tempted, partly by the sight of such spellings, partly by a sense of the fitness of the sound they suggest at the places where they occur, to wish the spellings kept, and our pronunciation adjusted to them: e.g.

"Reign'd where these Heavn's now rowl."—P. L., V. 578.
"on each hand the flames
Driv'n backward slope their point'ng spires, and rowld
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid Vale."—P. L., I. 222—224.
"Rowld inward, and a spacious Gap disclos'd."—P. L., VI. 861.
"Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe."—P. L., I. 52.
"And towards the Gate rowling her bestial train."—P. L., II. 873.

Did Milton, in all these cases, or in any of them, intend the sound which the spelling suggests to us? The following might seem to decide the matter:—

"When at the brook of Kishon old
   They were repulst and slain,
   At Endor quite cut off, and rowl'd
   As dung upon the plain."—Ps. LXXXIII. 37—40.

Here rowl'd rhymes to old. But take another passage:—

"Let th' enemy pursue my soul
And overtake it, let him tread
My life down to the earth and roul
In the dust my glory dead,
In the dust and there out spread
Lodge it with dishonour foul."—Ps. VII. 13—18.

What are we to do here? Either, keeping our modern pronunciations of the three rhyming words, soul, roll, and foul, we must accept the imperfect rhyme; or, as there is no doubt that our pronunciation of foul was also the old one, we must make the other two words conform in sound to it, and so read soul, rowl, foul. It may seem even comic to think of the second alternative, and suppose that the pronunciations soul, ould, &c., which we hear occasionally from the lips of old Irish pensioners and the like, were accepted pronunciations in Milton's days. But really the inquiry must take that range. It includes such words as old, bold, cold, fold, told, control, scroll, &c. Old is one of Milton's most frequent words: and, though I cannot certify that I have examined every occurrence of it, I have examined a great many without once finding the spelling ould. But I have found bould once (P. L., XI. 642) in twenty-seven occurrences of the word bold, and tould once (P. L., XI. 298) in nineteen occurrences of told. In twenty occurrences of the word fold, as noun or verb, I have found exactly one half with our present spelling, but the other half as fould, foulds, foulded. Controule (P. L., V. 803) and controul (Od. Nat. 228) are the only occurrences of that word; and we have never scroll, but only scrowle twice (P. L., XI.
Nor is Milton singular in such spellings. In Richardson's Dictionary there are examples of rowle and roule as well as roll, and of scorwle and scroul as well as scroll from earlier writers back to Chaucer—Spenser frequently indulging in rowle. On the other hand the spelling roll had become commoner with some of Milton's contemporaries, and even some of his seniors, than we find it in himself. Thus roll or rolle, rhyming to such words as pole and soul, and roll'd or even rold, rhyming to such words as gold and uphold, are common in the poems of Drummond of Hawthornden as early as 1616; where I do not think rowl or rowl'd will easily be found, but where I light at this moment on one Sonnet containing the word scroule rhyming to soule, mole and pole.—This last instance might suggest the true solution; which is that, even when the spelling was scroule or scorwle, rowl or roul, the pronunciation had come to be definitely scroll and roll. Observe that we still retain ou and ow in many words where the sound is that of the simple long o: e.g. soul, mould, shoulder, poultry, mourn, fourth; know, blow, below, snow, own, bestow. All the difference seems to be that in the seventeenth century ou and ow for long o was kept generally or occasionally in words from which we have now dismissed them—roll, scroll, control, fold, bold, told, &c., being among the number. Butler in his English Grammar, indeed (1633), expressly recognises ow as in certain cases the proper spelling for the long o sound, and would rather appropriate ou to the diphthongal purpose. Thus he proposes sou for the name of the animal and sow for the verb; foul for "unclean," as now, but sowl instead of soul; sour for the adjective, as now, but fowr for the number; crown where we write crown, but known as we now have it. People did not accept this discrimination between the ou and the ow, but went on using both sounds indifferently, sometimes for the long o sound and sometimes for others.

Spelling of the Past Tense and Past Participle of weak Verbs.—Two practices in the old texts are to be noticed under this head: viz. (1) the use of the apostrophe in past tenses and participles in ed when the e is not to be sounded, as low'd, flow'd, mov'd, favour'd, espirt'd, rais'd, oppos'd, flam'd, reserv'd, prepar'd, ordain'd, unconsum'd, injur'd; (2) the recurrence of the t form for the ed where the sound is actually t and not d, as in vanquisht, markt, banisht, belcht, kickt, lookt, mixt, encampt, tift, prest, &c.

(1.) The former practice is still kept up in a lax way in our poetry; and such forms as low'd, mov'd, adorn'd, steer'd are still expected whenever we open a book of verse. Wordsworth, however, set the example of abandoning the habit, and writing loved, moved, adorned, steered, even when the e is not to be sounded. He was right; and it would be well if such forms as low'd, steer'd, adorn'd (with Heav'n's, giv'n, and the like) were banished from our verse. They serve no purpose, for who ever wants now, except by special direction, to say lovèd, steerèd, adornèd; and they are an eyesore in our printed pages, already sufficiently ticked.
with apostrophes in possessive cases and elsewhere. The fact is, such forms as lovd, steerd, adorn'd, were once habitual in English prose also: and we have feebly retained in our verse-printing what we have swept out of our prose-printing without harm. Probably the origin of the habit was that in former times the suffix ed was oftener sounded in full than now, and that, when the habit of the contracted pronunciation became more common, the apostrophe was a convenient means for marking it. The disfigurement of old printed pages by this device was the less because the apostrophe was not then much used in possessive cases and inverted commas were rare. But that Milton and his contemporaries found the apostrophe troublesome even in this case appears from their often dropping it. Milton has rowld as often as rowld; and his pages abound with such spellings as appeerd, barbd, embattell'd.

(2.) The Miltonic forms vanquisht, markt, lookt, mixt, belcht, &c., have been admired by some late writers. But more has been made of the trifle than it is worth. It is well, of course, to remember that there were two forms of the præterite suffix in Old English—the d form (appearing variously in old writings as ed, id, yd, od, and ud), and the t form (appearing variously as et, it, yt, &c.) But this is not quite the question. The t form, which belonged to the Northern English, still survives and prevails among the Scotch; who continue to say plantit, grantit, thankit, lookit, landit, kickit, &c., just as their poet Barbour did five hundred years ago. But in Southern or Standard English it is the d form that is normal; and the question is about such casual deviations from it as those noted in Milton. Let us look at the facts.—Words ending either in the flat dental d, or in the sharp dental t, are in a peculiar predicament. Neither the d simple nor the t simple can be added to them; and therefore, if they take the suffix at all, it must be the full ed or it, as landed or landit, planted or plantit. The English, having chosen the d form, say landed, planted.—Next is the category of words ending in any other of the flat consonant sounds besides d: viz. b, v, flat th (as in thine), g, z, zh (as in azure), dsh, ng. Here there is a physical necessity that the suffix, if contracted to the consonant only, must be d or ed sounding d. You must say robbed (i.e. robbd), loved, wretched, rigged, blazed, rouged, pledged, and hanged; for the vocal organs cannot utter monosyllabically the combinations robt, lovt, wreatht, rikt, blazt, rousht, pletcht, hankt. If one thinks one has succeeded, it is because one has unawares changed the terminal flat sound of the root into its corresponding sharp: ropt, luft, breatht (th as in three, not as in thine), rikt, blaist, roosht, pletcht, hankt.—A third category of verbs consists of those that end in any of the sharp consonant sounds except t: viz. p, f, sharp th (as in three), k, s, sh, tch. Here the fact is exactly reversed. Though we spell slapped, quafted, frothed, stacked, passed, slashed, watched, we cannot pronounce these words monosyllabically except as slap't, quaft, frotht, slackt, past, slasht, watcht. If we think
we have succeeded in saying slapd, quaifd, &c., it is because unawares we have changed the sharp terminal of the root into the corresponding flat and said slapd, quaifd, &c.—There remains as a fourth category of verbs all those that end in any of our elementary sounds not yet mentioned: i.e. in one of the liquids l, m, n, r, or in one of the vowels. Now here it is positively optional, so far as vocal possibility is concerned, whether we shall add d or t. We can say killed or kilt, slammed or slamt, grinn’d or grint, murmured or murmurt, displayed or displat, bestowed or bestowt, &c. In fact, however, the English rule is d, and t is the exception. We have a few words like dwelt, dealt, spelt, smelt, spilt, dreamt, learnt, which it is customary to write and pronounce so, though spelled, spilt, smelt, dreamt, dreamed, learnt are not out of fashion. ——These being the facts, it is not difficult to come to a decision on the matter in question. Wherever in Milton we have a verb of the fourth category with a t for the præterite suffix, it will naturally be kept, to indicate that the pronunciation is to be t and not d. Instances of this, however, are not more numerous in his text than in our present practice: perhaps less numerous; for, though I find learnt I also find learnt, and I find dreamed or dream’d three times, but never dreamt. The only doubt then is about præterites of verbs of the third category. The instances first quoted—vanquished, markt, lookt, mixt, belcht—are, it will be observed, all of this category; and it is in such instances that Landor and other purists in spelling would not only preserve Milton’s spelling in his own text, but imitate him themselves. Well, it is not a matter of necessity in order to direct to the pronunciation; for, as we have seen, let us write vanquished, marked, looked, mixed, belched, as persistently as we please, no English reader can pronounce them otherwise than vanquished, looked, &c. The sole intrinsic reason to be given, then, for the t spelling in such words is that it is phonetically truer, and at the same time more curt, than the other. If once, however, we raise the flag of phonetic accuracy in English spelling, there is a world more for us to do than write lookt and mixt, while our neighbours write looked and mixed. Still, in reprinting Milton, the plea might avail if he had himself been constant to his own supposed habit. But he was not so. His admirers in this minute matter, besides forgetting that any credit in it for a great part of his life belonged to the printers, have not sufficiently examined the original texts of his Poems. Not only there do we find many instances of the awkward suffix form ’t instead of simple t—e.g. plat, provok’t, escap’t, danc’t; we find also frequent aberrations into the d form of the suffix where the sound is, and cannot but be, t. If I find plact, I also find plact’; if I find express’d; if I find washt, I also find wash’d; and so I find pass’d, pass’d, march’d, lik’d, pluck’d, shriek’d, possess’d, ask’d, retrench’d &c. Are we to rectify all these into the t form, or are we to follow slavishly the texts in their reasonless changings from t to ’t, and from both to d or ’d, and back again? Surely the most sensible plan is to conform to
present usage, and print uniformly ed in this category of praeterites, unless where, as does happen sometimes, the t form recommends itself by a subtle twitch of fitness at the moment: e.g. P. L., VI. 580, where the cannon in Heaven are seen, and behind each

"A Seraph stood, and in his hand a Reed
Stood waving iipt with fire."

II. Peculiarities worth Preserving.

Hight: drouth: bearth.—The word height, spelt as now, occurs in the 1645 edition of the Minor Poems (Arc. 75); but, with a single exception, in every other of thirty-four occurrences of the word in Milton’s poetry (twenty-six of them in Par. Lost, four in Par. Reg., and three in Sams. Ag.) it is spelt hight. The single exception is at P. L., IX. 167, where the spelling is hight. There can be no doubt that Milton approved of the spelling and pronunciation hight as indicating more correctly the formation of the word by the addition of the suffix th to the adjective high. He seems more dubious about the derivative verb, for he has once hight’nd (P. L., VI. 629), and once hight’nd (P. L., IX. 793).—The word drouth does not occur in the poetry, but the form drouth four times and droughth once (P. R., I. 325). It is to be inferred that Milton preferred the th termination of the word, whether it meant “thirst” (for which drouth is still a Scottish word) or “scarcity of water” (Com. 928).—Twice in the poetry we have the peculiar word bearth, viz.:

"Help to disburden Nature of her Bearth."—P. L., IX. 624.
"Out of the tender mouths of latest bearth."—Ps. VIII. 4.

In all modern editions the word in both places is printed birth. This seems improper. The word birth, so spelt, is frequent in the poetry; but in at least the first of the two instances of bearth the spelling seems to imply a peculiar meaning. It there means “collective produce.”

Sovran: harald.—That Milton’s ear preferred the Italian form sovrano (sovrano) to the French form sovereign, which was the commoner in his time, as it is now, is evident from the fact that his original texts give us nineteen times sovran, thrice sovr’ran, and once soveran (Com. 41), while only once have we sovr’aign (P. R., I. 84). So we have sovrantie once and sov’rantsy once.—In the Minor Poems we have herald and heraldry as now (Lyc. 89, Od. Circ. 10); but, whenever the word occurs in Par. Lost, it is in the form harald, from the Italian haraldo (I. 752, II. 518, XI. 660). In the single occurrence of the word after Par. Lost (Par. Reg., II. 279) there is a relapse into herald. Milton probably thought the sound harald more heroic, and therefore more suitable for Par. Lost.
As examples of a few stray peculiarities take the following:—For charioteer we have charioter (P. L., VI. 390, Od. Fair Inf., 8); and, though in both cases the pronunciation charioteer will suit, and in the second there is a temptation to that pronunciation by the rhyme neer, it is not unlikely that charioter was the sound intended; for Milton uses the double e in mountaneer (Com. 426).—In the same line in which this last word occurs we have bandite for bandit, with a lengthened pronunciation of the second syllable.—Four times for landscape we have lantskip (L. Al. 70, P. L., II. 491, IV. 153, V. 142). The t is insignificant and awkward; but the skip is to be kept.—Senteries occurs P. L., II. 412, and is to be kept.—We have both wreck and wrack in Milton—wreck P. R., II. 228 and S. A. 1044; but more frequently wrack (so or as rack, shipwrack, &c.) The second, where it occurs, ought to be kept, as a genuine old form.—Stupendious, though a solecism or vulgarism now, cannot always have been so; for Richardson gives instances of it from Howell, Henry More, and Barrow. Milton has the word but twice, and both times as stupendous (P. L., X. 351, S. A. 1627).—Terf or terfe for turf is one of the spellings of Milton that have escaped notice. It cannot be accidental, for it occurs wherever the word is used in the poetry—i.e. four times in all. The pronunciation seems to have been terf or tirf.

Voutsafe.—This is one of the quaintest peculiarities of Milton’s spelling. Three times in the poetry we have our present spelling vouchsafe (P. R., II. 210, Ps. LXXX. 14 and 30); but the word occurs seventeen times besides, and always as voutsafe, voutsaf st, voutsafes, voutsaf’t, voutsaf’d, or voutsaf. Now, as the word is compounded of vouch and safe, and as vouchsafe, vouchsave, or the like, with the vouch fully preserved, was the usual spelling of Milton’s predecessors and contemporaries, he must have had a reason for the elliptical form voutsafe. I believe it was his dislike to the sound ch, or to that sound combined with s.—Milton evidently made a study of that quality of style which Bentham called “pronunciability.” His fine ear taught him not only to seek for musical effects, and cadences at large, but also to be fastidious as to syllables, and to avoid harsh or difficult conjunctions of consonants, except when there might be a musical reason for harshness or difficulty. In the management of the letter s, the frequency of which in English is one of the faults of the speech, he will be found, I believe, most careful and skilful. More rarely, I think, than in Shakespeare will one word ending in s be found followed immediately in Milton by another word beginning with the same letter; or, if he does occasionally pen such a phrase as “Moab’s sons,” it will be difficult to find in him, I believe, such a harsher example as earth’s substance, of which many writers would think nothing. The same delicacy of ear is even more apparent in his management of the sh sound. He has it often, of course; but it may be noted that he rejects it in his verse when he can. He writes Basan for Bashan (P. L,
I. 398), Sittim for Shittim (P. L., I. 413), Silo for Shiloh (S. A. 1674), Asdod for Ashdod (S. A. 981), &c. Still more, however, does he seem to have been wary of the compound sound ch as in church. Of his sensitiveness to this sound in excess there is a curious proof in his prose pamphlet entitled An Apology against a Pamphlet called A Modest Confutation, &c., where, having occasion to quote these lines from one of the Satires of his opponent, Bishop Hall,

"

Teach each hollow grove to sound his love,
Wearying echo with one changeless word,"

he adds, ironically, "And so he well might, and all his auditory besides, with his teach each!" There can be little doubt, I think, that it was to avoid this teach each that he took the liberty of Miltonizing the good old English word vouchsafe into voutsafe.

There are some cases where, though there is no peculiarity in the spelling of Milton's texts, a difference of pronunciation is to be borne in mind. Such are his occasional differences from our present accentuation—aspect for aspeet, surface for surfice, infamous for infamous, blasphémous for bladsphemous, brigad for brigade; and his occasional elongations of words—as when he makes three syllables of conscience, five of contemplation, &c. As the metre itself will direct the reader in such cases, it is hardly necessary for the printer to mark them.

III. PECULIARITIES OF GRAMMATICAL INFLECTION.

Such of these as need be noticed here distribute themselves, of course, among the parts of speech subject to inflection. These we shall take in this order—Noun, Adjective (with Adverb), Verb, Pronoun.

NOUN.

Under the head of Gender I have remarked nothing unusual; nor under the head of Number anything more peculiar than the occasional spelling childern, already adverted to, and the occurrence once of the word shoone for shoes (Com. 635). There is a little more under Case, as follows:

It has been already mentioned that the apostrophe in possessive cases is rare in Milton's texts; but that occasionally, and chiefly in proper names, we do have our apostrophe in possessives, as in the examples already quoted.—"Gaza's frontier bounds," "Meander's margent," "Neptune's mace," &c. On the other hand, as we have seen, the apostrophe is sometimes inserted not as a possessive mark at all, but merely as a plural mark: hero's for heroes, myrtle's for myrtles, Gorgons and Hydra's, &c.—In modern English, practice varies as to the
possessive singular of nouns already ending in s. We say the lass’s beauty; but we hear also Mars’s hill (as in the English Bible, Acts xvi. 22), James’s book, and still more certainly Dickens’ works, Lycurgus’ laws, Socrates’ disciples, Aristophanes’ comedies. The better way would be the regular one, Mars’s hill, James’s book, Dickens’ works, &c., though euphony in the case of words of more than two syllables might advise avoiding the inflection altogether by saying “the laws of Lycurgus,” &c. Milton has asses jaw (i.e. in our spelling, ass’s jaw); but his general practice in such words is not to double the s: thus Nereus wrinkled look, Glauceus spell. The necessities of metre would naturally constrain to such forms.—In a possessive followed by the word sake or the word side disagree to the double bilabial makes us sometimes drop the inflection. In addition to “for righteousness sake” such phrases as “for thy name sake” and “for mercy sake” are allowed to pass; bed-side is normal, and river’s side nearly so. Milton’s practice in this respect is rather interesting. He is generally regular: e.g. he has (we insert the apostrophe and spell as now) anger’s sake, truth’s sake, empire’s sake, glory’s sake, honour’s sake, bellie’s sake; but he has also goodness’s sake (Ps. VI. 8), “for intermission sake” (S. A. 1629), and the line “And for his Maker’s image sake exempt” (P. L., XI. 514). So, though he has brethren’s side (Od. Pas. 21) and by mother’s side (P. R., II. 136 and III. 154), he has forest side (P. L., I. 782), “by mossy fountain side” (P. R., II. 184), and thicket side (Com. 185).

Adjective.

The line in Lycidas, “Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,” presents us with the rare positive of our word rather. The positive mickle for much occurs once (Com. 31).—In Milton, as in other writers of his time, adjectives of two syllables and more, which we generally compare now by the expletives more and most, received sometimes the regular inflection for comparison: e.g. famousest (S. A. 982), virtuousest (P. L., VIII. 550), exquisitest (P. R., II. 346).—The curious double comparisons found in Shakespeare and others (more braver, less happier, most unkindest, &c.) are strange to Milton, unless chiepest is taken into the category.—It has already been noted that Milton does not use the word farther in his poetry, nor the word furthest, but only further and farthest, spelt so, or sometimes furder and fardest. The th instead of the th may be regarded as an alternative old inflection.

Verb.

Conjugation.—Bin for been (see ante, p. xxxix.), spred for spread, wraught, saught, &c., for wrought, sought, &c. (see ante, p. xl.), may be regarded as mere varieties of spelling. Seven times in the poetry we
Inflections.

have the word *wept* as now; but once, whether intentionally or not, the form is *wept* (*Ep. March. Winch. 56*). The præterite of the verb *eat* occurs but four times (*E. All. 102, P. L., IX. 781, P. R., I. 352 and II. 274*), never as *ate*, but each time in the form *eat*. That the pronunciation corresponded to the spelling seems proved by the first occurrence, where *eat* rhymes to *feat*:

"With stories told of many a feat,  
How Faery Mab the junkets eat."

In the past participles of those peculiar verbs which are themselves derived from Latin past participles Milton, like Shakespeare and others, sometimes prefers the original Latin form to the elongated form with the *ed* suffix: *e.g.*

"Who ever by consulting at thy shrine  
Return'd the wiser, or the more *instruct*?"—*P. R.*, I. 439.

"What I can do or offer is *suspect*."—*P. R.*, II. 399.

"Which when Bêlzebub perceiv'd, then whom,  
Satan except, none higher sat."—*P. L.*, II. 300.

"Of pleasure *situate* in Hill and Dale."—*P. L.*, VI. 641.*

"But to destruction sacred and *devote*."—*P. L.*, III. 208.

"Bright effluence of bright essence *increate*."—*P. L.*, III. 6.

Mr. Abbott, in his Shakesperian Grammar, quoting similar instances from Shakespeare and Bacon, includes them under a more general law. Quoting from Dr. Morris, he observes that it was not uncommon in Early English to drop the suffix for the past tense and the past participle in verbs, whether Latin or Anglo-Saxon, ending already in the sound of *d* or *t*; and he gives, as examples from Shakespeare, *acquit* for *acquitted*, *bloat* for *blothed*, *disjoint* for *disjointed*, *enshield* for *enshielded*, *graft* for *grafted*, *quit* for *quitted*, *taint* for *tainted*, *wed* for *wedded*, *waft* for *wafted*, *wet* for *wetted*, *whist* for *whisted* (i.e. *hushed*). Instances of this kind are, I think, rarer in Milton; but we find *uplift* for *uplifted* (*P. L.*, I. 193), *yield* standing probably for the past indicative *yielded* (*S. A. 259*), and (*Od. Nat. 64*) the Shakespearian *whist* for *whisted*:

"The windes with wonder *whist*  
Smoothly the waters kist."

The following are some other peculiarities in the conjugation of strong verbs, with references to passages:—

_Sung for sang; sprung for sprang; sunk for sank; and frore for frozen* (*P. L.*, II. 595); _shaked for shaken* (*Od. F. Inf. 44*); _shook for shaken* (*P. L.*, VI. 219); _stole for stolen* (*P. L.*, IV. 719); _took for taken* (*Com. 558*); _mistook for mistaken* (*Arc. 4*); _strook for struck* (*P. L.*, II. 165 and other places).

The Miltonic conjugations of *sing* and *strike* are especially interesting, and are discussed more minutely in the Notes to *P. L.*, III. 383 and *P. L.*, II. 165.
Mr. Abbott informs us that the old participial prefix *y* (standing for the German *ge*) is found only two or three times in Shakespeare, as in *yclept, ylad, yslaked*. In Spenser, with his studied archaism, it is frequent. Milton has it but rarely—*ychained* (Od. Nat. 155), *yclept* (L'All. 12). See notes on these passages: also on *russy-fringed* (Com. 890), and *star-ypointing* (On Shak. 4).

**Inflection for Person and Mood.**—Once (P. L., XI. 369) we have *slepst* for *sleptst*; where, if it is not a misprint, the *t* is omitted for ease of sound.—Milton had learnt to prefer the *s* inflection, originally Northern English, to the *th* inflection, more South-English, for the third person singular indicative. Thus he has *loves*, rather than *lovesth*; *brings*, for *bringeth*; *sees*, for *seeth*; *seems*, for *seemeth*. Occasionally, however, he has the *th* form: e.g. *singeth* (L'All. 65), *saith* (Ps. II. 11), *lieth* (Ep. Hobs. II. 1), *shew'th and indu'dth* (Sonnet II.) He has *quoth* twice (Lyc. 107 and Ep. Hobs. II. 17). *Hath* is incessant with him, while *has* eludes search. *Doth* he is so far from avoiding that Todd's verbal index registers twenty-four occurrences of it against only one of *does* (Com. 223). He uses the verb *be* indicatively (e.g. Com. 12, "Yet some there be") as well as subjunctively (L'All. 132, "If Jonson's learned sock be on"), imperatively (P. L., X. 769, "Be it so"), and infinitively (P. L., X. 877, "longing to be seen").

**Pronouns.**

Like Shakespeare and others of our older writers, Milton employs the nominative plural form *ye* occasionally for the objective *you*: e.g. Com. 216, "I see *ye* visibly," and 1020, "She can teach *ye* how to climb."—The form *thir* which he frequently substitutes for *their* is a mere way of unemphatic spelling, and can hardly be regarded as commemorating the older *hira* and *hir*, the original possessives plural of the third personal pronoun, for which *their* came in by loan from the possessive plural of the demonstrative.—By far the most important inquiry, however, under the present head, relates to Milton's use of the possessive singular of the third personal pronoun (which grammarians now prefer to call the demonstrative pronoun of the third person) in its three gender forms, *his, her, its*.

*His, her, its:—* The brunt of the inquiry falls on the form of *its*. This word, it is well known, is one of the greatest curiosities in the English language, not being a genuine old English word at all, but an upstart of the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, seldom used even then, or for a good while afterwards, and not fully admitted till the reign of Charles II. It may be well here to give its history a little more in detail. The best essays on the subject known to me are those of the late Professor Craik (English of Shakespeare, ed. 1859, pp. 97—104),
the late Mr. Thomas Watts of the British Museum (quoted in Latham's *English Language*, ed. 1862, pp. 527—529), and Mr. W. Aldis Wright (*Bible Word-Book*, under the word *It*); but additional facts have been brought to light by Dr. Morris (*Early English Alliterative Poems*, Preface, xxvi., xxvii., and *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, pp. 119—124). Farther research is even yet desirable, and every addition will help.

In the old English, called Anglo-Saxon, the third personal pronoun was declined thus:—

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The neuter nominative and accusative, it will be seen, was *hit*, and the neuter possessive, as well as the masculine possessive, was *his*. But "neuter" in Anglo-Saxon did not mean precisely what it does in modern English. We have no proper grammatical recognition of gender in modern English nouns, but make all names for male living beings masculine, all names for females feminine, and all names for lifeless things neuter, except when we personify them. In old English, or Anglo-Saxon, however, just as in Greek and Latin, and modern German, there was a true grammatical distinction of gender, and the names of lifeless things were distributed into the three genders—masculine, feminine, and neuter. Thus, *gád* (*breath or wind*) is masculine in Anglo-Saxon; and so, in John iii. 8, where our present version has, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof," the A.-S. has "Gást oréðath thar he wilé, and thó gehýrst his stefne." Again, *Judea*, the name of the country, is feminine; and so, in Luke xxi. 21, where our version has "Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out," the A.-S. has "Thonne fleoth on múntas thá tha on Judea synd; and nythre ne ástigath tha tha on hyre middele synd." Finally, *sæd* (*a seed*) and *trewō* (*a tree*) are both neuter; and so, in Matt. xiii. 32, where our version, respecting the mustard seed, says, "Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but, when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it," the A.-S. has "Thæt is ealra sæda læst: sóthlice thonne *hit* wyxth, *hit* is ealra wyrtā mást, and *hit* wyxth trewō; swá thæt heofnance fulhas cumath and eardiath on *his* bogum." Take another example. In Mark ix. 43—47, where our authorized version has "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off . . . and if thy foot offend thee, cut it off . . . and if thine eye offend
Thee, pluck it out,” the neuter accusative it serving for all the three nouns, we read in the Anglo-Saxon thus:—“Gif thin hand thé swicath, ceorf hi of . . . and gif thin fót swicath thé, ceorf hine of . . . gif thin eage thé swicath, weorp hit út”; where the grammatical genders in A.-S. of the three nouns, hand (fem.) foot (masc.) and eye (neut.), are precisely discriminated by the form of the accusative of the pronoun fitted to each.

Like every other portion of English inflected speech, the third personal pronoun sustained remarkable changes in passing out of the old Englisc or Anglo-Saxon stage of the book-language into what is called Early English, or the book-English of the fourteenth century. Even in that century, however, there was no uniformity in the usage of different parts of the pronoun by English writers, each district or dialect having forms for some parts peculiar to itself. Chaucer, for example, persevered in the forms her, hire, or hir, for the possessive plural, and hem for the accusative plural, long after northern writers had adopted their and them. Perhaps not till the close of the fifteenth century, or the first half of the sixteenth, when compromises among the dialects for the formation of a standard book-speech had been pretty well completed, could a fixed declension of the pronoun for all literary England have been written down. Then in our usual spelling it stood as follows:—

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On comparing this with the declension in the old literary Englisc or Anglo-Saxon, what had happened in the interval, it will be seen, consisted of three things:—I. Neglect and confusion of Inflections. This is seen in the loss of the proper old A.-S. accusative sing. masc. hine (still traceable in such phrases in Devonshire and the south of England generally as “I seed ’en”: “Heave a stone at ’en”); also in the loss of the old fem. acc. sing. hi, and of the old dative neut. him (which had been maintained till pretty late in some districts); and further in the extension of him from the dat. sing. masc. to the purposes of the acc. sing. masc. as well, so as to cover the lost hine, and the similar extension of her from the gen. and dat. sing. fem. to the acc. sing. fem., so as to cover the lost hi. II. Interblending with other Pronouns. This is seen in the substitution of she for the old nom. fem. sing. heó—said she being the nom. fem. sing. of the old definite article, or demonstrative pronoun, se, seó, that (appropriated by northern writers for the purpose as early as the twelfth century, and passing through such variations as seó, scho, sco, scé, sche); and it is also seen in the substitution of the plural cases of that same definite article, or demonstrative pronoun—tha,
Inflections.

thāra, thām, tha—bodily, though with the usual corruption and confusion of inflections, for the cashiered old native plurals hi, hira, him, hit. This last substitution was introduced in the North in the thirteenth century; and Chaucer, as we have said, stood out against it, as far as the genitive and accusative cases were concerned. III. The operation of the H-dropping Tendency. This tendency, so natural to the Southern English, had plenty of scope in a pronoun all whose parts originally began with h. Even yet, in rapid colloquial speech, we hear, from persons in whom the h-dropping tendency is by no means pronounced, such phrases as “I did say it to ‘im, but ‘e drove me to it by ‘is conduct to ‘er”; and that the same habit was common long ago, not among uneducated persons merely, is proved by the fact that in Early English writings we find ‘a as a distinct form for he (perpetuated in Dame Quickley’s English, and other such English, in Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, e.g. “’a must needs,” 2 Hen. VI. iv. 2), and ’em for hem or them (frequent even in the classical writing of Addison’s time, e.g. “take ’em and wear ’em”). The stress of the tendency, however, fell on the neuter singular of the pronoun. The old A.-S. hit passed, in books, at first optionally, into it, but at last decidedly and conclusively into it. The dropping of the h in hit is as early as the twelfth century; in the fourteenth century it and hit are found competing with each other, some districts and dialects preferring one, and others the other; in Chaucer’s texts both are found, though it predominates; but by the sixteenth century hit is obsolete in literature and it established. Not that the form hit had even then totally vanished. It seems to have persevered for some time in the vernacular of Lancashire and the Western Midlands generally; and it persists yet most strongly in the vernacular Scotch. In any village over a large part of Scotland to this day one hears continually from a schoolboy such phrases as “That’s hit,” for “That’s it,” and this not from any casual insertion of the aspirate (which is a fault unknown in that region), but from the unbroken tradition of the genuine A.-S. hit. Even there, however, just as over all England, it has been substantially universal in book-speech since the sixteenth century.

How about the possessive or genitive forms of the pronoun between the fourteenth century and the sixteenth? So far there was no difficulty. His, the proper old masculine possessive, went with he (nom.) and him (acc.), for males; her, the proper old feminine possessive, went with she (nom.) and her (acc.) for females; and the arrangement has held good to our day. Where the difficulty came to be felt was in the case of the much more numerous neuter nouns, or names for all inanimate objects. His was still, theoretically, as we have marked it in the last declension, the proper neuter poss. sing., as well as the proper masc. poss. sing.; but practice and theory had begun to conflict. So long indeed as the hit form of the nominative or accusative neuter was kept up generally, or in any district, the difficulty hardly appeared.
The old neuter possessive his could still vindicate itself by its obvious etymological connexion with hit. But, when the h was dropped, and hit became it generally or locally, there came a flutter among the grammarians. What had his to do with it? Was not his the masculine possessive, going properly with he and him? Why let it, which had not an h to show for itself, claim the same form? In this emergency we see a struggle of methods:—(1) To distribute the confusion by obliging the feminine form her to relieve the supposed masculine form his occasionally in the duty of serving as a possessive for it. The late Mr. Thomas Watts’s quotations of Numbers iv. 9 from some of our versions of the Bible in chronological series are very pertinent here. In Wycliffe’s Bible (1389) the text runs, “And thei shulen take the iacyntyn mantil with the which thei shulen cover the candelstik with the lanterns and her toonges and snyters.” In the contemporary variety of Wycliffe’s called Purvey’s, however, we find “Thei schulen take also a mentill of iacynt with which thei schulen hile the candelstike with his e lanternes and tongis and snytels.” In Tyndale’s Pentateuch (1530) there is a return to her in the text and its continuation, thus: “And they shall take a cloth of jacynte and cover the candelsticke of light and hir lampes and hir snoffers and fyre pannes, and all hir oyle vessels which they occupye aboute it, and shall put upon her and on all hir instrumentes a coverynge of taxus skynnes, and put it upon staves.” In Coverdale’s version (1535) his reappears: “And they shall take a yalowe clothe and cover the candelsticke of light therwith, and his lampes, with his snoffers and outquenchers.” In Matthews’s Bible (1537) we have the feminine again, “And they shall take a cloth of iacincte, and cover the candelstycle of lyght and her lampes and her snoffers and fyre pannes.” Finally, in our authorized version (1611), “And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it.” These vicissitudes of his and her in one passage seem clearly to prove that between the fourteenth century and the seventeenth her was allowed to compete with his in the office of possessive for the neuter it. Here we may detect, if we choose, a survival of the idea of grammatical gender, even in a case where the recollection of the Anglo-Saxon gender of a particular noun had perished; for candel-staef and candel-sticca, the two words for “candlestick” in A.-S., are both masculine. (2) Another plan was to avoid giving it a possessive form at all, and resort to such substitutes as of it, thereof, or the repetition of the possessive of the noun designated by the pronoun. We have an example in Matth. xiii. 32, in the authorized version, where the old Englisc on his hogum, or “on his boughs” (i.e. the boughs of the tree from the mustard-seed), is evaded and becomes “in the branches of it”; and another in John iii. 8 in the same version, where the Anglo-Saxon thū gehyrst his (i.e. the wind’s) stefne becomes “thou hearest the sound thereof.” (3) Still the need of
a distinct possessive for *it* was felt; and, at length, a third plan was adopted. The hint for this plan seems to have been furnished by the dialect of the West Midlands (Lancashire, &c.) There, if not elsewhere in England, the habit of ignoring inflections in every possible case had been pushed so far as to bring about such phrases as "The King wife" for "the King's wife" (perpetuated perhaps in such occasional phrases yet as "hell-fire," "river-side," "Lady-day"), and the same habit had been extended to the neuter pronoun *hit*, so as to make it indeclinable, or the same for nominative, possessive, and accusative. "Hit dedes of dethe duren there yet" ("Its deeds of death endure there yet") and "Of *hit* woe will I wete" ("Of its woe will I wit") are examples quoted by Dr. Morris from English poems of that dialect in the fourteenth century; and he reports that this possessive use of *hit* is quite common in those poems. Now, by extension, this possessive use of *hit* was easily transferred, in other dialects, to the *it* which had become the substitute for *hit*; and thus, in the sixteenth century, if not earlier, the duties of the possessive case, in addition to those of the other two, were imposed on the simple *it*. Mr. Aldis Wright, in his *Bible Word-Book*, quotes instances from Udal's *Erasmus* (1548), and from the Geneva Bible (1579): e.g. "Love and devocion towards God also hath *it* infancie, and it hath *it* comying forwarde in groweth of age"; "The evangelicall simplicitee hath a politique cast of *it* owne too"; "The world hath *it* glorie." There is no doubt that such instances from sixteenth century writings could be multiplied, and that *it* was then a rather favourite competitor in certain districts with *his*, *her*, of *it*, *thereof*, &c., for the place of the possessive neuter of the third personal pronoun. In the Lancashire dialect the idiom still lasts, "*it* mother" still passing there for "its mother." (4) But a possessive in *t* was an anomaly; and so there sprang up a fourth device. As *it* was a stray and seemingly kinless word, why not subject it to the common rule, and form a possessive for it by the ordinary plan of clapping on an *s*? As they said "Kit's hat," or "Bet's bonnet," why not say of the hat "it's band," or of the bonnet "it's ribbon"? The only impediment seemed to be that colloquially the form *it's* was in use for *it is*, as in the phrase "*it's* true." But then that could be got rid of by pronouncing and writing the contraction for *it is* in another way, 'tis, so as to leave *it's* free for the new purpose. Accordingly we find *it's* as a possessive creeping into use late in the sixteenth century. Where, or by whom, it was first used will perhaps never be known. I should not wonder if the form was of northern origin, *s* being a favourite inflectional factotum in northern parts, and the form *it* having been adopted there for book-use, though *hit* was vernacular. The oldest instances of *it's* quoted by Mr. Aldis Wright are from Florio's *World of Words* (1598), and the same writer's *Montaigne* (1603); but, as instances are frequent there—"for it's owne sake," "science had it's of-spring," "doe it's best," "it's name," &c.—it seems likely that Florio only confirmed a previous
custom. At all events, the mongrel had been born in Florio’s time, and had begun a career more remarkable than has fallen to the chance of perhaps any other word in the English language.

The career, as we now know, was to end in absolute victory. *Its* has become the established neuter possessive of the third personal pronoun in English; it is so habitual a word with us that it is almost sure to occur once or twice in any few continuous sentences; we are puzzled to think how it could ever have been opposed, or how people could have got on without it. And yet it *was* opposed; it had to fight its way, and beat its competitors by long effort and trial; and it was not till the end of the seventeenth century that the victory was finally won. The farther history of the word as far as 1674, the date of Milton’s death, is all that concerns us here.

In our authorized version of the Bible (1611) the word *its* does not once occur. In one passage in our modern copies, indeed (Levit. xxv. 5), we read “That which groweth of *its* own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap”; but this is a printer’s substitution for the text of the original edition, “That which groweth of *it* owne accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap.” While in this passage the authorized version uses that now obsolete possessive form *it* which we have marked as the third method in our historical enumeration, the prevailing methods there are the first and second. Evasion by “*of it,*” “*thereof,*” &c., is common enough; but, where the evasion is not resorted to, the true old form *his,* without recourse to the alternative *her,* is the rule. Whether this was from a cognisance of the fact that *his* was the true old neuter form, as well as the masculine, it might be difficult to determine. The example already given from Numbers iv. 9—“the candlestick of the light, and *his* lamps, and *his* tongs, and *his* snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto *it*”—rather suggests that it was; and so do Gen. i. 11, “The fruit-tree yielding fruit after *his* kind, whose seed is in itself,” and the phrase, Luke xiv. 34, “If the salt have lost *his* savour, wherewith shall *it* be seasoned?” In any case, the utter omission of the word *its* from the authorized version, though that word was already in existence in London, seems to prove that it was not considered sufficiently respectable for an elevated purpose.

Nevertheless, the word was pushing itself into use at that time colloquially, and in popular, and especially dramatic, literature. Shakespeare’s practice with respect to it may be taken as significant of what was going on around him. Mr. Aldis Wright finds the possessive form *it* in the First Folio exactly fifteen times, and the form *its* exactly ten times; and he quotes (*Bible Word-Book*) all the instances of each. Shakespeare, he proves, accepted *its* as a word that might be used occasionally, and that sometimes recommended itself by a necessity or a kind of emphatic fitness. Overwhelmingly predominant, however, in his text is the continued use of *his* where we should now employ *its.*
Inflections.

Hardly a page or two of any good edition, when carefully read, but will furnish an example. Thus:

"When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it shines."—Hamlet, I. 1.

"Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act."—Ibid. I. 3.

"The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die;
But, if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity."—Sonnet xciv.

"Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind;
And which governs me to go about
Doth part his function and is partly blind,
Seems seeing, but effectually is out;
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch:
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch."—Sonnet cxiv.

"Since nature cannot choose his origin."—Hamlet, I. 4.

There are also instances in Shakespeare of her where we should now use its, though these are rarer, and in some of them one may detect a tinge of that personifying mode of thought which might suggest her now in similar cases: e.g.—

"Let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire."—Hamlet, iii. 4.

"For holy offices I have a time; a time
To think upon the part of business which
I bear in the state; and nature does require
Her times of preservation."—Henry VIII., iii. 2.

Some instances of its have been produced, I believe, from Bacon; and it has been found in Sylvester's Du Bartas (1605), and not unfrequently in Ben Jonson, and the dramatists and other popular writers of the reigns of James and Charles I. I have myself come upon it easily enough in the prose and verse of Drummond of Hawthornden between 1616 and 1630, sometimes in cases where a contemporary southern writer would pretty surely have used his; I have, on the whole, an impression that the northern writers and speakers of that time used it more frequently than the southern; but, as I have found it in the title of a London book of 1651 in so emphatic a form as this, "England's Deliverance from the Northern Presbyter compared with its deliverance from the Roman Papacy," and as I have also found it apparently quite at home in Sir Henry Vane's mystical treatise "The Retired Man's Meditations," published in 1655, and in other writings of that date, I cannot doubt that the word was quite an acceptable one in London in the middle of the seventeenth century.
The exact position of the word in England in the beginning of Charles's reign is perhaps best indicated in Butler's English Grammar of 1633. There it distinctly figures as a recognised word; for Butler, in his table of the Possessives of the three Personal Pronouns, at p. 40, gives them, in due form, thus:—(1) Sing. MY, Plur. OUR; (2) Sing. THY, Plur. YOUR; (3) Sing. HIS, HER, ITS, Plur. THEIR. Yet the reader is staggered by Butler's own practice in the pages of this very Grammar. Thus, speaking of the letter W, he writes, "W hath taken his name, not of his force, as other letters, but of his shape, which consisteth of two U's." Again he writes, "A vowel hath a perfect sound, without the help of another letter: and therefore his only force or sound is his name." So one of his sections is headed "Of a Verb: I, Of His Cases and other Accidents." I have indeed met in his Grammar the phrase "What an eas and certainti it woode bee, both to the readers and writers, that every letter were content with its own sound;" and there may be other such examples: but certainly his came more naturally to him than its.

What of Milton? By diligent search one may come, here and there, on an its in his prose-writings; but that even in his prose he disliked and avoided the form seems proved by such passages as the following in his Elementary Latin Grammar entitled *Accedence Comment't Grammar* (published in 1669, though doubtless written long before):—"The "Superlatve exceedeth his Positive in the highest degree, as duris-"simus, hardest; and it is formed of the first case of his Positive that "ends in is, by putting thereto simus"; "There be three Concordes or "Agreements: The first is of the Adjective with his Substantive; The "Second is of the Verb with his Nominative Case; The Third is of "the Relative with his Antecedent." Here, it will be observed, Milton exactly conforms to Butler in 1633, or is even more resolute for the use of his as a true neuter possessive than Butler had been. Let us pass, however, from Milton's prose to his poetry.

In Milton's poetry, I believe, it has been definitely ascertained, he uses the word its only three times, viz. *Od. Nat.* 106, *Par. Lost*, I. 254, and *Par. Lost*, IV. 813. Here are those three memorable passages:—

"Nature that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat, the Airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was don,
And that her raign had here its last fulfilling;
She knew such harmony alone

"Hail horroures, hail
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time,
The mind is its own place, and in it self
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n."—*Par. Lost*, I. 250—255.
Three times, therefore, in his whole life did Milton use the word its in his poetry—once about Christmas-day 1629, when he was one-and-twenty years of age; and twice between 1658 and 1665, when he was between his fiftieth year and his fifty-seventh. If the passages are studied, it will be seen that there was a certain necessity for using its in each case. Her in the first passage would have been ambiguous between “Nature” and “reign”; and, though its might have passed, hardly well. In the second passage his would have been ambiguous between the speaker, Satan, and “mind”; and, though her might have passed, it would have been with a loss of the emphasis implied in its. In the third passage, his would again have been ambiguous between the person, Satan, and the abstract noun “falsehood”; and, though her might have passed, it would have personified “falsehood” rather incongruously with the occasion—which is Satan’s return to his own shape, not a feminine one, at the touch of Ithuriel’s spear.—The only wonder is that a similar stress of meaning and context did not oblige Milton to write or dictate its much more frequently.

How does he get on without it? Marvellously well. In the first place, the very idea or peculiar mental turn or act involved in the word its or its equivalents (of it, thereof, &c.) was somehow far rarer in the writing of Milton’s time than it is in writing now. Mr. Craik’s remark on this subject is both true and acute. “The most curious thing of all in the history of the word its,” he says, “is the extent to which, before its recognition as a word admissible in serious composition, even the occasion for its employment was avoided or eluded. This is very remarkable in Shakespeare. The very conception which we express by its probably does not occur once in his works for ten times that it is to be found in any modern writer. So that we may say the invention, or adoption, of this form has changed not only our English style, but even our manner of thinking.” What Mr. Craik here says of Shakespeare is true of Milton. Perhaps it is even truer of Milton. That he was much more chary of the use of the word its than Shakespeare had been appears from the fact that, though Shakespeare had used the word ten times before 1616, Milton in his literary life, stretching from 1625 to 1674, used it in his poetry but three times. But even of the substitutes or equivalents he is sincerer than Shakespeare. The odd possessive form it, found in Shakespeare fifteen times, is not found in Milton’s poetry once. The word thereof, if Todd’s verbal index is to be trusted, occurs but seven times, all in Paradise Lost. In not one of these occurrences, however, does the word stand for our possessive its, but only for “of it” in a different sense from its; and indeed six of them are mere quotations
of the Scripture text, "In the day that thou eatest thereof." In short, for the expression of our conception its in a single word, when he did want to express it, Milton confined himself, even more strictly than Shakespeare, to the alternative of his or her.

On the whole, her seems to have been Milton's favourite. Here are a few examples:

"His form had not yet lost
All her Original brightness."—P. L., I. 592.

"Th' ascending pile
Stood fixt her stately hight."—P. L., I. 723.

"Th' Ethereal mould
Incappable of stain would soon expel
Her mischief."—P. L., II. 141.

"This Desart soile
Wants not her hidden lustre, Gemms and Gold."—P. L., II. 271.

"If I that Region lost,
All usurpation hence expell'd, reduce
To her original darkness."—P. L., II. 984.

But, though Milton uses her for our its (sometimes with an approach to personification, but not always) in cases where Shakespeare would have used his, Mr. Craik is wrong, I think, in saying that his personifications by his are rare, and still more wrong in saying he "never uses his in a neuter sense." Surely, the grammatical terms Superlative, Adjective, Verb, and Relative, are neuter enough; and yet to each of these, as we have seen, Milton fits the word his. But take a few examples from his poetry:

"The Thunder,
Wing'd with red Lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts."—P. L., I. 176.

"Southward through Eden went a River large,
Nor chang'd his course."—P. L., IV. 224.

"the neather Flood,
Which from his darksom passage now appeares."—Ibid. 232.

There stood a Hill not far whose griesly top
Belch'd fire and rowling smoak; the rest entire
Shon with a glossie scurif, undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic Ore,
The work of Sulphur."—P. L., I. 673.

"It was a Mountain at whose verdant feet
A spatious plain outstretch't in circuit wide
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd."—P. R., III. 255.

"Error by his own arms is best evinc't."—P. R., IV. 235.

Here is a passage in which his and her, both in a neuter sense, are companions:

"O that torment should not be confin'd
To the bodies wounds and sores
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, brest, and reins;
Inflections.

But must secret passage find
To th' inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey!"—S.A. 612, 613.

This little Essay on the history of the word *Its* in connexion with Milton may be concluded with a practical application.

In the Library of the British Museum there is a copy of the tiny First (1645) edition of Milton's Minor Poems, on the blank page at the end of which some old possessor of the volume has left written, in minute handwriting, the following piece of verse. We print it in our present spelling:—

"AN EPIGRAPH.

He whom Heaven did call away
Out of this hermitage of clay
Has left some relics in this urn
As a pledge of his return.
Meanwhile the Muses do deplore
The loss of this their paramour,
With whom he sported ere the day
Budded forth its tender ray.
And now Apollo leaves his lays,
And puts on cypress for his bays;
The sacred sisters tune their quills
Only to the blubbering rills,
And while his doom they think upon
Make their own tears their Helicon,
Leaving the two-topt mount divine
To turn votaries to his shrine.

Think not, reader, me less blest,
Sleeping in this narrow cist,
Than if my ashes did lie hid
Under some stately pyramid.
If a rich tomb makes happy, then
That bee was happier far than men
Who, busy in the thymy wood,
Was fettered by the golden flood,
Which from the amber-weeping tree
Distilleth down so plenteously;
For so this little wanton elf
Most gloriously enshrined itself—
A tomb whose beauty might compare
With Cleopatra's sepulchre.

In this little bed my dust
Incurtained round I here intrust,
While my more pure and nobler part
Lies entombed in every heart.

Then pass on gently, ye that mourn
Touch not this mine hollowed urn.
These ashes which do here remain
A vital tincture still retain;
A seminal form within the deeps
Of this little chaos sleeps;
The thread of life untwisted is
Milton's English:

Into its first consistencies;
Infant nature cradled here
In its principles appear;
This plant thus calcined into dust
In its ashes rest it must,
Until sweet Psyche shall inspire
A softening and prolific fire,
And in her fostering arms enfold
This heavy and this earthy mould.
Then as I am I'll be no more,
But bloom and blossom [as b[efore],
When this cold numnness shall retreat
By a more than chemic heat."

Subscribed, immediately under the last line, are two initials, the first unfortunately so blurred by the Museum Library stamp that it cannot be distinctly made out, but the second distinctly "M"; and appended is the date "December 1647." My acquaintance with these lines dates from about 1858, when, having occasion to consult the volume containing them, I read them and took a note of them. Knowing the handwriting not to be Milton's, and seeing no reason otherwise for believing Milton to be the author, I thought nothing more necessary at the time; but in May 1866, recurring to the volume for another purpose, I thought it as well to make a copy of the pretty little curiosity, heading it in my note-book "Copy of M.'s lines, in a contemporary hand (not Milton's) on the fly-page at the end of a copy of Milton's Poems, edit. 1645, in Brit. Mus. (press-mark 238 h. 5)." Thinking it not unlikely that the blurred first initial might be "J," I added "J. M." as the subscribed initials, only attaching a query to the "J" to signify uncertainty.

My friend, Mr. Henry Morley, Professor of English Literature in University College, London, chancing afterwards to consult the same volume, was also attracted by the lines, and, not doubting that the handwriting was Milton's, and that the signature was "J. M.," very naturally concluded that the piece was a hitherto unknown poem by Milton, written by him for preservation, in Dec. 1647, in one of his copies of his volume of Minor Poems printed two years before. He communicated it, therefore, to the Times newspaper, where it was published under the title "An unpublished Poem by Milton," and with the signature as "J. M.," on the 16th of July, 1868. Immediately there arose a controversy on the subject, which lasted some weeks. The controversy took a wide range, and passed at length into a mere cloud of verbal criticism, with illustrative quotations from old poets, only slightly relevant to the real question. Important and relevant evidence on the negative side, however, did come out at once. Mr. Bond and Mr. Rye of the British Museum, and Mr. W. Aldis Wright of Cambridge, with other authorities, at once declared the handwriting not to be Milton's,—to be so different from Milton's that it was inconceivable how anyone acquainted with Milton's hand could possibly mistake the
one for the other. It was found also, on close examination of the
dubious initial of the signature, that it was most probably not a “f”; and
Mr. Bond made so sure that it was a P that, in sending to the
Times (July 30) an exact transcript of the original, letter for letter, he
gave the subscription as positively “P. M., 10<sup>th</sup>, 1647.” These items
of evidence at once arrested the tendency to agree with Mr. Morley in
ascribing the poem to Milton. Nevertheless, as people had taken a
liking for the quaint little thing itself, argument for the possibility of its
being Milton’s did not wholly cease; and I believe there are still some
persons who think that, after all, it may be Milton’s.

This is not the place for renewing the controversy in its whole ex-
tent; and I need only repeat my conviction that the sum of the evidence,
external and internal, taken in every possible form of both kinds, is
absolutely conclusive against the hypothesis that the poem is Milton’s.
One item of the internal argument, however, does concern us here. It
may be called the argument from the <i>its</i> test. I proposed this test at
the time, and I still rely upon it.

We have seen Milton’s habit in respect of the word <i>its</i>. We have
seen how wonderfully he eludes the very necessity for using such a
word, how the word occurs but three times in all his poetry, and how
in every other case, where the necessity for such a word is not eluded,
he uses <i>his</i> or <i>her</i> where we should now use <i>its</i>. How stands the
Epitaph in this respect? It consists of but fifty-four lines, and yet the
word <i>its</i> occurs four times in it:

“Ere the day
Budded forth <i>its</i> tender ray.”

“The thread of life untwisted is
Into <i>its</i> first consistencies.”

“Infant nature cradled here
In <i>its</i> principles appear.”

“This plant thus calcined into dust
In <i>its</i> ashes rest it must
Until sweet Psyche,” &c.

Now, if the professed date of the Epitaph had been some date before
the end of the sixteenth century, and if the question had been as to the
authenticity of the Epitaph as professing to be of such a date, these
four occurrences of <i>its</i> in it would have proved it to be a forgery. The
Chatterton antiques fell before this test among others. The question,
however, is not whether the poem is a genuine production of somebody
in 1647. That is not denied. The word <i>its</i>, as we have seen, had
crept pretty widely into use by that time, and was favoured in particular
districts and by particular writers; and the Epitaph, were it nothing
else, would be an interesting additional illustration of the fact. But
the <i>its</i> starts into great consequence when it is proposed to attribute
the piece to Milton. Can it be supposed that a pronominal form which
occurs but three times in the whole body of Milton's poetry, ranging over the entire fifty years of his literary life from 1624 to 1674, should occur four times in a single piece of fifty-four lines written by him some hour in December, 1647? Mr. Morley suggests that, whatever was Milton's general habit, the exigencies of the thought and syntax in this particular piece required the four occurrences of the word its. This, however, would but alter the form of the marvel. How was it that the very necessity for the use of the word, though Milton felt it but three times at long intervals through the rest of fifty years, came upon him with such resistless force in one fell hour in December 1647 as to extract from him then four repetitions of the word? But I deny that there was in fact any such exigency in this piece as to require Milton to depart from his custom of his or her. Take the first occurrence of its in the piece:—

"With whom he sported ere the day
Budded forth its tender ray."

Here I do not see that the very slight ambiguity that might arise from the use of his would have prevented Milton from using that form, as he has in Comus, 977-8:—

"And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye."

Take, again, the third instance, with its abominable grammar—

"Infant nature cradled here
In its principles appear."

Here it would surely have been more natural for Milton to use her. Thus, Par. Lost, II. 911:—

"The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave."

For, in this case, in face of the fact that the writer almost personifies "nature" by the epithet "infant" and the image "cradled," how can one find a reason for the use of its in a supposed desire of the writer strongly to indicate lifelessness or sexlessness? Such a subtlety might apply better in the other two cases:—

"The thread of life untwisted is
Into its first consistencies."

"This plant thus calcined into dust
In its ashes rest it must."

I have found no passage in Milton in which "thread" occurs in a connexion to show whether he would have used his or her with it. Nor for "plant" either have I found any such passage, unless this (Com. 620—623) be one:—

"well-skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray."
In short, the Epitaph must have been written by one of those persons in Britain in 1647 who had adopted the word *its* regularly into their vocabulary, and whose thinking had taken on the peculiar syntactical trick which familiarity with the word prompts and facilitates. Milton, most conspicuously, was not one of those persons.

**IV. SYNTAX AND IDIOM.**

Prefix to Dr. E. A. Abbott’s excellent *Shakespearian Grammar* is a little essay, in which the author sums up his observations of the differences between Elizabethan English and the present English. Although he includes all parts of Grammar, the stress of his remarks is on what we here call Syntax and Idiom.

“Elizabethan English, on a superficial view, appears to present this great point of difference from the English of modern times, that in the former any irregularities whatever, whether in the formation of words or in the combination of words into sentences, are allowable.”——

Such is Mr. Abbott’s general proposition; and he goes on to class under two heads the most notable of the so-called “irregularities”:

I. “In the first place, almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech. An adverb can be used as a verb, ‘They askance their eyes’; as a noun, ‘the backward and abyss of time’; or as an adjective, ‘a seldom pleasure.’ Any noun, adjective, or neuter verb can be used as an active verb. You can ‘happy’ your friend, ‘malice’ or ‘foot’ your enemy, or ‘fail’ an axe on his neck. An adjective can be used as an adverb, and you can speak and act ‘easy,’ ‘free,’ ‘excellent’; or as a noun, and you can talk of ‘fair’ instead of ‘beauty,’ and ‘a pale’ instead of ‘a paleness.’ . . .” II.

“In the second place, every variety of apparent grammatical inaccuracy meets us: he for him, him for he; spoke and took for spoken and taken; plural nominatives with singular verbs; relatives omitted where they are now considered necessary; unnecessary antecedents inserted; shall for will, should for would, would for wish; to omitted after ‘I ought,’ inserted after ‘I durst’; double negatives; double comparatives and superlatives; such followed by which, that by as; as used for ‘as if,’ that for ‘so that’; and, lastly, some verbs apparently with two nominatives, and others without any nominative at all. To this long list of irregularities it may be added that many words, and particularly prepositions and the infinitives of verbs, are used in a sense different from the modern.”——Some of Mr. Abbott’s accompanying explanations are worth remembering. He points out that the origin of some of the apparent anomalies of the Elizabethan idiom is to be sought for farther back, in the earlier state of the native speech, and that, in fact, though English had by Shakespeare’s time shaken off most of its
once abundant inflections, and was ready to shake off such as remained, yet the old grammar survived in certain strong radical mechanisms, to which all the new matter of the composite and still growing vocabulary had to adjust itself, and also in a lingering habit, or blind occasional trick, of inflections that had been forgotten. He calls attention to the wealth and variety of matter with which, in the age of Elizabeth, this apparatus of speech, and the English mind that owned it, had to deal. There were not only the hereditary notions, and those already imported and represented in the Romance and other additions to the old native vocabulary; there were also the new thoughts and feelings bred by the energetic inquiries, actions, and discoveries of the age itself. Especially, there was an influx of new knowledge, including new ideas and speculations about language itself, and about scholarship and literary taste, from those classical studies which had been recently revived, and from the translations of Latin and Greek authors which had become common. Here was certainly a vast strain upon the grammatical apparatus; and some of the effects can be marked. What of the influence of classical studies in particular? Mr. Abbott is of opinion that it was confined mainly "to single words and to the rhythm of the sentence," and that the syntax remained English. In saying this, however, he recognises within the word "English" a certain spirited power of the English writers of the Elizabethan time to make syntax bend to their whim or will. Hence anomalies in the Elizabethan style, especially redundancies and ellipses, that cannot be otherwise accounted for. "Clearness," says Mr. Abbott, "was preferred to grammatical correctness, and brevity both to correctness and clearness. Hence it was common to place words in the order in which they came uppermost in the mind, without much regard to syntax; and the result was a forcible and perfectly unambiguous, but ungrammatical, "sentence." For the rest, though Mr. Abbott admits that the regularising of the English syntax and idiom which has gone on from Elizabeth's time to this has been a natural process, determined by that law of specialization of function or division of labour which holds among words as among other things, and one form of which is the passing of the real and literal into the merely algebraic and symbolic, he yet regrets some of the results. "For freedom, for brevity, and for vigour," he says, "Elizabethan is superior to modern English"; and, after recapitulating his previous observations, and adding, as yet one other influence in the formation of the Elizabethan book-English, a certain humoursome deference of the popular writers to the spoken idiom round them, with its colloquialisms and rapid contractions, he concludes that all causes together "combined to give a liveliness and wakefulness to Shake" spearian English which are wanting in the grammatical monotony of "the present day."

This general conclusion may be disputed. Take Shakespeare away, and there have certainly been English writers of the present century as
great, as strong, as lively, as racy, as any of the Elizabethans. Add the irregularities and flashing freedoms of syntax to be found in the writings of such men, the true concomitants of the higher Elizabethans, to the irregularities of a different kind diffused through that public slip-shod to which a great deal of the lower Elizabethan literature really corresponds, and it may be doubted whether "grammatical monotony" is yet our characteristic. Indeed, many of those very Elizabethanism which Mr. Abbott has noted so carefully in the body of his work, and which our strict School Grammars now ignore as obsolete, are not obsolete at all, but will be found current yet in conversation and in books, if we choose to look for them. Nor are some of the details of Mr. Abbott's philological exposition free from exception. Apart from these, however, his description of the actual Elizabethan English is the best yet given, and even in the few sentences we have quoted from it there is the essence of much exact information, acquired by no superficial survey, but by a careful collection and study of instances.

Well, the Elizabethan syntax, such as Mr. Abbott has described it, was that which Milton inherited. Though he was but beginning to speak, read, and write, when Shakespeare died, and though his life stretched forward sixty years from that point, Shakespeare's syntax, in its main features, is to be traced through all his English writings. All or most of those irregularities or apparent anomalies of idiom which Mr. Abbott has enumerated as most essentially Elizabethan or Shakespearian might be illustrated also by examples from Milton.

With all this, however, and without denying that freedom, ease, and alertness from moment to moment, were qualities of the Elizabethan syntax, one may venture at once on the assertion that one of the most marked characteristics of Milton from first to last was his adoption and use of a highly disciplined syntax. One cannot pass from a reading in Spenser or a reading in Shakespeare to any of Milton's poems without a feeling of the fact. Accuracy, disciplined accuracy, is discernible in the word-texture of all his poems. There is, however, a gradation chronologically. In the Minor Poems, grace, harmony, sweetness, and beauty of image and colouring, all but veil the strictness of the purely logical connexion of idea with idea and clause with clause. Sometimes even, as in parts of Comus, the Shakespearian syntax seems to suffice, or the syntax seems as easy as the Shakespearian, and it is only the unfailing perfection of the finish, with perhaps a greater slowness in the movement, that suggests the presence of a something different. When it is inquired what this is, one can only say, in reading the more level passages, that it consists in a greater scholarliness, a more habitual consciousness that there is a thing called syntax to trouble writers at all. One remembers here Milton's treatise of Latin Grammar, entitled Accedence comment't Grammar. "Syntax or Construction," he there says, "consisteth either in the agreement of words together in number, "gender, case, and person, which is called Concord, or the governing
“of one the other in such case or mood as is to follow.” Shakespeare, of course, knew as much, and could have discoursed about Syntax as well as about any other subject, if necessary; but, in fact, he had left his Syntax behind him at Stratford Grammar School, and went through the world practising Syntax without thinking about Syntax. Not so Milton. Concord and government were ideas of his daily drill, and, when he wrote English, he carried them with him. Hence that scholarly care rather than mere Shakespearian ease which we discern in the style of his Minor Poems, even where the ease is greatest. Then we may call it finish. Even in those Minor Poems, however, when the thought becomes more powerful or complex, the syntax passes farther away from the Shakespearian, and what was finish before becomes weight or musical density. Some of the most Miltonic passages in the Minor Poems exhibit this density of syntax. In the series of Sonnets written between 1640 and 1660 the density is even more apparent, from the necessary stringency of the Sonnet form itself; and these, like a chain of islets, bring us from the earlier poems to the great poems of the later life. In Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, the Miltonic, in syntax as in all else, is seen at its fullest. It is in them that Milton’s most formed syntax is to be studied. Variety, no doubt! Parts and passages of rich, or even sweet and simple beauty, as in the earlier poems, and where still the effect of the disciplined accuracy of idiom is that of consummate finish! Other parts and passages, however, where the close syntactical regulation takes, as before, the form of compact musical weight! Finally, passages and parts which so pass all previous bounds, both in length of sentence and in multiplicity of ideas to be organized into one sentence, that Milton’s syntactical art is taxed to its utmost, and even then, but for the harmonizing majesty of the verse, the resulting structure might be called not dense merely, but contorted or gnarled!

But we may be more precise. That highly-disciplined syntax which Milton favoured from the first, and to which he tended more and more, was, in fact, the classical syntax, or, to be more exact, an adaptation of the syntax of the Latin tongue. It could hardly fail to be so. The very notion of a syntax, or system of concord and government among words, seems to belong only to an inflected language; for what is concord but amicable correspondency of inflection, or government but enforced variation of inflection? It is only because English retains a few habits of inflection still that it can be said to have a syntax at all in any other sense than that of a usual way of ordering or arranging words; and, even now, questions in English syntax are often settled best practically, if a settlement is wanted, by a reference to Latin construction. If I say “Admitting that you are right, you will be blamed,” or if I even venture on so hideous a variety of the same form as “Proceeding half a mile along the pathway, a magnificent cascade burst into view,” who is to check me, or who is likely to check me, if it be not one
who thinks of concord in the Latin participle and is shocked accordingly? Hence, in fact, the unrelated or misrelated participle is by far the most common form of English slip-shod at the present day. In Shakespeare’s time, too, or in Milton’s, any weakness in the native syntactical instinct that had come down from the times of the highly-inflected Old English either had to remain a weakness, an easy tolerance of variety, or had to be remedied by an importation of rule from the Latin. Now, whatever Shakespeare did on such occasions (and decided Latinisms in construction are very rare in him), Milton did import rule from the Latin. Even in his Minor Poems, where the syntax is most like the easy native syntax of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, Latin constructions and idioms, and even positive flakes of translated Latin, may be detected. But the Latinism grew upon him, and its increase seems to have kept pace with that very progress of his syntax, from scholarly finish to compact musical density, and so to occasional gnarled complexity, which we have described. In his middle life, it is to be remembered, Milton was a writer of great prose-pamphlets of laboured Latin, intended for European circulation. It was after this rebaptism in Latin that he returned to English in his Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson. Need we wonder that, for this among other reasons, the Latinism of his English style there attained its maximum? Such, at all events, is the fact.

An example or two will verify what has been said. Let the scholarly reader observe microscopically the syntax of the following passages from Paradise Lost:

"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, and 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 in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished."—II. 201—213.

"If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit straitened 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 shunned or feared
By us, who rather double honour gain
From his surprize proved false, find peace within,
Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event?
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
Alone, without exterior help sustained?
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.”—IX. 322—341.

"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, returned
By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gathered his own doom; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned,
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped
Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.”—X. 333—349.

Here what have we? A use, it is true, of certain native mechanisms, so that the syntax is part English; but these mechanisms aided, and all but supplanted, by Latin constructions. It is not only that Latin phrases and idioms are translated; it is that Milton bends, arranges, and builds up his own uninflected or scarce-inflected English on the system of the Latin syntax. Observe, generally, the fondness for those participial constructions by which the Latins saved conjunctions and connecting particles, and gave their syntax its character of brevity and strength. Such constructions abound even in the short pieces quoted, both in the form of the case relative and in that of the case absolute. Though the case absolute had survived in native English, one can see that in such instances as “we not endured,” “that past,” “which understood,” it was really the Latin ablative absolute that was in Milton’s mind.

Illustrations of the Latinism of Milton’s construction and idiom might be endless; but the following may here suffice:—

Special Latinisms.—“After Eve seduced,” for “After the seduction of Eve,” is one instance, already quoted, of a well-known special Latinism: “Post urbem conditam.” Mr. Abbott produces but one example of this formation from Shakespeare, and that a doubtful one. But it recurs in Milton. Thus:—“After the Tuscan manners transformed” (Com. 48); “Never since created Man” (P. L., I. 573); “After summons read” (P. L., I. 798); “After Heaven seen” (P. L., III. 552); “After his charge received” (P. L., V. 248); “From his surmise proved false” (P. L., IX. 333); “At that tasted fruit” (P. L.,
Among Milton's special Latinisms we are inclined to class a good many of his case-absolute phrases; for, though the dative absolute was an Anglo-Saxon idiom, and the nominative absolute, as a recollection of it, is frequent in early and Elizabethan English, Milton's case-absolute seems often, as we have said, imagined in the Latin, e.g.:-

"till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder."—P. L., I. 776, 777.

"This said, he paused not."—P. L., V. 64.

"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-opened wide
On golden hinges turning, as by work
Divine the sovran Architect had framed.
From hence—no cloud, or, to obstruct the sight,
Star interposed, however small—he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,

"Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office."—P. L., X. 1001, 1002.

Once or twice the accusative is used absolutely instead of the nominative: e.g. "us dispossessed" (P. L., VII. 142); "me overthrown" (S. A. 463).

**MISCELLANEOUS LATINISMS.**—The following (some of them representative of recurring forms) may suggest the wealth of Latinisms, with sometimes a Grecism, scattered through Milton's text:—

"Spare to interpose them oft."—Sonnet XX.

"Peace is despaired;
For who can think submission?"—P. L., I. 660, 661.

"Whatever doing, what can we suffer more?"—P. L., II. 162.

"What sit we then projecting peace and war?"—P. L., II. 329.

"Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed?"—P. L., III. 2, 3.
"Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream?"—P. L., III. 7.

"I will clear their senses dark
What may suffice."—P. L., III. 188, 189.

"to change torment with [for] ease."—P. L., IV. 892, 893.

"Yet evil whence? In thee can harbour none,
Created pure."—P. L., V. 99, 100.

"aery shapes
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm, or what deny."—P. L., V. 105—107.

"Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold
Eastward among those trees what glorious shape
Comes this way moving."—P. L., V. 308—310.

"on all sides to his aid was run
By Angels many and strong."—P. L., VI. 335, 336.

"Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints."—P. L., VI. 808.

"me higher argument remains."—P. L., IX. 41—43.

"Greedily she ingorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death."—P. L., IX. 791, 792.

"Sagacious of his quarry from afar."—P. L., X. 281.

"more wakeful than to drowse."—P. L., XI. 131.

The Latinism of Milton's constructions will pursue us through a good deal of what follows; but it is best to throw the farther peculiarities of his syntax that seem most worthy of notice into an independent classification.

Ellipses.—"The Elizabethan authors," says Mr. Abbott, "objected to scarcely any ellipsis, provided the deficiency could be easily supplied from the context;" and, as respects Shakespeare, he illustrates the remark through fifteen pages of examples and comments. The ellipses in Milton are perhaps not so numerous as in Shakespeare; but they are frequent and interesting.

Some may be called Ellipses in thought, inasmuch as what is omitted is some idea or link in the meaning which it is taken for granted the reader will supply for himself. An example is P. L., I. 587—589:—

"Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their great commander;"

where, if the context is studied, it will be seen that Milton in the phrase "Thus far," &c., requires his readers to perform for themselves a sum in proportion with data he has furnished. Another example is Par. Lost, II. 70—73:—

"But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe!
Let such [as are of this opinion] bethink them," &c.

Of what are called mere ellipses of expression, or grammatical ellipses (though, strictly considered, these resolve themselves into ellipses of
thought too), there is a great variety of kinds, not a few being really Latinisms.

**Omission of the Nominative to a Verb.**—This, which is not uncommon in Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans, Mr. Abbott attributes, in them, partly to a lingering sense of Old English verb-inflections, partly to the influence of Latin, partly to the rapidity of Elizabethan pronunciation, which slurred such nominatives as *I* and *he*. To which of these causes Milton’s ellipses of the kind are most generally owing will be best judged from a few examples:

“Or wert thou that just Maid who once before
Forsook the hated Earth, O tell me soothe,
And camest [thou] again to visit us once more?”—*D. F. I.* 50—52.

“His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
[He] Cared not to be at all.”—*P. L.*, II. 46—48.


“On whom the great Creator hath bestowed
Worlds, and on whom [he] hath all these graces poured.”—*P. L.*, III. 673, 674.


“One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and [they] up to him return.”—*P. L.*, V. 469, 470.

“This is my Son beloved: in him [I] am pleased.”—*P. R.*, I. 85.

**Omission of the Verb “to be.”**—This, also Elizabethan, is pretty frequent (sometimes as a Latinism) in Milton, e.g.:

“Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless [thou art] the goddess that,” &c.—*Com.* 265—267.

“though my soul [is] more bent
To serve therewith my Maker.”—*Sonnet XIX.*

“Though . . . their children’s cries [were] unheard.”—*P. L.*, I. 394, 395.

“Yet confessed [to be] later than Heaven and Earth.”—*P. L.*, I. 508.

“[Being] Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.”—*P. L.*, III. 76.

“The tempter, ere [he was] the accuser, of mankind.”—*P. L.*, IV. 10.


“Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled? or [art] thou than they
Less hardy?”—*P. L.*, IV. 918—920.

“pretending first
[It to be] Wise to fly pain.”—*P. L.*, IV. 947, 948.

“and gev’st them names,
Needless [to be] to thee repeated.”—*P. L.*, VII. 493, 494.

“Death as oft accused
Of tardy execution, since [it had been] denounced
The day of his offence.”—*P. L.*, X. 852—854.

“though my pardon
[Be] No way assured.”—*S. A.* 738, 739.
Omission of Antecedent.—Examples of this (generally Latinisms) are:—

"in bulk as large
As [those] whom the fables name of monstrous size,"—P. L., I. 196, 197.
"Will envy [him] whom the highest place exposes."—P. L., II. 27.
"To find [one] who might direct his wandering flight."—P. L., III. 631.

to subdue
By force [those] who reason for their law refuse."—P. L., VI. 40, 41.
"returning [thither] whence it rolled."—P. L., VI. 879.
"Sent from [him] whose sovran goodness I adore."—P. L., VIII. 647.
"and soon found of whom they spake
I am [he]."—P. R., I. 262, 263.

Peculiar Miltonic Ellipsis.—It is not safe to give this name to a form of which there may already be registered examples in plenty from other authors than Milton; but, as it has struck me first in Milton, and as the Miltonic examples of it are memorable, let the name stand for the present. The ellipsis may be described as a peculiar omission of the word "of" by which a phrase compounded of an adjective and a substantive is made to do duty as an adjective. The Miltonic examples of it, though memorable, are few. I have noted the following:—

"He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
   Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
   Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
   Behind him cast."—P. L., I. 283—286.

   "feathered mail,

"Brass, iron, stony mould."—P. L., VI. 576.

   "Up led by thee,
   Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
   An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
   Thy tempering."—P. L., VII. 12—15.

"Under his forming hands a creature grew,
   Man-like, but different sex."—P. L., VIII. 470, 471.

Miscellaneous Ellipses.—The variety of these may be indicated by the following specimens. Some, it will be seen, are again Latinisms in reality:—

"Daily devours apace, and nothing said."—Lycid. 129.

"While smooth Adonis from his native rock
   Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
   Of Thammuz yearly wounded."—P. L., I. 450—452.

"More glorious and more dread than from no fall."—P. L., II. 16.

   "Let us not then pursue,
   By force impossible, by leave obtained
   Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
   Of splendid vassalage."—P. L., II. 249—252.

"a place [of which it was] foretold [that it] should be."—P. L., II. 830, 831.
"Direct my course:
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof."—P. L., II. 980—982.
"Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will."—P. L., III. 173.
"The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
Their sinful state."—P. L., III. 185, 186.
"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 . . . . . . . . . . . . . offered himself to die
For Man's offence."—P. L., III. 403—410.
"stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move."—P. L., III. 718, 719.
"whereof here needs no account,
But rather to tell how," &c.—P. L., IV. 235, 236.
"Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same
Or undiminished brightness, to be known
As when thou stood'st in Heaven."—P. L., IV. 835—837.
"Freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not."—P. L., V. 538—540.
"Hast thou turned the least of these
To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquished."—P. L., VI. 284—286.
"greater now in thy return
Than from the giant-Angels."—P. L., VII. 604, 605.
"Such pleasure she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole audittress."—P. L., VIII. 50, 51.
"Her husband [as] the relater she preferred."—P. L., VIII. 52.
"Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful Earth."—P. L., VIII. 95, 96.
"Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happy, and without Love no happiness."—P. L., VIII. 620, 621.
"Thee, Serpent, noblest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endued."—P. L., IX. 560, 561.
"punished in the shape he sinned [in]."—P. L., X. 516.
"This had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations, and had hither come,
From all the ends of the Earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee."—P. L., XI. 342—346.
"Which argues [thee] overjust and self-displeased
For self-offence."—S. A. 514, 515.
"Knowing [myself], as needs I must, by thee betrayed."—S. A. 840.

Grammatical Superfluities.—These are, as might be expected, not nearly so numerous in Milton. Indeed, it would be very difficult to find a distinct and positive instance. The little prose-note appended
to the early poem called *The Passion* might seem to be one: "This subject the author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished." But, though this is an anomalous construction now, the anomaly does not lie in superfluity. Read "The author, finding this subject to be," &c., and all is rectified without the loss of a word. So with the following apparent instances:—

"I know thee, stranger, who thou art."—*P. L.*, II. 990.

"The other sort... Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell."—*P. L.*, VI. 376—380.

"Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast, Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?"—*P. L.*, IX. 288, 289.

"To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied."—*P. L.*, XI. 453.

"I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith He leaves his gods."—*P. L.*, XII. 128, 129.

In each of these cases, though there seems to be a grammatical excess, it will be found that the excess is required by the meaning. Take the first and the last of the quoted passages. They are examples of a usage which Mr. Abbott finds frequent in Shakespeare, and which he calls "the redundant object." It may easily be defended. "I know, stranger, who thou art," and "I see, but thou canst not, with what faith he leaves his gods," would not convey what is meant—viz., first, the recognition or optical discernment of a person, and, secondly, a fact about that person. Nor, even by present usage, could the word *he* in "To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied," be omitted without loss of the intended emphasis. In the two remaining examples retraction would equally enfeeble the sense. The phrase "The other sort" in the one, and the noun "Thoughts" in the other, may be taken as instances of an emphatic Elizabethan form which Mr. Abbott names "the noun absolute"; or the two whole sentences may be taken as instances of a subtle grammatical figure, which Mr. Abbott calls "Construction changed by change of Thought," and of which we have more to say.

Seeming redundancies also rather than real are Milton's occasional *double negatives*. There are two forms, however, of this idiom. There is, first, the double negative, usually so called, of such Shakespearian and Early English phrases as "He *denied* you had in him *no* right," "*Forbade* the boy he should *not* pass these bounds," where the second negative word does not undo the first, but only intensifies the negation already made in it. Distinct from this is another double negative, constructed on the ordinary grammatical principle that "two negatives make an affirmative," and serving, in fact, as a rather emphatic affirmative. Of the following four passages the first two are examples of the first kind of double negative, the last two of the second; and it will be seen that in none of them is there properly redundancy:—
Thus hard pressed for examples of real grammatical superfluity in Milton, I may present these as the best I have found—

"Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed."—P. L., I. 337.

"without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections."—P. L., V. 351—353.

With these I may associate Milton's pretty frequent use of the adverbial forms from hence, from thence, from whence, instead of the simpler adverbs hence, thence, whence. He uses these simple adverbs too, and hence and whence oftener in proportion than thence.

Construction changed by change of Thought.—Perhaps there is no subtler observation in Mr. Abbott's Shakespearian Grammar than that which occasioned his invention or adoption of this useful name for a rather frequent and troublesome, but very interesting, class of Shakespearian idioms (Sh. Gr. § 415). It is all the more welcome because it is a recognition of the more general and far-reaching principle that all the so-called Figures of Speech, including all grammatical variations and irregularities, however minute, are to be referred ultimately to equivalent turns, modifications, changes of manoeuvre, in the act of thinking.

First let us give two of Mr. Abbott's Shakespearian instances:

"Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be."—Hamlet, iii. 2.

Here the change of number from sticks to fall evidently indicates a change in Shakespeare's act of thinking as he wrote. He was first thinking of one piece of fruit, or of fruit as one mass, sticking to a tree; but next moment he sees the shower of separate pieces of fruit falling numerously. Again in the passage

"Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through our host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight
Let him depart,"—Henry V. iv. 3.

we see the King first only telling Westmoreland what to proclaim, but immediately, in his indignation at the idea called up, passing into the direct imperative, as if he were facing the army and making the proclamation himself.
Milton's English:

If the reader will now go back on our collection of Miltonic Ellipses (pp. lxxxii.—lxxxiii.) he will be able to explain some of the most puzzling of them on this principle. Here, however, are a few cases in which the *afterthought*, or *change of front*, if we may so call it, in Milton's mind, and the corresponding change of construction in the sentence, may be better observed:

"Or did of late Earth's sons besiege the wall
Of sheeny Heaven, and thou some goddess fled."—D. F. I. 47, 48.

"the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil."—Com. 197—199.

"There does a sable cloud
*Turn* forth her silver lining to the Night,
And *casts* a gleam over this tufted grove."—Com. 223—225.

"So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things."—P. L., IV. 201—203.

"Much less can bird with beast or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape."—P. L., VIII. 395, 396.

"[O flowers] . . . *which* I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names."—P. L., XI. 276, 277.

"Who was that just man, *whom* had not Heaven
Rescued, *had* in his righteousness been lost."—P. L., XI. 681, 682.

"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."—P. L., XI. 770—776.

"Deservedly thou griev'st, composed of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end."—P. R., I. 407, 408.

"Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offered with my aid
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate," &c.—P. R., IV. 467—470.

"thoughts that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone
But rush upon me thronging."—S. A. 19—21.

*Change of tense*, it will be noted, is a very natural form of this curious kind of change of construction; and a few more examples may be given, illustrating this fact:

"*It was* the winter wild
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger *lies.*"—Od. Nat. 29—31.

"And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful justice *bore* for our excess,
And *seized* obedience first with wounding smart."—Upon the Circ. 23—25.
'I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me."—Sonnet XII.

"Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
Throw his steep flight in many an aery wheel,
Nor staid till on Niphates' top he lights."—P. L., III. 739—742.

**INTERCHANGES OF PARTS OF SPEECH.**—The most frequent of these by far is the use of an *Adjective* for an *Adverb*. This, common in the Elizabethan writers, is incessant in Milton. Examples are "Mean-while inhabit *lax, ye Powers of Heaven*" *(Par. Lost, VII. 162), "which plain infers*" *(Par. Lost, IX. 285), "I bring thee voluntary" *(Par. Reg., II. 394). And so in every page we have obscure for obscurely, chief for chiefly, safe for safely, frequent for frequently, equal for equally, idle for idly, brief for briefly, easy for easily, attentive for attentively, certain for certainly, advised for advisedly, more glad for more gladly, sager for more sagely, or the like.—Next in frequency is the substitution of an *Adjective for a Substantive*: e.g. "those rebellious" *(Par. Lost, I. 71), "this essential" *(Par. Lost, II. 97), "the vast Abrupt" *(Par. Lost, II. 409), "this profound" *(Par. Lost, II. 989), "the esteem of wise" *(Par. Lost, IV. 886), "these rebelled" *(Par. Lost, VI. 737), "great or bright infers not excellence" *(Par. Lost, VIII. 90—91), "My earthly by his heavenly overpowered" *(Par. Lost, VIII. 453), "grounded on just and right" *(Par. Lost, VIII. 572), "whose higher intellectual more I shun" *(Par. Lost, IX. 483), "by putting off human" *(Par. Lost, IX. 713—14), "the Grand" *(Par. Reg., X. 427), "the stony" *(Par. Lost, XI. 4), "the magnetic" *(Par. Reg., II. 168).—There are some instances of *Verb for Noun*: e.g. "beyond compare" *(Par. Lost, I. 587, 588), "without disturb" *(Par. Lost, VI. 549), "at his dispose" *(Par. Reg., III. 34 and 369), "the unsearchable dispose" *(S. A. 1746).—Of *Substantive for Adjective* the peculiar Miltonic idioms, "ethereal temper," "sky-tinctured grain," "different sex," already noted *(and p. lxxxii.) may be taken as compound instances; "carbuncle his eyes" *(Par. Lost, IX. 500) is a simpler one.—"Where he abides, think there thy native soil" *(Par. Lost, XI. 292) may possibly be construed as an instance of adverb for noun; but there are not so many instances of this and other odd substitutions in Milton as Mr. Abbott reports among the Elizabethans. "As they sat recline" *(Par. Lost, IV. 333), "made so adorn for thy delight" *(Par. Lost, VIII. 576), and "sight so deform" *(Par. Lost, XI. 494), are not to be mistaken as instances of verb for adjective, the first and third being simple appropriations of the Latin adjectives *reclinis* and *deformis*, and the second of the Italian *adorno*.

**IRREGULARITIES IN CONCORD AND GOVERNMENT.**—Although Milton was more strict in his syntax than the Elizabethans generally had been, instances do occur in him of Elizabethanisms of this glaring kind.
Singular Verb with Plural Nominative.—This is frequent in the third person plural; where, however, it is not merely a license or irregularity, but rather a relic of Old English grammar. While the old Southern dialect had *eth* for the termination of the third person plural indicative present of verbs (*loveth*) and the old Midland had *en* (*loven*), the old Northern had *s* or *es* (*loves*). This last still persists in vernacular Scotch: e.g. "Sailors *has* hard lives." Now, after the standard English had, in the main, dropt inflection in the plural of verbs (saying *love* in all the three persons), a tradition of the northern inflection in *s* was kept up in some usages of the third person plural. Instances in Shakespeare are numerous: thus, from Mr. Abbott:—

"These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
Draws out our miles, and makes them wearisome."—Rich. II. ii. 3.

"Plenty and peace breeds cowards."—Cymb. iii. 6.

It is in the form of this last instance—*i.e.* of a verb agreeing with two or more nouns—that we find the idiom common in Milton: *e.g.*

"His praise and glory was in Israel known."—Ps. CXIV. 6.

"Not those newfangled toys and trimming slight
Which takes our late fantasies with delight."—Vac. Ex. 19, 20.

"Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due."—Lyric. 6, 7.

"Thy worth and skill exempt thee from the throng."—Sonnet XIII.

"hill and valley rings."—P. L., II. 495.

"Kingdom and power and glory appertains."—P. L., VI. 815.

"all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion, forms."—P. L., VIII. 222, 223.

"Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,
Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death."—P. R., IV. 386—388.

Here is one striking example of a similar liberty of concord in the first person, where the explanation is not persistence of archaic habit, but bold purpose by the writer himself:—

"Both Death and I
Am found eternal."—P. L., X. 815, 816.

Explicable on the same principle, or on that of change of construction with change of thought, is this false concord of person in a relative clause—

"Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless [thou art] the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'ost here with Pan."—Com. 265—268.

The following is an instance of what we should now call false concord of case in opposition:—

"who rebelled
With Satan: *he* who envies now thy state."—P. L., VI. 899, 900.
Each is often used by Shakespeare in a plural way, as equivalent to Both or All: e.g. "What each of them by the other lose" (Coriol. iii. 2), "Each in her sleep themselves so beautifully" (R. of L., 494). So Milton:—

"Each in their crystal sluice."—P. L., V. 133.
"Each in their several active spheres."—P. L., V. 477.
"Cattle and creeping things and beasts of the Earth,
Each in their kind."—P. L., VII. 452, 453.

"All flesh,
Corrupting each their way."—P. L., XI. 888, 889.

Occasional violations of our present rules of government occur among the pronouns. "Save He who reigns above" (Par. Lost, II. 814) is a bold use of the nominative for the objective, after precedents in Shakespeare; and the frequency of ye for the usual objective you has been noted in our remarks on Milton's peculiarities of inflection. That idiom, however, is not extinct yet.——The following instances of the objective relative whom are worth noting:—

"Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven."—P. L., I. 499, 491.
"Beelzebub . . . than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat."—P. L., II. 299, 300.
"Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
The Deity."—P. L., V. 805, 806.

Theoretically whom should be who in each of these cases (e.g. the first — "Belial came last, and a more lewd Spirit than he fell not from Heaven"); but the ear revolts from "than who." Than is used prepositionally in such cases, as it sometimes is even with the direct pronouns: "You are a much greater loser than me" (Swift).

Other Peculiarities among the Pronouns.—One of the most frequent and interesting of these is the use of the possessives of the personal pronouns—my, mine, our; thy, thine, your; his, her, their—as true possessive cases with the full function of our equivalents for them—of me, of us, of thee, of you, of him, of her, of them. Thus they are often antecedents to relatives: e.g. :—

"His high will
Whom we resist."—P. L., I. 161, 162.
"Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last . . .
Came."—P. L., I. 376—379.
"his tyranny whom reigns
By our delay."—P. L., II. 59, 60.
"his love entire
Whose progeny you are."—P. L., V. 502, 503.
"my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God."—S. A. 377, 378.
Milton's English:

This usage has not yet gone out in modern English poetry, though it has become much rarer than it was among the Elizabethans, probably because we have come to regard my, thy, his, &c., rather as adjectives than as possessive cases of substantives. Indeed we should hardly make an antecedent even of the possessive case of a noun. "The man's horse who was here just now" would seem an odd phrase. Probably Milton's habit of referring to Latin constructions made it natural for him to perpetuate this particular Elizabethanism both with the possessives of nouns and with the possessives of pronouns. He would think of such Latin phrases as mei qui, mei ejus, ejus qui, ejus quem, eorum qui, eorum quos, &c. We see this recollectiveness of Latin constructions, at all events, in a still stronger variety of the same usage, which is not uncommon in Milton, and which (if I may judge from the absence of equally strong Elizabethan examples in Mr. Abbott's Shakesperean Grammar) was more Miltonic than Elizabethan. It is the actual junction of the possessives, no less than of the nominatives or the objectives, in agreement with adjectives and participles: e.g.:

"Wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation, suddenly
My guide was gone."—P. L., V. 89—91.

Here it is not the "guided" that wonders, but Eve, the speaker; or, in other words, "wondering" agrees with "my," just as if it had been "of me wondering" or "mei admirantis." Exactly so in the following instances, and in some of them more strikingly:

"these tidings from the Earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,
Foretold so lately what would come to pass."—P. L., X. 36—38.

"our liberty confined
Within Hell-gates till now."—P. L., X. 368, 369.

"Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own."—P. L., XI. 520, 521.

In Latin these would be quite normal: vestrûm admonitorum, nostrûm inclusorum, eorum deformantium; but, if met with in an exercise in English composition in the present day, they would be set down as examples of slip-shod of the "misrelated participle" variety.——By the bye, the nearest approach to an actual case of misrelated or unrelated participle that I have observed in Milton is the following in a speech of Dalila:

"First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them—both common female faults—
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?"—S. A. 773—780.
Granting, however, is one of a small group of participial forms (seeing, touching, concerning, respecting, judging, considering) to which custom concedes this slovenliness; and it says much for Milton's care that instances like the above are rare in his verse. It may be taken as an elliptical case-absolute.

The relatives THAT, WHO, WHICH.—These words have had a curious history. That is the oldest. It was the singular neuter of the demonstrative se, seó, that, used relatively in Anglo-Saxon, when the forms who and which (hwá and hwíte) were never so used. Surviving the general slaughter of inflections, the originally neuter that became the ordinary or sole relative, for masculine and feminine as well as for neuter in Old English. Not till the sixteenth century did which creep in as a relative in competition with that, and then not as a neuter relative only, but as a masculine or feminine also: e.g. "Our Father which art in Heaven"; "The mistress which I serve" (Sh. Tempest, iii. 1). The introduction of the interrogative who as a declinable relative was still later; but, when introduced, it was used relatively in all its parts—not only who, whose, and whom, but also what. ("The matter what other men wrote": Ascham.) Thus, in Shakespeare's time, there were three relatives, That and which indeclinable, and who declinable (who, who, what, whose, &c.) Soon, indeed, what was dismissed from its relational function, except in certain peculiar usages of which there are yet traces. When this had been done, and the relative who had been thus left without its proper neuter, which, though an old and independent compound of who (hwíte = who-like), was voted into the vacant place, and the declension of the relative who became, as now, who, who, which, while the interrogative remained who, who, what. Through the seventeenth century, accordingly, there were transmitted two so-called relative pronouns—the indeclinable that and the declinable who, who, which; but still with a recollection of which as a separate relative, masculine and feminine as well as neuter. There was a good deal of consequent confusion in the practice; but gradually the superior ease and smoothness of the old that re-won it the preference. By Addison's time the preference had become so decided as to call forth a protest from that critic. "In his Humble Petition of Who and Which," Addison makes the neglected vocables complain thus: "We are descended of ancient families, and kept up our dignity and honour many years, till the jack-sprat that supplanted us." A curious example of the ignorance of those days of the true history of the English language; for That, as we have seen, was the real Saturn of the genealogy. Nevertheless, Addison's protest took effect; and now we have that, who, and which in about equal favour. We need all three; but have we even yet any principle regulating choice among them? It does not seem so. Each writer obeys his own tact or acquired habit, and writers vary.

The only attempt that I know of to establish a logical principle on the subject is in Professor Bain's English Grammar. His principle
Milton's English:

is that *who* and *which* ought to be reserved for co-ordinate clauses in a sentence—*i.e.* for clauses of additional predication—while *that* ought to be used in all clauses merely restrictive or explanatory of a current subject or predicate. Thus the sentence "The soldiers, *who* are brave, will push on" is right if I mean that the soldiers are brave and that they will push on; but, if I mean only that such of the soldiers as are brave will push on, then I ought to say, "The soldiers *that* are brave will push on." In practice, however, the first form, only without the commas, is often used for the second meaning; and hence ambiguity. So, if I say "Here is the book, *which* will save me the trouble of farther explanation," I am right if I mean that I have found the book I had been looking for, and that so I shall be saved the trouble of farther explanation; but, if I mean that I have found a book of such a sort that it will save me the trouble of farther explanation, then I ought to say, "Here is the book *that* will save me the trouble," &c. Yet, in practice, the first form is often employed for the second meaning, both in talk and in writing, only with the comma omitted in writing; and hence again ambiguity. All this ambiguity, it is said, would be avoided by a recollection of the simple principle: *that* for merely restrictive or qualifying phrases, and *who* and *which* for co-ordinate clauses.

Adopted absolutely (which would lead to the most awkward effects), or only partially (say for the nominative *who*, *who*, *which* in both numbers, and the direct objective *whom*, *whom*, *which* in both numbers) would the principle be a new institute in English, or would it only be a return to the correct practice of a former age? Mr. Bain seems to be of the latter opinion. "If we go back," he says, "to the writers of the seventeenth century, we find the usage observed." This, I think, is too strongly stated; and the matter is worth a little inquiry.

At first sight it might seem that Shakespeare's practice accorded with the principle universally. *That* is incessant in his pages as the restrictive or qualifying relative; and his instinctive adoption of it, sentence after sentence, in places where modern writers would use *who*, *whom*, or *which*, is one of the secrets of the lightness, ease, and swiftness of his style. The full sense of this characteristic of Shakespeare, if indeed it was not a general Elizabethanism, will be obtained best by reading any page *ad aperturam*; and to give examples is a poor substitute. Here, however, are a few:—

"That god forbid *that* made me first your slave
I should in thought control your times of pleasure."—Sonnet Iviii.

"The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
*That* flesh is heir to."—Hamlet, iii. 1.

"the spurns
*That* patient merit of the unworthy takes."—Ibid.
"or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death."—M. for M. iii. 1.

On the other hand, Shakespeare is very observant of the distinctive function of who and which as co-ordinating relatives: e.g.—

"I'll give her father notice
Of their disguising and pretended flight;
Who, all enraged, will banish Valentine."—Two G. of Ver. ii. 6.

"But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff."—Tempest, v. 1.

"Henry the Fourth,
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest,
And, after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth,
Who by his prowess conquered all France."—3 K. Henry VI. iii. 3.

So far all appears regular in Shakespeare; but farther examination discloses many inconsistencies. Thus which is often used for the restrictive that, both in the neuter, with relation to things, and also (from a survival of the notion of which as an independent relative, older than who, though converted into a kind of neuter of who) in the masculine and feminine with relation to persons:

"The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve."—Tempest, iv. 1.

"It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt."—Lear, v. 3.

"It is an heretic that makes the fire,
Not she which burns in't."—Wint. Tale, ii. 3.

"This is an art
Which does mend nature."—Wint. Tale, iv. 4.

"Your love and pity doth the impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow."—Sonnet cxii.

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds."—Sonnet cxvi.

Much more rare, indeed excessively rare, is the occurrence of the nominative who, or the direct objective whom, in the merely restrictive function. There are examples, however, as well as of whose and the phrases to whom, with whom, &c., in the same function:

"As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers."—Coriol. ii. 1.

"He that no more must say is listened more
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose."—Rich. II. ii. 1.
"They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow,
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces."—Sonnet xciv.

Finally that, though usually restrictive, is sometimes used, as in old
English, for the co-ordinating who and which: e.g.

"as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder."—Hamlet, v. i.

1 In me thou seest the twilight of such day
   As after sunset fadeth in the west,
   Which by and by black night doth take away,
   Death's second self, that seals up all in rest."—Sonnet lxxiii.

This last instance shows clearly that Shakespeare was often guided by
reasons of sound. Which in the last line would have been normal; but, having had one co-ordinating which in the preceding line, he would
not repeat it. The following passage is interesting from its variety of
device:

"Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,
Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimmed
The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
Set roaring war."—Tempest, v. i.

Of Milton we have to report that he is much farther astray from the
proposed rule for who, which, and that than Shakespeare. He was
guided, in great part, no doubt, in this matter as in others, by the tradi-
tion of the Shakespearian or Elizabethan English; but he had con-
tracted a habit also of thinking his English relative clauses very much
after the laws of the Latin qui, quae, quod, with the indicative or with
the subjunctive. Hence a mixed system of who, which, that, &c., in
his English, and yet the most consummate management.

An excellent and true use of which not unfrequent in Milton is where
the antecedent is not a single noun, but a whole clause, or even a series
of clauses: e.g.

"Well may we afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare."—P. L., V. 316—320.

"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—which makes through Heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night."—P. L., VI. 4—8.
Syntax and Idiom.

There are incessant examples also of the use of who, whose, whom, and which, in the ordinary way, as co-ordinating relatives, or links of additional predication in connexion with single antecedent nouns; and, indeed, the forms whose and whom, as answering to the Latin cuius, quorum, quam, quos, quas, and the forms to whom, of whom, &c., as answering to the Latin cui, quibus, ad quem, ad quos, de quo, de quibus, &c., are, as far as I have observed, much more frequent in Milton than in Shakespeare:—

"The aidless, innocent Lady, his wished prey,
    Who gently asked," &c.—Com. 574, 575.

"Forth rushed in haste the great consulting Peers,
    Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy
    Congratulant approached him, who with hand
    Silence, and with these words attention, won."—P. L. X. 456—459.

"Imitate the starry quire,
    Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
    Lead in swift round the months and years."—Com. 111—113.

"Hail, divinest Melancholy,
    Whose saintly visage is too bright
    To hit the sense of human sight."—Il Pens. 12—14.

"who knows not Circe,
    The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup
    Whoever tasted lost his upright shape?"—Com. 50—52.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
    Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold."—Sonnet XVIII.

"the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
    Whom with low reverence I adore."—Arc. 36, 37.

"Dark-veiled Colytto, to whom the secret flame
    Of midnight torches burns!"—Com. 129, 130.

"Provoking God to raise them enemies,
    From whom as oft he saves them penitent."—P. L. XII. 318, 319.

"Vane, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
    Than whom a better senator ne'er held
    The helm of Rome."—Sonnet XVII.

"Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
    Which men call Earth."—Com. 5, 6.

"Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
    From anguish of the mind, and humours black
    That mingle with the fancy."—S. A. 599—601.

"His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
    Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
    Of some great ammiral, were but a wand—
    He walked with."—P. L. I. 292—295.

"which when Samson
    Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined
    And eyes fast fixed he stood."—S. A. 1635—1637.

"my noble task,
    Of which all Europe rings from side to side."—Sonnet XXII.
Milton's English:

"unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not."—P. L., X. 750—752.

"Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more."—P. L., IX. 263, 264.

In all these cases, and in hundreds more, Milton exhibits what the proposed new rule would call the correct, or co-ordinating, use of the declinable relative who, with a more habitual recourse to it, and especially to the oblique cases whose, whom, and to which as the incorporated neuter, than is found in Shakespeare. So he furnishes innumerable illustrations also of what the rule would call the correct use of that. In the following, it will be observed, that is purely restrictive or explicative, and that that is not avoided:—

"As the gay motes that people the sunbeams."—Il Pens. 8.

"Of every star that heaven doth shew
And every herb that sips the dew."—Il Pens. 171, 172.

"Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of Eternity."—Com. 12—14.

"He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre."—Com. 381—382.

"I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death."—Com. 560—562.

"And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day."—Sonnet XXI.

"those rich domains
That the first wealthy Pope received of thee."—Translated Scrap.

"Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men."—P. L., I. 50.

"And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones."—P. L., I. 360.

In all these examples, and in hundreds more, Milton uses that, very much as Shakespeare had done, as the merely restrictive or qualifying relative, while all the examples of who, which, whose, whom, hitherto quoted from him, have exhibited these words only in co-ordinating constructions. It would be a great mistake, however, to infer a fixed principle of Milton's syntax from these two sets of selected instances. Quite as numerous are the instances in which he reverses the apparent rule of the foregoing, and uses who, which, whose, whom, for merely restrictive constructions, and that that for co-ordinating constructions.

How thoroughly the Latin qui, que, quod had been incorporated into Milton's English, for restrictive as well as for co-ordinating constructions, may be seen from the following handful of examples. They are all in accordance with our present mixed practice; but every who,
whose, or whom in them, and nearly every which, would in Shakespeare’s syntax have been resolved into that.

“Or wert thou that just Maid who once before
Forsook the hated Earth?”—D. F. I. 50—51.

“Here lieth one who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move.”—Hobson. II. 1, 2.

“that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.”—Sonnet II.

“This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend.”—Arc. 5, 6.

“I shall appear some harmless villager
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.”—Com. 166, 167.

“Yea even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.”—Com. 591, 592.

“Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Meliboeus old I learnt.”—Com. 821, 822.

“Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul,
Must now be named and printed heretics.”—Forc. of Conc.

“That one talent which is death to hide.”—Sonnet XIX.

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”—Sonnet XIX.

“Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old.”—Sonnet XVIII.

“Whom do we count a good man? Whom but he
Who keeps the laws and statutes of the senate,
Who judges in great suits and controversies?”—Translated Scrap.

“Blest is the man who hath not walked astray
In counsel of the wicked.”—Ps. I.

“He shall be as a tree which planted grows
By watery streams.”—Ibid.

“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.”—P. L., I. 381—383.

“That all may see who hate us how we seek
Peace and composure.”—P. L., VI. 559, 560.

“behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed.”—P. L., VI. 637, 638.

“Eve, easily may faith admit that all
The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends.”—P. L., XI. 142, 143.

“most men admire
Virtue who follow not her lore.”—P. R., I. 482, 483.

It Milton is much more Latin than Shakespeare in his use of who and which in merely restrictive constructions, he makes amends by reviving
much more frequently than Shakespeare did the Old English use of *that* in distinctly co-ordinative constructions: *e.g.*

> "Nature, *that* heard such sound
> Beneath the hollow round
> Of Cynthia's seat the airy region thrilling,
> Now was almost won
> To think her part was done." —*Od. Nat.* 101—105.
> "Hail, bounteous May, *that* dost inspire
> Mirth, and youth, and warm desire." —*M. Morn.*
> "Sport, *that* wrinkled Care derides." —*L'All.* 31.
> "Bacchus, *that* first from out the purple grape
> Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine . . .,
> On Circe's island fell." —*Com.* 46—50.
> "And disinherit Chaos, *that* reigns here
> In double night of darkness and of shades." —*Com.* 334, 335.
> "His praise, ye Winds, *that* from four quarters blow,
> Breathe soft or loud." —*P. L.*, V. 192, 193.
> "and to him called
> Raphael, the sociable Spirit, *that* deigned
> To travel with Tobias." —*P. L.*, V. 220—222.
> "The Sun, *that* light imparts to all, receives
> From all his alimental recompense." —*P. L.*, V. 423, 424.

That Milton did not follow the rule of *who* and *which* for co-ordinating constructions, and *that* for restrictive, has been abundantly proved. On the whole, he seems to have been guided by a varying momentary instinct, sometimes logical perhaps, but often merely musical. ——I may add that occasionally, like Shakespeare, he has the genuine archaism (now a vulgurism) of *what* for the relative *that* or *which*: a relic of the time when the whole of the interrogative *who* was used relatively (see *ant*e, p. lxxxii.) Thus "All *what* we affirm" (*Par. Lost*, V. 107), "Easy to me to tell thee all *what* thou commandest" (*Par. Lost*, IX. 569—70). Peculiar relative constructions also are "Such a foe is rising *who* intends" (*Par. Lost*, V. 724, 725), and "such wherein appeared obscure some glimpse of joy" (*Par. Lost*, I. 523, 524). I have not noted any examples in Milton of Shakespeare's use of *which* for the masculine and feminine; but there may be such.

**Prepositions.** — That multiplicity of meanings for the common prepositions of, *to*, &c., on which Mr. Abbott has commented as one of the characteristics of Elizabethan English persists in Milton, though not to the same extent, nor perhaps to an extent beyond the practice of poets of our own time. I will note but a few instances: "And of pure now purer air meets his approach" (*Par. Lost*, IV. 153, 154) seems to present of in a sense like from; "may of purest Spirits be found no ingrateful food" (*Par. Lost*, V. 406, 407) is one of the
passages in which of serves for our present by; and "Greet her of a lovely son" (March. Winch. 23) gives of in the sense of on account of. In "to the twelve that shine in Aaron’s breastplate" (Par. Lost, III. 597, 598) to is equivalent to through all the rest of, or to the complete number of; in "So much hath Hell debased, and pain enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven" (Par. Lost, IX. 487, 488), it has the sense of in comparison with (see also S. A. 950); and in "God will restore him eyesight to his strength" (S. A. 1503) it has the sense of in addition to. "Which, but herself, not all the Stygian powers" (Par. Lost, II. 875) is an example of but used prepositionally for except. An anomalous use of twixt, applying it to more than two objects, is found in "Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires" (Par. Lost, I. 346).

**ADVERBS AND CONJUNCTIONS.**—The most frequent difference from our present English here is the use of the conjunction that for so that. It was a transmitted Elizabethanism, well conserved by Milton: e.g.

"And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That, even to his last breath (there be that say’t),
As he were pressed to death, he cried ‘More weight.’"—Hobson, No. 2.

"Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony,
That Orpheus' self may heave his head."—L’All. 143—145.

"Like Maia’s son he stood
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled

There are other now unusual senses of the conjunction that: e.g. Par. Lost, III. 278, where it seems to mean inasmuch as. In the lines On Shakespeare we have virtually whilst that for whilst; and elsewhere I think we have that redundant.

As appears in several senses not now common. It serves for that or as that: e.g. "a stripling cherub... such as in his face youth smiled celestial" (Par. Lost, III. 637, 638: compare Par. Reg., II. 97, 98); also for as if: e.g. "into strange vagaries fell, as they would dance" (Par. Lost, VI. 614, 615); also for in proportion as: e.g. "For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss" (Par. Lost, IX. 879); also for such as (Il Pens. 163—165) and such that or so that it (Od. Nat. 96—98).

Of but for than, "No sooner blown but blasted" (D. F. I. 1) is an early example; and the idiom recurs (Par. Lost, III. 344, 347, XI. 822, 824, &c.) in Par. Lost, V. 674, and perhaps elsewhere, and has a sense of if or though.——Milton uses the word both where the reference is to more objects than two: e.g. "The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven" (Par. Lost, IV. 722); and he takes the same liberty with neither: e.g. "Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire" (Par. Lost, II. 912).——The variety of his uses of or, nor, neither, &c., may
be inferred from these examples, in some of which, however, change of construction by change of thought bears a part:

"Or [either] envy, or what reserve, forbids to taste?"—P. L., V. 61.
"Much less can bird with beast or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape."—P. L., VIII. 395, 396.
"Or [either] east or west."—P. L., X. 685.
"Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
And he the future evil shall," &c.—P. L., XI. 773, 774.
"neither thus heartened or dismayed."—P. R., I. 268.
"I bid not, or forbid."—P. R., I. 495.

Transpositions and Inversions.—Leaving not a few miscellaneous peculiarities (Elizabethanisms, or Latinisms) to be marked in the notes in connexion with the passages in which they occur, we may conclude this account of Milton’s syntax and idiom with a reference to one other matter properly belonging to the subject of Syntax.

Occasionally some very striking inversion or transposition of the usual order of words in a sentence is met with in Milton: e.g.—

"Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage."—P. L., II. 917—919.
"Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The Atheist crew."—P. L., VI. 369, 370.
"That whom they hit none on their feet might stand."—P. L., VI. 592.
"For in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears."—P. L., IX. 558, 559.
"Reject not, then, what offered means who knows
But God hath set before us to return thee
Home to thy country."—S. A. 516—518.

Such transpositions are sometimes instances merely of Milton’s freedom in English, which led him, like other writers, into the word-figures called by the rhetoricians Hyperbaton, Anastrophe, Tmesis, Dialysis, &c.; but very often they are patent Latinisms. For, as has been already hinted, the highly Latin mechanism of Milton’s syntax, especially in later life, appears not only in individual constructions, but necessarily also in the arrangement of the words within a clause, and of the clauses of a sentence with relation to each other. Without dwelling longer, however, on the effects of Milton’s Latinism per se on the order of his syntax, let us briefly inquire how far another cause may have co-operated in forming that structure of sentence and style which we can recognise as Miltonic.

Few services of criticism to Literature have been greater than Wordsworth’s famous onslaught on what he called Poetic Diction. Under this name, he denounced the notion—made prevalent, as he maintained, by the practice of the English eighteenth-century poets, from Dryden...
onwards, with few exceptions—that poetry consists in, or requires, an artificial mode of language, differing from the language of ordinary life, or of prose. The censure branched into several applications; but one of them concerned mere syntax. It was a mistake, Wordsworth contended, to suppose that Verse requires deviations from the natural prose order of words, or that such are legitimate in Verse. Unfortunately, the very name Verse had suggested the contrary; and, the difficulties of versifiers in adjusting their sense to the mechanical restraints of metre and rhyme having led to all kinds of syntactical tricks, such as the placing of an adjective after its noun, the tugging of a verb to the end of the line for the rhyme’s sake, &c., these had been accepted, and Verse had come, in general, to be a kind of distorted Prose. Here, as in other things, Wordsworth held, a reform was needed. It was necessary to teach people afresh (and true poets would be the best teachers) that proper verse-syntax is not distorted prose-syntax, or syntax relieved from any of the conditions imposed upon good prose, but only syntax with all the conditions of good prose retained and certain other and more exquisite and difficult conditions superadded.

—So far Wordsworth; and certainly his precept and example, in this respect, were most wholesome. Some English poets, indeed, coevals of Wordsworth, and his partners in the general crusade against “Poetic Diction,” could not emancipate themselves, as he did, from the custom of a syntax mechanically inverted to suit the mere exigencies of metre and rhyme. Crabbe is one example. In some of Wordsworth’s important successors, also, not to speak of the masses of everyday versifying that pass for poetry, verse on the principle of distorted prose has been only too abundant. On the whole, however, nothing has been more remarkable in the best English poetry of the present century than the return to a natural syntax, or even to the ordinary prose order of the words. Tennyson is here conspicuous. No writer is more essentially and continually the poet than he; hardly a line of his but contains that very something that distinguishes the poet from the prosaist; and yet it is not in the syntax that this differentia appears, and often, for many lines together, the words fall exactly and punctiliously into their ordinary prose places.—Not the less does it appear, both from a theoretical consideration of the subject, and from a study of the actual syntax of our truest poets, Tennyson and Wordsworth himself included, that the precept, as it was first put forth by Wordsworth, was too absolute. Besides those illegitimate inversions of prose-syntax which arise from a lazy or slovenly forcing of the metre and rhyme, there certainly are other inversions natural to verse as such, and not illegitimate. These seem to be of two sorts:—

(1) There are inversions natural to the peculiar elevation of mood or feeling which prompts to verse and which verse presupposes. After all, syntax has its root in thought, and every state of mind has its own syntax. This is seen within prose itself. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” is a different
construction from "Diana of the Ephesians is great," simply because the thought is not the same. And so, in prose itself, there are all varieties of syntax, from the regularly-repeated concatenation of subject, copula, and predicate, natural to the coolest statement of facts and propositions, on to the irregular rhythm of complex meditation and emotion, verging on verse, and in fact often passing into verse. Nor, when the express limit is passed, and one leaves prose avowedly for verse, is the variability of the syntax with the movement of the thought or meaning so wholly concluded already that there can be no natural variation farther. Verse is itself a proclamation that the mood of the highest prose moments is to be prolonged and sustained; and the very devices that constitute verse not only serve for the prolongation of the mood, but occasion perpetual involutions of it and incalculable excitements. (2) Study of beauty of all kinds is natural to every artist; and the poet, when he comes to be an artist in verse, will seek beauty in sound. Here, too, though we call it art, nature dictates. The writer in verse may lawfully aim at musical effects on the ear not consistent with prose syntax. In fact, this is not a distinct principle from the last, but only a particular implication of that principle, worthy of separate notice.

The syntax of Milton's poetry certainly is affected by the verse to a larger extent than we might guess from Wordsworth's enthusiastic references to him as the perfect model for poets at the very time when he was expounding his Reform of Poetic Diction. In no poet do we see the movement of ideas, and therefore the order of the words, swayed more manifestly by that elevation of feeling, that glow of mood, which comes upon the poet when he has risen above "the cool element of prose," and is "soaring in the high region of his fancies with his garland and singing-robcs about him." Indeed all through his life the leading characteristic of Milton's mind was that it could not be prosaic. He lived in song; it was his most natural mode of speech. Even in his prose-writings, all that were not mere hackwork, he every now and then spurns the ground, grows metrical, and begins to ascend. And so, when he actually was in his proper element of verse, his thoughts came in an order ruled not only by the logic of custom and reason, or by that modified by the Latinism of his syntax as it would have told in prose, but also by the conditions of roused feeling musically moved. In the following passage of At a Solemn Music is there not an inversion of ordinary syntax greater in amount, and more subtle in kind, than can be debited to Latin habits of construction or to any other cause than the verse-excitement?

"Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present"
That undisturbed song of pure concord,
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 Cherubic 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."

In such a passage as this, and all through Milton's poetry, instances of deviation from ordinary prose syntax may be noted as incessant, and we cannot always or often dismiss them as mere Latinisms. They are often clearly proper to English verse-syntax as such. Whether there are not cases, especially in the rhymed poems, where the inversions are too evidently compelled by the verse-mechanism, is a question that may be left to the varying tastes of readers. Generally, however, in seeming cases of this kind the quest of minute beauty of sound may be detected. Perhaps the best instance of this is the frequency with which the adjective *old* is put after its substantive. The word *old* occurs about sixty times in the poems; and nineteen times it occurs in this manner. "And last of kings and queens and *heroes old*" is, I think, the first case (*Vac. Ex. 47*); in the same piece we have "A *Sibyl old*" (69); after which we have "*Melibæus old*" (Com. 822), "*Bellerus old*" (Lyc. 160), "*Kishon old*" (Ps. LXXXIII. 37), "*Saturn old*" (P. L., I. 519), "*heroes old*" again (P. L., I. 552), "*warriors old*" (P. L., I. 565), "*Mount Casius old*" (P. L., II. 593), "*the Anarch old*" (P. L., II. 988), "*Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old*" (P. L., III. 36), "*Darkness old*" (P. L., III. 421), "*fables old*" (P. L., XI. 11), "*kings and heroes old*" again (P. L., XI. 243), "*Salem old*" (P. R., II. 21), "*seers old*" (P. R., III. 15), "*prophets old*" again (P. R., III. 178), "*Ninus old*" (P. R., III. 276), and "*giants old*" (S. A. 148).

V. THE PUNCTUATION.

Milton was singularly indifferent, not to say careless, about punctuation. His own manuscripts prove this. While sufficiently neat in the general mechanical arrangement, and in such particulars as the paragraphing of his poems, the indentation of lines to show the metre, &c., he either did not point at all, or merely now and then ticked in a comma or semicolon at random. No objection can be made to his habit of using small letters at the beginning of his lines of verse where they do not also begin a sentence; and, indeed, much might be said for that practice, though we have now disused it. Nor is there any-
thing remarkable in his omission of full stops at the ends of his sentences, especially where these come also at the ends of lines. Many writers omit points in this way, and trust such minutiae to the printer. But Milton’s neglect in this particular exceeds the usual, and contrasts strikingly with the extreme accuracy, the logical perfection, of his syntax, even when it is most knotty and complex. Here is an average specimen of the pointing of his MSS.:—

"Begin then Sisters of the sacred well
that from beneath the seate of Jove doth spring
begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string
hence with denial vaine, and coy excuse
so may some gentle muse
with luckie words favour my destin’d urne
and as he passes turne
and bid faire peace be to my sable shroud
for wee were nurs’t upon the selfe same hill
fed the same flock by fountaine, shade, and rill"

Here we have not only commas and other points omitted where any ordinary writer would insert them, with commas ticked in here and there to make their general absence more evident; but also sentences begun with small letters instead of capitals. Often, however, where Milton does point, the pointing is not merely arbitrary, but positively wrong. Here, for example, is a passage from Milton’s sketch of the plot of a drama on the subject of the destruction of Sodom, pointed as in the draft in his own hand among the Cambridge MSS.:—

"Lot that knows thire drift answers thwartly at last of which notice given to the whole assembly they hasten thither taxe him of presumption, singularity, breach of city customs, in fine offer violence, the chorus of Shepherds prepare resistance in thire maisters defence calling the rest of the servitute, but being forc’t to give back, the Angels open the dore rescue Lot, discover themselves, warne him to gather his freinds and sons in Law out of the city, he goes and returns as having met with some incredulous, some other freind or Son in Law out of the way when Lot came to his house, overtakes him to know his busines, heer is disputed of incredulity of divine judgments and such like matter, at last is describ’d the parting from the city the Chorus depart with thir maister, the Angels doe the deed with all dreadfull execution, the Ch. and nobles of the city may come forth and serve to set out the terror a Chorus of Angels concluding and the Angels relating the event of Lots journy, and of his wife.”

Now, it must not be supposed that Milton was thus neglectful or lawless in his pointing because there was no attention to pointing, no rule on the subject, among his contemporaries. There was very good punctuation in Milton’s time, though not on that strict logical principle which ought now to be accepted as the only proper one for systematic pointing, but rather on a combination of that principle with regard for the vocal pauses convenient in reading. In Butler’s English Grammar of 1633 there are very good rules, according to the system of that day, for the use of points. The rules would serve very well yet, though they
recommend more use of the colon than is now common, and take no account of inverted commas for quotation-marks, or of other occasional points that have been found convenient. Milton's neglect of points in his MSS., therefore, was not the mere custom of his time; it was the voluntary carelessness in this matter of a man peculiarly accurate and punctilious in his syntax and rhythms.

Of course, he intended that, when his drafts were published, the pointing should be set right by the printer, or by the printer and himself together. What, then, of the pointing of his Minor Poems in the First or 1645 edition, as published by Moseley? The printer of that volume was Ruth Raworth; but Milton himself, if not Moseley too, must be supposed to have revised the sheets as they came from that lady's printing-office, and so to be responsible for the pointing. The best that can be said for it is that it is passable. It is such that one can read without discomfort; and in the Latin Poems, as one would naturally expect, Milton's care in the revision seems to have distinctly included the pointing. Not unfrequently, however, in the English poems one comes upon passages where the pointing is by no means correct, and would not have been called correct at the time. Thus, from Arcades:

"Fame that her high worth to raise,
Seem'd erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise,
Less then half we find exprest,
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreds,
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads,
This this is she alone,
Sitting like a Goddes bright,
In the center of her light."

My impression, from general recollection, is that the pointing in those of Milton's prose-pamphlets which were printed before he became blind is not, on the average, better than that of the First edition of his poems, and so that, during that whole period of Milton's literary life when he could see his publications through the press for himself, he gave but moderate attention to the particular of pointing, and left it very much to the readers in the divers printing-offices with which he had dealings. There were differences of skill in this matter in the printing-offices; and so some of the pamphlets were better pointed than others.

Milton's blindness was total in 1652; and from that time, if not for a year or two before, he was unable to revise the proofs of his publications for himself. Probably his English pamphlets published in those circumstances were not worse pointed than their predecessors had been; but I have noted in some of the Latin pamphlets gross errors of
pointing, marring even the sense, and indicating the absence even of such revision as Milton would have given had he been able. All the more fortunate, therefore, it was that Paradise Lost came into such good hands. Whether from the care bestowed on that poem by the printer Simmons, or through special precautions taken by Milton for the revision of the proofs under his own direction, the First or 1667 edition of Paradise Lost is by far the best printed of all Milton's books published in his life-time. The pointing is much better than that of the First edition of the Minor Poems, and, though on that system of compromise between clause-marks and pause-marks which may now be voted obsolete, is yet altogether a fair specimen of pointing after that system.

Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, printed at Milton's expense in 1671 by John Starkey, did not fare so well as Paradise Lost had fared in the hands of Simmons. The paper is thicker, and the type more widely-spaced; but the press-work is less careful, and the pointing much worse. Sometimes it is very bad. Thus, Par. Reg., II. 25 et seq.:

"Then on the bank of Jordan, by a Creek:  
Where winds with Reeds, and Osiers whisp'ring play  
Plain Fishermen, no greater men them call,  
Close in a Cottage low together got  
Thir unexpected loss and plaints out breath'd.  
Alas, from what high hope to what relapse  
Unlook'd for are we fall'n, our eyes beheld  
Messiah certainly now come, so long  
Expected of our Fathers; we have heard  
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth,  
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,  
The Kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:  
Thus we rejoyc'd, but soon our joy is turn'd  
Into perplexity and new amaze:  
For whither is he gone, what accident  
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire  
After appearance, and again prolong  
Our expectation? God of Israel,  
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;  
Behold the Kings of the Earth how they oppress  
Thy chosen, to what highth thir pow'r unjust  
They have exalted, and behind them cast  
All fear of thee, arise and vindicate  
Thy Glory, free thy people from thir yoke,  
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,  
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,  
By his great Prophet."

In the Second edition of Paradise Lost, in 1674, though the Ten Books of the First were divided into Twelve, and a few additional lines were inserted, the printers had the First for their copy, and followed its pointing. Likewise, in the Second edition of the Minor Poems, in 1673, the pointing of the First edition was, in the main, repeated. Several pieces, however, appeared in this Second edition that had not
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appeared in the First. How were these pointed? Very poorly. Thus, Sonnet XIX. (numbered XVI. in that edition):—

"Doth God exact day labour, light deny'd,  
I fondly ask; but patience to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best  
Bear his milde yoak, they serve him best, his State  
Is Kingly."

From this account of the punctuation of Milton's Poems in the extant MS. drafts of them, and in the original printed editions, it will be seen that it would be difficult to recover anything that could even presumably be called Milton's system of punctuation, and that, if we could recover it, the prize would be worth nothing. If he were alive now, the pointing of his Poems would be the last thing about them in which he would avow any personal interest, or even opinion. Yet, in some respects, a writer's pointing, or abstinence from pointing, is more characteristic, gives us a keener insight into his mental processes, than his spelling. Why, then, do not those who insist on the preservation of the spelling of the original editions of Milton's Poems insist also on the preservation of their pointing, with all its variations from good to passable, from passable to bad, and occasionally from bad back again to the sheer destitution of points favoured by most of his own MSS.? For my part, I should find greater instruction, greater insight at least into the habits of defunct printing-offices, in the variable punctuation of the old texts, positively bad as it often is, than in their reasonless flutterings round our present spellings of words, shown by deviations from them in one page and returns to them in another. There is head-work, clever or stupid, in the one variation; the other is mainly finger-work.

VI. MILTON'S VERSIFICATION AND HIS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH VERSE.

Although the terms of classical Prosody—Iambus, Trochee, Spondee, Dactyl, Anapaest, Tribrach, &c.—may be applied to English verse effectively enough on the principle of taking accented syllables for longs and unaccented for shorts, there is a superior convenience in some respects in the mode of scanning English verse adopted by Dr. Latham in his work on the English Language. Let \( a \) stand for an accented syllable, and \( x \) for an unaccented one: then for the Iambus we have \( xa \), for the Trochee \( ax \), for the Spondee \( aa \), for the Dactyl \( axx \), for the Anapaest \( xxa \), for the Tribrach \( xxx \), &c.; and we have the means of constructing a formula which shall express the metre of any given line of English verse. Thus, instead of saying of the line "Dearly
bought the hidden treasure" that it consists of four Trochees, or is Trochaic Dimeter or Trochaic Quaternarius, we may say that it is of the formula $4ax$; instead of saying of the line "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold" that it consists of four Anapæsts, we may say that it is of the formula $4xxa$; and, instead of saying that a normal line of our ordinary blank verse consists of five Iambi, we can say that its formula is $5xa$. With the help of such additional symbols as + for a supernumerary syllable and — for a syllable, or part of a foot, in defect, we can express the peculiarities for which the terms catalectic, hypercatalectic, &c., are used in classical Prosody. We shall employ this mode of notation, with some extensions, in what follows.

On the merest general survey of English Poetry in respect of its Verse-mechanism, one discerns two important features in which it contrasts with the Poetry of the Greeks and Latins, in addition to that feature of contrast which is the most obvious of all: viz. the liberty and frequency of Rhyme:—(1) English Verse is prevailingly Iambic, or of the $xa$ metre. In Classical Poetry we have the Dactylic Hexameter for epic, narrative, and didactic purposes, the Iambic Trimeter or Iambic Senarius for the purposes of the Tragic Drama, and the same, with Trochaic and other licences and varied ranges of measure, for the purposes of Comedy; and these metres, with that variation of the first which consists of Elegiacs or alternate Hexameters and Pentameters, share the bulk of Greek and Latin Poetry among them, while other miscellaneous metres and combinations are used by the Greek and Latin lyricists. In English Verse, on the other hand, the $xa$ metre is overwhelmingly the most frequent. Trochaic, Dactylic, and Anapæstic measures occur occasionally in our lyric poetry; but the Iambic is all but our metrical factotum. Nay, among Iambic measures, we have tended mainly to one in particular. Though a good deal of our best-known poetry from Chaucer till now is in Iambic Octosyllabics or the $4xa$ formula, much more of it is in Iambic Decasyllabics or the $5xa$ formula. In the form of our common blank verse, or in the older form of heroic rhyming couplets, we have made this $5xa$ metre suit for the narrative and didactic purposes to which the Greeks and Latins appropriated the Dactylic Hexameter or $6axx$; we have made it suit also for the purposes of the Tragic Drama, for which they employed the Iambic Trimeter or $6xa$, and for the purposes of Comedy, for which they used that verse more laxly and with many licences; besides which, we use the same $5xa$ largely for various purposes in rhyming stanzas. (2.) In what has just been said another fact is involved: to wit, that the English ear has not hitherto shown itself capable of sustaining easily or continuously verse of such length of line as the classic ear favoured. There are specimens in our older poetry of verse in $6xa$, or even longer measures; Tennyson in his Maud has introduced a rhyming variation of the Dactylic Hexameter, and elsewhere he has given us poems in $8ax$—; and there have been similar experiments by other recent English
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paraphrase on Psalm CXIV.—Ordinary rhyming Heroics (Iambic Decasyllabics) or the 5 xa couplet; with one couplet 5 xa +.

Paraphrase on Psalm CXXXVII.—Ordinary rhyming Iambic Octosyllabics, or the 4 xa couplet; with a general Trochaic or ax effect, arising from the fact that a good many of the lines, including the refrain, omit the initial unaccented syllable.

The Cambridge Period: 1625—1632.

On the Death of a Fair Infant: 1626.—A seven-line rhyming stanza, the first six lines 5 xa, the seventh line an Alexandrine or 6 xa. It differs only in this 6 xa ending from the "Rhyne Royal" of the prosodians, used by Chaucer (Clerk’s Tale, Troilus and Cresside, &c.); by Spenser (Ruines of Time, Hymn of Heavenly Love, &c.); and by Shakespeare (Lucrece).

At a Vacation Exercise: 1628.—Ordinary rhyming Heroics.

On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity.—Introduction in same stanza as On the Death of a Fair Infant; but "The Hymn" in a peculiar rhyming eight-line stanza of combined 3 xa, 4 xa, 5 xa, and 6 xa.

Upon the Circumcision.—A complex rhyming stanza of fourteen lines of combined 2 xa, 3 xa, and 5 xa.

The Passion.—Same stanza as On the Death of a Fair Infant.

On Time.—A single burst of twenty-two lines of combined 3 xa, 4 xa, 5 xa, and 6 xa, rhyming irregularly in pairs.

At a Solemn Music.—A single burst of twenty-eight lines of combined 3 xa, 4 xa, 5 xa, and 6 xa, rhyming irregularly in pairs.

Song on May Morning.—Ten lines of combined 5 xa and 4 xa, in rhyming couples; with a Trochaic or ax effect in some of the lines.

On Shakespeare: 1630.—Ordinary rhyming Heroics.

On the University Carrier: 1630—1.—Ordinary rhyming Heroics.

Another on the Same: 1630—1.—Ordinary rhyming Heroics.

Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester: 1631.—Ordinary Octosyllabic Iambics, or 4 xa couplets, as in Paraphrase of Psalm CXXXVII; with the same frequent Trochaic or ax effect from the omission of the initial unaccented syllable.

Sonnets I. and II.—Both in 5 xa and after Italian precedents.

The Horton Period: 1632—1638.

L’Allegro and II Penseroso.—Both mainly in ordinary Octosyllabic Iambics, or 4 xa couplets, with the frequent Trochaic effect of a line in which the initial unaccented syllable is missing; but each Poem beginning with an introductory lyric of ten lines of combined 3 xa (or 3 xa +) and 5 xa (or 5 xa +).
Milton's English:

Arcades.—Three lyrics or songs, in 4\(xa\), 3\(xa\), and 2\(xa\), variously rhymed, and with a frequent Trochaic or ax effect; together with a speech in ordinary rhymed Heroics, or the 5\(xa\) couplet.

Comus: 1634.—The dialogue in the ordinary dramatic blank verse of 5\(xa\) varied by 5\(xa\) + (the first time of Milton’s use of Blank Verse); with one passage, however (lines 405–512), in ordinary rhyming Heroics or the 5\(xa\) couplet. The interspersed lyrical pieces of two sorts, viz.: 1. Considerable passages of reticulative in ordinary Octosyllabics or the 4\(xa\) couplet, with the customary Trochaic liberty in many lines, and occasionally an elongation into Heroics or the 5\(xa\) measure. 2. Songs proper in combined 2\(xa\), 3\(xa\), 4\(xa\), 5\(xa\), and 6\(xa\), variously rhymed, and often with a Trochaic liberty in the lines.

Lycidas: 1637.—With the exception of the last eight lines, which form a separate stanza in the Ottava Rima (5\(xa\)) of Ariosto, Tasso, and other poets, this pastoral is written in a peculiar variety, which may be called “The free musical paragraph.” The poet, we see, had not restricted himself beforehand by any rule, unless it were that the measure was to be Iambic or \(xa\), and that the poem should on the whole be in rhyme. Accordingly the poem is an exquisite example of a kind of verse which theorists might perhaps pronounce the most perfect and natural of any—that in which the mechanism is elastic, or determined from moment to moment by the swell or shrinking of the meaning or feeling. Most of the lines are in 5\(xa\), but ever and anon this is shortened to 3\(xa\); the rhymes are occasionally in couplets, but are more frequently at longer intervals, as if running into stanzas; sometimes a rhyme affects but two lines, but sometimes it is extended through three or four—once even through six in the same paragraph; while occasionally there is a line not rhyming at all, but so cunningly introduced that the absence of the rhyme is not felt (see Introd. to Lycidas, II. 276, and also Notes to the Poem, III. 445 et seq.)

Middle Life (Period of Prose Polemics): 1640—1660.

Sixteen English Sonnets (Sonnets VIII.—XXIII. of the General Series): 1642—1658.—These, like Sonnets I. and II., are all after the Italian form of the Sonnet in its authorized varieties (see Introduction to the Sonnets, II. 276—281).—The piece On the Forcers of Conscience, belonging to the same series, is a Sonnet with a peculiar prolongation (see Introduction to the piece, II. 289—290).—The metre in the Sonnets is, of course, always 5\(xa\); but in the “tail” or “prolongation” of the Sonnet in the last-named piece two of the lines are in 3\(xa\).

Scrap of Translated Verse in the Prose-Pamphlets.—These are all in the ordinary Blank Verse of 5\(xa\).

Horace, Ode I. V., Translated.—An unrhymed piece of sixteen lines, in alternate pairs of 5\(xa\) (or 5\(xa\) + ) and 3\(xa\).

Psalms LXXX.—LXXXVIII.: 1648.—All in four-line stanzas of alternate 4\(xa\) and 3\(xa\), or Iambic “eights and sixes,” differing from the so-called Service Metre only in the fact that the first line of each stanza generally rhymes with the third, as well as the second with the fourth.

Psalms I.—VIII.: 1653.—Experiments in various metres and combinations of rhyme, no two alike (see Introd. II. 315, 316, and note, III. 484).—Psalm I. is in ordinary rhymed Heroics or the 5\(xa\) couplet; the others are in various rhymed stanzas, but all the lines in the \(xa\) metre, ranging from 2\(xa\) or 2\(xa\) + to 5\(xa\) or 5\(xa\) +.

Later Life: 1660—1674.

Paradise Lost: 1667.—Blank Verse of the established 5\(xa\) or 5\(xa\) + measure; the use of which kind of verse for an Epic Poem was regarded by Milton himself as a great innovation upon English practice (see his Preface, I. 131, and note on the same, III. 110—113).

Paradise Regained: 1671.—Ordinary Blank Verse of 5\(xa\) or 5\(xa\) + continued.
The Verse.

Samson Agonistes: 1671.—Ordinary Blank Verse of 5 xa or 5 xa + continued, save in the choruses and lyrical parts of the soliloquies of Samson. In these, as Milton has himself explained (see his Preface to the Poem, II. 98, and note on the same, III. 323, 324), he held himself released from all rule, and versified as he liked, with a view to produce in English something of the effect of the Choruses in Greek Tragedy. In the main, however, the novelty of the versification in these lyrical parts does not consist in mixture of metres, but only in the use of a blank verse of varying lengths of line in the habitual Iambic or xa metre, from 2 xa to 6 xa at pleasure. Occasionally, indeed, in a whole line, or in part of a line, there is an Anapaestic or Dactylic character, or a greater deviation from the Iambic than is normal; but the very rareness of such instances at a time when Milton was avowedly free from all law, save that of his own ear, proves how difficult it was for him to get away from his normal xa measure, with its customary xa variation. It is perhaps more remarkable that, while the verse of these choral and lyric passages of intermingled short and long lines is generally Blank, like that of the dialogue, and though Milton had publicly taken farewell of Rhyme some time before, yet now and then he here reverts to Rhyme for a subtle effect.—On the whole, the verse of the choral and lyric parts of Samson Agonistes may be described as Blank Verse of various lengths of the Iambic metre, from 2 xa to 6 xa, with occasional touches of the Anapaestic and other metres, and with occasional rhymes.

From this survey the following facts appear:—I. Milton, from first to last, used all but exclusively the Iambic or xa metre, herein agreeing with the general body of English poets. Moreover, within the xa metre, his poetry, in conspicuously the largest proportion, keeps to the 5 xa line, whether blank, or in rhyming couplets, or distributed through rhyming stanzas or through free musical paragraphs. Next in frequency is the line of 4 xa or ordinary Octosyllabics; in his use of which he so frequently omits the initial unaccented syllable as to cause a Trochaic effect, and give us the option of scanning many of his lines either as acephalous Iambic Dimeters, or as Trochaic Dimeters catalectic. For the rest, he ranges, as we have seen, from 2 xa to the Alexandrine or 6 xa. II. Milton began with Rhymed Verse, and with customary forms of such Verse—viz. Heroics, and Octosyllabics; and his originality afterwards did not display itself so much in positive inventions of new metres as in certain extensions of metrical usage:—(1.) Very early we see him extending his range in the Rhymed Stanza by the use of stanzas which may possibly be his own; and this freedom of stanza accompanies him into later life. (2.) Very early he shows his fondness for the Sonnet, after the strict Italian model. To this model he adheres in later life; and his introduction, or re-introduction, of the Italian Sonnet 6, as we have elsewhere explained (II. 276—281), a fact of note in the history of English Verse. (3.) Very early we see a tendency in him to escape the bonds of the stanza altogether, and to indulge himself in free rhyming lyrics, conditioned, as to length of line, number and distance of rhymes, &c., purely by his own meaning, feeling, and musical tact at the moment. In this assertion of a liberty of rhyming lyrics beyond any bounds of stanza Milton had had English predecessors; but his example added importance to the practice. (4.) His chief innovation in English Verse, as he himself most emphatically marked,
was his disuse in his later life of Rhyme altogether for purposes to which it had been long consecrated, and his extension and adaptation to Epic Poetry of the Blank Verse which had till then, with few exceptions, been appropriated exclusively to the Drama. He had first used Blank Verse for the drama or dialogue of his Comus, and in this had but followed custom; but, when he put forth his Paradise Lost, in 1667, wholly in Blank Verse, he could proclaim it as "an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty restored to Heroic Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming." The innovation was confirmed by Paradise Regained. As Samson Agonistes was a drama, the use of Blank there for the dialogue could occasion no remark. (5.) One other innovation of Milton was his deviation occasionally from the normal Blank of $5+xa$ or $5xa+$ into a free irregular Blank of combined short and long lines of $xa$. His Translation of Horace, Ode L.—V. is one specimen; but the most interesting and abundant specimens are in the soliloquies and choruses of his Samson.

In Eckermann's Conversations of Goethe, under the date April 6, 1829, there is this story:—"We sat a while longer at table, taking some "glasses of old Rhenish wine, with some good biscuits. Goethe "hummed to himself unintelligibly. The poem of yesterday [a poem "of Goethe’s in three stanzas, of the date January 1788, printed in the "Zweiter Aufenthalt in Rom] came into my head again. . . . One "peculiarity of this poem," said I, ‘is that it has upon me the effect of "rhyme, and yet it is not in rhyme. How is this?’ ‘That is the "result of the rhythm,’ he replied. ‘The lines begin with a short "syllable, and then proceed in trochees to the dactyl near the close, "which has a peculiar effect, and gives a sad, bewailing character to "the poem.’ He took a pencil, and divided the line thus:—

‘Vön | meinəm | breıtən | Lägər | bın ıch vər | traîbən.’

"We then talked of rhythm in general, and came to the conclusion that "no certain rules can be laid down in such matters. ‘The measure,’ "said Goethe, ‘flows, as it were, unconsciously from the mood of the "poet. If he thought about it while writing the poem, he would go "mad, and produce nothing of value.’”——A subsequent conversation on Verse and its technicalities (Feb. 9, 1831) led to remarks from Goethe which are thus reported:—"Nowadays technicalities are every-"thing, and critics begin to torment themselves whether in a rhyme an "s should be followed by an s and not an s by ss. If I were young "and bold enough, I would purposely offend against all these technical "whims: I would employ alliteration, assonance, false rhyme, and any-"thing else that came into my head; but I would keep the main point "in view, and endeavour to say such good things that every one should "be tempted to read them and to learn them by heart.”——These two anecdotes are a fit preface to what is here to follow. Milton, in the act
The Verse.

of writing or mentally composing his poetry, did not generally think of the minuita of the verse-mechanism; but obeyed the mood of his thought, and the instinct of a musical ear as perfect and fastidious as was ever given to man. There is no doubt, however, that, like Goethe, he could become the prosodian of his own verses when he chose, and was very learned and critical in all such matters. He would not have objected, therefore, to the most microscopic examination of his verse in search of the mechanical causes or accompaniments of the poetic effects. What of this kind can be given here may divide itself between two heads—I. Milton's Metrical Management, and II. Milton's Rhymes.

The Metrical Management.

It is by examining Milton's Blank Verse that we shall best learn his metrical art.

The formula of the normal line of Blank Verse is 5 xa: which means that each normal line consists of ten syllables, alternately weak and strong. Here are examples of such lines from Milton's poetry:

"At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound."—Comus, 555.
"Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen."—P. L., I. 330.
"Of flutes and soft recorders, such as raised
To hight of noblest temper heroes old."—P. L., I. 551, 552.
"The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings."—P. L., II. 494, 495.
"And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies."—P. L., II. 950.
"And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dust with horrid shades."—P. R., I. 295, 296.
"And I shall shortly be with them that rest."—S. A. 598.

Such regular lines of five Iambi, however, are much less frequent than might be supposed, and very rarely are two or three of them found consecutively. The reason is that any considerable series of lines of this uniform construction would be unendurable. The ear demands variety; and so, mutatis mutandis, that happens in English Blank Verse which happened in the various kinds of classic verse. The Heroic verse of Homer and Virgil is called Dactylic Hexameter, the formula of which, if we use our symbols for accent as symbols for quantity, would be 6 axx. In fact, however, no line of six Dactyls exists. Not only is the last or sixth foot invariably a Spondee (aa); but even the fifth, which generally must be a Dactyl, may now and then be a Spondee, and any of the preceding four may be either a Spondee or a Dactyl. Thus we may have lines occasionally with only one dactylic foot. The reason for the name of the verse, therefore, is that each line has a total effect equivalent to that of six Dactyls. So in the kind of verse called Iambic Trimeter or Iambic

VOL. I.
Senarius, which was the verse of the Greek tragedians for the dialogue, and of their Latin followers. The norm of each line was six Iambi, or, in our notation, 6 \( xx \), so that the verse may be taken as our Blank lengthened by a foot. Regular lines of the six Iambi do occur; but a succession of such would have been thought monotonous. In the actual practice of the poets (Greek and Latin together) the ear therefore dictated varieties, which the prosodians, coming after them and watching what they had done, expressed in these rules—that any one of the first five feet might be a Tribrach (xxx); that any of the three odd feet (the 1st, the 3rd, and the 5th) might perfectly well be a Spondee (aa); and that this Spondee might be resolved into a Dactyl (axx) or an Anapaest (xxx) in any of the three places, though in the third place the Anapaest, and in the 5th the Dactyl, ought to be very rare. The verse was called Iambic Senarius, in short, because each line was to consist of six Iambi, or what the cultured ear would accept as equivalent. Precisely so are we to be understood when we say that the formula of Milton’s Blank Verse, or of English Blank Verse generally, is 5 \( xx \). Lines may occur, frequently enough, that answer exactly to that formula; but the formula only means that each line delivers into the ear a general 5 \( xx \) effect, the ways of producing this effect being various. What the ways are can be ascertained only by carefully reading and scanning a sufficient number of specimens of approved Blank Verse.

Unfortunately, the process of scanning Milton’s Blank Verse, or any other English verse, is not so certain as that of scanning Greek or Latin verse. All depends on the reading; and the reading depends on the taste and habits of the reader. It would be easy to read Milton’s Blank Verse so that all the lines, or most of them, should be redacted by force into the normal 5 \( xx \). Thus, the first line of Paradise Lost might be read:—

“Öf máns I first dís I óbéd I ende and I thè frúit”

or the very abnormal line, P. L., VI. 866, might be read thus:—

“Búrnnt ãf I têr thém I tò thè I bôttóm I lèss pít.”

This, of course, is too horrible; and such barbarous readers are imaginary. I am not sure, however, but that, in the reading of Milton or of Shakespeare, even by persons of education and taste, especially if they are punctilious about Prosody, there is a minor form of the same fault. It consists in reading so as to regularize the metre wherever it is possible to do so—in reading the \( xx \) tune into the lines through and through, wherever, by a little persuasion, they will yield to it. This, I think, is wrong. The proper way is not to impose the music upon the lines, but to let the music of each line arise out of it as it is read naturally. Only in this way can we know what metrical effect Shakespeare or Milton anywhere intended. Perhaps the elision-marks and other such devices in the old printed texts, though well-intentioned,
help to mislead here. When, in the original edition of Paradise Lost, I
find *flamed* spelt *flam'd*, or *Heaven* spelt *Heav'n*, or *Thebes* spelt *Thēb's*,
I take the apostrophe as an express direction to omit the e sound and
pronounce the words as monosyllables; but I cannot accept the apo-
trophe as an elision-mark of precisely the same significance in the lines
"Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues" (P. L., I. 15), and "That
led th' imbattell'd Seraphim to warr" (P. L., I. 129)—for these reasons:—
(1) Because the strict utterances *thAonian* and *thimbattelld* are
comicalities now, which I cannot conceive ever to have been serious;
(2) because such contracted utterances are quite unnecessary for the
 metre, inasmuch as the lines are perfectly good to the ear even if the
word *the* is fully, but softly, uttered, according to prose custom; and
(3) because I find the same elision mark used in the old texts in cases
where it is utterly impossible that the total suppression of the e can have
been meant. No doubt the reading of English poetry in Milton's time or
Shakespeare's differed in some respects from ours. The differences, how-
ever, must have been in details of pronunciation rather than in metrical
instinct. The habits of pronunciation did, of course, affect the metre.
If there was an option between *inflam'd* and *inflamèd*, the metre was
influenced by that; the frequent shifting of the accent in such words as
*infamous*, *blasphémonous*, *triūmphs*, also influenced the metre; and, not
seldom, to make out the metre, we have to remember the old liberty of
lengthening words by resolution of single syllables of custom into two
at will: e.g. *octān* (*Od. Nat. 66*), *contemplātiōn* (*II. Pens. 54*). In fact,
however, the metre itself generally reveals such peculiarities at the
instant of their occurrence and prevents them from being obsolete.
On the whole, then, it is best to assume that strictly metrical effects are
pretty permanent, that what was agreeable to the English metrical sense
in former generations is agreeable now, and that, even in verse so old as
Chaucer's, one of the tests of the right metrical reading of any line is
that it shall satisfy the present ear. For this reason, and also because
Milton's poetry is a property which, by his own express intention,
we may use and enjoy after our own habits and methods, the right
way of scanning his verse is to read it freely and naturally as we
should read verse of our own day, subject only to a few transmitted
directions, and to register the actual results as well as we can in metrical
formulae.

On this principle (which still, of course, leaves room for difference, as
no two readers will read alike 1) I would offer the following as the

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1 For anything like delicate scanning, as Mr. A. J. Ellis has pointed out, the mere
distinction of syllables into *strong* and *weak*, *or accented* and *unaccented*, is insufficient.
There are *degrees* of stress in good reading even on the syllables called strong or
accented, some *a* syllables being twice or even thrice as emphatic as others reckoned
as *a*, and consequently taking twice or thrice the time in good enunciation. Efficient
scanning ought to recognise this fact. In the text, however, I try to make the
customary distinction between *x* and *a* suffice.
scanning of the first twenty-six lines of *Paradise Lost*, the double formula in some places indicating an option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>xa</th>
<th>ax</th>
<th>xa</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>xa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>ax</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>ax</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>ax</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>ax</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>ax</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td></td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>aax</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>aax</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>ax</td>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>xa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>ax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>aa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
<td>xa</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here only two or three lines are normal, and there is great variety in the construction of the rest. In ten or eleven cases the *xa* or Iambus is absent from the first metrical place and we have instead the Trochee (**ax**), the Spondee (**aa**), or the Pyrrhic (**xx**). In thirteen lines the Iambus is absent from the second place and we have a Pyrrhic, a Trochee, a Spondee, or even an Anapæst (**xxa**) or an Antibacchius (**aax**) instead. In the third place we have five times a Trochee, a Pyrrhic, or a Spondee for the Iambus, and once an Antibacchius. In the fourth place, besides the Trochee and the Spondee in several lines, we have once possibly a Tribrach (**xxx**) and once possibly an Anapæst. Even in the last place, though the Iambus most decidedly holds its own, there are
one or two cases in which natural reading requires, I think, so much stress on the penultimate syllable that the foot becomes a kind of Spondee. Finally, the scanning proves that a line of Blank Verse may admit of a substitute for the Iambus in several places, and not in one only.

For a farther and more systematic view of the peculiarities of Milton’s Blank Verse it will be best to distinguish his irregular lines (if it be not absurd to give that name to what is so perpetual and habitual) into two classes, according as the deviations from the supposed normal 5-xa consist in substitutions of the other dissyllabic feet (the Trochee, the Pyrrhic, or the Spondee) for the regular Iambus, or in the substitutions of trisyllabic feet (the Anapaest, the Dactyl, the Tribrach, &c.) for the same.

I. DISSYLLABIC VARIATIONS.—From the perplexing abundance of examples of such, page after page, take, almost at random, these:

(1) “Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment.”
(2) “Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze.”
(3) “Dovelike sat’st brooding on the vast Abyss.”
(4) “Nine times the space that measures day and night.”
(5) “Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell.”
(6) “Irreconcilable to our grand Foe.”
(7) “Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last.”
(8) “Numberless as thou seest, and how they move.”
(9) “Infinite wrath and infinite despair.”
(10) “Whose image thou art: him thou shalt enjoy.”
(11) “On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star.”
(12) “Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve.”
(13) “Not to know me argues yourselves unknown.”
(14) “Gabriel from the front thus called aloud.”
(15) “Thus said:—Native of Heaven, for other place.”
(16) “In their triple degrees: regions to which.”
(17) “Created thee in the image of God.”
(18) “Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.”
(19) “Yet fell: remember and fear to transgress.”
(20) “To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.”
(21) “Productive on herb, plant, and nobler birth.”
(22) “Greedily she ingorged without restraint.”
(23) “Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life.”
(24) “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”
(25) “Like change on sea and land, sidereal blast.”
(26) “Me, me only, just object of his ire.”
(27) “Found so unfortunate; nevertheless.”
(28) “In the visions of God: it was a hill.”
(29) “Justification towards God, and peace.”
(30) “To the flood Jordan—came as then obscure.”
(31) “With them from bliss to the bottomless pit.”
(32) “Among daughters of men the fairest found.”
(33) “And made him bow to the Gods of his wives.”
(34) “After forty days’ fasting had remained.”
(35) “And with these words his temptation pursued.”
(36) “From that placid aspect and meek regard.”
All these lines, it will be observed, are decasyllabic; and so far they are
regular. There being only ten syllables in each, the forced Iambic
chant might regularize them all completely, or convert them all into
strict $xa$: e.g. "Irréconcilable tô ôur grand Fâe"; "On a sünbëam,
swift âs â shoottûng står"; "Grëedîly shë ïngôrged without rëstrâint";
"Thât invincible Sâmson, far rénowned." Even where the Iambic
chant is at its worst, however, it does not inflict such horrors as these,
but acknowledges reluctantly that the lines are not to be regularized.
A study of the facts puts all formally right by declaring that English
Blank Verse admits a Trochee, a Spondee, or a Pyrrhic, for the Iambus
in almost any place of the line.

Now, the possible combinations of the four dissyllabic feet $xa$, $ax$,
$xx$, and $aa$ in the five places, with the result of a blank verse that shall
be good to the ear, are not a matter for arithmetical computation, but
for experience. An examination of any one page, however, shows that
they are very numerous. It is by no means to be supposed that the
foregoing examples represent them all; but in these examples alone a
considerable number of interesting variations may be observed. Thus
the Trochee for the Iambus is very frequent in them. It appears, if I
may trust to my own reading, in the first metrical place in Nos. 1, 2, 3,
6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 22, 29, 31, 34, 39, 40, 45, 46, giving in each case
the very acceptable effect, so common in good blank verse, of a strong
syllable now and then at the beginning of a line. I find it in the second
metrical place in Nos. 15, 16, 20, 24, 26, 28, 32, 34, 36, 42, 44, 47;
it comes in the third metrical place in Nos. 11, 12, 13, 23; and in the
fourth in Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38, 40,
43. The Pyrrhic also is not uncommon. I find it, or seem to find it,
in the first metrical place in Nos. 11, 16, 20, 24, 28, 30, 32, 35, 42, 44, 47;
in the second in Nos. 8, 10, 14, 18, 21, 22, 37, 38, 39, 43, 45; in the
third in Nos. 3, 6, 17, 18, 19, 31, 33, 35, 40; and in the fourth in Nos.
26, 34, 39, 45. One does not like to speak so surely of the Spondee,
which is supposed to be rather alien to English speech; and the matter
is complicated (as indeed it is in the Pyrrhic) by the delicate question
of what the distinction is between accent and mere stress, strength, or
quantity. Can a weak syllable, on the one hand, be said to be accented,
and a syllable requiring strong or emphatic enunciation, on the other
hand, be said to be unaccented? Without discussing such a subtlety, let me say that I perpetually find in Milton's verse a foot for which "Spondee" is the best name, and that it would be difficult to characterize many of his lines otherwise than by calling them Spondaic. In the foregoing examples I find, or seem to find, the Spondee for the Iambus, in the first metrical place, in Nos. 4, 5, 7, 15, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27, 38, 43; in the second metrical place in Nos. 2, 3, 13, 30, 35; in the third metrical place in Nos. 7, 10, 21, 26, 34, 41; in the fourth metrical place in Nos. 7, 14, 41; and (what is worth observing) in the fifth or last metrical place in Nos. 6, 7, 41, 43, 45.—More appears from the examples given than merely that the Iambus may be replaced anywhere in the line by another disyllabic foot. It appears that there may be not only one such displacement, but several such, in any line, and indeed that one displacement naturally brings others by way of correction or compensation. Thus, of the 47 lines quoted, while some exhibit but one displacement (e.g. Nos. 1, 4, 5, 29, 36, 46), there are two displacements in many (Nos. 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 33, 37, 42, 44, 47); three displacements in 13 (Nos. 3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 24, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41); four displacements in 6 (Nos. 7, 18, 26, 34, 35, 45), and one remaining line (No. 43) with actually five displacements, or not a single regularly placed Iambus in it. Subtle laws, no doubt, regulate the correction of one displacement by another or others; but the inquiry is too minute here.—One remark bearing on it may, however, be added. It is that the acceptability of a line to the ear, the ease with which it is passed as good or usual blank verse, is by no means in the inverse proportion of the number of its variations from the normal; and, vice versa, that the strangeness of a line to the ear, the difficulty of accepting it, is by no means in the direct proportion of the number of its variations. Of the 47 specimen lines twenty-three, or almost exactly a half, are lines which, I think, would be accepted at once, or without much demur, as in legitimate Blank Verse time—viz. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 29, 30, 37, 38, 39, 41, 43, 45, and 46. The other half, or twenty-four in all,—viz. Nos. 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 40, 42, 44, 47—are strange lines, out of time with the general rhythm of Blank, and some of them so startlingly so, that, in their detached state, they look like bits of prose, or lines astray from some complex chorus. Well, among those lines that would be accepted at once by everybody as in true Blank Verse time is precisely that No. 43 which is irregular or non-Iambic in all the five places: "Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both Worlds" (aa, xx, aa, ax, aa). Of the other perfectly or easily acceptable lines, two exhibit four variations (No. 7, with actually four Spondees, and No. 45 with a Trochee, two Pyrrhics, and one Spondees), seven exhibit three variations (Nos. 3, 6, 13, 14, 38, 39, 41), eight exhibit two variations (Nos. 2, 8, 9, 12, 15, 22, 30, 37), and five exhibit one variation (Nos. 1, 4, 5, 29, 46). Of the twenty-four strange
lines, on the other hand, one exhibits one variation (No. 36), thirteen exhibit two variations (Nos. 10, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 32, 33, 42, 44, 47), six exhibit three variations (Nos. 11, 16, 19, 24, 31, 40), and four exhibit four variations (Nos. 18, 26, 34, 35).

From the above it results that, though five beats or accents are the normal measure of Blank Verse, yet the number of accents, unless in a peculiar sense of accent, not realized in actual pronunciation, is also variable. In a good many of the lines only four distinct accents can be counted (e.g. Nos. 8, 9, 11, 18, 20, 22, 24, 31, 33, 35, 37, 40, 42, 44, 47). In three lines (Nos. 17, 28, and 39) I can detect but three; and, on the other hand, in a few very Spondaic lines the number seems to mount to six (Nos. 2, 25, 26), seven (No. 43) or even eight (Nos. 7, 41). This diminution of the accents below four or increase above five conflicts, I know, with the common notion of accent, which makes it a mystic something, distinct from stress, strength, or anything that can be perceived in actual enunciation. But I cannot bear a nomenclature which in such a line as No. 7 would call the weak "their" and the strong repeated "who," indiscriminately unaccented syllables, or which would sink the coequality of three words in the following line with the strongest other words in it by saying that it has somehow but five accents:

"Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shapes of death."

Occasionally there will be found a line which has the full normal number of accents, but only nine syllables: e.g.

"Self-fed and self-consumed: if this fail."
"Dwells in all Heaven charity so rare?"

II. Trisyllabic Variations.—Less numerous than the lines that escape from the strict 5 xa formula by the substitution of the Trochee, the Pyrrhic, or the Spondee, for the Iambus, but still very frequent, are the lines that escape from the formula by the holder substitution of one of the trisyllabic feet. This occasions even a greater irregularity in appearance; for, wherever an Anapæst, a Dactyl, a Tribrach, or other trisyllabic foot, displaces an Iambus, the line, of course, is lengthened to eleven syllables. Nevertheless the trisyllabic variation consists with the genius of English Blank Verse, and imparts to it an additional power and freedom. Again a collection of examples, out of the abundance bedded in Milton’s text, will best yield conclusions:—

1. "To quench the drought of Phæbus, which as they taste."
2. "Likeliest and nearest to the present aid."
3. "To seek i’ the valley some cool friendly spring."
4. "Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o’ the woods."
5. "But for that damned magician, let him be girt."
6. "Crams and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?"
The Verse.

7. "I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees."
8. "Made Goddess of the river; still she retains."
9. "Created hugest that swim the ocean stream."
10. "Inexorably, and the torturing hour."
12. "Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain."
13. "Passion and apathy and glory and shame."
14. "Immeasurably: all things shall be our prey."
15. "The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar."
16. "Of massy iron or solid rock with ease."
17. "So he, with difficulty and labour hard,"
18. "Moved on: with difficulty and labour he."
19. "If true, here only, and of delicious taste."
20. "The organs of her fancy, and with them forge."
21. "Virtue in her shape how lovely: saw and pined."
22. "No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare."
23. "Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought."
24. "Plant of the field, which ere it was on the Earth."
25. "Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus."
26. "Over fish of the sea and fowl of the air."
27. "Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold."
28. "How dies the Serpent? He hath eaten and lives."
29. "Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth."
30. "That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed."
31. "Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not."
32. "Thy punishment then justly is at his will."
33. "To a fell adversary, his hate and shame."
34. "Not this rock only: his omnipresence fills."
35. "In piety thus and pure devotion paid."
36. "Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue."
37. "Ridiculous, and the work Confusion named."
38. "By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire."
39. "Their city, his temple, and his holy ark."
40. "The throne hereditary, and bound his reign."
41. "Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise."
42. "By vision found thee in the Temple, and spake."
43. "Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art."
44. "And on that high authority had believed."
45. "Behold the Kings of the Earth how they oppress."
46. "Little suspicious to any king; but now."
47. "Powers of Fire, Air, Water and Earth beneath."
48. "No advantage, and his strength as of assay."
49. "Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove."
50. "From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts."
51. "How quick they wheeled, and, flying, behind them shot."
52. "Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight."
53. "City or suburban, studious walks and shades."
54. "Shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece."
55. "Epicurean, and the Stoic severe."
56. "Have brought thee and highest placed; highest is best."
57. "The mystery of God, given me under pledge."
58. "By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine."
59. "With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts."
60. "Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift?"
61. "Miraculous, yet remaining in those locks."
62. "Out, out, hyena! These are thy wonted arts."
63. "She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting."
Milton's English:

64. "The sumptuous Dalila floating this way."
65. "Afford me, assassinated and betrayed."
66. "Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?"
67. "This insolence other kind of answer fits."
68. "Whether he durst accept the offer or not."
69. "To something extraordinary my thoughts."
70. "Relation more particular and distinct."

All these lines might be rectified into Dactyly by supposing elisions, slurs, or contracted utterances; and there are some who seem to favour such a practice. There could be no more absurd error. Will anyone venture to say that the word "Phæbus" in No. 1 is to be pronounced "Phæbs," the word "magician" in No. 5 "magishn," the words "feeder" and "river" in Nos. 6 and 8 "feed," and "riv," the words "the ocean-stream" in No. 9 "thocean-stream," the word "reason" in No. 11 "reezn," the word "difficulty" in No. 17 "diffikty," the word "purple" in No. 27 "purp,'" the word "ridiculous" in No. 37 "ridiculous," the word "capital" in No. 41 "capital," the words "No advantage" in No. 48 "Nadvantage," the word "Philistines" in No. 60 "Philistines," the word "giant" in No. 66 "gint," or the word "particular" in No. 70 "partiklar"? Did Milton require these pronunciations in his verse, or the other violations and comicalities that would be necessary to reduce the rest of the lines to Dactyly? I do not believe he did; and, if Blank Verse required such, Blank Verse would not be worth having. But it does not. The lines above and any other such lines remain perfectly good Blank Verse even with the most leisurely natural enunciation of the spare syllable; and the pedantic expression of this fact is that English Blank Verse admits a trisyllabic substitute for the Iambus in any place, and may thus become hendecasyllabic.

Scanning the seventy specimen lines, we make out this result; which may pass on the whole, though it is by no means likely that it will be accepted in all particulars.—In eighteen the supposition of an Anapaest (axa) mends the line—three times in the first metrical place (Nos. 26, 43, 48); six times in the second metrical place (Nos. 3, 21, 29, 56, 64, 65); three times in the third (Nos. 9, 12, 45); three times in the fourth (Nos. 47, 51, 57); and three times in the last (Nos. 5, 10, 24). In six lines the Dactyl (axx) solves the knot—four times in the first place (Nos. 2, 46, 49, 53); once in the second place (No. 54); and once in the fourth place (No. 50). The Tribrach also accounts for six—once in the first place (No. 55); once in the second (No. 14); and four times in the third (Nos. 17, 18, 33, 40). For three lines the Antibacchius (axx) comes to the rescue, twice in the second place (Nos. 19 and 34), and once in the third (No. 32); and for two lines the rarer Cretic (axa) is the solvent, once in the first place (No. 23) and once in the fourth (No. 7). This leaves thirty-five of the lines, or exactly one half, unaccounted for; and in these, strange to say, the neatest agent is the Amphibrach (axa). It fits the first place eight times (Nos. 11, 15, 25, 35, 37, 39, 61, 67), the second seven times (Nos. 16, 27, 52, 58, 62, 63, 66), the third eleven times
The Verse.

(Nos. 1, 5, 6, 8, 20, 22, 31, 44, 60, 69, 70), and the fourth nine times (Nos. 13, 28, 30, 36, 38, 41, 42, 59, 68).—The introduction of a trisyllabic foot is apt to cause a disturbance even in the rest of the fabric of the line, made up as it is of dissyllabic feet with their accents. Hence some of the lines quoted require very peculiar scanning, apart from the inserted trisyllabic foot. Some of them, indeed, would not pass for Blank Verse at all if they stood by themselves, and are such only when fused into the music of the context: e.g. Nos. 24 and 26. In both these cases Milton is quoting from Scripture, and it is his habit then to compel the metre to adopt the literal text.

Are there any examples of two trisyllabic variations in one line? There are, though exceedingly rare. I quote a few:—

(1) "Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait."
(2) "Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought."
(3) "Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek."
(4) "Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought."
(5) "The one winding, the other straight, and left between."
(6) "Aim at the highest: without the highest attained."
(7) "Curiosity, inquisitive, importune."

In each of these, if the pronunciation is not slurred, there are twelve syllables; and yet they are not Alexandrines. They are verses with two trisyllabic feet each, so that the metre of the whole line is pushed wider by two syllables. Thus in No. 1 "Wallowing" is a Dactyl in the first place, followed by an Anapaest in the third; in No. 2 there is an Anapaest in the second place, followed by another, or perhaps rather a Bacchius (xaα), in the third; in No. 3 there is an Amphibrach in the first place, followed by a Cretic in the fourth; in No. 4 there is an Amphibrach in the first place, followed by an Anapaest in the third; in No. 5 a Bacchius begins the line, followed by an Anapaest; in No. 6 there is an Amphibrach in the second place, repeated in the fourth; and, if No. 7 is to be scanned at all, it is by supposing an Anapaest in the first place, followed by a Tribrach in the second, a Trochee in the third, and then two Iambi.

If all Milton's thousands of lines of Blank Verse, therefore, were examined individually, they might be distributed, so far as we have yet seen, into four sorts:—I. The normal 5 xa, or pure Decasyllabics of five Iambi. Such lines do occur pretty numerously, and generally, I think, with a calming, soothing, or pathetic effect. II. The 5 xa, with more or less of dissyllabic variation. This is by far the prevailing sort, and is divisible into sub-varieties, according to the amount and method of the dissyllabic variation. III. Lines of 5 xa formula converted into Hendecasyllabics by some single trisyllabic variation. These are numerous. IV. Lines of 5 xa widened into Duodecasyllabics by a double trisyllabic variation. These are exceedingly rare.
Of one feature of Milton's Blank Verse we have hitherto taken no account. It is **The Supernumerary Final Syllable.** This is a distinct thing from the supernumerary syllable or syllables that may arise within any line from the trisyllabic variation. It is a relic of the old English habit of speech which made it natural, as we see in Chaucer, to end verses with a weak syllable after a strong, as the Italians, and other nations do yet. In Shakespeare the ending of a line with a supernumerary weak syllable after the last strong one was perfectly optional: often there are five or six such lines consecutively in a single speech.—How far did Milton keep up the habit? With respect to this question, we must distinguish between Milton's Dramatic Blank Verse, in his *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*, and his Narrative Blank Verse, the adoption of which for his *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* he claimed as almost an invention.—The eighth line of *Comus* is one with a supernumerary final syllable ("Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being"); the tenth is the same; and throughout the Masque such lines occur at intervals to the number of about 70 in all, or about 9 per cent. of the whole. It appears, therefore, that Milton availed himself of the traditional liberty of 5xa+ for dramatic blank verse, though more sparingly than was usual with the stage-dramatists.—Not even in his Narrative Blank did he quite reject the convenient liberty. In the first Book of *Paradise Lost*, consisting of 798 lines, I count nine lines with a supernumerary final syllable. This is at the rate of about one in every hundred; and I rather think that the proportion throughout most of the poem is not in excess of that, though it varies in different Books, and in Book X. in particular I have noted at least fifty-two extra-syllabled lines in a total of 1104, or at the rate nearly of one in every twenty. In *Paradise Regained*, containing altogether 2070 lines, the number of extra-syllabled lines, as roughly observed, is 70 or more; which is at the rate of one in every thirty. On the whole, therefore, the notion that Milton disapproved of lines of this kind in Epic Blank Verse has been exaggerated. That he did hold them less suitable, however, for Epic Blank Verse than for Dramatic Blank, is suggested not only by his very moderate use of them in his epics, but also by the fact that such lines are most frequent there in the dramatic parts or speeches.—The idea is confirmed when we pass to *Samson Agonistes*. He rather revels in the liberty of extra-syllabled lines in that dramatic poem. The blank verse dialogue parts of the drama make about 1300 lines, and I have counted over 230 extra-syllabled lines among them, or more than one in every six. They sometimes come very thickly. In one speech of Samson's there are twelve in thirty-two lines, and there are instances of three or four quite consecutively.

This fact of the occasional Supernumerary Final Syllable imports an additional metrical peculiarity into Milton's Blank Verse, inasmuch as it may occur in any of the four sorts into which on other grounds his lines may be distributed.
The Verse.

When it occurs in a line of the first sort, *i.e.* composed otherwise of five pure consecutive Iambi, it simply makes that line $5 \text{x}\alpha +$, or hendecasyllabic: *e.g.*

"While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither."

When it occurs in a line of the second sort, *i.e.* which would be otherwise $5 \text{x}\alpha$ with dissyllabic variation or variations, the result similarly is $5 \text{x}\alpha +$ of that sort, also hendecasyllabic: *e.g.*

"Eternal King: thee author of all being."

But when it occurs in a line of the third sort or of the fourth—*i.e.* in a line of the single or the double trisyllabic variation—more happens. Such lines are still properly of the $5 \text{x}\alpha$ formula, inasmuch as the trisyllabic feet introduced are but substitutes for $\text{x}\alpha$ in the places where they come, but they are already hendecasyllabic or duodecasyllabic. Now when such a line acquires a supernumerary final syllable, or becomes $5 \text{x}\alpha+$, we have the curious phenomenon of a line perfectly within the rule of Blank Verse, perfectly answering to the $5 \text{x}\alpha+$ formula, and yet containing twelve or even thirteen syllables. Here are examples of a length of twelve syllables so occasioned in lines already hendecasyllabic by the action of a single internal trisyllabic variation:

"The fellows of his crime, the followers rather."

"Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining."

"Some way or other yet farther to afflict thee."

And here is one example of a length of thirteen syllables produced by the supernumerary final syllable in lines already duodecasyllabic in virtue of two internal trisyllabic variations:

"By spiritual, to themselves appropriating."

Instances of lines twelve or thirteen syllables long are among the extreme rarities of Milton’s text; but there is yet another way in which such a rarity may occur. It is by the accident or inadvertence of an Alexandrine—*i.e.* of a line not at all of the proper $5 \text{x}\alpha$ or $5 \text{x}\alpha+$ rhythm merely widened by trisyllabic variation and the supernumerary final syllable, but distinctly of the $6 \text{x}\alpha$ rhythm. An ordinary Alexandrine consists of twelve syllables (six pure Iambi or an equivalent of dissyllabic feet) thus:

"From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire."—Od. Nat. 28.

"While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave."—Od. Nat. 68.

But then, as an Alexandrine itself is susceptible of internal trisyllabic variation as well as dissyllabic, and as it may also have a supernumerary final syllable or be $6 \text{x}\alpha+$, we may have Alexandrines of thirteen syllables (or even perhaps fourteen): thus:

"And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day."—Od. Nat. 140.

"Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable."—Od. Nat. 244.

"So huge their numbers, and so numberless their nation."—F. Q. iv. xii.
Are there any Alexandrines in Milton's Blank Verse? There are some, both of twelve syllables and of thirteen, scattered through the choruses in Samson, where, as we have said (ante, p. ciii.), Milton ranges freely from 2 \( xa \) to 6 \( xa \): e.g.:

"No strength of man or fiercest wild beast could withstand."—127.
"With studied argument and much persuasion sought."—658.
"Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times."—695.

In these choruses, however, Milton holds himself released from all ordinary rule; and in his Blank Verse proper, narrative or dramatic, it is much more difficult to find a true Alexandrine. In Comus, 617, where the end of a speech of the Elder Brother runs into one line with the beginning of a speech of the Guardian Spirit, the two fragments form an Alexandrine, thus:

"As to make this relation?  
\textit{Spirit}: Care and utmost shifts."

The following are also perhaps examples:

"As if she would her children should be riotous."—Comus, 763.
"For solitude sometimes is best society."—\( P. L. \), IX. 249.
"Such solitude before choicest society."—\( P. R. \), I. 302.
"Private respects must yield, with grave authority."—S. A. 868.

It may be maintained that these last are not positive examples, inasmuch as they may be taken rather as lines of 5 \( xa \) with two supernumerary weak final syllables; and the same may be said more plausibly of such lines as the following:

"Is now the labour of my thoughts: 'tis likeliest."—Com. 192.
"Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers."—\( P. R. \), III. 82.
"Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest."—S. A. 445.
"To accept of ransom for thy son, their prisoner."—S. A. 1460.

Nevertheless, exactly such lines do pass for Alexandrines in poems where Alexandrines are due, the two final weak syllables passing (as often in \( xa \) verse) for a distinct foot: e.g.

"In whose dead face he redd great magnanimity."—Spens. \( F. Q. \) II. viii. 23.
"This garden to adorn with all variety."—\( F. Q. \) II. xii. 59.

Whether, after such precedents, we call the above examples from Milton Alexandrines, or whether we call them, as it is perhaps best to do in dramatic dialogue, only 5 \( xa \) lines with two supernumerary final syllables, in either case we see in them lines of twelve or thirteen syllables produced by a cause different from those already noted.

\textbf{The Cæsura.}—This term is used in different senses by prosodians; but it seems best, for English verse, to understand by it the pause
attending the conclusion of a period, or of some logical section of a period, when that pause occurs anywhere else than at the end of a line. That Milton attached some importance to the Cæsura, in this sense, as a factor in Blank Verse, may be inferred from his Prefatory Note to 
_Paradise Lost_, where, defending the all-sufficiency of Blank Verse for "true musical delight," he says that such true musical delight "consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another." Now, in this sense, I think I can report with some certainty that the most frequent Cæsura in Milton's Blank Verse is at the end of the third foot (i.e. generally after the sixth syllable, though it may occasionally be after the seventh, or even after the eighth): _e.g._

"And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death." _||_

"In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High overarched embower." _||_

"Prone on the flood extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood." _||_

"Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle." _||_

This, I think, is also Shakespeare's favourite Cæsura. Next in frequency in Milton is the Cæsura after the second foot (generally the fourth syllable): _e.g._

"A thousand demigods on golden seats
Frequent and full." _||_

After these two, but a long way after them, the most common are the Cæsura in the middle of the third foot (generally after the fifth syllable), and that in the middle of the fourth foot (generally after the seventh syllable): _e.g._

"shapes and forms,
The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
Their great Commander." _||_

"Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded, though immortal." _||_

Considerably less frequent still is the Cæsura after the completed fourth foot (generally the eighth syllable); and still more rare, though occasional, are the Cæsuras at the middle of the second foot (generally after the third syllable) and after the first completed foot (generally the second syllable):——

"Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds." _||_ Thus they"

"for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him." _||_ Round he throws his baleful eyes."

"And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories; _||_ for never since created Man."
Milton's English:

Very rare indeed is the Cæsura in the middle of the fifth foot (i.e. after what is generally the ninth syllable); but there are instances:

"Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets, I would not taste thy treasonous offer.|| None But such as are good men can give good things."

Hardly to be found at all is the Cæsura after the first syllable or in the middle of the first foot; but this may pass as an instance:

"The Ionian Gods, of Javan's issue held Gods;|| yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth."

Milton's Rhymes.

Alliteration, which played so important a part in Anglo-Saxon and other old Teutonic verse, and which was systematically kept up afterwards in English Rhymed Poetry, to a greater extent than has commonly been observed, was not a regular device with Milton. Neither did he permit himself that liberty of occasional Assonance instead of Rhyme, or as an approach to Rhyme, of which there are traces in Spenser, and in more recent poets: e.g., Burns. Assonance at its fullest, as in Spanish ballad-poetry, consists in the recurrence of the same vowel-sound, but in different consonantal settings, at the ends of lines, where we expect rhymes:—thus, back...cat, bold...rose, seeming...beaker, assenting...protested, would be English assonances. English poets would hardly venture on such assonances as these in the place of rhymes; but Spenser has deckt...set, alone...home, gotten...soften, discover...mother, encomber...thunder, labour...favour, tempted...consented, and the like, which are really assonances simulating rhyme; and Burns has in the same way Luath...you have, kent vet...contented, behint her...vintner, Montgomery...drumly, glory...afore thee, early...Mary, &c. Goethe, as we have seen, asserted the right of a real poet to such assonances if he chose. Milton claimed no such right. In that portion of his poetry where he had yielded to the weakness, as he came at last to regard it, of seeking musical effect in anything else than "apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another," he had been content with Rhyme proper, or "the jingling sound of like endings," as the one regular device in addition.

Rhymes, however, may be either Perfect or Imperfect; and nearly the whole question as to Milton's practice in rhyming connects itself with this distinction:—I. Perfect Rhyme consists of the stated recurrence, at metrical intervals, of exactly the same vocal endings, whether vowel-sounds simply (e.g., go...blow, eye...cry), or vowel-sounds with consonantal additions completing the syllable (e.g., gold...bold...mould...rolled, rose...close...blows, hand...stand, bear...spare, pause...draws), or vowel-sounds
with such additions as to make farther syllables (e.g., going...blowing, beaming...streaming, thunder...plunder, mountains...fountains, utility...facility). Obviously, from this definition, a perfect rhyme may be single or monosyllabic, double or dissyllabic, or even triple or trisyllabic: obviously also, it is not identity of spelling that is required, but only identity of sound in the vowel that leads the rhyme, and in all that follows it, if anything does follow it, to complete the rhyme. Two sorts of Rhyme, however, that would be "perfect" according to this definition, are excluded, nevertheless, from good English verse. One is the identical rhyme: i.e. a rhyme perfect by the foregoing rule, but unfortunate in having the same consonantal sound repeated before the leading vowel-sound: e.g., verse...converse, so...sew, leaving...believing. Though French verse favours such rhymes, and they are found in Italian, they are forbidden in modern English. Equally forbidden in all serious poetry is what may be called the Provincial Rhyme, or that in which the rhyme is good only by a pronunciation peculiar to a locality or district. Rhymes of this sort specially worthy of reprobation are such "Cockney Rhymes" as "arm...calm," "morn...dawn," "morning...dawning," "Ah...far," "lyre...Sophia," "higher...Thalia." Keats was, I think, the first classic English poet that fell into such rhymes, but they have become alarmingly frequent of late in South of England verse.—II. Imperfect Rhymes are those which, though falling short of the conditions of Perfect Rhyme, yet give, whether from custom, or from their approximation to Perfect Rhyme, a similar pleasure to the ear. They may be variously classified; but perhaps the following classification, suggested in part by Mr. A. J. Ellis's collection of imperfect rhymes from Moore and Tennyson (Early English Pronunciation, pp. 858—862), is practically sufficient:—(1) Weak or unaccented sounds rhyming with the same, or nearly the same, strong or accented: e.g. misery...see, eternity...free, agonies...freeze, myrrh...lovelier, minister...fair, visible...hill, festival...all, &c. (2) Consonantal Rhymes, or Vowel-sounds rhyming with different vowel-sounds because the sequent consonants are the same: e.g. love...move, love...grove, home...come, one...alone, blood...good, heaven...even, clamber...chamber, death...sheath, have...save, urn...mourn, God...abroad, Christ...mist, earth...forth, &c. Such rhymes are quite common in the best modern English poets, and are therefore legitimate. Many of them are called specially Eye-Rhymes, because the sameness of the spelling helps to reconcile them to the ear. 3) Rhymes in which the vowel-sounds differ decidedly, and there is also a difference of accent: e.g. die...sympathy, eyes...mysteries, Christ...Evan- nelist. The accepted rhymes of this sort are comparatively few, and some of them are Eye-Rhymes. (4) Rhymes in which, the vowel-sounds either agreeing somewhat or differing essentially, the sequent consonants yet differ, so that the effect is that of Imperfect Assonance: e.g. his...bliss, peace...these, house...vows, else...tells, vase...grace, breath...breathe, pass...was, face...gaze, &c.
Milton's English:

Mr. A. J. Ellis, in his great work on Early English Pronunciation, propounds it as an *à priori* principle that "When few people can read, rhymes, to be intelligible, must be perfect." The principle may be questioned. Is it not inconsistent with the order of development in such things, as shown in the delight which young children take even now in very imperfect rhymes, and the difficulty of getting them to distinguish between perfect rhymes and imperfect, and also in the fact that very imperfect rhymes pass most easily in popular and vernacular poetry? Quite independent of the principle, however, is the conclusion which Mr. Ellis has arrived at respecting the practice of Chaucer, Gower, and the other oldest English rhyming poets. Their rhymes, he contends, (pp. 245 *et seq.*), are all but invariably perfect, apparent exceptions being due either to wrong reading or to clerical errors in the editions. Very soon, however, says Mr. Ellis, this strictness of rhyming ceased, and when we reach the time of Spenser and Shakespeare we are in a changed world. The era of perfect rhymes, he says, is then left behind, so that it is no longer possible to derive exact information as to the pronunciations of words from the rhymes of the poets. He is especially severe on Spenser, to whose laxities and forced shifts in rhyming he devotes ten pages (pp. 862—871). Sir Philip Sidney he finds more careful in this particular, though with licences unknown to Chaucer and Gower (pp. 872—874); and of Shakespeare the report (pp. 953—966) is that, as he was a contemporary of Spenser, and doubtless a reader of the *Faery Queene*, we do not expect "any very great regularity in his rhymes," and should be much disappointed if we did. Although Mr. Ellis expressly refrains from "the aesthetic question," and confines himself to an investigation and statement of the facts, one rather infers, from his tone and some of his phrases, that he regrets the laxity which introduced imperfect rhymes into English verse and regards it as a degeneracy. Goethe's *dictum* on the subject to Eckermann ought, therefore, again to be remembered, as well as the fact that imperfect rhymes have been ratified by the continued practice of the most careful and musical of our poets, Tennyson among the latest.

Milton's practice is interesting in itself, and may be allowed to have some bearing on the aesthetic question,—He has, of course, his full proportion of Perfect Rhymes, chiefly monosyllabic, but occasionally disyllabic. Equally of course, we may add, no sanction of the hideous modern Cockney rhymes, as claiming to belong to this class, will be found in him. Of "identical rhymes" he is not so innocent, though one can see that, despite the example of Chaucer, Spenser, and the Italian poets generally, he did not like them. In *Psalm* LXXX. 21—23 he makes "tears" rhyme to itself; in *Psalm* LXXXVI. 26—28 he makes "works" rhyme to itself; in *Vac. Ex.* 89, 90, he makes "not" rhyme with "knot"; in *Sonnet* IX. he makes the proper name "Ruth" rhyme with "ruth" the abstract noun; in *Psalm* II. 20—22 he makes "averse" rhyme with "converse"; in *Psalm* VII. 32—35 he makes "righteousness"
timelessly ... dry
blest ... hoverest
sphere ... were
hence ... pestilence
first ... worst
deity ... he
pass ... was
come ... room
birth ... hearth
still ... invisible
nothing ... clothing
spreads ... meads
underneath ... death
unsufferable ... table
God ... abode
her ... paramour
eyes ... deformities
sphere ... harberging
stood ... flood
appear ... bear
voice ... noise
lose ... close
alone ... union
quire ... heir
said ... made
great ... set
vanity ... die
wearing ... steering
infancy ... glorify
session ... throne
bliss ... is
torn ... mourn
sweat ... seat
Ashtaroth ... both
horn ... mourn
fast ... haste
stable ... serviceable
verse ... fierce
stood ... blood
tears ... characters
entombed ... consumed
flood ... good
verse ... pierce
throne ... thereon
birth ... earth
one ... soon
request ... feast
stood ... bad
wears ... tears (n)
fall ... funeral
grade ... have
moan ... Helicon
one ... overthrown
known ... down
home ... come
affirm ... term
hearers ... bearers
were ... carrier
seas ... increase
end ... fiend
tie ... harmony
strove ... above
throne ... Contemplation
mirth ... hearth
Bear ... sphere
tragedy ... by
groves ... loves
breathe ... beneath
I ... harmony
lie ... necessity
were ... her
excuse (n) ... muse
gone ... overgrown
return ... mourn
wear ... ear
flood ... mood
promontory ... story
feast ... guest
societies ... eyes
youth ... shew'th
even ... Heaven
pored on ... word on ... Gordon
good ... blood
throng ... tongue
God ... load
victories ... arise
chide ... denied
save ... have
seat ... great
wear ... severe
again ... sustain
alone ... one
put ... glut
iniquity ... he
unstable ... miserable
peace ... less
soul ... roll ... soul
this ... is
righteousness ... cease
severe ... forbear
Deity ... high
great ... set
lord ... word
wet ... great
rise ... enemies
shield ... withheld
forgive ... grieve
harbinger ... err
done ... alone
God ... abroad
shew ... true
on ... Son
fast ... placed
ear ... her
Milton's English.

Imperfect Rhymes (continued).

there ... clear
drove ... move
true ... shew
prayer ... are
prove ... love
tomb ... comb
great ... entreat
descry ... solemnity
wave ... have
known ... oblivion
pair ... are
resort ... sport
removed ... loved
have ... cave
there ... love
eye ... misery
where ... sphere
true, with shew'th...youth
solemnity
shew'dew
wave ... have
severity ... worth
skies ... harmonies
shew'dew
forth ... worth
warth...comb
severity ... lie
madrigal ... vale
wound (n) ... ground
A doubt may exist whether some of these rhymes, imperfect now in our present pronunciation of English, may not have been perfect in the pronunciation of Milton's time. With respect to two of the pronunciations, where such a supposition seems most plausible, (roll...soul... foul, and shew...dew...true, with sheu'rth...youth), this point has been discussed already in the part on Spelling. But, with all possible deduction on account of such dubious pronunciations, the proof is positive that Milton made free and large use of imperfect rhymes. From a rough calculation, I should say that, in the whole of his rhymed poetry, extending to about 2,700 lines, every eighth or tenth rhyme is more or less imperfect. Nor is it only in his least elaborate poems and passages that such rhymes occur. They occur in passages the most finished and dainty, the most lyrical and musical. Take for example the Echo Song in Comus, sung by the lost Lady in the woods at night. That song is avowedly an address to the very Genius of Sound; it is the song of which the Guardian Spirit said that its perfection had enraptured Silence herself, and might have created a soul under the ribs of Death. Well, that song is even conspicuous for its imperfect rhymes:——

"Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!"
INTRODUCTION TO PARADISE LOST.
INTRODUCTION:

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, AND EXPOSITORY.

First and Subsequent Editions of the Poem.

It was possibly just before the Great Fire of London in September, 1666, and it certainly cannot have been very long after that event, when Milton, then residing in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, had the manuscript of his Paradise Lost ready to receive the official licence necessary for its publication. The duty of licensing such books was then vested by law in the Archbishop of Canterbury, who performed it through his chaplains. The Archbishop of Canterbury at that time (1663—1677) was Dr. Gilbert Sheldon; and the chaplain to whom it fell to examine the manuscript of Paradise Lost was the Rev. Thomas Tomkyns, M.A. of Oxford, then incumbent of St. Mary Aldermary, London, and afterwards Rector of Lambeth, Chancellor of the Cathedral Church of Exeter, and D.D. He was the Archbishop's domestic chaplain, and a great favourite of his—quite a young man, but already the author of one or two books or pamphlets. The nature of his opinions may be guessed from the fact that his first publication, printed in the year of the Restoration, had been entitled "The Rebel's Plea Examined; or, Mr. Baxter's Judgment concerning the Late War." A subsequent publication of his, penned not long after he had examined Paradise Lost, was entitled "The Inconveniences of Toleration;" and, when he died in 1675, still young, he was described on his tomb-stone as having been "Ecclesia Anglicana contra Schismaticos assertor eximius." *

A manuscript by a man of Milton's political and ecclesiastical

* Wood's Athenæ, by Bliss, iii. 1046—1048.
antecedents could hardly, one would think, have fallen into the hands of a more unpropitious examiner. It is accordingly stated * that Tomkyns hesitated about giving the licence, and took exception to some passages in the poem—particularly to that (Book I. vv. 594—599) where it is said of Satan, in his diminished brightness after his fall, that he still appeared

"as when the Sun, new-risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind a cloud,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs."

At length, however, Mr. Tomkyns was satisfied. There still exists the first book of the actual manuscript which had been submitted to him.† It is a fairly-written copy, in a light, not inelegant, but rather characterless hand of the period—of course, not that of Milton himself, who had been for fourteen years totally blind. It consists of eighteen leaves of small quarto, stitched together; and on the inside of the first leaf, or cover, is the following official licence to print in Tomkyns's hand:

Imprimatur:
Tho. Tomkyns, Rmo. in Christo Patri ac Domino, Dno. Gilberto, divinâ Providentia Archiepiscopo Cantuariensi, à sacris domesticis.

The other books of the manuscript having received a similar certificate, or this certificate on the MS. of the first book sufficing for all, the copy was ready for publication by any printer or bookseller to whom Milton might consign it. Having already had many dealings with London printers and booksellers, Milton

† The manuscript is described, and a facsimile of a portion of it is given, in Mr. Samuel Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton, 1861; pp. 196, 197. It is, or was then, in the possession of William Baker, Esq., of Bayfordsbury, Hertfordshire, to whom it had descended, with other relics of interest, in consequence of the marriage of an ancestor with Mary, the eldest daughter of the second Jacob Tonson, of the famous publishing family of the Tonsons. Bishop Newton, in his Life of Milton, 1749, mentions the manuscript as then in possession of the third Jacob Tonson, who was brother of the said Mary. How it came to be in the Tonson family at all will appear in the course of this Introduction.
may have had several to whom he could go; but the one whom he favoured in this case, or who favoured him, was a certain Samuel Simmons, having his shop "next door to the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street." * The date of the transaction between Simmons and Milton is April 27, 1667. On that day an agreement was signed between them as follows:

These Presents, made the 27th day of April, 1667, between John Milton, gent., of the one parte, and Samuel Symons, printer, of the other parte, Witness That the said John Milton, in consideration of five pounds to him now paid by the said Sam* Symons, and other the considerations herein mentioned, Hath given, granted, and assigned, and by these presents doth give, grant, and assign unto the said Sam* Symons, his executors and assigns, All that Booke, Copy, or Manuscript, of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost, or by whatsoever other title or name the same is or shalbe called or distinguished, now lately Licensed to be printed, Together with the full benefitt, profitt, and advantage thereof, or which shall or may arise thereby: And the said John Milton, for him, his executors and administrators, doth covenant with the said Sam* Symons, his executors and assigns, That hee and they shall at all tymes hereafter have, hold, and enjoy the same and all Impressions thereof accordingly, without the lett or hinderance of him the said John Milton, his executors or assigns, or any person or persons by his or their consent or privitie, And that he the said Jo: Milton, his executors or administrators, 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 Booke or Manuscript, or any other Booke or Manuscript of the same tenor or subject, without the consent of the said Sam* Symons, his executors or assigns: In Consideration whereof the said Sam* Symons, for him, his executors and administrators, doth covenant with the said John Milton, his executors and assigns, well and truly to pay unto the said John Milton, his executors and administrators, the sum of five pounds of lawfull English money at the end of the first Impression which he the said Sam* Symons, his executors or assigns, shall make and publish of the said Copy or manuscript; Which Impression shalbe accounted to be ended when thirteene hundred Books of the said whole Copy or Manuscript imprinted shalbe sold and retailld off to particular reading Customers: And shall also pay other five pounds unto the said Mr. 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 fifteene hundred Books or volumes of the said whole Copy or

* He was probably the son, or other near relative, and successor, of a Matthew Simmons, printer, who had occupied the same premises in 1649, and had then printed Milton’s Εἰκονοκλάστης. Milton had resided for a good many years—i.e. from 1640 to 1648, and again from 1661 to 1664—in Aldersgate Street or its vicinity; and he probably knew the “Golden Lion” and Simmons’s shop well. There is still a “Golden Lion Court” in Aldersgate Street, with one or two houses near it that have stood since Milton’s time.
Manuscript a-piece: And further That he the said Samuel Symons and his executors administrators and assignes shalbe ready to make Oath before a Master in Chancery concerning his or their knowledge and beleife 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 intitled to his said money, from time to time, upon every reasonable request in that behalfe, Or, in default thereof, shall pay the said five pounds agreed to be paid upon each Impression, as aforesaid, as if the same were due, and for and in lieu thereof: In Witness whereof the said parties have to this writing Indented Interchangeably sett their hands and sailes the day and yeare first above-written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us,
John Fisher,  
Benjamin Greene, serv[ant] to Mr. Milton.*

* The above is a copy of the celebrated original document now in the British Museum—which document is the one that went into Simmons's keeping at the time of the transaction, while its counterpart, bearing Simmons's signature, went, of course, into Milton's keeping. The relic was presented to the Museum in 1852 by Samuel Rogers, the poet, in whose possession it had been from 1831, one of the most valued curiosities in his house in St. James's Place. Rogers had purchased it for a hundred guineas from Mr. Pickering, the publisher, into whose hands it had come for the second time, through intermediate dealers, after it had been in the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who died in 1830, and to whom Mr. Pickering had originally sold it for 60/. Mr. Pickering himself had first acquired it, in February 1826, for 45/. 3s., at a sale of manuscripts, the property of Mr. Septimus Proett, a London bookseller, and the publisher of an expensive edition of Paradise Lost, with plates after designs by Martin. Mr. Prowett had purchased the document, along with others, in 1824, for the sum of 25/. in all, from a tailor in Clifford Street, Bond Street, whose account of them was that they had been left in his house by a lodger, who had decamped in his debt. There the history ends—save that Bishop Newton, in his Life of Milton in 1749, distinctly speaks of the contract with Simmons for Paradise Lost as being then, together with the manuscript of the First Book of the poem, in the possession of "Mr. Tonson, the bookseller," i.e. the third Jacob Tonson. This Tonson died in 1767; and the question is, How came the contract with Simmons to be lost sight of till 1824, and then to reappear in a tailor's hands in Clifford Street? Why did it not descend, along with the manuscript of the First Book and other relics, in the family of the Bakers of Bayfordbury, Herts, representatives of the Tonsons by intermarriage (see note, ante, p. 2)? The answer to this is not very clear; but it seems that a collection of
Bibliographical, Biographical, and Expository.

For practical purposes, it will be observed, the substance of the transaction is that Milton received Five Pounds down on papers, consisting of the business-corrrespondence of the Tonsons, &c., was left, at the death of Jacob Tonson, tertius, in 1767, in the house in the Strand last occupied by him (lately No. 345, near Catherine Street)—which house was also a banking-establishment, known as Mr. Hodsoll's, but in which Tonson had been a partner. Continuing to lie here, neglected and with no proper owner, the papers would naturally become the prey of unscrupulous clerks, or others that might take a fancy to them; and hence, while some of the "Tonson papers" were kept in the right hands, others were dispersed and got into the market. Meanwhile; the uncertainty of the history of the document from 1767 to 1824 must not be allowed to shake belief in its genuineness. There is not the least doubt that it is the actual document assented to by Milton on the 27th of April, 1667. ——— But another question has been raised. Is the signature "John Milton," attached to the document, Milton's autograph? The poet Rogers never doubted this when he exhibited the document to his guests; the hundreds who look at the document in the British Museum never doubt it; it is the natural belief in the circumstances. But the late Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby—to whose Ramblings in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton (pp. 200—204) we are indebted for some of the foregoing facts in the history of the document—saw reason to question this belief. He inclined to the opinion (Ramblings, pp. 135—137) that the signature was not written by Milton's own hand, but only in his presence and by his authority. This, we think, is also the opinion to which any one would come who is sufficiently acquainted with undoubted specimens of Milton's handwriting. The signature here differs decidedly from his well-known signature before his blindness, of which there are specimens as late as 1650 and 1651; nor does it look like a modification of that signature induced by blindness. It seems hardly the writing of a blind man. But can it be supposed, it will be said, that in a legal document like this, sealed and witnessed, the signature should not have been Milton's own, though he was blind? In reply to this, it is to be stated that there are other documents of quite as formal a nature, executed in Milton's name after his blindness, and bearing his signatures—which signatures are certainly not in his own hand. For one example, see a facsimile in Mr. Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings (Plate XVII.) of the signature and seal of the poet to a conveyance of a bond for 400l., dated 7th May, 1660. The signature there is totally unlike Milton's known signature, and also totally unlike that now under discussion. Moreover, in a subsequent business-document, which went into Simmons's hands, in relation to this very bargain about Paradise Lost, we have a signature of the poet so unlike the present that, if the one is Milton's own, the other cannot be. On the whole, the conclusion is that, though the signature to the agreement with Simmons is possibly Milton's own, it is more likely that another person wrote the characters, Milton only assenting and touching the seal. And, generally, on this subject of Milton's autograph, it may be stated that so habitual was it with Milton, after the date of his complete blindness (1652 or 1653), to employ other hands in writing for him, that any professed autograph of his after that date would require to have its claims sharply looked into. There may be later genuine autographs; but at present I do not know of one.———The seal appended to the signature
handing over the licensed manuscript to Simmons, and was promised a second Five Pounds when the first edition should have been sold, a third Five Pounds when the second edition should have been sold, and a fourth Five Pounds when the third edition should have been sold—the measure of each edition to be 1,300 copies actually sold, and Simmons's oath to be taken, if necessary, to prove the sale. But, in order, as we suppose, to allow a margin for presentation copies, it is provided that, while in the account between Milton and Simmons each of the three first impressions is to be reckoned at 1,300 copies, in the actual printing of each Simmons may go as high as 1,500 copies.

It has been inferred from the wording of this document that Milton, before his bargain with Simmons, had begun the printing of the poem at his own expense. There seems no real ground, however, for thinking so, or that what was handed over to Simmons was anything else than the fairly copied manuscript which had received the imprimatur of Mr. Tomkyns. With that imprimatur, Simmons might proceed safely in printing the book and bringing it into the market. Accordingly, on the 20th of August, deserves a word. The device on the shield is the "argent spread eagle, with two heads gules, legged and beaked sable," which the poet derived from his father as the family-arms, and which, as Anthony Wood tells us (Fasti, i. 480, note), the poet "did use and seal his letters with." There are other Milton documents extant bearing the same seal—one of them the conveyance mentioned above. This seal, most frequently used by Milton, seems to have descended to his widow after his death, and to have been one of a few silver articles—"2 tea-spoons, and one silver spoon, with a seal and stopper and bitts of silver"—which were jointly valued at 12s. 6d. in an inventory of the old lady's goods after her death at Nantwich, Cheshire, in 1727. Whether it is still in existence we do not know. But there was another silver seal in the poet's possession, differing from the present in having not only the shield with the spread eagle upon it, but also the surmounting family crest: viz. "out of a wreath, a lion's gamb couped and erect azure, grasping an eagle's head erased gules." This more elaborate seal, less frequently used by Milton, descended to the poet's youngest daughter, Deborah, wife of Abraham Clarke of Spitalfields, and from her to her daughter Elizabeth Clarke, who married Thomas Foster of Holloway. On Thomas Foster's death, it was acquired by Mr. John Payne, bookseller; who sold it, in 1761, for three guineas, to Mr. Thomas Hollis, the well-known virtuoso and enthusiast in Milton. It is now, or was recently, with other relics from Mr. Hollis's collection, in the possession of Edgar Disney, Esq., of the Hyde, Ingatestone, Essex, son of the late John Disney, Esq., F.S.A., who inherited the Hollis property. There is an engraving of it in the Milton Papers of Mr. John Fitchett Marsh, edited for the Chetham Society, 1851 (p. 21).
1667, or four months after the foregoing agreement, we find this entry in the books of Stationers' Hall.

August 20, 1667: Mr. Sam. Symons entered for his copie, under the hands of Mr. Thomas Tomkyns and Mr. Warden Royston, a Booke or Copie Intituled Paradise Lost, a Poem in Tenne bookes, by J. M. 6d.

The "Mr. Warden Royston," who is here joined with Mr. Tomkyns as authorizing the entry, was Richard Royston, a well known bookseller of the period, and one of the wardens of the Stationers' Company for 1667. By the rules of the book-trade, the signature of one of the wardens of the year was required, as well as that of the official licenser, to authorize the registration of a book; and, accordingly, underneath Tomkyns's *imprimatur* on the manuscript of the First Book, mentioned as still existing at Bayfordsbury, Herts, we find the name "Richard Royston," together with these words in another hand, "*Int. per Geo. Tokefeilde, Cl.*" These last words are a mere record by the Company's clerk that the copyright had been regularly entered as above. The sum of 6d. annexed to the entry was the fee for registration.

The date of the above entry in the Stationers' registers fixes the time about which printed copies of the poem were ready for sale in London. There are few books, however, respecting the circumstances of whose first publication there is room for a greater variety of curious questions. This arises from the fact that, among the numerous existing copies of the First Edition, no two are in all particulars exactly alike. They differ in their title-pages, in their dates, and in minute points throughout the text. There is involved in this, indeed, a fact of general interest to English bibliographers. In the old days of leisurely printing, it was quite common for the printer or the author of a book to make additional corrections while the printing was in progress—of which corrections only part of the total impression would have the benefit. Then, as, in the binding of the copies, all the sheets, having or not having the corrections so made, were jumbled together, there was no end to the combinations of different states of sheets that might arise in copies all really belonging to one edition; besides which, if any change in the proprietorship, or in the author's or publisher's notions of the proper title, arose before all the copies had been bound, it was easy to cancel the first title-
Introduction:

page, and provide a new one, with a new date if necessary, for the remaining copies. The probability is that these considerations will be found to affect all our early printed books. But they are applicable in a more than usual degree, so far as differences of title-page are concerned, to the First Edition of Paradise Lost. Here, for example, is a conspectus of the different forms of title-page, and other accompaniments of the text of the Poem, that have been recognised among existing copies of the First Edition. We arrange them, as nearly as can be judged, in the order in which they were issued.

*First title-page.*—"Paradise lost. | A | Poem | written in | Ten Books | By John Milton. | Licensed and Entred according | to Order. | London | Printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker | under Creed Church neer Aldgate; And by | Robert Boulter at the Turks Head in Bishopsgate-street; | And Matthias Walker, under St. Dunstons Church | in Fleet-street, 1667. | " 4to. pp. 342.

*Second title-page.*—Same as above, except that the author's name "John Milton" is in larger type. 1667. 4to. pp. 342.


*Fourth title-page.*—Same as the preceding, but the type in the body of the title larger. 1668. 4to. pp. 342.

*Fifth title-page.*—"Paradise lost. | A | Poem | In | Ten Books. | The Author | John Milton. | London. | Printed by S. Simmons, and to be sold by S. Thomson at | the Bishops-Head in Duck-lane, H. Mortlack at the | White Hart in Westminster Hall, M. Walker | under St. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street, and R. Boulter at | the Turks-Head in Bishopsgate-street, 1668. | " 4to. pp. 356. The chief peculiarity in this issue, as compared with its predecessors, is the increase of the bulk of the volume by fourteen pages or seven leaves. This is accounted for as follows:—In the preceding issues there had been no Prose Argument, Preface, or other preliminary matter to the text of the poem; but in this there are fourteen pages of new matter, interpolated between the title-leaf and the poem. First of all there is this three-line Advertisement: "The Printer "to the Reader. Courteous Reader, There was no Argument at first intended "to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, is procured. "S. Simmons." Then, accordingly, there follow the prose Arguments to the several Books, doubtless by Milton himself, all printed together in eleven pages; after which, in two pages of large open type, comes Milton's preface, entitled "The Verse," explaining his reasons for abandoning Rhime—succeeded, on the fourteenth page, by a list of "Errata." But this is not all. Simmons's three-line Address to the Reader, as given above, is, it will be observed, not grammatically correct; and, whether because Milton had found out this or not, there are some copies, with this fifth title-page, in which the ungrammatical three-line address is corrected into a five-line address thus—"The Printer to
"the Reader.  Courteous Reader, There was no Argument at first intended "to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have pro- "cur'd it, and withall a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the "Poem Rimes not.  S. Simmons."

Sixth title-page.—Same as the preceding, except that, instead of four lines of stars under the author's name, there is a fleur-de-lis ornament. 1668. 4to. pp. 356.
Here we have the same preliminary matter as in the preceding. There seem to be some copies, however, with the incorrect three-line Address, and others with the correct five-line Address, of the Printer.

Seventh title-page.—"Paradise lost.  | A | Poem | in | Ten Books.  | The Au-
thor | John Milton.  | London, | Printed by S. Simmons, and are to be sold by | T. Helder, at the Angel, in Little Brittain, | 1669.  | " 4to. pp. 356. Some copies with this title-page still retain Simmons's incorrect three-line Address to the Reader, while others have the five-line Address. Rest of preliminary matter as before.

Eighth and Ninth title-pages.—Same as last, except some insignificant changes of capital letters and of pointing in the words of the title. 1669. 4to. pp. 356.*

Here are at least nine distinct forms in which, as respects the title-page, complete copies were issued by the binder, from the first publication of the work about August 1667 on to 1669, inclusively; besides which, there are the variations among individual copies arising from the two forms of the Printer's Advertisement, and the variations in the text of the poem arising from the indiscriminate binding together of sheets in the different states of correctness in which they were printed off. The variations of this last class are of absolutely no moment—a comma in some copies where others have it not; an error in the numbering of the lines, or of a with for an in, in some copies, rectified in others; &c. On the whole, the text of any existing copy of the First Edition is as perfect as that of any other—though there is an advantage in having a copy with the small list of Errata and the other preliminary matter.† But the variations in the title-page are of

* This list is drawn up from my own inspection of all copies within my reach, assisted by consultation of the article "Milton" in Mr. Bohn's edition of Lowndes's Bibliographer's Manual, and by examination of a list given by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby (Ramblings, pp. 80, 81). I believe my list does not exhaust the variations.

† The copy of the First Edition in my own possession is one with what I have called the seventh title-page, and with the three-line form of Simmons's Address to the Reader.
greater interest. Why is the author's name given in full in the title-pages of 1667, then contracted into "J. M." in two of those of 1668, and again given in full in two of those of the same year, and in all those of 1669? And why, though Simmons had acquired the copyright in April 1667, and had entered the copyright as his in the Stationers' Books in August 1667, is his name kept out of sight in all the title-pages prior to that one of 1668 which is given as the Fifth in the foregoing list, and which is the first with the preliminary matter—the preceding title-pages showing no printer's name, but only the names of three booksellers at whose shops copies might be had? Finally, why, after Simmons does think it right to appear on the title-page, are there changes in the names of the booksellers—two of the former booksellers first disappearing and giving way to other two, and then the three of 1668 giving way in 1669 to the single bookseller, Helder of Little Britain? Very probably, in some of these changes nothing more was involved than convenience to Simmons in his trade at the time. Business may have been temporarily disarranged by the Great Fire. Not impossibly, however, more was involved than this in so much changing and tossing-about of the book within so short a period. May not Simmons have been a little timid about his venture in publishing a book by the notorious Milton, whose attacks on the Church and defences of the execution of Charles I. were still fresh in the memory of all, and some of whose pamphlets had been publicly burnt by the hangman after the Restoration? May not his entering the book at Stationers' Hall simply as "a Poem in Ten Books by J. M." have been a caution on his part; and, though in the first issues he had ventured on the name "John Milton" in full, may he not have found it advisable, for a subsequent circulation in some quarters, to have copies with only the milder "J. M." upon them? May not Milton himself have suggested such precautions?

In any case, the first edition of *Paradise Lost* was a most creditably-printed book. It is, as has been mentioned, a small quarto—of 342 pages in such copies as are without the "Argument" and other preliminary matter, and of 356 pages in the copies that have this addition. But the pages are not numbered—only the lines by tens along the margin in each Book. In one
or two places there is an error in the numbering of the lines, arising from miscounting. The text in each page is enclosed within lines—single lines at the inner margin and bottom, but double lines at the top for the running title and the number of the Book, and along the outer margin columnwise for the numbering of the lines. Very great care must have been bestowed on the revising of the proofs, either by Milton himself, or by some competent person who had undertaken to see the book through the press for him. It seems likely that Milton himself caused page after page to be read over slowly to him, and occasionally even the words to be spelt out. There are, at all events, certain systematic peculiarities of spelling, which it seems most reasonable to attribute to Milton's own instructions. Altogether, for a book printed in such circumstances, it is wonderfully accurate; and, in all the particulars of type, paper, and general getting-up, the first appearance of Paradise Lost must have been rather attractive than otherwise to book-buyers of that day.

The selling-price of the volume was three shillings*—which is perhaps as if a similar book now were published at about 7s. 6d. From the retail sale of 1,300 copies, therefore, the sum that would come in to Simmons, if we make an allowance for trade-deductions at about the modern rate, would be something under 140l. Out of this had to be paid the expenses of printing, &c., and the sum agreed upon with the author; and the balance would be Simmons's profit. On the whole, though he cannot have made anything extraordinary by the transaction, it must have been sufficiently remunerative. For, by the 26th of April, 1669, or after the poem had been published a little over eighteen months, the stipulated impression of 1,300 copies had been exhausted. The proof exists in the shape of Milton's receipt for the additional Five Pounds due to him on that contingency:—

* "A General Catalogue of Books printed in England since the dreadful Fire of London, 1666, to the end of Trinity Term, 1674; collected by Robert Clavel. London, 1675." Here, for the sake of comparison, are a few prices of similar books from the same authority:—Davenant's Works, 11s. 4s.; Cowley's Works, 14s.; Relique Wottoniana, 5s.; Donne's Poems, 4s.; Hudibras, Parts I. and II. reprinted, 3s. 6d.; Randolph's Poems, Cleveland's, and Denham's, 3s. each; Waller, and Herbert, 2s. 6d. each; Dryden's Annum Mirabilis, 1s. 6d.
Received then of Samuel Simmons five pounds, being the Second five pounds to be paid mentioned in the Covenant. I say recd. by me.

Witness, Edmund Upton.

*The original of this document is, or recently was, in the possession of Lady Cullum, widow of the Rev. Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Bart., who had it in his possession at least as far back as 1822. Its former history has not been traced; but, not improbably, it came from among those papers, left by Jacob Tonson, t.rtius, of which an account has been already given (see ante, p. 4, note). A facsimile of it was given in the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1822; and there is a copy of this facsimile in Mr. Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings, Plate XVIII. Connected with the document is a curious incident, which should be a warning to purchasers of such antiquities. At the public sale, in June, 1859, of the manuscript collections of the late well-known antiquary, Mr. Dawson Turner, there was put up what professed to be this identical receipt of Milton to Simmons for his second Five Pounds, together with what professed to be a subsequent receipt (to be presently spoken of) by Milton's widow for a final payment by Simmons on account of Paradise Lost. These two supposed originals were bought on commission for an American collector for 43/$. Scarcely had they been bought, however, when a controversy arose as to their genuineness. Lady Cullum claimed to have in her possession the two original documents in question: how, then, could Mr. Dawson Turner have had them too? The matter was discussed in the columns of the Athenaeum at intervals from September 1859 till February 1860. So far the mystery was cleared up. It appeared that, many years before, Sir Thomas Cullum had lent the two original documents to Mr. Dawson Turner, and that the documents put up at the sale were only copies, and not perfect copies either, of these originals—which copies Mr. Dawson Turner had made, or caused to be made, for his own use, before returning the originals. He had neglected to label them as copies, and hence the error. The Cullum documents were thus established to be the true originals, and the sale of the others was cancelled. But another question remained as to one of the documents. It is not doubted that the Cullum document is the genuine receipt which Milton gave and Simmons kept; but is it Milton's autograph? In this case, the body of the receipt being in the same hand as the signature, either both are autograph, or receipt and signature were both written for Milton by another hand. We have already explained, in connexion with the original agreement with Simmons for the publication of Paradise Lost (see ante, p. 5, note), that Milton, in his blindness, did use other hands for his signature even to legal documents. Whether this receipt for the second Five Pounds is autograph is to be determined, therefore, by comparison with Milton's known handwriting. Now from that it differs even more than the signature to the original agreement with Simmons. No one looking at the receipt, and knowing Milton's hand before his blindness, would for a moment admit it to be in Milton's hand; besides which, there is an interlineation in the receipt, which
Thus, by the end of April 1669, Milton had received in all Ten Pounds for his *Paradise Lost*. This was all that he was to receive for it in his life. For, contrary to what might have been expected after a sale of the first edition in eighteen months, there was no second edition for five years more, or till 1674. Either the book was out of print for those five years, or what demand for it there continued to be was supplied out of the surplus of 200 copies which, for some reason or other, Simmons had been authorized to print beyond the 1,300. But in 1674—the last year of Milton's life—a second edition did appear, with this title:—


This edition is in small octavo, with the pages numbered, but with no marginal numbering of the lines—the pages of the text as numbered being 333. Prefixed (in some copies, at least) is a not badly executed portrait of the author, with this inscription underneath, "W. Dolle sculpsit: Johannis Miltoni effigies, æt. 63, 1671." * There are also prefixed two sets of commendatory verses—the one in Latin signed "S. B., M.D." and written by a certain Samuel Barrow, a physician and a private friend of Milton; the other in English, signed "A. M.," and written by Andrew Marvel. But the most important difference between this and the previous edition is that, whereas the poem had been arranged in Ten Books in the first, it is here arranged in Twelve. This is accomplished by dividing what had formerly been the two longest Books of the poem—Books VII. and X.—into two Books each. There is a corresponding division in the "Arguments" of these Books; and the "Arguments," instead of being given in a body at the

a blind man could hardly have made. The signature to the receipt also differs decidedly from the signature to the agreement eighteen months before. If *that* was autograph, *this* can hardly be. My belief is that neither is autograph; but, were I to vote for either, it would be rather for the signature to the agreement than for the receipt. This last I take to have been written for Milton—not impossibly by his third wife, whose hand it somewhat resembles.

* The same portrait (a copy, on a reduced scale, of Faithorne's celebrated Engraving of Milton, prefixed to his History of Britain in 1670) had been prefixed to Milton's *Artes Logicae plenior Institutio*, published in 1672, and also to the Second Edition of his Minor Poems, brought out in 1673.
beginning, are prefixed to the Books to which they severally apply. These changes, we are distinctly informed,* were made by Milton himself. To smooth over the breaks made by the division of the two Books, the three new lines were added which now form the beginning of Book VIII. and the five that begin Book XII.; and there are one or two other slight additions or alterations, also dictated by Milton, in the course of the text, besides a few verbal variations, such as would arise in reprinting. Account will be taken of such variations in our Notes. On the whole, the Second Edition, though very correct, is not so nice-looking a book as the First.

As Milton’s death occurred in the year in which the second edition was published, he cannot himself have witnessed any greater “success” for his poem than might be measured by the circulation of some 1,500, or at most some 1,800, copies. But that the poem had by that time made an extraordinary impression, and recalled attention to its author as indubitably one of the greatest poets of England or of all time, is proved not only by the language employed by Barrow and Marvel in their commendatory verses—language which, with all allowance for the custom of eulogy in such cases, is startling yet for its vastness—but also by other testimonies. “Jo : Dreyden, Esq., Poet Laureate, who very “much admired him,” says Aubrey, “went to him to have leave “to putt his Paradise Lost into a drama in rhyme. Mr. Milton “received him civilly, and told him he would give him leave to “tagge his verses.”† Accordingly, some time before Milton’s death, his friends were scandalized and the whole town amused, by hearing of that extraordinary production of Dryden which he professed to have founded on Milton’s epic, and which he entitled The State of Innocence, or the Fall of Man: an Opera. That the bad taste of this performance of the Laureate did not escape censure at the time might easily be proved;‡ but that his inten-

* Memoir of Milton by his nephew Phillips, 1694. Phillips’s words respecting the Second Edition are: “amended enlarg’d and differently dispos’d as to the number of books, by his own hand, that is by his own appointment.”
† Aubrey’s Lives, written about 1689, published 1813: Art. “Milton.” “Tags” were bits of silver, or other metal, at the ends of ribbons used in dress.
‡ There is a sneering allusion to Dryden, for the liberty he had taken with Milton’s Paradise Lost, in Andrew Marvel’s commendatory verses prefixed to the second edition of the poem. See particularly lines 11—16 and 45—50.
tion was in the highest degree respectful to Milton appears from the "Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic Licence," which he prefixed to the opera, when he published it in 1674, just after Milton's death. He there tells us that the opera had been "wholly written" in one month's time, and that he had been compelled to publish it in self-defence, "many hundred copies of it," and those full of errors, having been already "dispersed abroad" without his consent. He then adds these words: "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 [distinguished] 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." Such an attestation, by a man in the position of Poet Laureate, may be taken as evidence of what was then a formed opinion in the English literary world. In short, before Milton's death, such was the admiration of his Paradise Lost that the publisher Simmons may have had a reasonable pride in putting his own name only on the title-page of the second edition, and in advertising his own shop, "next door to the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street," as the place where copies were to be bought.

Four years sufficed to exhaust the Second Edition; and in 1678 a Third Edition appeared, with this title:


This edition is in small octavo, and in other respects on the model of its predecessor, save that there are a few verbal variations, due to the printer, and that, by the getting of a line or two more into the page in some parts of the third edition, there are two pages fewer in all in that edition than in the second, i.e. 331 pages instead of 333. This Third Edition is of no independent value—the Second Edition being the last that could have been
supervised by Milton himself. From the appearance of a third edition in 1678, however, it is to be inferred that by that time the second of those impressions of 1,300 copies which had to be accounted for to the author was sold off (implying perhaps a total circulation up to that time of 3,000 copies), and that, consequently, had the author been alive, he would have been then entitled to his third sum of Five Pounds, as by the agreement. Milton being dead, the sum was due to his widow. Whether, however, on account of disputes which existed between the widow and Milton's three daughters by his first wife as to the inheritance of his property (disputes which were the subject of a lawsuit in 1674-5), or for other reasons, Simmons was in no hurry to pay the third Five Pounds. It was not till the end of 1680 that he settled with the widow, and then in a manner of which the following receipt given by her is a record:—

I do hereby acknowledge to have received of Samuel Symonds, Citizen and Stationer 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 8vo. By John Milton Gent.: my late husband. Witnes my hand this 21st day of December, 1680.

\[\text{Elizabeth Milton}\]

Witness, William Yapp.
Ann Yapp.

That is to say, Simmons, owing the widow Five Pounds, due since 1678, and in prospect of soon owing her other Five Pounds on the current impression of the Poem, preferred, or consented, to compound for the Ten by a payment of Eight in December 1680. The total sum which he could in any case have been called upon to pay for Paradise Lost by his original agreement was 20l.

* Copy, with facsimile of signature, in the Gentleman's Magazine for July 1822, and facsimile of the whole in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings, Plate XVIII. The original is, or lately was, in the possession of Lady Cullum; and it was the late Mr. Dawson Turner's copy of this original that was put up for sale, in June, 1859, along with his similar copy of Milton's receipt for the second Five Pounds, under the false impression that they were the originals (see ante, p. 12, note).
and the total sum which he did pay was 18l. If he thus got off 2l., it was probably to oblige the widow, who may have been anxious to realize all she could of her late husband's property at once before leaving town. There is, indeed, a subsequent document from which it would appear as if Simmons feared having farther trouble from the widow. It is a document, dated April 29, 1681, by which she formally releases Samuel Simmons, his heirs, executors, and administrators for ever, from "all and all manner of action and actions, cause and causes of action, suits, "bills, bonds, writings obligatory, debts, dues, duties, accounts, "sum and sums of money, judgments, executions, extents, quarrels "either in law or equity, controversies and demands, and all and "every other matter, cause, and thing whatsoever, which against "the said Samuel Simmons" she ever had, or which she, her heirs, executors, or administrators should or might have "by reason "or means of any matter, cause, or thing whatsoever, from the "beginning of the world unto the day of these presents."* About the most comprehensive release possible!

From 1680, accordingly, neither Milton's widow, nor his daughters, had any share or interest whatever in the sale of Paradise Lost. The property remained solely with the printer Simmons. Nor did he keep it long. Even before his last transactions with the widow, he had arranged to transfer his entire interest in the poem to another bookseller, Brabazon Aylmer, for twenty-five pounds—a sum which shows that, on the whole, he cannot have been consciously unfair in his dealings with the widow. Brabazon Aylmer, whose shop was at the sign of the Three Pigeons in Cornhill, was a well-known bookseller, in a brisker way of business than Simmons had been able to pretend to. He is described by a contemporary as "a very just and religious man," "nicely exact in all his accounts," "well acquainted with the mysteries of his trade," and as having been "as often engaged in very useful designs as any other that can be named through the whole trade." He was the publisher of Dr. Isaac Barrow's works, and of some of Tillotson's. What is more interesting to us here, he had had dealings with Milton in his life-time; for he had

* Copy in Gentleman's Mag. for July, 1822, from the original, then in possession of Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Bart.
published, in July, 1674, the little volume of Milton's *Epistole Familiare* and *Prolusiones Oratoria*—to which volume there is prefixed a short preface in Aylmer's own name, explaining certain particulars in his concern with the volume. His purchase of the copyright of *Paradise Lost* from Simmons in 1680 may be taken as proving his continued interest in the man with whom he had been thus slightly in contact before. But, after all, Aylmer's connexion with *Paradise Lost* was transitory. Active and accurate man of business as he was, there was in London at least one bookseller of a more active and speculative turn still, and more likely to discern what might be made commercially of a book like *Paradise Lost*. This was the famous Jacob Tonson, the first of the three booksellers of that name, and the founder of the eminent firm. He was then a very young man, having commenced business in 1677, when he was scarcely twenty-one years of age, at the sign of the Judge's Head, near the Fleet Street end of Chancery Lane. Young as he was, and rough-mannered even to rudeness, he had already some of those notions of business by the carrying out of which he was to make a new era in the book-trade. He had already begun those relations with Dryden which were to grow closer during the rest of Dryden's life, and through which the veteran poet, if he did not get all the money that he needed, or thought himself entitled to, got more than he would probably have got had his dealings been with any one else. What made Tonson think of *Paradise Lost* as a book worth looking after, we do not precisely know. Certain it is that, on the 17th of August, 1683, he bought half of the copyright of it from Brabazon Aylmer, at a higher price than Aylmer had paid for it, and that about seven years later, on the 24th of March, 1690 (query 1690-91), he bought the other half.*

* The authorities for the statements in this paragraph are various. The transfer of the book from Simmons to Aylmer, and then from Aylmer to Tonson, is vouched for by Bishop Newton (Life of Milton, 1749), who may have had the information from the then living members of the Tonson firm, his own publishers. For the other facts, see the title-page and preface to Milton's *Epistole Familiaris*, Edit. 1674; Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, i. pp. 292, 293; and Dunton's *Anecdotes*, quoted in Nichols, iii. 627. The month of the publication of the *Epistole Familiaris* by Aylmer I have from the Stationers' Registers.
The acquisition of the copyright of *Paradise Lost* by Jacob Tonson is a fact of some consequence in the history of the book. When Tonson bought his first half of the copyright in 1683, the book was in its third edition. About 4,000 or 4,500 copies in all had been printed off up to that time—of which, however, a considerable number (probably the bulk of the third edition) remained on hand. The sale of these, from Aylmer's counter or Tonson's, seems to have sufficed all demand for a year or two more. But then there came a sudden stir. In 1688, while Tonson was still only half-proprietor of the book, there appeared a Fourth Edition of it, in folio size, and with this title: "*Paradise Lost. A Poem. In Twelve Books. The Author John Milton. The Fourth Edition. Adorn'd with Sculptures. London, Printed by Miles Flesher for Richard Bently, at the Post Office in Russell-Street, and Jacob Tonson at the Judges-Head in Chancery Lane near Fleet-street.*" An interesting fact respecting this Fourth Edition of the poem, accounting also for its large size and sumptuous form, is that it was published by subscription—one of the first books so published in England.* At the end of the volume is a list of "The Nobility and Gentry that encourag'd, by subscription, the printing this Edition." The list consists of more than 500 names, including those of many eminent men of the day, such as Dryden, Waller, Lord Dorset, Sir Robert Howard, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Somers, Dr. Aldrich, Atterbury, and Milton's old political antagonist, Sir Roger L'Estrange. Preceding the title-page, is a portrait of Milton by R. White, adapted from Faithorne's engraving of 1670; and there is an engraving before each book of the poem. All this shows an increase of interest in the poem, and a wish to do the best for it, which it is reasonable to attribute to Jacob Tonson. He is said, indeed to have been "advised and encouraged" in the undertaking by Somers, "who not only subscribed himself, but was zealous in promoting the subscription."† Dryden also, whose

* Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, iv. 8. The first book published by subscription in England, Nichols here says, was Walton's Polyglott Bible (1654-57); the second, he thinks, was Dryden's *Virgil*; and the third, he thinks, was this edition in 1688 (which he calls Tonson's) of *Paradise Lost*. But Dryden's *Virgil* was not published till 1697.

† *Newton's Life of Milton*, 1749, p. xl.
loyalty to Milton from the first is remarkable, is likely to have been among Tonson's advisers in the affair; and it was probably as much to oblige Tonson, as to express again his own opinion of Milton, that he wrote those now famous lines which were first given to the world at the foot of White's portrait of Milton in this very edition of 1688:

"Three Poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty; in both the last.
The force of nature could no further go;
To make a third she joined the former two."

As will be seen from the title-page of this Fourth Edition of Paradise Lost, Tonson was not yet sole proprietor of the copyright—his associate Richard Bently probably representing that half of the right which had been left, in 1683, still in Brabazon Aylmer's hands. Moreover, though some copies of this Fourth Edition of Paradise Lost were sent into the market bound up with similar folio editions of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, also freshly published in 1688, this seems only to have been by arrangement with a third bookseller, Randal Taylor, whose name appears on the title-pages of the two smaller poems, and who was then their proprietor. It was probably the success of the fourth edition of the great Epic—whether in its separate form, as published by Bently and Tonson jointly, or as bound up with Taylor's editions of the two smaller poems, printed in the same year to match—that induced Tonson to extend his property in Milton's poetry. At all events, as we have seen, he did, in 1690, buy the remaining half of the copyright of Paradise Lost; and from this date onwards we find him having almost a monopoly of the publication not only of that, but also of the other poems. In 1692 he brought out another folio edition of Paradise Lost, counting as the fifth edition of that poem, bound up with another edition (the fourth) of Paradise Regained. This was followed, in 1695, by a sixth edition of Paradise Lost, also in large folio, and with illustrations—many of the copies separate, but others bound up with Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes, and also the Minor Poems, all separately paged, but of the same folio size, so as to
constitute together what is really the first collected edition of the whole of Milton's Poems. But this sixth edition of *Paradise Lost* was distinguished by another important accompaniment. Besides the text of the poem, but separately paged, so that it might stand apart, and form a folio volume by itself, there was an elaborate commentary, consisting of no fewer than 321 folio pages of Annotations, under this title, "Annotations on Milton's "Paradise Lost: wherein the texts of Sacred Writ relating to the "Poem are quoted; the parallel places and imitations of the most "excellent Homer and Virgil cited and compared; all the ob-"scure parts rendered in phrases more familiar; the old and "obsolete words, with their originals, explain'd and made easy to "the English reader. By P. H. φιλοσοφιώτης." The "P. H." who thus led the way, so largely, carefully, and laboriously, in the work of commenting Milton, and from whom all subsequent commentators have borrowed, and often with very little acknowledgment, is ascertained to have been Patrick Hume, a Scotsman, of whom nothing more is known than that, at the time of the publication, he was settled as a schoolmaster somewhere near London. Tonson, we suppose, had found him out, and either set him on the work, or accepted the work from him, already done privately as a labour of love.*

After we pass into the Eighteenth Century, editions of the *Paradise Lost*, either separately or as a part of the "Poetical Works," begin to abound. A common statement, indeed, is that it was Addison's celebrated series of criticisms on *Paradise Lost*, (begun in No. 267 of the *Spectator*, Jan. 5, 1711-12, and concluded in No. 369, May 3, 1712) that first awoke people to

* It is really a pity that more is not known of this modest and meritorious "P. H.," who wrote so elaborate a commentary on *Paradise Lost*, only twenty-one years after Milton's death. Richardson, noticing him in 1734 (*Explanatory Notes*, p. cxvii.), says, "I have been told this was Philip Humes;" Paterson, a subsequent commentator on Milton (1744), calls him "a very learned and judicious gentleman of North Britain,... Peter Home;" Bishop Newton, in 1749, first gives him his right name of Patrick Hume. Later writers, confusing persons, have made him Sir Patrick Hume. My authority for his having been a schoolmaster near London is Mr. David Laing of Edinburgh, in a paper in the *Archaeologia Scotica* (vol. iii. pp. 83-91). I may add that among the graduates of the Edinburgh University about 1680 there is more than one *Patricius Hume.*
Milton's greatness as a poet, and that till then he had been neglected. The statement will not bear investigation. Not only had six editions of the *Paradise Lost* been published before the close of the seventeenth century—three of them splendid folio editions, and one of them with a commentary which was in itself a tribute to the extraordinary renown of the poem; and not only, before or shortly after Milton's death, had there been such public expressions of admiration for the poem, by Dryden and others, as were equivalent to its recognition as one of the sublimest works of English genius; but since the year 1688 Dryden's emphatic, if not very discriminating lines, above-cited as having been printed by way of motto under Milton's portrait in Tonson's edition of that year, had been a familiar quotation in the mouths of scholars. Even before those lines were written, the habit of comparing Milton with Homer and Virgil, and of wondering whether the highest greatness might not be claimed for the Englishman, had been fully formed. Addison's criticisms, therefore, were only a contribution to a reputation already become traditional. Before they appeared, three new editions of the Poetical Works, including *Paradise Lost*, and forming the seventh, eighth, and ninth editions of that poem, had been published by the enterprising Tonson—to wit, an edition in royal 8vo., in 2 vols. in 1705; another 8vo. edition, in 2 vols., in 1707; and a very pretty and correct pocket-edition, in 2 vols. 18mo., in 1711. When these were issued, Tonson was no longer in his first shop, the Judge's Head in Chancery Lane, but in a shop at Gray's Inn Gate, to which he had removed about 1697, in consequence of the death of his elder brother Richard, also a bookseller, who had occupied that shop, and whose son Jacob was thenceforward associated in business with his uncle as Jacob Tonson junior, or secundus. It is likely enough that Addison's criticisms, widely read as they were, may have helped on the sale of the three editions of Milton issued by the Tonsons, uncle and nephew, from this shop, and which were, in any case, handier than Tonson's folio editions that had preceded them. But, despite the fillip to Milton's popularity which Addison's papers must have given, it was not till eight years after the publication of the above-mentioned ninth, or small pocket-edition, of 1711, that the Tonsons found it advisable to bring out
another edition of Milton. They had meanwhile (about 1712) removed to that house in the Strand, opposite Catherine Street—called the Shakespeare’s Head, from the sign which they adopted for it—which continued for about half a century to be known to all London as the shop of the Tonsons. Here, in 1719, they tried a 12mo. illustrated edition of Paradise Lost by itself. In 1720 this was followed by a splendidly-printed 4to. edition of the Poetical Works collectively, in two volumes, known as “Tickell’s Edition,” from the share the poet Tickell had in it, and including a reprint of Addison’s criticisms on Paradise Lost. It was published by subscription, and has a list of more than 300 subscribers prefixed to it. Again, in 1721, there was a fresh 12mo. edition of the Poetical Works in 2 vols., also with Addison’s Critique; and, in 1725, there was published an 8vo. edition of Paradise Lost by itself, known as “Fenton’s Edition,” from its containing a Life of Milton by the poet Elijah Fenton. There were subsequent “Fenton” editions (so-called for the same reason) of the Poetical Works as a whole in 1727 and 1730, each in 2 vols. 8vo. These, which may be called the fourteenth and fifteenth Editions of Paradise Lost, were, with one exception, the last editions in which Jacob Tonson the eldest, and Jacob Tonson secundus, had any concern. Old Tonson died March 18, 1735-6, at the age of about eighty, a very wealthy man, and with estates in different parts of England. He had ceased for a considerable time before his death to take any active share in the business, leaving it to be managed by his nephew. To his nephew also, being himself childless, he had intended to leave the bulk of his property—including the celebrated Kit-Cat portraits, a collection of portraits of forty-three noblemen and men of letters of strong Hanoverian sentiments, who formed the Kit-Cat Club. Tonson, who was secretary to the club, had had the portraits, including his own, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and hung up in a room in his villa at Barn-Elms in Surrey. But the nephew, who had himself acquired a large fortune, predeceased his uncle by a few months (November, 1735), leaving three sons and three daughters, all amply provided for, and the two elder sons especially, Jacob and Richard, heirs of his business. The elder of these two, accordingly, Jacob Tonson tertius, having become also chief
legatee of his grand-uncle, was, from 1736 onwards, the head of the Tonson firm.*

Before the deaths of Jacob Tonson the eldest, and his nephew, the second of the name, there was one edition of Paradise Lost, not yet mentioned, which, though bearing the name of Tonson on its title-page, differed so signally from all the previous editions of the poem as to be calculated to upset and ruin them. Its title in full was as follows:—"Milton's Paradise Lost. A New Edition. By Richard Bentley, D.D. London: Printed for Jacob Tonson; and for John Poulson; and for J. Darby, A. Butterworth, and F. Clay, in Trust for Richard, James, and Bethel Wellington, 1732." This is Bentley's famous edition. It is a large quarto, of more than 400 pages, expensively printed, and with two portraits of Milton, engraved by Vertue. It deserves more than a passing notice.

Bentley's edition of Paradise Lost is, indeed, one of the curiosities of literature. The great scholar, while yielding to no one in his admiration of the poem and of its author, found many things in the received text of the poem which jarred on his own notions of grammatical correctness, of metrical fitness, of rhetorical good taste, and even of poetical and intellectual truth. He had a theory to account for this. Instead of remembering that the mode of thought, the style, and the musical art of Milton's age were by no means those of Bentley's, and that, even if the general change in these respects had been less considerable, it might happen that a Milton was often carried into trains of thought and raptures or mists of expression which a Bentley could not reduce to rule or precedent, he boldly resorted to the conclusion that whatever was un-Bentleian in the poem, or nearly all that was so, was corrupt. "Our celebrated author

* Authorities for statements in this paragraph are Lowndes's Bibliographer's Manual, by Bohn, Art. "Milton;" Todd's List of Editions at the end of his edition of Milton's Poetical Works, vol. iv. Edit. of 1852; Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, i. 292—299; and Cunningham's Handbook of London, p. 209. It is interesting to know that in Kneller's portrait of old Jacob Tonson—now, with the rest of the Kit-Cat collection, in possession of Mr. Baker of Bayfordbury, Herts—the publisher is represented in a gown and cap, and holding in his right hand a volume lettered "Paradise Lost." He had a feeling about the book so many editions of which he had published.
"when he compos'd this poem," he says in his preface, "being obnoxious to the Government, poor, friendless, and what is worst of all, blind with a Gutta Serena, could only dictate his Verses to be writ by another. Whence it necessarily follows, That any errors in Spelling, Pointing, nay even of whole Words of a like or near Sound in Pronunciation, are not to be charg'd upon "the Poet, but on the Amanuensis." With such errors, Bentley thought, the text, as printed in all previous editions, positively swarmed; and he professed to point them out, and to give in the margin in each case his conjecture of what Milton really did dictate or mean to dictate. But not only had the amanuensis, or the amanuenses, of Milton been in fault. "The Friend or Acquaintance, whoever he was, to whom Milton committed his Copy and the Overseeing of the Press, did so vilely execute that Trust, that Paradise under his Ignorance and Audaciousness may be said to be twice lost." Owing to the carelessness of this supposed Editor and of the printer Simmons, the First Edition, Bentley maintained, had been brought forth "polluted with such monstrous Faults, as are beyond Example in any other printed Book." In all such cases—which occur by hundreds—Bentley also offers the conjectural emendation or restoration. But worse and worse. Not only was Milton's editing friend grossly careless and ignorant; he was a scoundrel. "This suppos'd Friend," says Bentley, "knowing Milton's bad Circumstances, thought he had a fit Opportunity to foist into the Book several of his own Verses, without the blind Poet's Discovery." Instances of this are abundant, according to Bentley. He cites sixty-six in his Preface as specimens; and he brackets each, as it occurs in the text, for rejection and execration. Add, lastly, such occasional "slips and inadvertencies" as Milton himself could not but have fallen into, in so long and learned a poem, by reason of his blindness—which slips and inadvertencies Bentley also detects, but with greater diffidence as to the suggested amendments—and some notion will be formed of the havoc that would be made in the text of Milton by accepting Bentley's editorship. Only by looking into Bentley's edition, however, can an adequate idea be obtained of its utter monstrousness. It is perhaps the most interesting example in our literature of a powerful mind applying itself
admiringly to the product of a great mind of another class and of a diviner age, but feeling itself at every moment perturbed by some turn of thought, some phrase, some rhythm, out of the range of its own habits, and then, in strange unconsciousness of its own limitation, or of the lapse and flow of a nation's mind in such matters, concluding that all that so perplexed or offended it could never really have existed or have been intended to exist, and proceeding to eject it from the work examined, and to fill up the gaps with hard contemporary putty.

Take a specimen or two out of the abundance. At B. II., vv. 516—517, Milton's own editions have

"'Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to thir mouths the sounding Alchymie.'"

Bentley attacks the imaginary Editor for his ignorance here, and proposes to restore the true reading thus:—

"'Tow'rds the four winds four sturdy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding Orichalc.'"

He justifies the changes in two footnotes, as follows:—

V. 516. *Four speedy Cherubim.*] Not much need of Swiftness to be a good Trumpeter. For *Speedy* I suspect the Poet gave it,

_Four STURDY Cherubim._

_Sturdy, stout, robust, able to blow a strong Blast._

V. 517. *Put to their mouths the sounding Alchymie.*] There is a cheap Kitchin mix'd Metal for _Spoons, &c._ vulgarly call'd _Ockamie_, perhaps corruptly from _Alchymie_; but that is below Heroic Stile, and unworthy of _Milton_. And the Name, if any such, is silly. For Brass, Pewter, nay the very Silver and Gold Coin are as much Alchymie, as That is; being all mix'd Metals. He gave it thus,

*Put to their mouths the sounding ORICHALC._

ὀρεχάλκον, _Orichalcum_, the most sonorous of Metals for _Tuba_ and _Tibia_. _Suidas_ in that Word cites from old Poets, _Κάλακας ὀρεχάλκον, Bells of Orichalc, ὀρεχάλκον λάκα κύμβαλα, Sounding Cymbals of Orichalc_. And our _Spenser_ led the way for _Milton's_ using it, in his _Musiopotmos._

_Not Bilboa Steel, nor Brass from Corinth fet, Nor costly Orichalc from strange Phoenice._

Bear witness to the Editor's boldness; that for _Orichalc_ which he understood not, durst put in _Alchymie_, from the sound of one Syllable.
Take another example. At VI., 512—520, describing the invention of gunpowder and of artillery by the rebel Angels in Heaven, Milton has:

"Sulphurous and Nitrous Foame
They found, they mingl'd, and with suttle Art,
Concocted and adjusted they reduc'd
To blackest grain, and into store convey'd:
Part hidd'n veins digg'd up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike) of Mineral and Stone,
Whereof to found their Engins and thir Balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, perrnicious with one touch to fire."

Here Bentley finds a string of errors arising, from the supposed Editor's ignorance of the way in which gunpowder is made, and of the terms used in gunpowder-mills; and he thinks this is the passage "as the Poet certainly gave it":—

"Sulphurous and Nitrous Foam
They pound, they mingle, and with sooty Chark
Concocted and adjusted, they reduce
To blackest grain, and into store convey:
Part hidden Veins digg'd up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike of Mineral and Stone,)
Whereof to found their Engins and their Balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive Reed
Provide obsequious, with one touch to fire."

And so on he goes, leaving not a single page without similar emendations—changing "Not built" into "No butt" (I. 259), "distances" into "discipline" (IV. 935), "embraces" into "branches" (V. 215), "longitude" into "long career" (VII. 373), "loveliest" into "forehead" (VIII. 559), "is judicious" into "unlibidinous" (VIII. 591), "to the ages" into "out of ashes" (X. 647), &c. &c.; besides bracketing passages here and there as pure interpolations. The principle on which Bentley proceeds is, in short, that whatever is un-Bentleian is corrupt; and, apart from the interest of his work as a historical curiosity—as, in fact, an instance of a very "sturdy cherub" blowing an "orichalc"—it is useful only here and there on account of some acute criticism which Bentley's great classical learning enabled him to supply.

The work, at all events, had no such effect as Bentley intended. His views as to the text of *Paradise Lost* appeared at once untenable to all who considered the subject, and were, moreover,
formally replied to by Dr. Zachary Pearce, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, and other critics.* In the matter of Milton’s text, therefore, the course of subsequent editing proceeded as if Bentley’s amendments had never been proposed.

Bentley’s edition included, the editions of *Paradise Lost* hitherto enumerated by us bring the trade-history of the poem down to the year 1736. In that trade-history the Tonsons, it will be remarked, had been almost the sole agents. With the exception of an 8vo. edition of *Paradise Lost* by itself, printed in Dublin in 1724, and an edition of the Poetical Works in 2 vols. 12mo. supposed to have been printed in Holland in 1731, there were as yet no other editions in existence than the first three by Simmons, and those which Tonson had published and re-published in various sizes, from folio downwards. Of all Tonson’s editions, the folio of 1695, with the elaborate annotations by Patrick Hume annexed, remained the most important; but latterly the favourite editions, with those who wanted only the text and the simpler sort of accompaniments, seem to have been the so-called “Fenton” editions of 1725, 1727, and 1730. That the Tonsons should so long have retained the monopoly of the publication of the poem in England may strike us now as rather strange. Had our present Copyright Law, as fixed by the Act of 1842, been in existence, all copyright in *Paradise Lost* would have lapsed forty-two years after the first publication of the poem, *i.e.* in 1709. From that period the poem would have been public property, and anyone would have been at liberty to print it. It was in that very year 1709, however, that the first general act of any kind respecting copyright was passed in this country. By this act, which affected England and Scotland, but did not include Ireland, it was provided, in respect of books then already in the market, that the authors of such books, or those claiming under them, should have an undisturbed copyright for twenty-one years, counting from the 10th of April, 1710. This, though it apparently abrogated the notion, previously entertained in a loose form, that copyright in books was perpetual, was pro-

* Dr. Pearce’s Essay was completed in 1733, under the title “A Review of the Text of the Twelve Books of Paradise Lost, in which the chief of Dr. Bentley’s Emendations are consider’d.” Among other pamphlets on the question was one in 1732, entitled “Milton Restor’d and Bentley Depos’d.”
bably a boon at the time to those commercially interested in books. For, as there had been no express legal sanction to the common notion of a perpetual copyright in books, the reprinting of books without consent of the authors, or those who claimed under them, had become not uncommon; and, since 1694, when the Censorship of the Press virtually ceased, there had not been the special means of redress in such cases previously afforded by the power of calling to account persons who published books without being able to produce the licensed manuscript or the record of it in Stationers' Hall. Twenty-one years of continued monopoly from 1710 was probably, in these circumstances, as much as the Tonsons could have hoped for in the case of a book like Paradise Lost, of which they had already had the profit for twenty years. We have seen that they made good use of the further time allowed them.

That time, according to what would now be the legal interpretation of Queen Anne's Act, should have ended in 1737. We might have expected, accordingly, that, closely following the last-mentioned "Fenton" edition of Milton's Poetical Works in 1730, there should have been editions of Paradise Lost by other publishers than the Tonsons. We do not find, however, any such immediate stepping-in of other publishers. Not only were the numerous Tonson editions then on sale sufficient for the demand for some years, but, when new editions were wanted, they were still supplied by the Tonsons. It was Jacob Tonson tertius that was now the head of the celebrated firm in the Strand—that Jacob Tonson to whose soft and gentle manners, zeal for literature, and liberality of dealing, Dr. Johnson paid a tribute which one still reads with pleasure.* Under this Jacob Tonson, who had a less active partner in his brother Richard, the firm lost none of its fame. While continuing, and even extending, those operations in the works of Shakespeare which his father and great-uncle had bequeathed to him,† this Jacob Tonson the third

* In the preface to the re-issue in 1778 of the edition of Shakespeare which he had prepared for Tonson, and which was originally published in 1765.
† They had not published so many editions of Shakespeare as of Milton, but they had published the chief editions of Shakespeare issued in their time—to wit, Pope's in 1725 (reprinted by them twice), and Theobald's first edition in 1733.
did not neglect the traditional interest of his firm in Milton's Poems. In 1737, he published a new edition of *Paradise Lost* in 8vo.; in 1738, a new form of the "Fenton" edition of the same; and, in 1746, an edition of the Poetical Works in 4 vols. 12mo., two of the volumes containing *Paradise Lost*. But why, it may be asked, since the copyright had lapsed in 1731, were there not now editions by other publishers to compete with these of Tonson? The fact seems to be that, notwithstanding the terms of the Act of Queen Anne, there was no idea that the copyright really had lapsed. The old notion of an indefinite copyright in books still existed; and, in accordance with this notion, there was a custom among the London publishers of not interfering with each other's supposed copyrights. In Ireland, it was understood, English books might be reprinted; and, accordingly, in addition to the Dublin edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1724, already mentioned, there were two fresh Dublin editions in 1747 and 1748 respectively, the last on "Irish paper." But, as far as England and Scotland were concerned, it never seems to have occurred to Tonson, or to others for him, that his property in Milton's Poems was at an end. As late as 1761, Bishop Newton* repeats a statement on this point previously made by himself in 1749,† and by Birch in 1751.‡ Mentioning that second transaction of the first Jacob Tonson, by which, in March, 1690-1, he became sole proprietor of *Paradise Lost* after Simmons and Brabazon Aylmer, Bishop Newton, in 1761, adds these words: "Except one-fourth of it, which has been assigned to several persons, his [the eldest Jacob Tonson's] family have enjoyed the right of copy ever since." With the exception, therefore, of a fourth part of the copyright, which, for some trade-reason, had been assigned to divers persons jointly prior to 1749, the Tonsons regarded themselves, even in 1761, as the legal owners of *Paradise Lost*.§

† Same, prefixed to Newton's edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1749, pp. xxxviii. xxxix.
‡ Birch's Life of Milton, prefixed to the Prose Works, edition of 1751, p. lviii.
§ What is here stated will account for the fact that so many of what may be
Bibliographical, Biographical, and Expository.

Bishop Newton’s own edition, in two large quarto volumes, published by subscription in 1749, bears this title: “Paradise Lost. A Poem, in Twelve Books. The Author, John Milton. A New Edition, with Notes of various Authors. By Thomas Newton, D.D. London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper in the Strand. 1749.” This edition also, therefore, belongs, in part at least, to the seemingly endless series of editions published by the Tonsons. But the edition has a distinction that cannot be claimed for any previous one, unless it be the folio of 1695 with Hume’s Annotations. Newton was not yet Bishop of Bristol (to which dignity he attained in 1761), but only D.D. and the holder of a London living, to which he had been presented by Pulteney, Earl of Bath. It was on Lord Bath’s recommendation, together with that of Dr. Zachary Pearce, then Bishop of Bangor, afterwards of Rochester, (already mentioned by us as a defender of Milton’s text against Bentley’s proposed emendations), that Newton had undertaken a new edition of Paradise Lost. His design was, he says, to give such an edition as would be given of a classic author, i.e. with an accurate text and “cum notis variorum.” For the text, accordingly, he referred, he says, to the First and Second Editions, which alone can be called Milton’s own. He followed these editions faithfully, with proper disregard of Bentley, and with only the ordinary allowances for changes of spelling and pointing, though here and there suggesting an emendation. The distinction of the edition, however, hardly lies in the text, in which respect some of the previous editions of Tonson, larger and smaller, had been very accurate. It lies rather in the numerous foot-notes—many of them Newton’s own; others collected from previous critics and commentators, like Hume, Addison, Bentley, Pearce, and Richardson; and others supplied to Newton during the progress of the work by private friends, among whom he mentions Pearce again, Warburton, Dr. Heylin, and Mr. Thyer called the Paradise Lost relics—to wit, the licensed manuscript of the first Book of the Poem (see ante, p. 2), Milton’s agreement for the copyright with Simmons (see ante, p. 4), his Receipt to Simmons for the second Five Pounds (see ante, p. 12), and the widow’s subsequent receipt and discharge to Simmons (see ante, p. 16)—should have come down through the Tonsons. The firm had naturally come into possession of all the business documents relating to the Poem, and had retained them among their papers.
of the Manchester Library. The edition is, in fact, a "variorum" edition. Having been printed in very handsome form, partly at the Earl of Bath's expense, who also "generously contributed the copper-plates to beautify and adorn it," and to whom Newton dedicated it in terms of the highest eulogy, it came before the world with every advantage. The list of subscribers fills twelve pages, and is headed by the Prince and Princess of Wales. With the exception of the "copper-plates"—of which the less said now the better—Newton's edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1749, in two vols. large quarto, is still a sumptuous book in a library. It met with such success that *Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes*, and the rest of the poems, similarly edited and illustrated, were added in a separate quarto volume in 1752. The three volumes together, bearing date 1749-52, form Newton's first edition of Milton's Poetical Works.

The appearance of Newton's edition of Milton marks an epoch not only in Milton editing, but also in Milton publishing. Although that edition came forth by arrangement with Tonson, and bore Tonson's name on the title-page, and although Newton's *Life of Milton* prefixed to it contained the distinct statement that the Tonson firm were still chief proprietors of the copyright of *Paradise Lost*, it is precisely from this period that we find the Tonson monopoly in Milton's Poems discontinued. The Tonson business, indeed, was carried on—still in the Strand, but finally in a house near Catherine Street, opposite to the former more famous house—till as late as March 31, 1767, when it was brought to a close by the death of Jacob Tonson tertius, without issue. Nor, to the last, did Tonson cease to traffic in Milton. In addition to all the previous Tonson editions, and to Newton's new "variorum" edition, we find a republication of Tonson's "Fenton" edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1751, another edition of the same poem in 24mo. by Tonson in 1753, and three editions of the Poetical Works, in 1758, 1759, and 1760 respectively, beautifully printed at Birmingham by Baskerville, but for Tonson as publisher. But other publishers were now on the alert. Between 1750 and the death of Jacob Tonson tertius in 1767, there were three or four editions of *Paradise Lost* published in London by other houses than that of the Tonsons—the earliest being one in 12mo. in 1751,
"printed by R. Walker in the Little Old Bailey," and edited, with a selection of notes, by "John Marchant, Gent." During the same period there was a Glasgow edition of Paradise Lost (1750), and there were four Edinburgh editions of the Poetical Works collectively (1752, 1755, 1762 and 1767), and one new Dublin edition of the Poetical Works (1752). Dublin editions were not to be prevented; but why did not Tonson, claiming the copyright as late as 1761, try to make good his claim against the infringing London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow publishers? The likelihood is that, though he asserted his claim, he was afraid to try it at law. It was not, indeed, till some years after Jacob Tonson's death, that a legal decision was given, settling this and all similar questions. Action having been taken by the supposed holders of the copyright of Thomson's Seasons against Donaldson of Edinburgh for an edition of the Seasons in 1768 (two of the above-named Edinburgh editions of Milton's Poems had been published by this same Donaldson), it was decided on, appeal to the House of Lords, that the notion of a perpetual copyright in such books was a mere assumption, seeing that, whatever right at common law an author or his assigns might have had in his books, that right had been taken away by the statute of Queen Anne, and all property of the kind was regulated by the terms of the statute. According to this decision, Thomson's Seasons had been public property since 1757, and, by application of the decision to Paradise Lost, that poem had been common property since 1731. It was probably a pretty shrewd anticipation on the part of Tonson and others what the decision would be, that led Tonson to be content with the long monopoly in Milton which he and his firm had already enjoyed—a monopoly of twenty years beyond what the statute gave—and to acquiesce publicly in what he privately held to be infractions of his right. From the middle of the eighteenth century, at all events, the last vestige of the tradition of a perpetual copyright in books disappeared in Britain.

During the thirty-three years of the eighteenth century which had to run after the great name of Tonson had ceased from the bookselling world—i.e. from 1767 to 1800—there was an active competition among British publishers for the supply of the continued demand for Milton's Poems. Fourteen or fifteen new
editions of *Paradise Lost* during this period are enumerated, and about as many new editions of the collective Poetical Works in different forms.* Among these various editions we may note the following:—A folio edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1770, by Foulis of Glasgow; the edition of the Poetical Works in 1779, in 3 vols. small 8vo., with Life by Dr. Johnson, which formed part of Johnson’s series of the English Poets; an edition of *Paradise Lost*, “illustrated with Texts of Scripture by John Gillies, D.D., one of the ministers of Glasgow,” published in London in 1788; an edition of the first two Books of *Paradise Lost*, published at Bury St. Edmund’s in 1792-3, by Capel Lofft, Esq., with the original spelling in part restored, and other peculiarities; and, finally, the magnificent edition of the Poetical Works in three folio volumes, with Life by William Hayley, and engravings from designs by Westall, published by Boydell and Nicol in 1794-7. But even this last superb book, being without notes, did not supersede Bishop Newton’s “variorum” edition. Originally published in 1749-52, Newton’s edition of the Poetical Works remained the standard library edition till the close of the century, and was reprinted no fewer than eight times, either in its first form of 3 vols. 4to., or in the form of 4 vols. 8vo. Use was also made of Newton’s text and his notes in some of the smaller contemporary editions of *Paradise Lost*.

In the present century the well-known “variorum” edition of Milton’s Poetical Works, by the Rev. Henry John Todd (1763—1845), has, for library purposes, superseded Newton’s and all others. The first edition was in 1801, in 6 vols. 8vo., the editor being then Rector of Allhallows, Lombard Street, London. There was a second edition in 1809, in 7 vols.; a third in 1826, in 6 vols.; a fourth in 4 vols., in 1842, at which time Todd was Archdeacon of Cleveland in Yorkshire; and the last edition was in 1852, also in 4 vols. In Todd’s editions are amassed, in almost confusing over-abundance, selections from the notes, criticisms, elucidations, and dissertations of the whole series of previous editors and commentators, together with a considerable quantity

of fresh matter, historical and critical, by Todd himself. They retain the value due to great and miscellaneous accumulation of material actuated by conscientiousness and pious devotion to the subject; they ought always to be spoken of with respect; and whoever writes at large about Milton and his Poetry must use their stores, whether he makes sufficient acknowledgment or not. As Todd died in 1845, the edition of 1842 is the last that had his personal superintendence. In 1831 appeared Mr. Pickering's Aldine edition of the Poetical Works, in 3 vols. 12mo., with Life by the Rev. John Mitford— which edition has been reprinted more than once. In 1835 appeared, in 6 vols. 8vo., the Poetical Works, edited, with Notes and a Life, by Sir Egerton Brydges— of which edition there have been reprints in one volume. In 1851 there was issued by Mr. Pickering an edition in 8 volumes 8vo., of the Works of Milton both in prose and in verse— complete, save that it does not include the treatise on Christian Doctrine; to which edition there was prefixed, in a revised form, the Life written for the Aldine edition of the Poems by the Rev. John Mitford. It is to be regretted that an edition so handsome to the eye should be so incorrect, and should be without those accompaniments of accurate dating, explanation of the circumstances of the several publications, and other historical elucidations, which are essential to a good edition of the works of a great writer of the past. In this edition it is professed, indeed, that the poems, as well as the prose-writings, are reproduced from the original editions— spelling, punctuation, and all— which is so far a distinction of the edition for philological purposes; but not even has this scheme been adequately carried out. Still, as one of the most beautiful books of our modern press, Pickering's eight-volume Milton cannot be passed without notice. Nor, while leaving scores of other recent editions of Paradise Lost unmentioned, ought we to omit Mr. Thomas Keightley's, included in his edition of Milton's Poetical Works, in 2 vols. 8vo., in 1859. As this is perhaps the most recent well-known edition of Milton's poetry, so it is one of the most useful. Mr. Keightley has taken great pains with the text, more especially as regards the punctuation, which he has revised throughout according to a system of his own. He has also given a good selection of notes from the stores of Todd and
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other commentators, and has added not a few independent notes and criticisms; while in his companion volume on the Life, Opinions, and Writings of Milton (1855) will be found a distinct "Introduction to Paradise Lost," containing much that readers of the poem in his Edition would do well to take along with them. The only other edition which it seems necessary to notice is that included in an American edition of the Poetical Works by Professor Charles Dexter Cleveland of Philadelphia, of which there has been a London issue (1865) in one vol. 8vo. There are brief notes in this edition; but its chief peculiarity is an extensive verbal index to the poetry, revised and much amended from Todd's Verbal Index, first published in his edition of 1809.

Origin of the Poem and History of its Composition.

A great deal has been written concerning "the origin" of Paradise Lost.

Voltaire, in 1727, suggested that Milton had, while in Italy in 1638-9, seen performed there a Scriptural drama, entitled Adamo, written by a certain Giovanni Battista Andreini, and that, "piercing through the absurdity of the performance to the hidden majesty of the subject," he "took from that ridiculous trifle the first hint of the noblest work which the human imagination has ever attempted." * The Andreini thus recalled to notice was the son of an Italian actress, and was known in Italy and also in France as a writer of comedies and religious poems, and also of some defences of the Drama. He was born in 1578, and, as he did not die till 1652, may have been of some reputation in Italy as a living author at the time of Milton's visit. His Adamo, of which special mention is made, was published at Milan in 1613, again at Milan in 1647; and there was a third edition of it at Perugia in 1641. It is a drama in Italian verse,

* Essay on Epic Poetry, originally written by Voltaire in English during his stay in London, afterwards translated into French, and now included, in an amended form, in Voltaire's Collected Works, with the title "Essai sur la Poésie Épique." One chapter of the essay is devoted to Milton. It is a slight thing, showing no real knowledge of Milton's life; and the statement about Andreini, with which the chapter opens, is made in this off-hand manner: "Milton, voyageant en Italie dans sa jeunesse, vit représenter à Milan une comédie," &c. Where Voltaire had picked up the fact he does not tell us. I fancy it was a sheer guess of his own put as a fact.
in five Acts, representing the Fall of Man. Among the characters, besides Adam and Eve, are God the Father, the Archangel Michael, Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebub, the Serpent, and various allegoric personages, such as the Seven Mortal Sins, the World, the Flesh, Famine, Despair, Death. There are also choruses of Seraphim, Cherubim, Angels, Phantoms, and Infernal Spirits. From specimens which have been given, it appears that the play, though absurd enough on the whole to justify the way in which Voltaire speaks of it, is not destitute of vivacity and other merits, and that, if Milton did read it, or see it performed, he may have retained a pretty strong recollection of it.*

The hint that Milton might have been indebted for the first idea of his poem to Andreini opened up one of those literary questions in which ferrets among old books, and critics of more ingenuity than judgment, delight to lose themselves. In various quarters hypotheses were started as to particular authors to whom, in addition to Andreini, Milton might have been indebted for this or that in his Paradise Lost. The notorious William Lauder gave an impulse to the question by his publications, from 1746 to 1755, openly accusing Milton of plagiarism; and, though the controversy, in the form in which Lauder had raised it, ended with the exposure of his forgeries, the so-called "Inquiry into the Origin of Paradise Lost" has continued to occupy to this day critics of a very different stamp from Lauder, and writing in a very different spirit. The result has been that some thirty authors have been cited, as entitled, along with Andreini or apart from him, to the credit of having probably or possibly contributed something to the conception, the plan, or the execution of Milton's great poem. Quite recently, for example, a claim has been advanced for the Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel (1587—1679), one of whose productions—a tragedy called Lucifer, acted at Amsterdam, and published in 1654—describes the rebellion of the Angels, and otherwise goes over much of the ground of Paradise Lost. Milton, it is argued, must have heard of this tragedy before he began his own Epic, and may have known Dutch sufficiently to read it. Then there was the somewhat older Dutch poet, Jacob

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Cats (1577–1660), one of whose poems, describing Adam and Eve in Paradise, might have been known to Milton, even if he could not read Dutch, as it had been translated into Latin by Caspar Barlaeus, and published at Dordrecht in 1643. Nor, if Vondel and Cats remained unknown to Milton, was it possible that he should not be familiar with Adamus Exul, a Latin tragedy by the famous Hugo Grotius, the most learned Dutchman of his age, and whom Milton himself had met in Paris. This poem of Grotius, the work of his youth, had been before the world since 1601. But not from Dutch sources only is Milton supposed to have derived hints. May he not have seen the following Latin works by German authors—the Bellum Angelicum of Frederic Taubmann, of which two books and a fragment appeared in 1604; the Daemonomachia of Odoric Valmarana, published in Vienna in 1627; and the Sarcotis of the Jesuit Jacobus Masenius, three books of which were published at Cologne in 1644? Among possible Italian sources of help, better known or less known than Andreini's Adamo, there have been picked out the following—Antonio Cornozano, Discorso in Versi della Creazione del Mondo sino alla Venuta di Gesù Cristo, 1472; Antonio Alfani, La Battaglia Celeste tra Michele e Lucifero, 1568; Erasmo di Valvasone, Angelada, 1590; Giovanni Soranzo, Dell' Adamo, 1604; Amico Anguifilo, Il Caso di Lucifero; Tasso, Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato, 1607; Gasparo Murtola, Della Creazione del Mondo: Poema Sacro, 1608; Felice Passero, Epamerone; overo, L'Opere de sei Giorni, 1609; Marini, Strage degli Innocenti, 1633, and also his Gerusalemme Distruutta; Troilo Lancetta, La Scena Tragica d'Adamo ed Eva, 1644; Serafino della Salandra, Adamo Caduto: Trag. Sacra, 1647. A Spanish poet has been procured for the list in Alonzo de Azevedo, the author of a Creacion del Mundo, published in 1615; and a similar poem of the Portuguese Camoens, published in the same year, has also been referred to. Finally, reference has been made to the Locustæ of the Englishman Phineas Fletcher (a poem in Latin Hexameters published at Cambridge in 1627), and to certain Poemata Sacra of the Scottish Latinist, Andrew Ramsay, published at Edinburgh in 1633; as well as, more in detail, to Joshua Sylvester's English translation of the Divine Weeks and Works of Du Bartas, originally published
in 1605, and for nearly half a century one of the most popular books in England, and to the Scriptural Paraphrases of the old Anglo-Saxon poet, Cædmon, first made accessible in an edition brought out by Francis Junius in 1655. The claims of Sylvester’s Du Bartas to notice in connexion with Milton were urged most at large by Mr. Dunster in his “Considerations on Milton’s Early Reading and the prima stamina of his Paradise Lost,” published in 1800; and those of Cædmon by Mr. Sharon Turner, in his account of that poet given in his “History of the Anglo-Saxons” in 1807.*

What is to be said of all this? For the most part, it is laborious nonsense. That Milton knew most of the books mentioned, and, indeed, a great many more of the same sort, is extremely likely; that Sylvester’s Du Bartas had been familiar to him from his childhood is quite certain; that recollections of this book and some of the others are to be traced in the Paradise Lost seems distinctly to have been proved; but that in any of the books, or in all of them together, there is to be found “the origin of Paradise Lost,” in any intelligible sense of the phrase, is utterly preposterous. It is quite evident, indeed, that some of the books have been cited less from any knowledge of their contents than from confidence in their titles as casually seen in book-catalogues.†

One conclusion, pertinent to the subject, and which might have

* I have condensed into the smallest space possible this account of writers and writings that have been cited, by one person or another, as having been conceivably of use to Milton in his Paradise Lost. Todd has given an entire chapter of forty pages to the subject (vol. i. pp. 230—270, in the edition of 1852), containing analyses or specimens of the Poems, &c., supposed to have been of most use to Milton, together with references to the critics that had previously treated most minutely the question of Milton’s indebtedness to this or that particular writer. This chapter of Todd is the most complete compilation on the subject, save that it omits the Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel, from the list of Milton’s creditors. The claims of this poet have been urged, in Antwerp and elsewhere, since Todd’s chapter was written.

† A curious instance of this is given by Todd. Among the Italian books cited (by Baretti in his Italian Library) as likely to have been of use to Milton, was “an Epic Poem,” Le Sei Giornate, by Sebastiano Erizzo. The guess, of course, was that the title, Le Sei Giornate, meant the Six Days of Creation. The book, however, when examined, turned out, says Todd, to be neither a poem at all, nor in any way connected with the Six Days of Creation, but only a series of short novels told by six young men.
been suggested by the mere titles of so many books, appears to have been missed. The subject of Paradise Lost, it would seem, if only on the bibliographical evidence so collected, was one of those which already possessed in a marked degree that quality of hereditary and widely-diffused interest which fits subjects for the purposes of great poets. Milton, it may be said, inherited it as a subject with which the imagination of Christendom had long been engaged, and which had been nibbled at again and again by poets in and out of England, though by none managed to its complete capabilities. There are traces in his juvenile poems—as, for example, in his Latin poem In Quintum Novembris—of his very early familiarity, in particular, with some of those conceptions of the personality and agency of Satan, and the physical connexion between Hell and Man's World, which may be said to motive his great epic. Nothing is more certain, however, than that, though thus signalled in the direction of his great subject by early presentiments and experiments, he came to the actual choice of it at last through considerable deliberation.

It was in 1639, just after Milton's return from his Italian tour, in his thirty-first year, that he first bethought himself seriously of some great literary work that should be more commensurate with his powers than any of the pieces he had yet written. To this he was partly moved, as he himself tells us, by the reception which some of those earlier pieces had met with among the Italian scholars and men of letters whose acquaintance he had made while abroad. "Perceiving," he says, "that some trifles "which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or there- "about, met with acceptance above what was looked for, and "other things which I had shifted in scarcity of books and con- "veniences to patch 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 to them, and "divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward "prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and "intent 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 coun-
"try. 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 Ariosto 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 sages 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."*

From this passage, written in 1641, just after the meeting of the Long Parliament, and when Milton was for the first time a London householder on his own account, we learn three things—first, that, from his return from Italy about two years before, he had been full of the idea of some great literary enterprise; secondly, that he had resolved that it should not be in Latin, but in English; and, thirdly, that he did not despair of producing such a work as should be an example of a new kind of nobleness in the national literature of Britain. He does not here tell us that he had gone so far as to determine that the intended work should be an epic poem, and that he had all but fixed on a subject. These facts, however, we learn from his Latin poem to Manso, written at Naples just before his return to England, and from his Epitaphium Damonis, written immediately after his return. Passages in these two pieces distinctly prove that, while in Italy,

* The Reason of Church Government (published 1641), Book II., Intro-
duction.
he had conceived the notion of an English epic poem on the subject of the legendary history of Britain, including the Romance of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and that, for some time at least after his return, this idea still fascinated him.* Gradually, however, the idea had lost its hold; and, by the time when the foregoing passage was written, Milton, though still in the same general state of mind as to some great literary work to be undertaken and carried out, was all at sea again both as to the subject and as to the form. He had become uncertain whether the dramatic form, or some combination of the dramatic and the lyric, might not be fitter for his purpose than the epic, and, relinquishing the subject of Arthur, he had begun to look about for other subjects. All this we learn from the sequel of the passage already quoted. "Time serves not now," he there says, "and perhaps I might seem too profuse, to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, 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 know art and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art; and, 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 Charlemain against the Lombards, if to the instinct of nature and the emboldening 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 whether those Dramatic constitutions 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

* Mansus, lines 78–84; and Epit. Dam., lines 155–178.
"judges; and the Apocalypse of Saint 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 halle-
luiah's and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the
"grave authority of Paræus, commending that Book, is sufficient
"to maintain. 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 argument alone, but in the very critical art of compo-
sition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of Lyric
"poetry to be incomparable."* This whole passage is to be
taken as a literal record of Milton's meditations and hesitations
with himself over his great project, in his house in Aldersgate
Street, in 1641, when the work of the Long Parliament was wax-
ing warmer. He had still some inclination to the epic form, but
wavered between an epic of the ordinary heroic or historic kind
and an epic of some other conceivable kind that Scripture might
suggest; and, if he were to choose the ordinary or historic kind,
there were so many subjects from British history competing in
his mind that he could repeat Tasso's offer to let another person
decide which he should take. But the dramatic and lyrical forms
had also their attractions for him, and in each of these forms
there were possible varieties. Thus, if he resolved to write a
drama, should it be a tragedy of British legend, after the model
of the tragedies of the Greek dramatists, or should it be a
tragedy of a Scriptural kind, with interspersed songs and choral
accompaniments?*

Even had Milton not told us all this so distinctly in one of
his prose-pamphlets, we should have had the means of knowing
most of it. Some of the very papers which he had by him when
he was writing that pamphlet in his house in Aldersgate Street
are still extant in the famous volume of Milton relics in the
library of Trinity College, Cambridge;† and among these is one

† A more detailed account of this Cambridge volume of Milton MSS. will
be given in our Introduction to the Minor Poems.
most interesting record of his literary schemings and hesitations about this time, in the shape of a list, in his own hand, of nearly one hundred subjects which he had jotted down as all suitable for dramatic treatment. He had jotted these down, apparently, from day to day, as they struck him in the course of his readings, with the intention of estimating their relative degrees of merit, and at last fixing on the one, or the one or two, that should seem best. Sixty of the subjects are Scriptural, fifty-two being from the Old Testament, and eight from the New. Among the Old Testament subjects for tragedies are two from the history of Abraham, and others at various points of interest from the Flood downwards through the history of the Patriarchs, the Hebrew Judges, and the Kings both of Judah and Israel—in fact, from Genesis to the Books of Kings and Chronicles. The subjects from the New Testament include one relating to John the Baptist and several from the life of Christ. Most of the subjects in both sets are merely jotted down in the form of titles; but in other cases there is a brief sketch of the probable plot of the drama, with a list of the probable persons. Following the Scriptural subjects, in a separate list headed “British Trag.,” is a series of thirty-three subjects for tragedies from British history, from the end of the period of the Roman occupation, on through the times of the Saxon Heptarchy and as far as the Norman Conquest; and added to these is a distinct list of five subjects from Scottish history, with the heading “Scotch Stories, or rather British of the north parts.” It is worthy of remark that among the British subjects there is no mention of Arthur—the favourite heroes being rather Vortigern, Edwin of Northumbria, Edward the Confessor, and Harold. Among the Scottish subjects Milton was bold enough, though Shakespeare had preceded him, to set down that of Macbeth.

This most interesting list of subjects, still extant in Milton’s own hand, and written by him, as may be proved, between 1640 and 1642 inclusively, corroborates in a singular manner his account published in his prose-pamphlet at that time of what his mind “at home in the spacious circuits of her musing” had then liberty to propose to herself. But it does more than this. It shows a stronger determination to the dramatic form than we
should have inferred from the passage in the pamphlet. All the subjects in the long list are subjects for "Tragedies;" and, if Milton still contemplated an epic as an alternative, the fact is not here noted. But, further, though the list, by the multitudinousness and variety of its subjects, confirms the account which Milton gives of his uncertainty in this matter, it furnishes evidence at the same time that he was, consciously or unconsciously, tending towards one particular subject. Among the Scriptural subjects most fully sketched out, and which, it may be assumed therefore, attracted Milton most as they occurred to him, are these seven—Abram from Morea, or Isaac Redeemed, Sodom, Dinah, Moabitides or Phineas (Numbers xxv.), Abias Thersceus (the Sickness of Abijah, i Kings xiv.), Baptistes, and Christus Patiens (the Agony in the Garden). But there is one subject which predominates in the list over all these. This is PARADISE LOST, expressly set down under that now familiar title, and figuring in the list as no other subject is permitted to figure. For, in the first place, it is at the head of the total list of subjects—as if, when Milton began to look about for possible subjects, this was the very first that flashed upon his thoughts. But, in the second place, once the subject had been thought of, it evidently held its place in Milton's estimation more than any of the others. There are no fewer than four separate drafts of this one subject as meditated for dramatic treatment. The first Draft consists merely of a list of *dramatis persona*, as follows:

"The Persons:—Michael; Heavenly Love; Chorus of Angels; Lucifer; Adam, Eve, with the Serpent; Conscience; Death; Labour, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, with others, Mutes; Faith; Hope; Charity."

This Draft having been cancelled, another is written parallel with it, as follows:

"The Persons:—Moses" [originally written "Michael or Moses," but the words "Michael or" deleted, so as to leave "Moses" as preferable for the drama]; Justice, Mercy, Wisdom; Heavenly Love; the Evening Star, Hesperus; Lucifer; Adam; Eve; Conscience; Labour, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death, [as] Mutes; Faith; Hope; Charity."

This having also been scored out, there follows a third Draft, more complete, as follows:
"PARADISE LOST:—The Persons: Moses προλογισθείς, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not because of his [being] with God in the mount; declares the like of Enoech and Elias, besides the purity of the place—that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds, preserve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the sight of God; tells them they cannot see Adam in the state of innocence by reason of their sin.—[Act I.]: Justice, Mercy, Wisdom, debating what should become of Man if he fall. Chorus of Angels sing a hymn of the Creation.—Act II.: Heavenly Love; Evening Star. Chorus sing the marriage-song and describe Paradise.—Act III.: Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin. Chorus fears for Adam and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.—Act IV.: Adam, Eve, fallen; Conscience cites them to God's examination. Chorus bewails and tells the good Adam hath lost.—Act V.: Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise, presented by an Angel with 'Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, Pestilence, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, Fear, [as] Mutes—to whom he gives their names—likewise Winter, Heat, Tempest, &c.; Death entered into the world; Faith, Hope, Charity, comfort and instruct him. Chorus briefly concludes."

This is left standing; but in another part of the MS., as if written after some interval of time, is a fourth Draft, as follows:

"ADAM UNPARADIZED:—The Angel Gabriel, either descending or entering showing, since the globe is created, his frequency as much on Earth as in Heaven—describes Paradise. Next the Chorus, showing the reason of his coming—to keep his watch, after Lucifer's rebellion, by the command of God—and withal expressing his desire to see and know more concerning this excellent and new creature, Man. The Angel Gabriel, as by his name signifying a Prince of Power, passes by the station of the Chorus, and, desired by them, relates what he knew of Man—as the creation of Eve, with their love and marriage.——After this, Lucifer appears, after his overthrow; bemoans himself; seeks revenge upon Man. The Chorus prepares resistance at his first approach. At last, after discourse of enmity on either side, he departs; whereat the Chorus sing of the battle and victory in Heaven against him and his accomplices, as before, after the first Act, was sung a hymn of the Creation.——Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and consulting on what he had done to the destruction of Man. Man next and Eve, having been by this time seduced by the Serpent, appear confusedly, covered with leaves. Conscience, in a shape, accuses him; Justice cites him to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the meantime the Chorus entertains the stage, and is informed by some Angel of the manner of the Fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall.——Adam and Eve return and accuse one another; but especially Adam lays the blame to his wife; is stubborn in his offence. Justice appears, reasons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admonishes Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence.—The Angel is sent to banish them out of Paradise; but, before, causes to pass before his eyes, in shapes, a masque of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, despair. At last appears Mercy; comforts him, promises him the Messiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, Charity; instructs
"him. He repents, gives God the glory, submits to his penalty. The Chorus
briefly concludes.———Compare this with the former Draft."*

These schemes of a possible drama on the subject of Paradise Lost were written out by Milton, we repeat, as early as between 1639 and 1642, or between his thirty-first and his thirty-fourth year. They are part, we repeat, of a list of about a hundred subjects which then occurred to him in the course of his reading as worth considering for the great English Poem which he hoped to give to the world. From the place and the proportion of space which they occupy in the list it is apparent that the subject of Paradise Lost had then fascinated him more strongly than any of the others, and that, if his notion of an epic on Arthur was given up, a drama on Paradise Lost was looming before him as the most likely substitute. It is also more than probable that he then knew of previous dramas that had been written on the subject, and that, in writing out his own schemes, he had the schemes of some of these dramas in his mind. Vondel's play was not then in existence; but Andreini's was. Farther, there is evidence that, if Milton did fix on the subject he had so particularly been meditating, he was likely enough to make himself acquainted with any previous efforts on the same subject, and to turn them to account for whatever they might be worth. Thus, in that pamphlet of his, already quoted, in which we have seen him taking the public so frankly into his confidence in respect of his great literary design, he goes on to say that, though his interest in the great political controversies of the time compelled him to postpone the execution of his design, yet it should not be abandoned. Although a sense of duty had compelled him to "leave a calm and pleasing solitari-
eness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a
"troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes," he looked forward to a better time when he might resume his vocation as a poet. "Neither do I think it shame," he continues, "to covenant with

* Facsimiles of these four Drafts are given in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings (Plates IV. and VII.). They are very interesting, as showing Milton in the act of jotting down his scheme in its different stages—erasing the first Drafts as he proceeds to the others, and inserting afterthoughts and amplifications in these. I have done my best to print and point the drafts so as to bring out Milton's exact intention in each. The long dashes in the Fourth Draft indicate the division into Acts, as intended by Milton—each Act, it will be observed, ending with a Chorus.
"any 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 amorist, or the trencher-fury of a riming parasite, "nor to be obtained by the invocation 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 Seraphim 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—till which in some measure "be compassed, at mine 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."*

Yet another fact of interest. When Milton thus announced to the public his design of some great English poem, to be accomplished at leisure, and when he was privately considering with himself whether a tragedy on the subject of Paradise Lost might not best fulfil the conditions of such a design, he had actually gone so far as to write not only the foregoing drafts of the tragedy, but even some lines by way of opening. Our authority is his nephew, Edward Phillips. Speaking of Paradise Lost, and of the author’s original intention that it should be a tragedy, Phillips tells us, “In the Fourth Book of the Poem there are six [ten?] “verses, which, several years before the Poem was begun, were “shown to me, and some others, as designed for the very be- “ginnning of the said tragedy.”† The verses referred to by Phillips are those (P. L. IV. 32—41) that now form part of Satan’s speech on first standing on the Earth, and beholding, among the other glories of the newly-created World, the Sun in his full splendour in the heavens:

“O thou, that, with surpassing glory crowned,
Look’st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new World—at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished 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 above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven’s matchless King!" *

Phillips’s words “several years before the Poem was begun” would not, by themselves, fix the date at which he had seen these lines. But in Aubrey’s earlier Memoir of Milton (1680), containing information which Aubrey had derived from Phillips, this passage occurs, “In the 4th booke of Paradise Lost there are about 6 verses of Satan’s exclamation to the Sun w^th Mr. E. Phi. " remembers about 15 or 16 yeares before ever his Poem was “thought of; w^th verses were intended for the beginning of a “tragœdie, w^th he had design’d, but was diverted from it by other “besinesse.” Here we have indirectly Phillips’s own authority that he had read the verses in question at a date which we shall presently see reason to fix at 1642. He was then a pupil of his uncle, and living with him in his house in Aldersgate Street.

Alas! it was not “for some few years” only, as Milton had thought in 1641, that the execution of the great work then so solemnly promised had to be postponed. For a longer time than he had expected England remained in a condition in which he did not think it right, even had it been possible, that men like him should be writing poems. Only towards the end of Cromwell’s Protectorate, when Milton had reached his fiftieth year, and had been for five or six years totally blind, does he seem to have been in circumstances to resume effectually the design to which he had pledged himself. By that time, however, there was no longer any doubt as to the theme he would choose. All the other themes once entertained had faded more or less into the background of memory, and PARADISE LOST stood out, bold, clear, and without competitor. Nay more, the dramatic form, for which, when the subject first occurred to him, Milton had felt a preference, had been now abandoned, and it had been resolved that the poem should be an epic. He began this epic in earnest almost

* Phillips, in quoting the lines, substitutes “glorious” for “matchless,” in the last line.
certainly before Cromwell was dead—"about 2 yeares before the
K[ing] came in," says Aubrey on Phillips's authority; that is, in
1658, when, notwithstanding his blindness, he was still in official
attendance on Cromwell at Whitehall as his Latin Secretary.

Phillips's own statement, in his Memoir of his uncle, agrees with
Aubrey's. He distinctly says that it was while Milton was living
in the house in Petty France, Westminster, which he occupied
from 1652 to within a few weeks of the Restoration—"a pretty
"garden-house," Phillips calls it, "next door to the Lord Scuda-
"more's, and opening into St. James's Park"—that "the heighth
"of his noble fancy and invention began to be seriously and mainly
"employed " on Paradise Lost. So distinct a recollection of the
poem in association with the house almost implies that it had
been begun a year or two before that house was left, or while
Cromwell was still alive and occasionally seeing Milton.*

* The house, so rendered illustrious by Milton's residence, and by the com-
 mencement of Paradise Lost within it, still exists, in part at least. It is No. 19,
York Street, Westminster—the old name of Petty France having been changed
to York Street, in consequence of the fact that John Sharp, Archbishop
of York, had his town house here about the year 1708. Jeremy Bentham
owned the house, and lived and died in an adjacent one; and William Hazlitt
rented the house (from Bentham?) and lived in it from 1811 onwards. On the
parapet, near the back attic-window, is a stone tablet, set up by Bentham, with
the inscription, "SACRED TO MILTON, PRINCE OF POETS." The garden at
the back, once belonging to the house, was encroached upon by Bentham, and
added to his own, so that only a narrow piece of it now remains. Some farther
proposed alterations by Bentham, with a view to apply the ground to the pur-
poses of a "Chrestomathic School," roused Hazlitt's indignation. The present
back of the house is the old part; and the windows there, when Milton lived in
the house, looked, it seems, right upon St. James's Park—into which there was
probably a direct entry from the garden.—So much I had learnt from Mr.
Peter Cunningham's "Handbook of London," (Art. York Street, Westminster),
and Hazlitt's Spirit of the Age (edit. 1825, pp. 5, 6); but, lest readers out of
London should derive thence too handsome an idea of the house at present and
its surroundings, I may add the impressions made by a visit of my own on the
afternoon of December 27, 1866. It was a dull, darkish afternoon, and, on
my making my way from Birdcage Walk, through Queen's Square, into York
Street, the street seemed so mean, poor, and dingy, that it required an effort
of fancy, or at least a recollection of the rapidity with which London streets
degenerate, to persuade me that, fifty years ago, a man like Hazlitt could have
had his residence here. Much more was it difficult to convert in imagination
this slum of the present Westminster, at the back of Wellington Barracks, into
the Petty France of two centuries ago, where Milton, when Latin Secretary to
The uncertain state of affairs after Cromwell's death, or, at all events, after the resignation of his son Richard, whom Milton Cromwell, had his "pretty garden-house," and had Lord Scudamore for his next-door neighbour. With some difficulty, owing to imperfections of numbering, I made out No. 19, some way up the street on the right hand as you go from Queen's Square. The house looked narrow and uninviting, and the frontage to the street might have been a construction of the end of the last century or thereabouts. There was a ticket up intimating that the lower part, consisting of a shop and back-room, was to be let; and these premises were accordingly vacant, and, I think, boarded up. But, besides the shop door, there was a small private door from the pavement, with two minute black bell-handles. The next house on the left had been partly taken down, leaving a kind of gap, serving for the stowage of timber; on the right was a small cook-shop. Inquiring at this cook-shop, I was told I was quite right—the house to the left was No. 19, and Milton's; and, if I pulled one of the bells, I might see the landlady, who could tell me more. I pulled the upper bell; but, no one answering, I pushed the door open, and, advancing along a narrow passage, groped my way in utter darkness up a winding stair, which brought with it at once a conviction of an antiquity greater than that of the street-frontage. Though I saw faint gleams of one or two openings like doors, on my way, I did not stop till I reached the back-attic, where I heard voices. The door was partly open, and I had but a slight glimpse of the quaint interior, when a girl, in some consternation, but with a perception of the nature of my errand when I explained it, referred me to one of the doors lower down for the landlady's room. Groping back to this door, I found the landlady in what was evidently the principal room of the house—a room of respectable size, and doubtless once Milton's chief sitting-room. The landlady explained to me that the different rooms of the house were now let out to separate lodgers, and that she found it more difficult to let the back rooms than those to the front. She knew about Milton, and would have it that he composed generally in the back-attic. From the window of her own room I looked into the back-yard, and saw the wall, built by Bentham, which cut off what had once been the main part of Milton's garden. Just beyond the wall I saw the top of a small conical green-leaved tree, which the landlady duly chronicled as the cotton-tree planted by Milton. Having heard of a cotton-tree, or two cotton-trees, as existing here in Hazlitt's time, I expected something larger of the tree kind than what I now saw. Beyond the tree and the wall I could not see St. James's Park, but only the intervening buildings belonging, I think, to the barracks. After I had looked about the room a little, I descended, with the landlady as my guide, to the back-yard. It was a narrow stone-flagged space, with a water-butt and suchlike in it—so narrow that it was only by leaning back against the wall and looking upwards that I could descry Bentham's inscription to Milton, or rather the place of it, on a ledge from the back-attic. The appearance of the house at the back was better than in front—that of a narrow, old, three-storied, red brick house.—I have been the more particular in this description because this house, No. 19, York Street, Westminster, is, as I believe, the last of Milton's many
also served as Latin Secretary, may have interfered with the progress of the poem; and, when the Restoration came, there was danger for a time that not only the poem but the author's life might be cut short. That danger over, he was at liberty, "on evil days though fallen, and evil tongues," to prosecute his labour in obscurity and comparative peace. He had finished it, according to Aubrey, "about 3 years after the K's restauracion," i.e. about 1663. If so, he had been five or six years in all engaged on the poem, and the places in which he had successively pursued the task of meditating and dictating it had been mainly these —first, Petty France, Westminster, as aforesaid, till within a few weeks of the Restoration; next, some friend's house in Bartholomew Close, West Smithfield, where he lay concealed for a while after the Restoration; then, a house in Holborn, near Red Lion Fields, whither he removed as soon as it was safe for him to do so; and, finally, from 1661 onwards, in Jewin Street, close to that part of Aldersgate Street where he had had his house some eighteen or nineteen years before, when *Paradise Lost* first occurred to his thoughts. During the five or six years occupied in the composition of the poem in these places, it may also be mentioned, Milton's condition had been that of a widower. His first wife had died in 1652 or 1653, in the house in Petty France, leaving him three daughters; his second wife, whom he had married in November, 1656, while residing in the same house, had survived the marriage little more than a year; and his marriage with his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, did not take place till February, 1662-63, when, if Aubrey's account is correct, the poem was finished, or nearly so. It is probable, however, that, though Milton may have had the poem nearly complete in Jewin Street, before his third marriage, there may have still been a good deal to do with the manuscript in the house in "Artillery Walk, leading to Bunhill Fields," to which he and his third wife

London residences now extant, and it too is likely soon to go the way of all the others. It is certainly not the least interesting of the residences. Here it was that Milton lived when he knew and served Cromwell. Here he was first totally blind. Here his first wife died, and here the three young girls she left grew up, going from room to room in more than natural awe of their blind father. Here the second wife passed with Milton the brief period of their married life. Here, finally, it was that *Paradise Lost* was begun.
removed shortly after their marriage (in 1663 or 1664), and which was the last of Milton's many London residences, and that in which he died.* We have an interesting glimpse of the manuscript, at any rate, as in Milton's possession in a satisfactory state, during the summer of 1665. As the Great Plague was then raging in London, and as the neighbourhood of Bunhill Fields was especially terrible, owing to the existence there of a public pit, or burial-ground, into which the dead were thrown indiscriminately,† Milton had removed from his house in Artillery Walk to a cottage at Chalfont-St.-Giles, in Buckinghamshire, which had been taken for him, at his request, by Thomas Ellwood, a young Quaker, whose acquaintance with him had begun a year or two before in Jewin Street. Visiting Milton at Chalfont as soon as circumstances would permit, Ellwood was received in a manner of which he has left an account in his Autobiography. "After some

* Phillips's Memoir of Milton, 1694. Respecting the site of this house, there is an interesting note by Mr. Thomas Watts, of the British Museum, quoted in the addenda to Mr. Mitford's Life of Milton, prefixed to Pickering's edition of Milton's works. Owing to the absence of the name "Artillery Walk" from the elaborate map of London published by Ogilby in 1677, within three years after Milton's death, it is difficult to decide the site; but Mr. Watts concludes that Milton's house was in that part of the present Bunhill Row which is now occupied by "the row of houses to the left of the passenger who turns northward from Chiswell Street towards St. Luke's Hospital and Peerless Pool." Many of the present houses there, he adds, are well built, and some are old, though none can be safely assigned to the time of Milton. The row of houses figures in Ogilby's map as Bunhill simply; and opposite to it, where there is now another row of houses, was once merely one of the walls of the London Artillery ground, built about the time of the Restoration. The row might thus be popularly known as Artillery Walk; and it still leads, if not to Bunhill Fields, at least to Bunhill Fields Burying-ground, where Bunyan and Defoe are buried. Mr. Watts's conclusion, we may add, is confirmed by Aubrey's words. "He [Milton]," says Aubrey, "died in Bunhill, opposite to the Artillery-ground wall." Aubrey had been in the house both before Milton's death and after.

† This "pest-field," described vividly by Defoe in his History of the Plague of London, was the actual beginning of the Bunhill Fields Burying-ground, mentioned in the previous note as Defoe's own place of interment, and used so long as a place of interment by all Dissenters who objected to the English Burial Service. See Cunningham's Handbook of London, Art. Bunhill-Fields Burying-Ground. Milton, when he removed to Artillery Walk, had not anticipated such a ghastly use of the neighbouring ground within so short a time.
common discourses," he says, "had passed between us, he called " for a manuscript of his; which, being brought, he delivered to " me, bidding me take it home with me and read it at my leisure, " and, when I had so done, return it to him with my judgment " thereupon. When I came home, and had set myself to read it, I " found it was that excellent poem which he entituled Paradise " Lost."* The anecdote proves the existence of at least one, and most probably of more than one, complete copy (for the author would hardly lend his only copy), in the autumn of 1665—which may, accordingly, be taken as the date when the poem was considered ready for press. The delay of publication till two years after that date is easily accounted for. It was not, says Ellwood, till "the " sickness was over, and the city well cleansed, and become safely " habitable again," that Milton returned to his house in Artillery Walk. Then, still farther paralysing business of all sorts, came the Great Fire of September, 1666; and there were difficulties, as we have seen, about the licensing of a poem by a person of Milton's political antecedents.

Whether the time spent by Milton in the composition of Paradise Lost was five years (1658—1663), or seven or eight years (1658—1665), it is certain that he bestowed on the work all that care and labour which, on his first contemplation of such a work in his earlier manhood, he had declared would be necessary. The "industrious and select reading," which he had then spoken of as one of the many requisites, had not been omitted. Whatever else Paradise Lost may be, it is certainly one of the most learned poems in the world. In thinking of it in this character, we are to remember, first of all, that, ere complete blindness had befallen him (1652 or 1653), Milton's mind was stored with an amount of various and exact learning such as few other men of his age possessed; so that, had he ceased then to acquire more, he would still have carried in his memory an enormous resource of material out of which to build up the body of his poem. His memory must have been always very retentive, and it is probable that his blindness increased its powers. But he did not, after his blindness, cease to add to

* Life of Thomas Ellwood (originally published 1714): Reprint of 1855, p. 165
his knowledge by reading. At the very time when he was engaged on his *Paradise Lost*, he had several other great undertakings in progress, for which daily reading and research were necessary, even if they could have been dispensed with for the poem. He was engaged on the construction of a Body of Divinity from the Scriptures, on the completion of a History of Britain, and on the collection of materials for a new Thesaurus, or Dictionary, of the Latin tongue. For works like these, as will be evident from their very nature, daily readings and researches were indispensable. It would not be difficult to prove, however, that among the labours undertaken specially for the purposes of *Paradise Lost* while it was in progress must have been readings in certain books of geography and Eastern travel, and in certain Rabbinical, early Christian, and mediaeval commentators on the subjects of Paradise, the Angels, and the Fall. Nothing is more striking in the poem, nothing more touching, than the frequency, and, on the whole, wonderful accuracy, of its references to maps. Now, what ever wealth of geographical information Milton may have carried with him into his blindness, there are evidences, I think, that he must have refreshed his recollections of this kind after his sight was gone. There are evidences in the poem itself; and, if external evidence were needed, it might be found in one of his letters to his foreign friend, Peter Heimbach, dated Nov. 8, 1656. Here he thanks Heimbach for sending him information which he had desired as to the price of a great Atlas, requests further information as to the size of the work, and the comparative accuracy of two editions of it, and jests rather mournfully on the apparent absurdity of a blind man being so anxious to obtain a set of maps, and willing to give so much for them.* In another letter, also to a foreign friend (March 24, 1656-57), there are inquiries about copies of some of the Byzantine historians, which he wants for his library.† In short, for *Paradise Lost*, as well as for the prose labours carried on along with it, there must have been abundance of reading; and, remembering to what a stock of prior learning, possessed before his blindness; all such increments were added, we need have no wonder at the appearance now presented by

* Epistola Familiares, printed 1674.
† Epist. Fam. "Emerico Bigotio."
the poem. To say merely that it is a most learned poem—the poem of a mind full of miscellaneous lore wherewith its grand imagination might work—is not enough. Original as it is, original in its entire conception, and in every portion and passage, the poem is yet full of flakes—we can express it no otherwise—full of flakes from all that is greatest in preceding literature, ancient or modern. This is what all the commentators have observed, and what their labours in collecting parallel passages from other poets and prose-writers have served more and more to illustrate. Trivial as have been the results of these labours in many cases—certain as it is that often, where a parallelism has been produced by Hume, Newton, Todd, or others, Milton can have had no thought of it—it is yet true that he must often have knowingly recalled a passage or passages of previous authorship, and fused them into his own language. In the first place, Paradise Lost is permeated from beginning to end with citations from the Bible. Milton must have had the Bible almost by heart. Not only are some passages of his poem, where he is keeping close to the Bible as his authority, intentional coagulations of dispersed Scriptural texts; but it is possible again and again, throughout the rest, to detect the flash, through his noblest language, of some suggestion from the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, or the Apocalypse. So, though in a less degree, with Homer, the Greek tragedians (Euripides was a special favourite of his), Plato, Demosthenes, and the Greek classics generally. So with Lucretius, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, and the other Latins. So with the Italian writers whom he knew so well—Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, and others now less remembered. So with modern Latinists of various European countries, still less recoverable. Finally, so with the whole series of preceding English poets—particularly Spenser, Shakespeare, and some of the minor Spenserians of the reigns of James and Charles I., not forgetting that uncouth popular favourite of his boyhood, Sylvester's Du Bartas. In connexion with all which, or with any particularly striking instance of the use by Milton of a thought or a phrase from previous authors, let the reader remember his own definition of Plagiarism, given in his Eἰκονοκλάστης. "Such kind of borrowing as this," he there says, "if it be not bettered by the borrower,
among good authors is accounted plagiarism." And again, of quotations from the Bible,—"It is not hard for any man who hath a "Bible in his hands to borrow good words and holy sayings in "abundance; but to make them his own is a work of grace only "from above."

But how was Milton able to obtain his "borrowings," which he had such grace to make his own? How, in his blind condition, was he able to make, from day to day, those new researches—to read or reconsult those various books, and to refer to those maps—which were necessary, as we have seen, to the progress of his Paradise Lost, as well as of the other labours and studies which he carried on at the same time? This question will be best answered by producing the most authentic accounts we have of Milton's habits and methods of study, and his household ways generally, in the later period of his life, after he had been for a good many years totally blind.

Aubrey's account:—"He was an early riser, sc. at 4 o'clock "mane; yea, after he lost his sight. He had a man read to him. "The first thing that he read was the Hebrew Bible, and that "was at 4h. mane ½h. [from four o'clock to half-past four?] : "then he contemplated. At 7 his man came to him again, and "then read to him and wrote till dinner [till about 12 o'clock?] "The writing was as much as the reading. His 2nd [3rd] daughter, "Deborah, could read to him Latin, Ital., and French, and "Greek. . . . After dinner he used to walk three or four hours at "a time (he always had a garden where he lived); went to bed "about 9. Temperate; rarely drank between meals. Extreme "pleasant in his conversation, and at dinner, supper, &c.; but "satirical. . . . He had an organ in his house; he played on "that most. His exercise was chiefly walking. . . . His familiar "learned acquaintances were Mr. Andrew Marvel, Mr. Skinner, "Dr. Paget, M.D." *

Phillips's account:—"He was frequently visited [in his house in Petty France] by persons of quality, particularly my lady

* Aubrey's Lives, published 1813, from the MS. notes in the Bodleian. These notes were written about 1680, and sent to Anthony Wood at Oxford. Aubrey had known Milton personally, and collected particulars about him from his widow, his nephew Edward Phillips, his brother Christopher Milton, and other persons.
Introduction:

"Ranelagh, whose son for some time he instructed; all learned foreigners of note, who could not pass out of the city without giving a visit to a person so eminent; and, lastly, by particular friends that had a high esteem for him—viz. Mr. Andrew Marvel; young Lawrence (the son of him that was president of Oliver's council), to whom there is a sonnet among the rest in his printed poems; Mr. Marchamont Needham, the writer of Politicus; but, above all, Mr. Cyriack Skinner, whom he honoured with two sonnets. . . . Those [daughters] he had by his first [wife], he made serviceable to him in that very particular in which he most wanted their service, and supplied his want of eyesight by their eyes and tongue; for, though he had daily about him one or other to read to him—some, persons of man's estate, who of their own accord greedily caught at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him as oblige him by the benefit of their reading; others, of younger years, sent by their parents to the same end—yet, excusing only the eldest daughter by reason of her bodily infirmity and difficult utterance of speech (which, to say truth, I doubt, was the principal cause of excusing her), the other two were condemned to the performance of reading and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of whatever book he should at one time or other think fit to peruse—viz. the Hebrew (and, I think, the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which sorts of books to be confined to read without understanding one word must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance; yet it was endured by both for a time. . . . There [in Jewin-street] he lived when he married his third wife, recommended to him by his old friend, Dr. Paget in Coleman Street." *

The Quaker Ellwood's Recollection of his First Acquaintance with Milton in 1662:—"I mentioned before that, when I was a boy, I had made some progress in learning, and lost it all again before I came to be a man; nor was I rightly sensible of my loss therein till I came amongst the Quakers. But then I both saw my loss and lamented it, and applied myself with

"utmost diligence, at all leisure times, to recover it; so false "I found that charge to be which in those times was cast as a "reproach upon the Quakers, that they despised and denied all "human learning. . . . But, though I toiled hard, and spared no "pains to regain what once I had been master of, yet I found it "a matter of so great difficulty that I was ready to say, as the "noble eunuch to Philip in another case, 'How can I, unless "I had some man to guide me?' This I had formerly com-
"plained of to my especial friend Isaac Pennington, but now "more earnestly; which put him upon considering, and con-
"triving a means for my assistance. He had an intimate "acquaintance with Dr. Paget, a physician of note in London, "and he with John Milton, a gentleman of great note for learning "throughout the learned world, for the accurate pieces he had "written on various subjects and occasions. This person, having "filled a public station in the former times, lived now a private "and retired life in London; and, having wholly lost his sight, "kept always a man to read to him—usually the son of some "gentleman of his acquaintance, whom, in kindness, he took to "improve in his learning. Thus, by the mediation of my friend "Isaac Pennington with Dr. Paget, and of Dr. Paget with John "Milton, was I admitted to come to him—not as a servant of his "(which at that time he needed not), nor to be in the house with "him, but only to have the liberty of coming to his house at "certain hours when I could, and to read to him what books he "should appoint me; which was all the favour I desired. But, "this being a matter which would require some time to bring "it about, I, in the mean time, returned to my father's house in "Oxfordshire. . . . Understanding that the mediation used for "my admittance to John Milton had succeeded so well that "I might come when I could, I hastened to London, and in the "first place went to wait upon him. He received me courteously, "as well for the sake of Dr. Paget, who introduced me, as of "Isaac Pennington, who recommended me; to both of whom "he bore a good respect. And, having inquired divers things "of me with respect to my former progression in learning, he "dismissed me, to provide myself of such accommodation as might "be most suitable to my future studies. I went, therefore, and
"took myself a lodging as near his house, which was then in " Jewin Street, as conveniently I could; and from thenceforward " went every day in the forenoon, except on the first days of the " week, and, sitting by him in his dining-room, read to him in " such books in the Latin tongue as he pleased to hear me read. " At my first sitting to read to him, observing that I used the " English pronunciation, he told me, if I would have the benefit " of the Latin tongue, not only to read and understand Latin " authors, but to converse with foreigners either abroad or " at home, I must learn the foreign pronunciation. To this I " consenting, he instructed me how to sound the vowels. . . . " But this change of pronunciation proved a new difficulty to " me. . . . He, on the other hand, perceiving with what earnest " desire I pursued learning, gave me not only all the encourage- " ment, but all the help, he could. For, having a curious ear, " he understood by my tone when I understood what I read, " and when I did not; and accordingly would stop me, ex- " amine me, and open the most difficult passages to me. Thus " went I on for about six weeks’ time, reading to him in the " afternoons." *

Bishop Newton’s account: — "In his way of living he was an " example of sobriety and temperance. He was very sparing in " the use of wine or strong liquors of any kind. . . . He was " likewise very abstemious in his diet, not fastidiously nice or " delicate in his choice of dishes, but content with anything that " was most in season, or easiest to be procured; eating and drink- " ing (according to the distinction of the philosopher) that he " might live, and not living that he might eat or drink. So that " probably his gout descended by inheritance from one or other " of his parents; or, if it was of his own acquiring, it must " have been owing to his studious and sedentary life. . . . In his " youth he was accustomed to sit up late at his studies, and " seldom went to bed before midnight; but afterwards, finding it " to be the ruin of his eyes, and looking upon this custom as very " pernicious to health at any time, he used to go to rest early, " seldom later than nine, and would be stirring in the summer at

* Life of Thomas Ellwood, Reprint of 1855, pp. 109—113. Ellwood was about twenty-two years of age at the time to which the extract refers.
“four, and in the winter at five, in the morning! but, if he was not disposed to rise at his usual hours, he still did not lie sleeping, but had somebody or other by his bedside to read to him. At his first rising he had usually a chapter read to him out of the Hebrew Bible, and he commonly studied all the morning till twelve; then used some exercise for an hour, afterwards dined, and after dinner played on the organ, and either sung himself or made his wife [the third] sing, who, he said, had a good voice, but no ear; and then he went up to study again till six, when his friends came to visit him and sat with him perhaps till eight; then he went down to supper, which was usually olives or some light thing; and after supper he smoked his pipe and drank a glass of water, and went to bed.”*

The substance of this information may be thus summed up:—Milton, in his time of total blindness, was as laborious and systematic a student as he had been before, and had his day as regularly distributed into portions for different kinds of work and relaxation. In his readings and literary researches he availed himself of every variety of assistance. In the first place, among the learned friends of some social standing who were in the habit of dropping in upon him, there were, doubtless, some upon whom he might depend for an occasional hour’s help, or ask, during a call, to take down a volume for him from his book-shelves. There must have been not a few such friends, but we hear particularly of these five—Dr. Paget of Coleman Street; Andrew Marvel, M.P. for Hull after the Restoration, when he was forty years of age; Marchmont Needham, the political writer, of about the same age as Marvel; “young Laurence,” the son of that better-known Henry Laurence, who had been one of Cromwell’s most faithful adherents, and was President of his Council from 1654 to 1657; and Cyriack Skinner, “an ingenious young gentleman” of good family, who had formerly been Milton’s pupil, and who, in 1659, was a member, and sometimes chairman, of Harrington’s Republican club, called The Rota.* To this list may perhaps be added

* Newton’s Life of Milton, prefixed to his edition of Milton’s Poetical Works, edit. 1741, pp. lxvi. lxvii. Newton’s account of Milton’s habits is evidently in part derived from Aubrey and Phillips, but, as it includes one or two interesting particulars which he had picked up elsewhere, I have added it.

† Wood’s Athenæ, by Bliss, iii. 1119.
the Samuel Barrow, M.D., who wrote the Latin Commendatory Verses prefixed, along with Marvel's English ones, to the second Edition of Paradise Lost. But, whatever occasional help Milton may have received from such friends, it is clear that he had regular help of an independent kind. "He had daily about him," Phillips tells us, "one or other to read to him;" and Phillips farther explains this by adding that there were "persons of man's estate" who "greedily caught at the opportunity" of being allowed to read to Milton, accounting it a benefit to themselves, and that in other cases parents were eager to obtain the benefit for their sons. That there was even a competition for the honour appears from Ellwood's account of the manner in which he came to share in it. The young Quaker was, doubtless, only one of many volunteers who were at Milton's service and whom he used by turns. That he had, however, some one paid attendant always or generally about him, would be likely from the very nature of the case, even did Aubrey not speak of "his man" who read to him in the mornings. Add to all this the help he could command from the members of his own household. From the time when Paradise Lost was commenced till the time when it was finished, and for some years longer, Milton had his three daughters under the same roof with himself; and Phillips, their cousin, speaks almost with pity of the dreadful drill to which two of these girls were subjected. The eldest escaped only because she was an invalid and had a defect in her speech—she was lame and somewhat deformed, as we learn elsewhere; but the other two had been trained to read aloud books in at least six languages, without themselves understanding a word of what they read. They may have had some relief, as far as English books were concerned, though not in the way most agreeable to them, when Milton (Feb. 1662-63) married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, who, at the time of her marriage with Milton, was not more than twenty-five years of age, or about seven years older than her eldest step-daughter. There is evidence that this wife was extremely attentive to Milton and quite capable of reading to him in English. Lastly, both before and after this marriage, Milton had valuable literary help in the visits, whenever they were possible, of his nephew Edward Phillips, whom he had himself brought up and grounded
in his boyhood in all kinds of scholarship according to a system of his own. Phillips had since then been at Oxford, and, after leaving Oxford, had settled in London as what we should now call a hack-author—editing the Poems of Drummond of Hawthornden (1656), translating romances from the Spanish (1656), compiling a new Dictionary of English words (1657), and latterly continuing Sir Richard Baker's popular Chronicle of English History (1659). In every respect Phillips, whose age was about eight-and-twenty at the date of the last publication, was the very man to be of use to his uncle in literary researches; and, during the whole time of the composition of Paradise Lost, he was in the habit of seeing his uncle at short intervals—at all events, till Oct. 1663, when he went to be tutor to one of the sons of John Evelyn, and may thus have been less within reach. There was another nephew of Milton's—John Phillips, the brother of Edward, and about a year younger—whom we should have expected to find in similar relations to his uncle about this period. This younger nephew had also been brought up and educated in his boyhood by Milton, and he had been even more closely associated than his elder brother with some parts of Milton's career. Thus, in 1652, when the elder nephew was at Oxford, it was this younger nephew, then apparently still with his uncle in London, that wrote and published—doubtless under his uncle's superintendence—a Latin reply to an anonymous attack that had been made on his uncle's famous Defensio pro Populo Anglicano. The reply, though now printed among Milton's works, is entitled Joannis Philippi, Angli, Responsio ad Apologiam Anonymi cujusdam. But after that time John Phillips had diverged from his uncle. Like his brother Edward, he had betaken himself to literature; but his style of literature can hardly have met Milton's approbation—his first known English work having been a coarse Anti-Puritanical poem, called A Satyr against Hypocrites (1655). Neither of the brothers permanently retained Milton's principles, but Edward seems to have remained the more loyal to him personally. John may have visited him during the composition of Paradise Lost, but we have not the same evidence of this as we have in the case of Edward.*

* About the two Phillipses see Wood's Athenæ, by Bliss, iv. 759—769; also Godwin's Lives of Edward and John Phillips, 1815.
Introduction:

Amid such assistance in his blindness we are to conceive Milton not only carrying on his Dictionary of the Latin tongue, his compilation of a History of England to the Conquest, his construction of a system of Divinity from the Bible, and other prose-labours, but also slowly building up, for five or seven years, his great epic poem. As he required other eyes to read for him, and to provide him the new material from books which he ruminated for his various purposes, so whatever he composed had to be written for him by other hands. His mode of composition, or of committing to paper what he had previously composed in his mind, was Dictation. Those who served him as readers, or some of them, must also have served him as amanuenses. It has been the fond fancy of the public, fostered by artists and illustrators of Milton’s poetry, that it was chiefly or exclusively Milton’s three daughters, Anne, Mary, and Deborah, that served him in this capacity in the composition of his Paradise Lost. Most of us have seen flummery pictures and engravings representing the blind poet, in a rapt and ecstatic attitude, dictating his sublime epic, in a beautiful trellised arbour, or in an arched Gothic library, to his attentive and revering daughters. Alas! the imagination so suggested little corresponds with the reality. Phillips, from whose account of the three daughters the fancy has doubtless been derived, expressly tells us that it was only the two younger daughters that assisted Milton as readers, and that the eldest was unfit for this service, because of her bodily infirmity. We know, independently, that this eldest daughter, Anne Milton, could not write.* The other two daughters, Mary and Deborah, could write, and may, at a pinch, have assisted their father as amanuenses, besides helping him so largely as readers.† That they

* She signs by her mark, and a very clumsy one, to the Release, dated Feb. 24, 1674-5, for her portion of her father’s estate, after his death (facsimile in Mr. Marsh’s Milton Papers, and in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby’s Ramblings, p. 176). She was then twenty-eight years of age.

† There is a specimen of Mary’s writing in her signature, at the age of twenty-six, to the Release, dated Feb. 22, 1674-5, for her portion of her father’s estate (facsimile in Mr. Marsh’s Milton Papers, and in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby’s Ramblings, p. 177). The handwriting is rather coarse, and she spells her name “Million,” with two l’s.—Deborah’s signature is attached to a corresponding document from her, dated March 27, 1675, when she was nearly
were, in any especial sense, however, the amanuenses to whom Milton dictated his *Paradise Lost*, or any considerable portion of it, admits of great doubt. At all events, the common pictures and engravings, representing the blind Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* to his admiring daughters, are quite untrue to the actual relations between father and daughters at the time when the poem was written. Even in this Introduction to the poem it is right that some account of these should be given. It may not be without use that the student of the poem should have an exact idea of even the less pleasant domestic surroundings amid which it was shaped, meditated from day to day, and gradually completed in the mind of its blind author.

Milton, as we have seen, began the poem in 1658, when he was fifty years of age. He was then a widower for the second time. His first wife, Mary Powell, from Forest Hill, Oxfordshire—a most unsuitable person, to whom he had been married about ten years, and his relations with whom and her family had from the first been the reverse of happy—had died in 1652 or 1653, just about the time when his blindness became total. She had left him the three daughters—Anne, about seven years of age; Mary, about five; and Deborah, a mere infant. What attention the blind father, engrossed with his public and official, or private and intellectual, labours, could give to the poor, motherless children, living in the same house with him in Petty France, may easily be imagined. It was probably a fortunate thing for them when he brought into the house (Nov. 1656) his second wife—Catharine Woodcock of Hackney, who seems really to have been worthy of his love, and who is the "late espoused saint" of one of his best-known sonnets. But, after little more than a year (Feb. 1657-8), this wife, whom he had never seen with bodily eyes, had also died—the time of her death coinciding very nearly with that fixed as the commencement of *Paradise Lost*. The three daughters of the first wife, again left to their blind father's care and to that of servants, were now, respectively, twelve, ten, and twenty-three years of age (facsimile in Mr. Marsh's *Milton Papers*, and in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings*, p. 179). It has more character than her sister Mary's, and is not inelegant; but she spells her name "Deborah," with an o for an a.

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six years of age. They continued to live with their father during the rest of his stay in Petty France (till 1660); and, after his brief period of hiding at the Restoration, we are to fancy them again with him in the house which he had in Holborn, near Red Lion Fields (1660–1661), and then in that in Jewin Street, which he occupied for a year or two (1661–1663-4), and where the young Quaker Ellwood was just introduced to him. It must have been during this period of five years, spent mainly in the three houses mentioned—the eldest daughter advancing meanwhile from her thirteenth to her eighteenth year, the second from her eleventh year to her sixteenth, and the youngest from her seventh year to her twelfth—that Milton (besides having a governess in to teach them less or more, subjected the two younger to that terrible drill which enabled him to have their services as readers in languages which they did not understand. It is evident that Phillips, who must have seen the process, thinks it was overdone. “It must “needs,” he says, in the extract already made from him, “have “been a trial of patience almost beyond endurance: yet it was “endured by both for a long time.” These last words certainly imply that the two girls continued the labour after the third marriage of their father, with Elizabeth Minshull (Feb. 1662-3), and into the house in Artillery Walk, Bunhill, to which he removed shortly after that marriage. The services of Deborah, at any rate, who was not quite eleven years old at the time of this marriage, must have been mainly subsequent to it. Accordingly, it was in the house in Artillery Walk, and probably after the three girls had been five or six years there under the same roof with their new step-mother, that the catastrophe came which Phillips thus records: “Yet the irksomeness of this employment could “not always be concealed, but broke out more and more into “expressions of uneasiness; so that at length they were all (even “the eldest also) sent out to learn some curious and ingenious “sorts of manufacture that are proper for women to learn—par-“ticularly, embroideries in gold and silver.” If this first sending out of the daughters to learn some ways of earning their own living coincides with the time of their leaving their father’s house finally, and ceasing to have any but the most incidental com-munication with him—an event which, we know independently,
Bibliographical, Biographical, and Expository. 67
did occur "four or five years" before Milton's death—then the
date is 1669 or 1670, and Paradise Lost had been not only completed, but published, while the girls were still under their father's roof. In 1669 Anne was twenty-three years of age, Mary twenty-one, and Deborah seventeen. One can imagine girls of these ages, themselves not really cultivated, coming to rebel at last against a drudgery, as they would call it, to which they had long submitted, and the rather because there was added to the drudgery the sense of the control of a step-mother, not so much older than themselves as to be easily venerable. On the other hand, there is evidence, of a sadly authentic nature, that Milton thought he had more to complain of in his daughters than any mere repugnance to the drudgery of reading for him, or inability to agree with their step-mother. A few months before his death, or in July 1674, his daughters having then been four or five years apart from him, he made this solemn declaration as to the mode in which he wished his property to be disposed of: "The portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former [first] "wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, "having received no part of it: but my meaning is, they shall "have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion, and "what I have besides done for them—they having been very un-"dutiful to me. All the residue of my estate I leave to disposal "of Elizabeth, my loving wife." This declaration was made, in the house in Artillery Walk, to Milton's brother, Christopher Milton, then a bencher of the Inner Temple (afterwards Sir Christopher Milton, and a judge), the occasion being a visit of Christopher to his brother to take leave of him before going to Ipswich for his usual autumn vacation. After Milton's death, Christopher, believing that his brother had intended him to take the foregoing as his "nuncupative" or word-of-mouth will, in case they should not meet again, did draw it up on paper as such in the interest of the widow. The daughters contested it; and the records of the proceedings are still extant, including the examinations of Christopher Milton, and of two sisters, Mary Fisher and Elizabeth Fisher, who had been in Milton's service in the last year of his life. From their testimonies it appeared that the unpaid marriage-portion of Milton's wife, which he had left to his
three daughters, amounted to 1000l., besides interest on the same for about twenty years, and that the members of the Powell family from whom the money was to come were well able to pay it, and were under instructions to do so by the first Mr. Powell's will. If this were true, then 1000l. and twenty years' interest would not appear to have been an unfair provision for the daughters, taken in connexion with what Milton had "besides done for them"—by which seems to be meant the expense he had been at in getting them taught embroidery in gold and silver, &c., and perhaps in boarding them for some time while they were learning these arts after they had left his house. For the estimated value of the whole residue that would come to the widow was 1000l.; or, if it exceeded that sum, then—as the widow herself had informed Christopher Milton, though he had heard nothing of it from the deceased himself—Milton had privately expressed a wish to her that she should give the overplus to the daughters. It also came out in the evidence of all the three witnesses that Milton had often spoken of the undutifulness of his children. "As "touching deceased's displeasure with them," was their uncle Christopher's evidence, "he only heard him say, at the time of "declaring his will, that they were undutiful and unkind to him, "not expressing any particulars; but in former times he hath "heard him complain that they were careless of him being blind, "and made nothing of deserting him." Elizabeth Fisher's evidence, given apparently without any acrimony, contains a passage more startling. "This respondent hath heard the deceased de-"clare his displeasure against the parties ministrant, his children; "and, particularly, the deceased declared to this respondent that, "a little before he was married to Elizabeth Milton, his now "relict, a former maid-servant of his told Mary, one of the de-"ceased's daughters, and one of the ministrants, that she heard "the deceased was to be married—to which the said Mary re-"plied to the said maid-servant that that was no news, to hear of "his wedding, but, if she could hear of his death, that was "something: and [deceased] further told this respondent that all "his said children did combine together and counsel his maid-"servant to cheat him, the deceased, in her marketings, and that "his said children had made away, some of his books, and would
“have sold the rest of his books to the dunghill-women.” This is terrible. It carries us back, it will be noted, to the period before Milton’s third marriage and the residence in Artillery Walk, and gives us a glimpse of the state of things in that house in Jewin-street where Milton resided between 1661 and 1663, and where probably a large portion of Paradise Lost grew into completion. We see the blind man in his chamber there, meditating his lofty thoughts, and his three daughters, when they were not with him, gadding with the servants below, and left to their own devices. Is it to be wondered at that Milton’s old friend, Dr. Paget of Coleman-street, thought he was doing a service to him, and to the girls too, when he recommended to him a third wife in the person of the careful, tidy, kindly, still young, and apparently not un handsome, Elizabeth Minshull, from the neighbourhood of Nantwich in Cheshire? She was Dr. Paget’s own kinswoman, it seems; but it was a service. However difficult it may have been for the daughters, such as they were, to get on with her, she was a thoroughly conscientious wife to Milton, and to her was owing the comparative comfort of his later years. Nor must we forget the excuse there was for the daughters themselves. They had grown up, young motherless children, under the charge of a noble father, but still a kind of austere King Lear, less considerate of their peculiar wants than he ought perhaps to have been even in his blindness, and the best of whose notions in any case was perhaps not that which he entertained as to the proper training for girls. In behalf of at least one of them, also, the date of that miserable state of things of which we have a glimpse in Jewin-street has to be recollected. Anne, the eldest daughter, was over sixteen years of age at the time, and therefore responsible; Mary, of whom the worst story is told, was over fourteen; but Deborah, the youngest, was scarcely eleven, and at the bidding of her sisters. One would fain exempt this youngest daughter—who was, we are told, her father’s favourite, and who lived to speak of him with fond enthusiasm when she was an old woman, and people visited her on his account—from the charge of positive undutifulness to him in his lifetime.*

* The reader may like to have, in a note, a summary of what is known of the subsequent histories of Milton’s widow and his three daughters. The fol-
Introduction:

We are now prepared to understand how far Milton's daughters are likely to have been the amanuenses to whom he dictated his

lowing is the best condensation of particulars I can make from Aubrey, Phillips, Toland, the Nuncupative Will proceedings, Birch, Newton, Todd, Mr. Marsh's Milton's Papers, Mr. Hunter's Milton Gleanings, an Article in the Edinburgh Review, No. 50, and other sources:—The Widow. She was not quite thirty-six years of age at her husband's death. The issue of her suit in the matter of Milton's nuncupative will was that the will was set aside by the Court, not on account of any discredit of the evidence, but because all the formalities required in nuncupative wills had not been complied with. Instead of a probate of the will, the widow therefore received (Feb. 25, 1674-5) administration of all her late husband's property and rights in the ordinary way. By custom, she was entitled herself to two-thirds—one-third as widow, and one-third as administratrix—the remaining third being due to the daughters. She seems to have been prompt and considerate in settling matters according to this arrangement. Before the letter of administration was granted, she had given security to the two elder daughters for the payment to each of 100l., to be invested for their benefit in life-annuities, under the care of their uncles, Christopher Milton and Richard Powell; taking the release of the two daughters for the same, as, with one specified exception, a full discharge of all their claims. By the 27th of March following, she had handed over to the youngest daughter her 100l., together with "several goods," taking her release and her husband's for all their claims, with one exception. The exceptions in each case seem to have related to the possibility of the subsequent coming-in of debts to Milton not yet realized—the marriage-portion of 1,000l. from the Powells, for example; in which case the daughters reserved a right beyond the 100l. On the assumption, however, that 100l. was the just share of each of the daughters on the existing property, the total value of that property was 900l., and the widow's share 600l. On this, with whatever else she had of her own, the widow lived in London, and probably in the house near Bunhill Fields, for some years longer. Aubrey continued to visit her, and obtained from her some of the most interesting particulars about Milton preserved in his notes. He describes her, from this acquaintance with her, as "a gent. person, a peacefull and agreeable humour." In December 1680, as we have seen (ante, p. 16), she received from Samuel Simmons, the original publisher of Paradise Lost, eight pounds, as Simmons's discharge in full of all remaining claims upon him on account of the book; and in April 1681 (ante, p. 17), she gave Simmons a still more comprehensive release to the same effect. About this time, being then forty-two or forty-three years of age, she seems to have made up her mind to leave London, and return to her native county of Cheshire. There is a legal document, of date June 1680, by which it appears that she was then negotiating, through her brother, Richard Minshull, framework-knitter, of Wisterton, near Nantwich, Cheshire, for the lease of a house, &c. in his neighbourhood. Accordingly, she removed to Nantwich, where, amid her relations and old acquaintances, she lived a frugal, if not somewhat pinched, but eminently pious and respectable life, till as late as the autumn of 1727, when she died at the age of eighty-nine years. Her widowhood thus extended over the unusually long period of fifty-
Paradise Lost while it was in progress. All the three daughters were with him, so far as appears, during the entire time of the three years. Few persons seem to have inquired after her—Nantwich being so far out of the world. Phillips, writing in 1694, mentions her only as "said to be yet living." Toland, when preparing his Memoir of Milton, in 1698, caused a friend to write to her for information, and a letter from her was received in reply. Bishop Newton had received later accounts of her, which he incorporated in his Life of Milton, written in 1749. When talked with, she confirmed the usual stories of Milton's habits; but, "being asked whether he did not "often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation upon him "for stealing from those authors, and answered with eagerness that he stole "from nobody but the Muse who inspired him; and, being asked by a lady "present who the Muse was, replied it was God's grace, and the Holy Spirit "that visited him nightly." Newton had also heard (Note, in Newton's Milton, to Par. Lost IV. 305) that her hair had been originally of a golden hue. There is some reason to think that at Nantwich she was member of a Strict Baptist congregation; and it is possible, though not proved, that she was the Elizabeth Milton at whose death a funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Isaac Kimber, Baptist minister in Nantwich. In a printed volume of Kimber's Sermons, edited by his son in 1756, it is positively stated that she was; but, if so, a wrong date is there given to the sermon. There is no allusion to Milton in the sermon, to settle the point. Her will, dated August 22, 1727, provides that any overplus of her effects, after payment of her just debts and her funeral expenses, shall go to her nephews and nieces in Nantwich. She must have died before the 10th of October following, on which day the will was proved. Her estate was sworn at under 40l.; so that, if she had other property when alive, it must have been in the form of life-interest merely. It is interesting to know, from the minute inventory of her effects at death (a Notice of which, by Mr. J. F. Marsh, appears in vol. vii. of the Proceedings of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire), that she retained to the last the relics of her husband which she had brought with her from London, including not only the silver seal, mentioned at p. 6, but also two portraits of Milton, one as a boy of ten, the other as a youth of one-and-twenty, which had hung up in Milton's own parlour in his lifetime. These two portraits were sold by her executors. The first was sold for twenty guineas, and its history can be traced with perfect accuracy down to the present moment, when it is in the possession of Edgar Disney, Esq., of The Hyde, Ingatestone, Essex. The other was bought from the widow's executors by the Right Hon. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons; it was often engraved in the last century by Vertue and others; and it remained in the possession of the Onslow family till 1828, when, unfortunately, the present Earl of Onslow parted with it—since which time it has been lost sight of. It may yet be recovered, and there would be no difficulty in identifying it. —The Three Daughters:—The eldest daughter, Anne Milton, who, though lame and with a defect in her speech, is said to have had a "very handsome face," was twenty-eight years of age at the time of her father's death. According to the evidence of Elizabeth Fisher in the matter of Milton's will,
composition of *Paradise Lost*—in Petty France, Westminster; then in Holborn; then in Jewin-street; and, lastly, in Artillery

she had then a trade by which she could live, "which is the making of gold and silver lace, and which the deceased bred her up to." With this, and with the 100l. which came to her as her share of her father's effects, she lived on in London till her marriage (date unknown) with a person described as "a master-builder." She died in giving birth to her first child, which died with her. —Mary Milton, the second daughter, and, according to Aubrey, more like her mother than her father, was twenty-six years of age when her father died. She never married, and was dead before 1694. —The youngest daughter, Deborah Milton, "very like her father," according to Aubrey, was twenty-two years of age at her father's death, having been born in the house in Petty France, May 2, 1652. At the time of her father's death she was in Ireland, having gone thither as companion to a lady named Merian. Shortly after her father's death, she married an Abraham Clarke, of the city of Dublin, described as "a weaver"—"a mercer, sells silk," is Aubrey's addition. Accordingly, in her release to her step-mother for her 100l., dated March 27, 1675, she signs her name "Deborah Clarke," and her husband signs the document jointly with herself. After remaining in Dublin for a good many years, her husband and she came over to London, where her husband is thenceforward heard of as "a weaver in Spitalfields." She survived till August 27, 1727, when she died at the age of seventy-five. In her later years she was visited by many persons for her father's sake—among others by Addison, the engraver Vertue, and Professor Ward of Gresham College. Vertue consulted her as to her father's portraits, and obtained exact and useful information from her on that subject. Addison was struck by her resemblance to her father in the Faithorne portrait, and in others derived thence. She spoke to him and others of her father with becoming enthusiasm, and with a rush of fondness as she looked at the portrait of him she thought likest; and she impressed them as "a woman of good understanding and genteel behaviour, though in low circumstances." She told Mr. Ward that "she and her sisters used to read to their father in eight lang-
"guages; which, by practice, they were capable of doing with great readiness
"and accuracy, though they understood what they read in no other language
"but English; and their father used often to say in their hearing that one
"tongue was enough for a woman. None of them were ever sent to
"school, but all taught at home by a mistress kept for that purpose." Addi-
son, Mr. Ward, and others, had a singular corroboration of this story, by
hearing her repeat, even after such a distance of time, passages from the be-
ginning of Homer, and some verses of Euripides in Greek, and a little of Ovid's
Metamorphoses in Latin. On Addison's recommendation, the Princess of Wales,
afterwards Queen Caroline, sent her a present of fifty guineas. It may be taken,
too, as a sign of her affection for her father that, along with her 100l. in 1675,
she had secured "several goods" that had belonged to him—among which was
the second silver seal, mentioned p. 6, and also a Bible that had belonged
to her mother, and on a blank leaf of which Milton had entered the births of
his children. Through her alone, at all events, was the poet's lineage con-
tinued for more than one generation. Besides six sons and two daughters, who
Walk, Bunhill Fields. They might, therefore, have been his amanuenses, if they possessed the requisite ability. But the

had all died young, and without issue, she had a son, Caleb Clarke, and a daughter, Elizabeth. This Elizabeth Clarke married a Thomas Foster, described also as "a Spitalfields weaver." She was living, in 1738, in Pelham-street, Spitalfields, but afterwards kept a small chandler's shop in Lower Holloway; whence she removed, in 1748 or 1749, to Cock-lane, near Shoreditch Church. She lived till May 9, 1754, and, like her mother, was much visited by persons of note on Milton's account, and, among them, by two of Milton's biographers, Dr. Birch and Bishop Newton. To Dr. Birch, whose acquaintance with her had begun in 1738, she showed, in Jan. 1749-50, the Bible above mentioned, which had come to her from her mother. Newton's account of her, in 1749, is as follows: "She is aged about sixty, and weak and infirm. She seemeth to be a good, plain, sensible woman, and has confirmed several particulars related above, and informed me of some others, which she had often heard from her mother. . . . that he [Milton] kept his daughters at a great distance, and would not allow them to learn to write, which he thought unnecessary for a woman [Mrs. Foster is not quite correct here]; that her mother was his greatest favourite, and could read in seven or eight languages, though she understood none but English; that her mother inherited his headaches and disorders, and had such a weakness in her eyes that she was forced to make use of spectacles at the age of eighteen [i.e. almost from the time when she left her father's house]; and she herself, she says, has not been able to read a chapter in the Bible these twenty years."

The poor circumstances of this grand-daughter of Milton having been made known, a performance of Comus for her benefit took place, April 5, 1750, Dr. Johnson writing a Prologue, and Bishop Newton and the publisher Tonson contributing handsomely. It is the calculation of Todd that the whole proceeds amounted only to 147l. 14s. 6d., out of which about 80l. had to be deducted for expenses. This, however, is hardly reconcilable with Dr. Johnson's account, who, after saying (Life of Milton) that "the profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds," evidently implies that this sum was clear of all expenses by adding, "Of this sum one hundred pounds were placed in the stocks, after some debate between her [Mrs. Foster] and her husband in whose name it should be entered; and the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington." All Mrs. Foster's children, of whom she had had seven, having died in infancy, she was then the sole descendant of Milton living, "unless," as she told Bishop Newton, "there were some in the East Indies; which she very much questions, for she used to hear from them sometimes, but has heard nothing now for several years." This refers to the family of her elder brother Caleb Clarke, mentioned above as Deborah's only surviving son. What became of him, the grandson of Milton? He had gone to India, apparently when a very young man; for, even if he was Deborah's eldest child, he cannot have been born earlier than 1676, and we find him in Madras in 1703. He was then a married man; his wife's Christian name was Mary, but her surname is unknown. He had by her three children, all born at Madras—Abraham, baptized June 2,
eldest could not write, and she is excluded. The second could write tolerably, and the youngest still better; and they may have helped occasionally—more especially the youngest; in whose favour we have also Aubrey’s note, for whatever it is worth, “Deborah was his amanuensis.” Before the poem was completed, however, there was a fitter amanuensis than either at hand in Milton’s third wife. “Her husband,” she told people afterwards in her widowhood, “used to compose his poetry ‘chiefly in winter, and on his waking in the morning would ‘make her write down sometimes twenty or thirty verses.’”* Here, however, is a passage from Phillips, still more distinct:—

“There is another very remarkable passage in the composure “ of this poem, which I have a particular occasion to remember; “for, whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, “for some years as I went from time to time to visit him, in a “parcel of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time—which, being “written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correc- “tion as to the orthography and pointing—having, as the summer “came on, not been shewed any for a considerable while, and “desiring the reason thereof, was answered, that his vein never “happily flowed but from the Autumnal Equinoctial to the “Vernal [i.e. from the end of September to the end of March],

1703; Mary, baptized March 17, 1706, and buried in December of the same year; and Isaac, baptized Feb. 13, 1711. Caleb Clarke himself was afterwards, i.e. from 1717 to 1719, parish-clerk of Fort St. George, where he was buried on the 16th of October in the latter year. At the time of his death his son Abraham was in England; but he returned to India, and in September 1725, being then two-and-twenty years of age, married an Anne Clarke. They had a child Mary, born at Madras, and whose birth is registered there April 2, 1727. This is the last glimpse of these Clarkes in Madras, unless we take their relative Mrs. Foster’s account to Bishop Newton to mean that she had occasionally heard of them till as late as 1740. It is concluded that they all died out, and that consequently Milton’s line is extinct. But the conclusion is not necessary. In 1727, Abraham Clarke, Milton’s great-grandson, and the father of the infant Mary, was but four-and-twenty years of age. He may have had other children subsequently. His brother Isaac, too, was then only sixteen years of age, and remains unaccounted for. And what of the infant Mary, born in that year? Strange that this great-great-grandchild of Milton, born in India, should have been in existence before the death of either her great-grandmother, Milton’s daughter Deborah, or her step-great-great-grandmother, Milton’s third wife, at Nantwich!

* Newton’s Life of Milton, edit. 1761, p. lxxv.
"and that whatever he attempted [at other times] was never to " his satisfaction, though he exerted his fancy never so much; so " that, in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to " have spent but half his time therein." What has been chiefly noted in this passage is the interesting information conveyed in it, that Milton believed his vein of invention to be happier in the winter than in the summer half of the year, and did actually produce most of his *Paradise Lost* in late autumn, winter, and early spring.* But the information respecting the amanuenses is also worthy of notice. The poem was committed to paper, says Phillips, in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, by *any hand that happened to be near.* This might be that of either of the two younger daughters; latterly, it might be that of the third wife; but, quite as often, it may have been that of a hired amanuensis, or one of the numerous young men who came to his house at stated times to read to him for their own benefit. That he used such casual help in writing is otherwise known. In the volume of Milton MSS. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge—consisting mainly of the original drafts in his own hand of his chief minor poems, and other things written before his going to Italy, or shortly after his return—there are several scraps in other hands. These are either the first drafts or transcripts of some of his sonnets, written between 1642 and 1658, inclusively. At least six different hands may be counted in these scraps—not one of them his daughter Deborah's, or his daughter Mary's, or his third wife's. Indeed, if the scraps were written at the dates to which they refer, it is impossible that any of them should have been written by the third wife, since he was not married to her till 1662–3. It is equally impossible that they should have been written by either of his youngest daughters, since neither of them was born at the date of the earliest, and at the date of the latest Mary was but nine, and Deborah not six, years of age. But, whether they were written at the dates to which they refer or were transcripts afterwards, it is clear that they were written by various persons, and each by whatever hand chanced to be at Milton's service for the moment. And so till Milton's death. In

* The same fact is stated by Aubrey, to whom Phillips had mentioned it verbally (1680) many years before printing it himself.
the last of his private letters extant—dated London, Aug. 15, 1666, and addressed to the Peter Heimbach already mentioned—he asks his correspondent to excuse any faults in the writing or punctuation, on the ground that the letter has been written for him by a boy knowing nothing of Latin, to whom he has been obliged, in dictating, to spell out the words letter by letter. We can conceive Milton dictating parts of his *Paradise Lost* even to so unlikely an amanuensis as this—than whom, after all, neither of his writing daughters can have been much better, if so good.

To whomever he dictated, one would like to know anything that is to be known of his manner of performing that process. On this point we have no additional information more authentic than that which the painter Richardson had been able to collect from tradition when he wrote his sketch of Milton's Life in 1734. "Other stories I have heard," says Richardson, "concerning the posture he was usually in when he dictated—that he sat leaning backward obliquely in an easy chair, with his leg flung over the elbow of it. That he frequently composed lying in bed on a morning (twas winter, sure, then), I have been well informed; that, when he could not sleep, but lay awake whole nights, he tried [and] not one verse could he make, [but] at other times flowed 'easy his unpremeditated verse,' with a certain impetus and a stro, as himself seemed to believe. Then, at what hour soever, he rung for his daughter to secure what came. I have also been told he would dictate many, perhaps forty, lines, as it were in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number." *

We can believe part of this at least, though it would have been better if Richardson had given his authorities.

Yet one final inquiry respecting these mechanical matters:—By whatever instalments, at the hands of various amanuenses, day by day and week by week through five or seven years, and especially the winters of these years, Milton succeeded in transferring his Epic to paper in its first continuous rough copy, that copy, we may be sure, would not satisfy him. He must have changed his habits very much if it did. Of Shakespeare the earliest editors of his Plays

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say, “His mind and hand went together; and what he thought he
uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him
‘a blot in his papers.”* With Milton it was different. His mind
and hand, indeed, also went together, and what he thought he
uttered nobly at first; but then he was always re-thinking, and
compelling his hand to consequent modifications of what it had
already executed. The drafts of his earlier poems, yet extant in
his own hand in Trinity College, Cambridge, are a perfect study
in this respect. They prove him to have been a most fastidious
corrector of his own productions. They, and especially some of
them, abound with erasures, marginal corrections, interlineations,
re-insertions of words once erased, and even re-obliterations of
these in favour of new changes. Almost uniformly, too, every
correction is for the better, and the last form of a phrase or
passage is the most perfect, both in meaning and in music. Now
we cannot suppose that there was no corresponding process
during the composition of Paradise Lost. Only we may suppose
that much of the process was transacted mentally—that the poet,
before he dictated a passage or instalment of his poem, had in
many cases had it sounding in his mind for a while and assuming
the shape that satisfied him. Similarly, we must suppose him—
carrying as he doubtless did the whole poem, as far as it was
composed, in his memory—not unfrequently going back upon
portions of it, and here and there improving expressions, or
adding lines and passages for the sake of increased strength or
beauty, or indeed making modifications that had become neces-
sary in consequence of some new idea that had struck him farther
on as to some part of the conduct of the story. Hence there
would be changes, by his direction, in the aggregate copy that
had grown out of his first piecemeal dictations. We have also
Edward Phillips's information that it was he that assisted his
uncle in amending this copy, or part of it, in those more minute
particulars of spelling, punctuation, &c., to which the original
amanuenses were not competent, and in which it was difficult for
the blind author to superintend them. Suppose all finished in
this way, however, and still one fair copy at least would be
necessary for the licenser and the press, not to speak of previous

* Preface by Heminge and Condell to the Folio Shakespeare of 1623.
perusal by private friends. It must surely have been such a fair copy, and not the only manuscript in Milton's possession, that he lent to the young Quaker Ellwood at the cottage in Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, in the summer of 1665 (see ante, pp. 53, 54). At all events, there was the fair copy that went to the licensor, Mr. Tomkyns, in the following year, and from which the poem was printed by Simmons (see ante, p. 2). The first book of that copy is still extant (see ante, p. 2, note). As the other books of the copy are not extant, we do not know that the whole was written by the same hand; but it would be something to identify the hand that wrote this fair copy of even the First Book. We have not succeeded in doing so, and fear (though in such matters there is always hope, if antiquaries do their duty) it cannot be done. The hand certainly is not that of any of Milton's daughters; it is not his third wife's; it is not Edward Phillips's, nor John Phillips's; it is not Andrew Marvel's; it is not Cyriack Skinner's; nor, as far as we have been able to examine, is it that of any of the amanuenses who were employed in writing the manuscript of Milton's Treatise De Doctrinâ Christianâ, so long lost, but discovered by Mr. Lemon in 1823 in the State-Paper office, and published in 1825 by Bishop Sumner. This treatise, being in Latin, required perhaps amanuenses of a higher order than sufficed for the English poem.* The hand in the extant manuscript of the First Book is what is called a "secretary hand" of the period, and is probably that of a professional penman or copyist. The manuscript is neat and accurate, but there are corrections in it by another hand.

* It shows how firmly the legend of Milton dictating to his daughters had taken hold of the popular mind, that even an expert like Mr. Lemon supposed one of the hands in which the MS. of the Treatise on Christian Doctrine is written—"a beautiful Italian hand," as he described it—to be the hand of Milton's second daughter, Mary. Another hand, largely used in the MS., he supposed to be Edward Phillips's. Neither opinion was correct. The "beautiful Italian hand" at the beginning of the MS. is that of Daniel Skinner, a relative of Cyriack Skinner's, and whose connexion with the manuscript has been authentically traced. The other hand is not Edward Phillips's, nor John Phillips's, but that of some other person, who must have been about Milton from about 1658 onwards. References to the numerous facsimiles in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's Ramblings have facilitated my conclusions on this whole subject of Milton's amanuenses.
Paradise Lost is an Epic. But it is not, like the Iliad or the Æneid, a national Epic; nor is it an epic after any other of the known types. It is an epic of the whole human species—an epic of our entire planet, or indeed of the entire astronomical universe. The title of the poem, though perhaps the best that could have been chosen, hardly indicates beforehand the full extent of the theme. Nor are the opening lines sufficiently descriptive of what is to follow. According to them, the song is to be

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden.

This is a true description, for the whole story bears on this point. But it is the vast comprehension of the story, both in space and time, as leading to this point, that makes it unique among epics, and entitles Milton to speak of it as involving

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

It is, in short, a poetical representation, on the authority of hints from the Book of Genesis and other parts of the Bible, of the historical connexion between Human Time and Aboriginal or Eternal Infinity, or between our created World and the immeasurable and inconceivable Universe of Pre-human Existence. So far as our World is concerned, the poem starts from that moment when our newly-created Earth, with all the newly-created starry depths about it, had as yet but two human beings upon it. These consequently are, on this side of the pre-supposed Infinite Eternity, the main persons of the epic. But we are carried back into this pre-supposed Infinite Eternity; and the grand purpose of the poem is to connect, by a stupendous imagination, certain events or courses of the inconceivable history that had been unfolding itself there with the first fortunes of that new azure World which is familiar to us, and more particularly with the first fortunes of that favoured ball at the centre whereon those two human creatures walked. Now the person of the epic through the narration of whose acts this connexion is established is Satan. He, as all
critics have perceived, and in a wider sense than most of them have perceived, is the real hero of the poem. He and his actions are the link between that new World of Man the infancy of which we behold in the poem and that boundless antecedent Universe of Pre-human Existence which the poem assumes. For he was a native of that pre-human universe—one of its greatest and most conspicuous natives; and what we follow in the poem, when its story is taken chronologically, is the life of this great being, from the time of his yet unimpaired primacy or archangelship among the Celestials, on to that time when, in pursuit of a scheme of revenge, he flings himself into the new experimental World, tries the strength of the new race at its fountain-head, and, by success in his attempt, vitiates Man's portion of space to his own nature and wins possession of it for a season. The attention of the reader is particularly requested to the following remarks and diagrams. The diagrams are not mere illustrations of what Milton may have conceived in his scheme of his poem. They are actually what he did conceive, and most tenaciously keep before his mind from first to last; and, unless they are thoroughly grasped, the poem will not be understood as a whole, and many particular portions of it will be misinterpreted.

Aboriginally, or in primeval Eternity, before the creation of our Earth or the Starry Universe to which it belongs, universal space is to be considered, according to the requisites of the poem, not as containing stars or starry systems at all, but as a sphere of infinite radius—the phrase is, of course, self-contradictory, but it is necessary—divided into two hemispheres, thus:

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<p>| Heaven,                  |
| or                      |</p>
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The upper of these two hemispheres of primeval Infinity is Heaven, or The Empyrean—a boundless, unimaginable region of Light, Freedom, Happiness, and Glory, in the midst whereof God, though omnipresent, has His immediate and visible dwelling. He is here surrounded by a vast population of beings, called "the Angels," or "Sons of God," who draw near to His throne in worship, derive thence their nurture and their delight, and yet live dispersed through all the ranges and recesses of the region, leading severally their mighty lives and performing the behests of Deity, but organized into companies, orders, and hierarchies. Milton is careful to explain that all that he says of Heaven is said symbolically, and in order to make conceivable by the human imagination what in its own nature is inconceivable; but, this being explained, he is bold enough in his use of terrestrial analogies. Round the immediate throne of Deity, indeed, there is kept a blazing mist of vagueness, which words are hardly permitted to pierce, though the Angels are represented as from time to time assembling within it, beholding the Divine Presence and hearing the Divine Voice. But Heaven at large, or portions of it, are figured as tracts of a celestial Earth, with plain, hill, and valley, whereon the myriads of the Sons of God expatiate, in their two orders of Seraphim and Cherubim, and in their descending ranks, as Archangels or Chiefs, Princes of various degrees, and individual Powers and Intelligences. Certain differences, however, are implied as distinguishing these Celestials from the subsequent race of Mankind. As they are of infinitely greater prowess, immortal, and of more purely spiritual nature, so their ways even of physical existence and action transcend all that is within human experience. Their forms are dilatable or contractible at pleasure; they move with incredible swiftness; and, as they are not subject to any law of gravitation, their motion, though ordinarily represented as horizontal over the Heavenly ground, may as well be vertical or in any other direction, and their aggregations need not, like those of men, be in squares, oblongs, or other plane figures, but may be in cubes, or other rectangular or oblique solids, or in spherical masses. These and various other particulars are to be kept in mind concerning Heaven and its pristine inhabitants. As respects the other half or hemisphere of
the primeval Infinity, though it too is inconceivable in its nature, and has to be described by words which are at best symbolical, less needs be said. For it is Chaos, or the Uninhabited—a huge, limitless ocean, abyss, or quagmire, of universal darkness and lifelessness, wherein are jumbled in blustering confusion the elements of all matter, or rather the crude embryos of all the elements, ere as yet they are distinguishable. There is no light there, nor properly Earth, Water, Air, or Fire, but only a vast pulp or welter of unformed matter, in which all these lie tempestuously intermixed. Though the presence of Deity is there potentially too, it is still, as it were, actually retracted thence, as from a realm unorganized and left to Night and Anarchy; nor do any of the Angels wing down into its repulsive obscurities. The crystal floor or wall of Heaven divides them from it; underneath which, and unvisited of light, save what may glimmer through upon its nearer strata, it howls and rages and stagnates eternally.

Such is, and has been, the constitution of the Universal Infinity, from ages immemorial in the Angelic reckoning. But lo! at last a day in the annals of Heaven when the grand monotony of existence hitherto is disturbed and broken. On a day—"such a day as Heaven's great year brings forth" (V. 582, 583)—all the Empyrean host of Angels, called by imperial summons from all the ends of Heaven, assemble innumerably before the throne of the Almighty; beside whom, imbosomed in bliss, sat the Divine Son. They had come to hear this divine decree:—

"Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
Hear my decree which unrevoked 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."

With joy and obedience is this decree received throughout the hierarchies, save in one quarter. One of the first of the Archangels in Heaven, if not the very first—the coequal of Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, if not their superior—is the Archangel
known afterwards (for his first name in Heaven is lost) as Satan or Lucifer. In him the effect of the decree is rage, envy, pride, the resolution to rebel. He conspires with his next subordinate, known afterwards as Beelzebub; and there is formed by them that faction in Heaven which includes at length one third of the entire Heavenly host. Then ensue the wars in Heaven—Michael and the loyal Angels warring against Satan and the rebel Angels, so that for two days the Empyrean is in uproar. But on the third day the Messiah himself rides forth in his chariot of power, and armed with ten thousand thunders. Right on he drives, in his sole might, through the rebel ranks, till they are trampled and huddled, in one indiscriminate flock, incapable of resistance, before him and his fires. But his purpose is not utterly to destroy them,—only to expel them from Heaven. Underneath their feet, accordingly, the crystal wall or floor of Heaven opens wide, rolling inwards, and disclosing a spacious gap into the dark Abyss or Chaos. Horrorstruck they start back; but worse urges them behind. Headlong they fling themselves down, eternal wrath burning after them, and driving them still down, down, through Chaos, to the place prepared for them.

The place prepared for them! Yes, for now there is a modification in the map of Universal Space to suit the changed conditions of the Universe. At the bottom of what has hitherto been Chaos there is now marked out a kind of Antarctic region, distinct from the body of Chaos proper. This is Hell—a vast region of fire, sulphurous lake, plain, and mountain, and of all forms of fiery and icy torment. It is into this nethermost and dun-
geon-like portion of space that the Fallen Angels are thrust. For
nine days and nights they have been falling through Chaos, or
rather being driven down through Chaos by the Messiah's pursuing
thunders, before they reach this new home destined for them
(VI. 871). When they do reach it, the roof closes over them and
shuts them in. Meanwhile the Messiah has returned into highest
Heaven, and there is rejoicing over the expulsion of the damned.

For the moment, therefore, there are three divisions of Universal
Space—Heaven, Chaos, and Hell. Almost immediately, how-
ever, there is a fourth. Not only have the expelled Angels been
nine days and nights in falling through Chaos to reach Hell; but,
after they have reached Hell and it has closed over them, they
lie for another period of nine days and nights (I. 50—53) stupe-
fied and bewildered in the fiery gulf. It is during this second
nine days that there takes place a great event, which farther
modifies the map of Infinitude. Long had there been talk in
Heaven of a new race of beings to be created at some time by
the Almighty, inferior in some respects to the Angels, but in the
history of whom and of God's dealings with them there was to be
a display of the divine power and love which even the Angels
might contemplate with wonder. The time for the creation of
this new race of beings has now arrived. Scarcely have the
Rebel Angels been enclosed in Hell, and Chaos has recovered
from the turmoil of the descent of such a rout through its depths,
when the Paternal Deity, addressing the Son, tells him that, in
order to repair the loss caused to Heaven, the predetermined
creation of Man and of the World of Man shall now take effect.
It is for the Son to execute the will of the Father. Straightway
he goes forth on his creating errand. The everlasting gates of
Heaven open wide to let him pass forth; and, clothed with
majesty, and accompanied with thousands of Seraphim and
Cherubim, anxious to behold the great work to be done, he does
pass forth—far into that very Chaos through which the Rebel
Angels have so recently fallen, and which now intervenes between
Heaven and Hell. At length he stays his servid wheels, and, taking
the golden compasses in his hands, centres one point of them
where he stands and turns the other through the obscure profundity
around (VII. 224—231). Thus are marked out, or cut out, through
the body of Chaos, the limits of the new Universe of Man—that Starry Universe which to us seems measureless and the same as Infinity itself, but which is really only a beautiful azure sphere or drop, insulated in Chaos, and hung at its topmost point or zenith from the Empyrean. But, though the limits of the new experimental Creation are thus at once marked out, the completion of the Creation is a work of Six Days (VII. 242—550). On the last of these, to crown the work, the happy Earth receives its first human pair—the appointed lords of the entire new Creation, surveying it with newly-awakened gaze from the Paradise where they are placed, and where they have received the one sole command that is to try their allegiance. And so, resting from his labours, and beholding all that he had made, that it was good, the Messiah returned to his Father, reascending through the golden gates which were now just over the zenith of the new World, and were its point of suspension from the Empyrean Heaven; and the Seventh Day or Sabbath was spent in songs of praise by all the Heavenly hosts over the finished work, and in contemplation of it as it hung beneath them,

"another Heaven,
From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline."

And now, accordingly, this was the diagram of the Universal Infinitude:

There are the three regions of Heaven, Chaos, and Hell, as before; but there is also now a fourth region, hung drop-like into Chaos by an attachment to Heaven at the north pole or zenith. This is the New World, or the Starry Universe—all that
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Universe of orbs and galaxies which man’s vision can reach by utmost power of telescope, and which even to his imagination is illimitable. And yet as to the proportions of this World to some part of the total map Milton dares to be exact. The distance from its nadir or lowest point to the upper boss of Hell is exactly equal to its own radius; or, in other words, the distance of Hell-gate from Heaven-gate is exactly three semidiameters of the Human or Starry Universe (I. 73, 74).

Meanwhile, just as this final and stupendous modification of the map of Infinitude has been accomplished, Satan and his rebel adherents in Hell begin to recover from their stupor—Satan the first, and the others at his call. There ensue Satan’s first speech to them, their first surveys of their new domain, their building of their palace of Pandemonium, and their deliberations there in full council as to their future policy. Between Moloch’s advice for a renewal of open war with Heaven, and Belial’s and Mammon’s counsels, which recommend acquiescence in their new circumstances and a patient effort to make the best of them, Beelzebub insinuates the proposal which is really Satan’s, and which is ultimately carried. It is that there should be an excursion from Hell back through Chaos, to ascertain whether that new Universe, with a new race of beings in it, of which there had been so much talk in Heaven, and which there was reason to think might come into existence about this time, had come into existence. If it had, might not means be found to vitiate this new Universe and the favoured race that was to possess it, and to drag them down to the level of Hell itself? Would not such a ruin of the Almighty’s new experiment at its outset be a revenge that would touch Him deeply? Would it not be easier than open war? And on the stepping-stone of such a success might they not raise themselves to further victory, or at least to an improvement of their present condition, and an extent of empire that should include more than Hell?

Satan’s counsel having been adopted, it is Satan himself that adventures the perilous expedition up through Chaos in quest of the new Universe. He is detained for a while at Hell-gate by the ghastly shapes of Sin and Death, who are there to guard it; but, the gates being at length opened to him, never to shut again,
he emerges into the hideous Chaos overhead. His journey up through it is arduous. Climbing, swimming, wading, flying, through the boggy consistency—now falling plumb-down thousands of fathoms, again carried upwards by a gust or explosion—he reaches at length, about midway in his journey, the central throne and pavilion where CHAOS personified and NIGHT have their government. Here he receives definite intelligence that the new World he is in search of has actually been created. Thus encouraged, and directed on his way, again he springs upward, “like a pyramid of fire,” through what of Chaos remains; and, after much farther flying, tacking, and steering, he at last reaches the upper confines of Chaos, where its substance seems thinner, so that he can wing about more easily, and where a glimmering of the light from above begins also to appear. For a while in this calmer space he weighs his wings to behold at leisure (II. 1046) the sight that is breaking upon him. And what a sight!

“Far off the Empyreal Heaven extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
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.”

Care must be taken not to misinterpret this passage. Even Addison misinterpreted it. He speaks of Satan’s distant discovery “of the Earth that hung close by the Moon” as one of the most “wonderfully beautiful and poetical” passages of the poem. But it is more poetical than Addison thought. For, as even a correct reading of the passage by itself would have shown, the “pendent World” which Satan here sees is not the Earth at all, but the entire Starry Universe, or Mundane System, hung drop-like by a golden touch from the Empyrean above it. In proportion to this Empyrean, at the distance whence Satan gazes, even the Starry Universe pendent from it is but as a star of smallest magnitude on the edge of the full or crescent moon.*

At length (III. 418—422) Satan alights on the opaque outside,

* Heaven or the Empyrean being necessarily represented in our diagram as of definite dimensions, instead of infinite or indefinite, this minuteness of the Mundane System in comparison has to be imagined.
or convex shell, of the new Universe. As he had approached it, what seemed at first but as a star had taken the dimensions of a globe; and, when he had alighted, and begun to walk on it, this globe had become, as it seemed, a boundless continent of firm land, exposed, dark and starless, to the stormy Chaos blustering round like an inclement sky. Only on the upper convex of the shell, in its angles towards the zenith, some reflection of light was gained from the wall of Heaven. Apparently it was on this upper convex of the outside of the new World, and not at its nadir or the point nearest Hell, that Satan first alighted and walked (compare II. 1034—1053, III. 418—430, X. 312—349). At all events, he had to reach the zenith before he could begin the real business of his errand. For only at this point was there an opening into the interior of the Universe. All the outer shell, save at that point, was hard, compact—not even transpicuous to the light within, as the spherical glass round a lamp is; but totally opaque, or only glistering faintly on its upper side with the reflected light of Heaven. Accordingly—after wandering on this dark outside of the Universe long enough to allow Milton that extraordinary digression (III. 440—497) in which he finds one of the most magnificently grotesque uses for the outside of the Universe that it could have occurred to any poet to conceive—the Fiend is attracted in the right direction to the opening at the zenith. What attracts him thither is a gleam of light from the mysterious structure or staircase (III. 501 et seq.) which there serves the Angels in their descents from Heaven’s gate into the Human Universe, and again in their ascents from the Universe to Heaven’s gate. Sometimes these stairs are drawn up to Heaven and invisible; but at the moment when Satan reached the spot they were let down, so that, standing on the lower stair, and gazing down through the opening right underneath, he could suddenly behold the whole interior of the Starry Universe at once. He can behold it in all directions—both in the direction of latitude, or depth from the pole where he stands to the opposite pole or nadir; and also longitudinally,

"from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon."
At this point, and before following the Fiend in his flight down into the interior of our Astronomical Universe, it is necessary to describe the system or constitution of that interior as it is conceived by Milton and assumed throughout the poem. Let us attend, therefore, more particularly now to that small central circle of our last diagram, hanging drop-like from the Empyrean, which we have as yet described no farther than by saying that, small as it is, it represents our vast Starry Universe in Milton's total scheme of Infinitude. Although a great part of the action of the poem takes place in the Empyrean, in Chaos, and in Hell, much of it also takes place within the bounds of this Starry Universe of ours; so that, if there is any peculiarity in Milton's conception of the interior arrangements of this Universe, that peculiarity must be understood before many parts of the poem are intelligible. Such a peculiarity there is; and a distinct exposition of it is desirable in an Introduction to the Poem.

Milton's Astronomy, or at least the astronomical system which he thought proper to employ in his Paradise Lost, is not our present Copernican system—which, in his time, was not generally or popularly accepted. It is the older astronomical system, now usually called "the Ptolemaic," because it had been set forth in its main features by the astronomer Ptolemy of Alexandria, who lived in the second century.

According to this "Ptolemaic system," the Earth was the fixed centre of the Mundane Universe, and the apparent motions of the other celestial bodies were caused by the real revolutions of successive Heavens or Spheres of Space enclosing the central Earth at different distances. First, and nearest to the Earth, were the Spheres or Orbs of the Seven Planets then known, in this order—the Moon (treated as a planet), Mercury, Venus, the Sun (treated as a planet—the "glorious planet Sol," Shakespeare calls it, Troil. and Cress., Act 1. Scene 3), Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Beyond these, as an Eighth Sphere or Orb, was the Firmament or Heaven of all the fixed stars. These eight Spheres or Heavens had sufficed till Aristotle's time, and beyond it, for all the purposes of astronomical explanation. The outermost or eighth Sphere was supposed to wheel diurnally, or in twenty-four hours, from
East to West, carrying in it all the fixed stars, and carrying with it also all the seven interior Heavens or Spheres—which Spheres, however, had also separate and slower motions of their own, giving rise to those apparent motions of the Moon (months), Mercury, Venus, the Sun (years), Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, which could not be accounted for by the revolution of the Starry Sphere alone. But, later observations having discovered irregularities in the phenomena of the heavens which the supposed motions of even the Eight Spheres could not account for, two extra Spheres had been added. To account for the slow change called "the precession of the equinoxes," the discovery of which was prepared by Hipparchus in the second century B.C., it had been necessary to imagine a Ninth Sphere, called "the Crystalline Sphere," beyond that of the Fixed Stars; and, finally, for farther reasons, it had been necessary to suppose all enclosed in a Tenth Sphere, called "the Primum Mobile," or "first moved." These two outermost Spheres, or at least the Tenth Sphere, had been added in the Middle Ages; and, indeed, the Ptolemaic system, so completed up to the final number of Ten Spheres, may be called rather the "Alphonsine system," as having been adopted and taught by the famous King and astronomer, Alphonso X. of Castille (1252—1284). The following extract, which we translate from a Latin manual or Catechism of Astronomy by Michael Moestlinus, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Heidelberg, and preceptor of Kepler (Epitome Astronomiae, &c., 1582, pp. 34, 35), will give an idea of the form in which the system was popularly taught in schools and universities all over Europe till it was superseded by that of Copernicus:—"Quest. How many are the Orbs, or celestial Spheres, and what is their order?" Ans. "There are "various opinions concerning the number and order of the celestial Spheres; but, following for the present, for the sake of "learners, the doctrine of the Alphonsines, we reckon ten, in this "order:—The 1st is the Sphere of the Moon, which has the "lowest place in the Æther; the 2nd that of Mercury; the 3rd "that of Venus; the 4th that of the Sun; the 5th that of Mars; "the 6th that of Jupiter; the 7th that of Saturn. And these are "the Spheres of the Seven Planets, or wandering stars, each of "which has only one star, viz. its own planet, inserted in it.
"To these an 8th succeeds, which, from its order, is called 'the "'Eighth Sphere,' but also 'the Firmament,' on account of its "containing, and as it were fortifying or walling round, all the "other Spheres—for it was believed by the ancients to be the last "and Supreme Sphere. It is also called the Sphere of the "Fixed Stars, because in it are all the rest of the stars, whatever "their number, after the planets are excepted. There is moreover "a 9th, and finally a 10th Sphere; which last is the Primum "Mobile, or Last Heaven. These two Spheres are destitute of "stars." It need only be added that the Spheres were not neces- "sarily supposed to be actual spheres of solid matter. It was "enough if they were conceived as spheres of invisible or tran- "spicuous space. Perhaps only the outermost Sphere, or Primum "Mobile, enclosing the whole Universe from absolute Infinity or "Nothingness, had to be thought of as in any sense a material or "impenetrable shell.

The utter strangeness of this Ptolemaic system to our present "habits of thought causes us to forget how long it lasted. Although "it was in 1543 that Copernicus propounded the other system, "and although the views of Copernicus struggled gradually into the "belief of subsequent astronomers, and had further demonstration "given them by Galileo (1610—1616), the Ptolemaic or Alphonsine "system, with its ten Spheres enclosing the stationary Earth at "different distances, and wheeling round it in a complex combina- "tion of their separate motions, retained its prevalence in the "popular mind of Europe, and even in the scientific world, till the "end of the seventeenth century. Hence all the literature of Eng- "land, and of other countries, down to that date, is latently cast in "the imaginative mould of that system, and is full of its phraseology "and of suggestions from it. When Shakespeare speaks of the "'stars starting from their spheres,' he means from the Ptolemaic "Spheres; and, similarly, the word "sphere" in our old poetry has "generally this meaning. Indeed, it retains this meaning in some "of our still current expressions, as "This is not my sphere," "You "are out of your sphere," &c. A full examination of our old litera- "ture in the light of the principle of criticism here suggested—i.e. "with the recollection that it was according to the Ptolemaic con- "ception of the Universe, and not according to the Copernican,
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that our old poets thought of things and expressed their thoughts—might lead to curious results. We are concerned at present, however, with Milton only.

In Milton's case we are presented with the interesting phenomenon of a mind apparently uncertain to the last which of the two systems, the Ptolemaic or the Copernican, was the true one, or perhaps beginning to be persuaded of the higher probability of the Copernican, but yet retaining the Ptolemaic for poetical purposes. For Milton's life (1608—1674) coincides with the period of the struggle between the two systems. In his boyhood and youth he had, doubtless, in inherited the general or Ptolemaic belief—that in which Shakespeare died. Here, for example, is what everybody was reading during Milton's youth in that favourite book, Sylvester's Translation of Du Bartas:—

"As the ague-sick upon his shivering pallet
Delays his health oft to delight his palate,
When wilfully his tasteless taste delights
In things unsavoury to sound appetites,
Even so some brain-sicks live there now-a-days
That lose themselves still in contrary ways—
Preposterous wits that cannot row at ease
On the smooth channel of our common seas;
And such are those, in my conceit at least,
Those clerks that think—think how absurd a jest!—
That neither heavens nor stars do turn at all
Nor dance about this great round Earthly Ball,
But the Earth itself, this massy globe of ours,
Turns round about once every twice-twelve hours."

Du Bartas had been a French Protestant, and his English translator, Sylvester, was a Puritan. It was not, therefore, only to the Roman Inquisition, or to Roman Catholics, that Galileo must have seemed a "brain-sick" and "a preposterous wit" when he advocated the Copernican theory. In 1638 Milton had himself conversed with Galileo, then old and blind, near Florence. "There it was," he wrote in 1644 (Areopag), "that I found and "visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and "Dominican licensers thought." And yet, despite this passage, and other passages showing how strongly the character and history of Galileo had fascinated him, it may be doubted whether
Milton even then felt himself entitled to reject the system which Galileo had impugned. His friends and literary associates, the Smectymnuans, at all events, in their answer to Bishop Hall's "Humble Remonstrance" (1641), had cited the Copernican doctrine as an unquestionable instance of a supreme absurdity. "There is no more truth in this assertion," they say of one of Bishop Hall's statements, "than if he had said with Anaxagoras, 'Snow is black,' or with Copernicus, 'The Earth moves, and the 'Heavens stand still.'" There cannot be a more distinct proof than this incidental passage affords of the utter repulsiveness of the Copernican theory to even the educated English intellect as late as the middle of the seventeenth century. Milton was probably even then, if we may judge from the above-quoted reference to Galileo, in advance of his contemporaries on this question; and in the interval between that time and the completion of his Paradise Lost his Copernicanism may have become decided. There are, at any rate, two passages in Paradise Lost where he shows his perfect acquaintance with the Copernican theory, and with the arguments in its behalf. The one (IV. 592—597) is an incidental passage; in the other and much longer passage (VIII. 15—178) he makes the question a subject of express conversation between Raphael and Adam. In this last passage Adam is represented as arriving by intuition at the Copernican theory, or at least as perceiving its superior simplicity over the Ptolemaic; and, though the drift of the Angel's reply is that the question is an abstruse one, and that it is of no great consequence for man's real duty in the world which system is the true one, yet the balance of the Angel's remarks is also Copernican. There is no doubt that these two passages were deliberately inserted by Milton to relieve his own mind on the subject, and by way of caution to the reader that the scheme of the physical Universe actually adopted in the construction of the poem needed not be taken as more than a hypothesis for the imagination.

That scheme is, undoubtedly, the Ptolemaic or Alphonsine. Accordingly, the little central circle, hung drop-like from the Empyrean in our last diagram—and there representing the dimensions of the total Creation of the Six Days, or, in other words, of our Starry Universe—may be exhibited now on a magnified scale,
by simply reproducing one of the diagrams of the Heavens which were given in all the old books of Astronomy. The following is a copy (a little neater than the original, but otherwise exact) from a woodcut in an edition, in 1610, of the *Sphæra* of Joannes a Sacrobosco, with commentaries and additions by Clavius and others.*

* Joannes a Sacrobosco, or John Holywood, was an English mathematician of the thirteenth century, who lived and died in Paris; and his treatise *De Sphæra*, as amended by later writers, continued for several centuries to be the favourite manual of Astronomy throughout Europe. Milton himself used it in teaching his pupils, as we learn from his nephew Phillips. With respect to the above cut (which I have selected as the most picturesque from among many similar cuts in old manuals of Astronomy), it seems only necessary to guard the reader against the mistake of supposing that it represents the Mundane System in section precisely as in the former cuts. On the contrary, it represents the interior of the Universe as looked *down* into, in equatorial section, from the pole of the ecliptic. It is, in short, a view vertically *down* from the opening at the pole in the preceding cut—the axis being not from top to bottom of the cut, but from the eye to the centre.
This—literally this—so far as mere diagram can represent it, is the World or Mundane Universe, as Milton keeps it in his mind’s eye throughout the poem. It is an enormous azure round of space, scooped or carved out of Chaos, and communicating aloft with the Empyrean, but consisting within itself of ten Orbs or hollow Spheres in succession, wheeling one within the other, down to the stationary nest of our small Earth at the centre, with the elements of water, air and fire that are immediately around it. It is according to this scheme that Milton virtually describes the process of creation in the first, the second, and the fourth of the six days of Genesis (VII. 232—275 and 339—386)—the only deviation being that the word “Firmament” is not there applied specifically to the 8th or Starry Sphere, but is used for the whole continuous depth of all the heavens as far as the Primum Mobile. As if to prevent any mistake, however, there is one passage in which the Ten Spheres are actually enumerated. It is that (III. 481—483) where the attempted ascent of ambitious souls from Earth to the Empyrean by their own effort is described. In order to reach the opening into the Empyrean at the World’s zenith, what are the successive stages of their flight?

“They pass the Planets Seven, and pass the Fixed,
And that Crystalline Sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that First Moved.”

Here we have the Alphonsine heavens in their order, and with their exact names. But all through the poem the language assumes the same astronomical system. Where the words Orb and Sphere occur, for example, they almost invariably—not quite invariably—mean Orb or Sphere in the Ptolemaic sense. Yet, to make all safe, Milton, as we have seen, inserts two passages at least in which the Copernican theory of the heavens is distinctly suggested as a possible or probable alternative; and, moreover, even while using the language of the other theory, he so arranged that it need not be supposed he does so for any other reason than that of poetical preference.

In one respect the diagram must fail to convey Milton’s complete notion of the World or Mundane Universe at that moment where he supposes the Fiend first gazing down into it from the
glorious opening at the pole, and then plunging precipitate through its azure depths (III. 561—565) in quest of that particular spot in it where Man had his abode. That small Earth which is so conspicuous in the diagram, as being at the centre, either was not visible even to angelic eyes from such an amazing distance as the opening at the pole of the primum mobile, or was not yet marked. The luminary that attracts Satan first, from its all-surpassing splendour—at all events after he has passed the three outermost spheres, and so got within the glittering belt of the fixed constellations and galaxies—that luminary is the Sun. Though the tenant only of the fourth of the Spheres, this luminary so far surpasses all others in majesty that it seems like the King not only of the seven planetary Orbs, but of all the ten. It seems the very God of the whole new Universe—shooting its radiance even through the beds of the stars, as far as the primum mobile itself (III. 571—587). It is thither, accordingly, that Satan bends his flight; it is on this of all the bodies in the new Universe that he first alights; and it is only after the Angel Uriel, whom he there encounters, and who does not recognise him in his disguise, has pointed out to him the Earth shining at a distance in the sunlight (III. 722—724) that he knows the exact scene of his further labours. Thus informed, he wings off again from the sun’s body, and, wheeling his steep flight towards the Earth, alights at length on the top of Niphates, near Eden.

There is no need to follow the action of the poem farther in this Introduction. All that takes place after the arrival of Satan on the Earth—all that portion of the story that is enacted within the bounds of Eden or of Paradise—the reader can without difficulty make out for himself; or any such incidental elucidation as may be needed may be left for the Notes. It is necessary only to take account here of certain final modifications in Milton’s imaginary physical structure of the Universe, which take place after the Tempter has succeeded in his enterprise and Man has fallen.

In the first place there is then established—what did not exist before—a permanent communication between Hell and the new Universe. When Satan had come up through Chaos from Hell-gate, he had done so with toil and difficulty, as one exploring
his way; but no sooner had he succeeded in his mission than Sin and Death, whom he had left at Hell-gate, felt themselves instinctively aware of his success, and of the necessity there would thenceforward be of a distinct road between Hell and the new World, by which all the Infernals might go and come. Accordingly (X. 282—324) they construct such a road—a wonderful causey or bridge from Hell-gate, right through or over Chaos, to that exact part of the outside of the new Universe where Satan had first alighted, i.e. not to its nadir, but to some point near its zenith, where there is the break or orifice in the *primum mobile* towards the Empyrean. And what is the consequence of this vast alteration in the physical structure of the Universe? The consequence is that the Infernal host are no longer confined to Hell, but possess also the new Universe, like an additional island, or pleasure-domain, up in Chaos, and on the very confines of their former home, the Empyrean. Preferring this conquest to their proper empire in Hell, they thenceforward perhaps more frequently in our World than in Hell, winging through its various Spheres, but chiefly inhabiting the Air round our central Earth. But this causey from Hell to the World, constructed by Sin and Death, is not the only modification of the physical Universe consequent on the Fall. The interior of the Human World as it hangs from the Empyrean receives some alterations for the worse by the decree of the Almighty Himself. The elements immediately round the Earth become harsher and more malignant; the planetary and starry spheres are so influenced that thenceforward planets and stars look inward upon the central Earth with aspects of malevolence; nay, perhaps it was now first that, either by a heaving askance of the Earth from its former position, or by a change in the Sun’s path, the ecliptic became oblique to the equator (X. 651—691). All this is apart from changes in the actual body of the Earth, including the obliteration of the site of the desecrated Paradise, and the outbreak of virulence among all things animate.

From the foregoing sketch, it will be seen that, while the poem is properly enough, as the name *Paradise Lost* indicates, the tragical story of the temptation and fall of the human race in its
first parents, yet this story is included in a more comprehensive epic, of which the rebel Archangel is the hero, and the theatre of which is nothing less than Universal Infinitude. While the consummation, as regards Man, is the loss of innocence and Eden, and the liability to Death, and while the last objects that we see, in respect of this consummation, are the outcast pair, with the world all before them where to choose, taking their solitary way through Eden after their expulsion from Paradise, the consummation, as regards Satan, is more in the nature of a triumph. He has succeeded in his enterprise. He has vitiated the new World at its beginning, and he has added it as a conquest to the Hell which had been assigned to him and his for their only proper realm. True, in the very hour of his triumph a curse has been pronounced upon him; he and his host experience a farther abasement by being transmuted into the image of the Serpent; and he and they are left with the expectation of a time when their supposed conquest will be snatched from them, and they will be driven in ignominy back to whence they came. Still, for the present, and until that “greater Man” arise who is to restore the human race, and be the final and universal victor, they are left in successful possession. Whatever the sequel is to be (and it is foreshadowed in vision in the two last books) the Epic has here reached its natural close. Its purpose was to furnish the imagination with such a story of transcendent construction as should connect the mysteries of the inconceivable and immeasurable universe anterior to Time and to Man with the traditions and experience of our particular planet. This is accomplished by fastening the imagination on one great being, supposed to belong to the thronging multitudes of the angelic race that peopled the Empyrean before our World was created; by following this being in his actions as a rebel in Heaven and then as an exile into Hell; and by leaving him at last so far in possession of the new Universe of Man that thenceforward his part as an Archangel is almost forgotten, and he is content with his new and degraded function as the Devil of mere terrestrial regions. Thenceforward he and his are to dwell more in these terrestrial regions, and particularly in the air, than in Hell—mingling themselves devilishly in human affairs, and even, by a splendid stroke of diabolic policy, enjoying
the worship of men while securing their ruin, by passing themselves off as gods and demigods of all kinds of mongrel mythologies. That this is the main course and purport of the Epic will be perceived all the more clearly if the reader will note how much of the action, though it all bears ultimately on the fate of Earth, takes place away from the Earth altogether, and at a rate different from that of earthly causation, in the Empyrean, in Hell, in Chaos, or among the orbs and starry interspaces of the entire Cosmos. The portions of the poem which are occupied with descriptions of Eden and Paradise and the relation of events there are attractive from their peculiar beauty, but they amount to but a fragment of the whole.

One result which ought to follow from a right understanding of the scheme of the Poem, as it has been here exhibited, is a truer idea of the place which Milton's Epic holds among the great poems of the world, and also of its relation to his total mind and life. What is that in any man which is highest, deepest, and most essential in him—which governs all, reveals all, gives the key to all that he thinks or is? What but his way of thinking or feeling, whatever it may be, respecting the relation or non-relation of the whole visible or physical world to that which is boundless, invisible, unfeatured, metaphysical? What he thinks or feels on this subject is essentially his philosophy; if he abstains from thinking on it at all, then this very abstinence is equally his philosophy. And what greater character can there be in a poem, or in any other work of art, than that it truly conveys the author's highest mind or mood on this subject—his theory, if he has one, or his antipathy to any theory, should that be the case? It may be doubted whether the world ever has taken a poem to its larger heart, or placed it in the list of the poems spoken of as great, unless from a perception, more or less conscious, that it possessed, in a notable degree, this characteristic—that it was the expression, in some form or other, under whatever nominal theme, and with whatever intermixture of matter, of the intimate personal philosophy of a great living mind. To suppose, at all events, that Milton could have put forth any poem of large extent uninformed by his deepest and most serious philosophy of life and of the world,
is to know nothing whatever about him. The ingenious construction of a fiction that should anyhow entertain the world, and which the author might behold floating away, detached from himself, like a mere bubble beautifully blown and iridescent—this was not his notion of poesy. Into whatever he wrote he was sure to put as much of himself as possible; and into that work which he intended to be his greatest it would have been safe to predict that he would studiously put the very most of himself. It would have been safe to predict that he would make it not only a phantasy or tale of majestic proportions, with which the human race might regale its leisure, but also a bequest of his own thoughts and speculations on the greatest subjects interesting to man—a kind of testament to posterity that it was thus and thus that he, Milton, veteran and blind, had learnt to think on such subjects, and dared advise the world for ever to think also. True, from the nature of the case, a poet must express himself on such subjects not so much in direct propositions addressed to the reason as in figurative conceptions, phantasmagories, or allegories, imagined individually and connectedly in accordance with his intellectual intention. In as far, therefore, as Paradise Lost is an expression of Milton's habitual mode of thought respecting Man and History in relation to an eternal and unknown Infinity, it is so by way of what the Germans call Vorstellung (popular image or representation) and not by way of Begriff (pure or philosophic notion). Whether on such subjects it is possible to address the human mind at all except through visual or other sensuous images, and whether the most abstract language of philosophers consists of anything else than such images triturated to dust and made colourless, needs not here be inquired. Whatever might have been Milton's abstract theory on any such subject, it was certainly in the nature of his genius to express it in a Vorstellung. He had faith in this method as that by which the collective soul of man had been impressed and ruled in all ages, and would be impressed and ruled to the end of time. He more than once inserts in the poem itself passages cautioning the reader that his descriptions and narratives of supra-mundane scenes and events are not to be taken literally, but only symbolically. Thus, when the Archangel Raphael, yielding to Adam's request, begins, after a pause, his narrative of the
events that had taken place in the Empyrean Heaven before the creation of Man and his Universe, he is made (V. 563—576) to preface his narrative with these words:—

"High matter thou enjoinst 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 dispersed; 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
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like more than on Earth is thought!"

Let *Paradise Lost*, then, be called a Vorstellung. But what a Vorstellung it is! That World of Man, the world of all our stars and starry transparencies, hung but drop-like after all from an Empyrean; the great Empyrean itself, "undetermined square or round," so that, though we do diagram it for form's sake, it is beyond all power of diagram; a Hell, far beneath, but still measurably far, with its outcast infernal Powers tending disastrously upwards or tugging all downwards; finally, between the Empyrean and Hell, a blustering blackness of unimaginable Chaos, roaring around the Mundane Sphere and assaulting everlastingly its outermost bosses, but unable to break through, or to disturb the serenity of the golden poise that steadies it from the zenith—what phantasmagory more truly all-significant than this has the imagination of poet ever conceived? What expanse of space comparable to this for vastness has any other poet presumed to fill with visual symbolisms, or to occupy with a coherent story? The physical universe of Dante's great poem would go into a nutshell as compared with that to which the imagination must stretch itself out in *Paradise Lost*. In this respect—in respect of the extent of physical immensity through which the poem ranges, and which it orbs forth with soul-dilating clearness and maps out with never-to-be-obliterated accuracy before the eye—no possible
poem can ever overpass it. And then the story itself! What story mightier or more full of meaning can there ever be than that of the Archangel rebelling in Heaven, degraded from Heaven into Hell, reascending from Hell to the Human Universe, winging through the starry spaces of that Universe, and at last possessing himself of our central Earth, and impregnating its incipient history with the spirit of Evil? Vastness of scene and power of story together, little wonder that the poem should have so impressed the world. Little wonder that it should now be Milton's Satan, and Milton's narrative of the Creation in its various transcendental connexions, that are in possession of the British imagination, rather than the strict Biblical accounts from which Milton so scrupulously derived the hints to which he gave such marvellous expansion!

But will the power of the poem be permanent? Grand conception as it is, was it not a conception framed too much in congruity with special beliefs and modes of thinking of Milton's own age to retain its efficiency for ever? If the matters it symbolized are matters which the human imagination, and the reason of man in its most exalted mood, must ever strive to symbolize in some form or other, may not the very definiteness, the blazing visual exactness, of Milton's symbolization jar on modern modes of thought? Do we not desire, in our days also, to be left to our own liberty of symbolizing in these matters, and may it not be well to prefer, in the main, symbolisms the least fixed, the least sensuous, the most fluent and cloud-like, the most tremulous to every touch of new idea or new feeling? To this objection—an objection, however, which would apply to all great poetry and Art whatever, and would affect the paintings of Michael Angelo, for example, as much as the Paradise Lost of Milton—something must be conceded. Changes in human ideas since the poem was written have thrown the poem, or parts of it, farther out of keeping with the demands of the modern imagination than it can have been with the requirements of Milton's contemporaries. Not to speak of the direct traces in it of a peculiar theology, in the form of speeches and arguments (in which kind, however, there is less that need really be obsolete than some theological critics have asserted), the Ptolemaism of
Milton's astronomical scheme would alone put the poem somewhat in conflict with the educated modern conceptions of physical Nature. No longer now is the Mundane Universe thought of as a definite succession of Orbs round the globe of Earth. No longer now can the fancy of man be stayed at any distance, however immense, by an imaginary *primum mobile*, or outermost shell, beyond which all is Chaos. The *primum mobile* has been forever burst; and into the Chaos supposed to be beyond it the imagination has voyaged out and still out, finding no Chaos, and no signs of shore or boundary, but only the same ocean of transpicuous space, with firmaments for its scattered islands, and such islands still rising to view on every farthest horizon. Thus accustomed to the idea of Nature as boundless, the mind, in one of its moods, may refuse to conceive it as bounded, and may regard the attempt to do so as a treason against pure truth. All this, we think, must be conceded, although the effects of the concession will not stop at *Paradise Lost*. But there are other moods of the mind—moral and spiritual moods—which poesy is bound to serve; and, just as Milton, in the interest of these, knowingly repudiated the obligation of consistency with physical science as known to himself, and set up a great symbolic phantasy, so to this day the phantasy which he did set up has, for those anyway like-minded to him, lost none of its sublime significance. For all such, is not that physical Universe, which we have learnt not to bound, still, in its inconceivable totality, but as a drop hung from the Empyrean: is not darkness around it; is not Hell beneath it? And what though all are not such? Is it not the highest function of a book to perpetuate like-mindedness to its author after he is gone, and may not *Paradise Lost* be doing this? Nay, and what though the relevancy of the poem to the present soul of the world should have been more impaired by the lapse of time and the change of ideas than we have admitted it to be, and much of the interest of it, as of all the other great poems of the world, should now be historical? Even so, what interest it possesses! What a portrait, what a study, of a great English mind of the seventeenth century it brings before us! "I wonder not so much at the poem itself, "though worthy of all wonder," says Bentley in the preface to his edition of the poem, "as that the author could so abstract his
thoughts from his own troubles as to be able to make it—that, confined in a narrow and to him a dark chamber, surrounded with cares and fears, he could expatiate at large through the compass of the whole Universe, and through all Heaven beyond it, and could survey all periods of time from before the creation to the consummation of all things. This theory, no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction, but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace. And it would almost seem to me to be peculiar to him, had not experience by others taught me that there is that power in the human mind, supported with innocence and conscia virtus, that can make it shake off all outward uneasiness and involve itself secure and pleased in its own integrity and entertainment." It is refreshing to be able to quote from the great scholar and critic words showing so deep an appreciation by him of the real significance of the poem which, as an editor, he mangled. Whatever the Paradise Lost is, it is, as Bentley here points out, a monument of almost unexampled personal magnanimity.

It is not improbable that Milton's blindness, which we are apt to think of as a disqualification for poetry, as for other things, may, in the case of Paradise Lost, have been a positive qualification.

One can imagine many effects of blindness on the mind of a poet. Milton himself, as if with a presentiment of what was one day to be his own fate, had more than once, in his earlier poems, touched on this very theme. Thus, in his sixth Latin Elegy, written in 1629, speaking of strictness of life, and even habits of asceticism, as necessary for all poets of the highest order, he says:—

"Hoc ritu vixisse ferunt post rapta sagacem
Lumina Tiresian,"

and then proceeds to couple the name of the seer Tiresias, in this respect, with that of the poet Homer, who was likewise blind. Again, more expressly, in the Latin lines De Ideâ Platonicâ, also written in youth, we have mention of the same Tiresias and his blindness thus:—.
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"cui profundum caecitas lumen dedit
Dirceus augur."

One remembers also Milton's visit of reverence to the blind Galileo, and those lines in *Paradise Lost* itself (III. 33—36) where he tells us of the secret pleasure he had in associating himself with his famous blind predecessors of the ancient world:—

"Those other two, equalled with me in fate
(So were I equalled with them in renown)—
Blind Thamyris and blind Maenides;
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old."

As to these old poets and prophets blindness had given "the profounder insight," might it not be so also in his case? For this at least he prays. "As I too am blind," he continues,

"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."

But not only in this semi-mystic sense, so dear to Milton, and so natural to his mode of thought—that bodily blindness, in men like him, might perhaps be accompanied by deeper and sublimer spiritual vision, a larger gift of the real faculty of the seer—not in this sense alone might it be contended that, in his great poem, his blindness was even a qualification. Nor yet need it be meant merely, in a more prosaic consideration, that his blindness, by shutting in his mind from external objects, concentrated it on his daring theme and left him at more liberty to pursue it. Nor, again, need we have in view only that influence which would be exerted over his poetry, and especially over the structure and music of his verse, by the fact that his blindness prevented him from composing on paper, and compelled him to compose mentally. These and other influences of blindness may have all had effects. But the influence of which we speak is something more peculiar and specific.

The one sensation, as we may fancy, ever directly present to a blind man, that had once enjoyed sight, would be that of infinitely extended surrounding darkness or blackness. In Milton's case,
we learn from himself, it was not quite so in the first years of his blindness, though it may have gradually become so afterwards. Writing, on the 28th of September, 1654, to his Greek friend Philaras, in answer to a letter which Philaras had sent him, giving him hope that his blindness might not be incurable, and requesting a statement of the symptoms of his case, which Philaras might submit to the celebrated surgeon and oculist, Thevenot of Paris, Milton enters into various particulars as to the manner in which his blindness had come on, and his sensations after it had become total. It had been gradually coming on for ten years; the left eye had failed first; then the right, the vision of which had begun to be sensibly affected three years before the time of his then writing. Before this eye had quite failed, i.e. before his blindness could be called total, there had seemed to come from his shut eyes, on his lying down at night, copious bursts or suffusions of glittering light; but, as from day to day his vision faded towards extinction, these flashes of light had been exchanged for similar bursts of fainter colours, shot as with audible force from the eyes. "Now, however," he adds, "as if lucency were extinct, it is a mere blackness, or a blackness dashed, and as it were inwoven, with an ashy colour (merus nigror aut cineraceo distinctus et quasi intextus), that is wont to pour itself forth; yet the darkness which is perpetually before me, by night as well as by day, seems always nearer to a whitish than to a blackish (albenti semper quam nigricanti propior), and such that, when the eye rolls itself, there is admitted, as through a small chink, a certain little trifle of light." As this was written when Milton had been blind not more than a year, or perhaps two years at the utmost, may we not suppose that the process of darkening which he describes had continued, and that, by the time he had begun his Paradise Lost, even that little chink of which he speaks had been barred, so that the medium in which he found himself, night and day, had then less of the whitish or ash-grey in it, and more of the hue of absolute black? Such a supposition would accord with his own words in the poem (III. 41—49):

"Not to me returns
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.”

And, more decidedly, we seem to see the same suggested in the words of Samson respecting his blindness (*Sams. Agon. 80, 81*):—

“O, dark, dark, dark! amid the blaze of noon  
Irrecoverably dark; total eclipse!”

Now, whether the medium in which a man moved who had lost his sight were such a total opaque of infinitely extended blackness, or only a paler surrounding darkness of ashy gloom, in what would his imaginations of things physical consist? Would they not consist in carving this medium into zones, divisions and shapes, in painting phantasmagories upon it or in it, in summoning up within it or projecting into it combinations of such recollections of the once visible world as remained strongest and dearest in the memory? But are there not certain classes of images, certain kinds of visual recollection, that would be easier in such a state of blindness than others? While the recollections of minute and indifferent objects became dimmer and dimmer—while it might be difficult for a man long blind to recall with exactness the appearance, for example, of such a flower as the violet, or the aspect of a lichen-veined seat at the root of a tree—might not there be a compensation in the superior vividness with which certain other sensations of sight, and in particular all luminous effects, all contrasts of light and darkness, were remembered? If a blind man, that had once enjoyed sight, retained a more vivid recollection of some objects than of others, and a keener faculty in calling up their images, might they not be such objects as these—a lamp, the mouth of a furnace, the sun, the moon, a ball of red-hot iron, the ground covered with snow, the nocturnal sky studded with stars? Might not one that had become blind even excel a person not so afflicted in all that kind of physical description which consisted in contrasts of light and darkness, blaze and blackness, or could be effected poetically through the metaphor of luminousness?
Apply this to *Paradise Lost*. In the first place, the very physical scheme and conception of the poem as a whole seems a kind of revenge against blindness. It is a compulsion of the very conditions of blindness to aid in the formation of a visual phantasmagory of transcendent vastness and yet perfect exactness. That roof of a boundless Empyrean above all, beaming with indwelling light; that Chaos underneath this, of immeasurable opaque blackness; hung into this blackness by a touch from the Empyrean, our created Universe, conceived as a sphere of soft blue ether brilliant with luminaries; separated thence by an intervening belt of Chaos, and marked as a kind of antarctic zone of universal space, a lurid or dull-red Hell—in all this what else have we than the poet making districts in the infinitude of darkness in which he himself moved, and, while suffering some of the districts to remain in their native opaque, rescuing others into various contrasts of light? But not only in the total conception or diagram of the poem may this influence of blindness be traced. In the filling-up, in the imagination of what goes on within any one of the districts into which space is so marked out, or by way of the intercourse of the districts with each other, we may trace the same influence. True, there are portions of the poem where the poet, retracting his regards from the vast and the distant, occupies himself in describing this Earth, and the Eden amidst it, and the Paradise of loveliness within that Eden. By far the larger proportion of the physical descriptions in the poem is, however, of a different kind—not descriptions of landscape, nor terrestrial descriptions at all, but descriptions of phenomena and incidents in the astronomical universe, or in the realms of Heaven, Chaos, and Hell beyond that universe, or interconnecting those realms with that Universe and with Earth. Much of the action and incident consists of the congregation of Angelic Beings in bands beyond our universe, or in their motions singly towards our universe, descrying it from afar, or in their wingings to and fro within our universe from luminary to luminary. Now, in all these portions of the poem, involving what may be called physical description of a supra-terrestrial kind, the mere contrast of darkness with light, the mere imagery of lucency—of light in masses, streaks, gleams, particles, or discs—goes very far. Many instances
might be given. When Satan, already half-way through Chaos, in his quest of the new Universe, ceases his temporary halt at the pavilion of Night, and, having received direction there, rises with fresh alacrity for his further ascent, how is the recommencement of his motion indicated? He (II. 1013-4)—

"Springs upward like a pyramid of fire
Into the wild expanse."

And, when, having attained to the new Universe and found the opening into it, he flings himself down and alights first on the Sun, how is his alighting on the body of the Sun described (III. 588—590)?—

"There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the Sun's lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw."

But, even if we follow Milton into the passages of purely terrestrial description in his Paradise Lost—his descriptions of Eden and what went on there—we shall trace, if I am not mistaken, some subtle action of the same influence from his blindness. These portions of the poem amount to about a fifth or sixth of the whole, and they are surpassingly beautiful. The poet revels there in a wealth of verdure and luxuriant detail, reminding us of the rich pastoral poems of his youth, when he delighted in landscape and vegetation. Take the first general description of Paradise (IV. 246—268):—

"Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others whose fruit, burnished 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 crowned
Her crystal mirror 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.”

How richly here do the blind poet’s recollections of natural scenery come back to his dreams! Or take, as a more minute specimen, the description of the nuptial bower of Eve (IV. 692—703):

“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 odorous bushy shrub
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Brodered the ground, more coloured than with stone
Of costliest emblem.”

Beautiful this too; a brave recollection of his old loves, the flowers! But, though such passages abound, showing how, after years of blindness, the poet could still walk in imagination over the variegated earth and recall its delights of form and colour for his use, it will be found, I think, that even in these passages, and much more in others, there is here and there a subtle cunning peculiar to blindness. What I mean is that, even in his descriptions of terrestrial scenes and incidents, Milton will be found, in his Paradise Lost, to have produced his effects with an unusual degree of frequency through the use of the possible varieties of the single metaphor of luminousness or radiance. When, for example, Ithuriel and Zephon, searching through Paradise at night, discover Satan squat like a toad at the ear of the sleeping Eve, and when Ithuriel touches him with his spear, how is the effect described (IV. 814—820)?

“Up he starts
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun some magazine to store
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;
So started up in his own shape the Fiend.”

In the sequel, Ithuriel and Zephon, leading Satan as their prisoner, bring him to the western point of the garden, where the two subdivisions of guardian angels that have been going their rounds have just met and formed company under Gabriel's command. There Gabriel upbraids the captive Fiend, who in his turn defies Gabriel, and waxes insolent. One of his speeches is so insolent that the whole band of Gabriel's angels instinctively begin to close round him to attack him. And how is this described (IV. 978—980)?—

“While thus he spake, the Angelic squadron bright
Turned fiery-red, sharpening in mooned horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round.”

i.e. the appearance of the angelic band, advancing in the dark to encircle Satan, was like that of the crescent moon. But throughout the poem many similar instances will be found, in which the metaphor of luminousness is made to accomplish effects that we should hardly have expected from it. We see the fond familiarity of the blind poet with the element of light in contrast with darkness, and an endless inventiveness of mode, degree, and circumstance in his fancies of this element. Throughout Paradise Lost, brilliance is, to a great extent, Milton's favourite synonym for beauty.*

One question that may be asked respecting the scheme of Paradise Lost remains still unanswered. What extent of time is embraced in the story of the poem? On this question Addison is rather vague: “The modern criticks,” he says, “have collected, “from several hints in the Iliad and Æneid, the space of time “which is taken up by the action of each of those poems; but, “as a great part of Milton's story was transacted in regions that

* To prevent mistake, I may state that I have already, in various places, and sometimes anonymously, expressed some of the speculations given in the text as to the influence of Milton's blindness on his later poetry.
“lie out of the reach of the Sun and the sphere of Day, it is "impossible to gratify the reader with such a calculation, which, "indeed, would be more curious than instructive.” With due deference to Addison, it is best to assume that some instruction may lurk in whatever is curious; and, if Milton has given any hints in his poem, bearing on the question of the length of time over which the story extends, or on the more subtle question of his own notion of the applicability of the human measure of time to such a story at all, it is the business of the critic to collect them. In this respect, too, there is not the least doubt that Milton had a distinct intention.

The action of the poem opens, in the First Book, with what Milton, in the Argument to that book, calls "the midst of things" —i.e. with the rousing of Satan and the rest of the fallen Angels from their first stupor in Hell, and their assembling to deliberate on the policy that may be best for them in their new condition. Whatever information is given us respecting those prior events in Heaven which had brought things to this pass, comes in mostly in later parts of the poem by way of retrospect. The rousing of the rebel Angels in Hell is the first event in the order of reading. That event, however, is not left undated. It was exactly eighteen days after the expulsion of the rebel Angels from Heaven by the Messiah. Nine of these days had been occupied, we are afterwards told (VI. 871—875), with their fall into Hell—

"Nine days they fell. Confounded Chaos roared,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
Encumbered him with ruin; Hell at last
Yawning received them whole, and on them closed."

But, after they had thus fallen into Hell and been inclosed within its convex, there was a second period of nine days, during which they lay there stunned and stupefied. This we are told at I. 50—53, where the account of Satan's first awakening from his stupor and casting round his baleful eyes in Hell is prefaced thus:—

"Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gult,
Confounded, though immortal."
Milton, it will be seen, here positively stipulates that these second nine days, during which the fallen Angels lay entranced in Hell, shall be taken as literal or human days. Indeed, there is a necessity for this which does not at once appear. For it is during these second nine days, or period of the entrancement of the outcast Angels in Hell, that Milton subsequently makes the creation of Man's Universe to have taken place; and, as that creation, according to his literal rendering of the Scripture narrative, is described as occupying six days, the measure of the day is intended to be the same in both cases. There are even means for determining, by hints in the poem, those particular six days, out of the nine of Angelic stupor in Hell, during which Milton conceived the work of creation in the Chaos above Hell to have been completed. Thus, in the Argument to the First Book, where we are told that "the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell," it is added that Hell is "described here not in the centre," but as situated in "a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos"—the reason for this deviation from the classical or traditional view of the place of Tartarus in space being given, parenthetically, in these words: "For Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly yet not accurst." That is to say, it has to be assumed in Milton's Epic that the rebel Angels are already fallen into Hell, and closed in there, before there need have existed that Universe of our heavens and earth within the bounds of which Hell had been usually placed by previous poets. This is a preliminary hint to prevent mistake; but actually the poem itself tells us that the central Universe did not exist at the time when the rebel Angels fell through the depths of Chaos, nor till after they had been shut up for some time in that pit or nethermost section of Chaos which had been converted into a Hell. When Satan and the rest have recovered from their stupor of nine days in this new abode, they are represented (I. 650—656, and II. 345—351) as knowing, from their recollection of prophecies and rumours in Heaven, that somewhere or other, "about this time," the new World of Man must have been created; and on this knowledge or conjecture all their farther action is founded. And their conjecture is right. The work of the new creation
Introduction:

had been begun in the Chaos above them, and completed, or all but completed, during their stupor. For, according to Raphael's account to Adam (VII. 131, et seq.), it was after Satan and his legions had been driven by the Messiah's thunders down into Hell, and the Messiah had returned in triumph to his Father in the Empyrean, that the fiat for the new creation went forth. To execute this fiat, the Son, attended by His myriads of angelic ministers, again rides forth into Chaos; where, first marking out the spherical bounds of the new Universe, or clearing its destined bulk in the body of Chaos (VII. 216—242), He then, in six successive days (VII. 243—550), brings it, and the Earth at its centre, to perfection. At the close of the sixth day, called "the seventh evening" in the poem, all having been made consummate by the creation of Man, He returns to His Father in the Empyrean, and there follows the Sabbath of rest, contemplation, and worship among all the Heavenly hosts (VII. 551—634). All this Raphael tells to Adam—relating, seemingly as one who had been an eye-witness, the acts of each of the six days, save (as afterwards appears) one. That day was the sixth. On that day, or on the most important portion of it, Raphael was not himself within the bounds of the new Universe, and, consequently, he had only heard of the crowning creation of Man on that day, and had not witnessed the particulars. This we learn from his own words to Adam (VIII. 228—246), in reply to Adam's proposal to relate in return his recollections of his origin on the Earth. Adam, though he makes this proposal, does so chiefly with a view to prolong his conversation with the Archangel, and is naturally diffident as to the interest which his poor story may have for his Heavenly and all-informed guest. But Raphael reassures him, and explains why Adam's recollections of that sixth day of creation, the day of Adam's own origin, will be of special interest to him—

"For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
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 mixed. Not that they durst without His leave attempt; But us He sends upon His high behests For state, as sovan King, and to enure 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 lament and furious rage. Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light Ere Sabbath evening.”

This passage certainly implies that, in Milton's conception, that sixth day, the Friday of the creative week, on which Man was made, was also the day on which the rebel Angels, recovering from their nine days of stupor, began to bustle about in Hell. On the afternoon of that day, Raphael with his squadrons, watching at the gates of Hell in nether Chaos, found them still fast, but could hear the tumult of the inmates within. It was while they were in their first tumult there, and the thought of the new Universe was occurring to Satan, that the gracious act which finished that Universe was going on high overhead. Nay, and that next day in Hell, which was spent by the Fiends in continued tumult, but in tumult organized into a council to deliberate their future policy—was it not the same day which was spent by the hosts of the unfallen Angels in the Empyrean, Raphael amongst them after his expedition, as a Sabbath of rest, contemplation, and worship? The very Sabbath which in Heaven was spent in hymns of rejoicing over the new Universe was spent in Hell in plotting its ruin!

So far, unless we suspect obliviousness in Milton and mere casual coincidence, we must suppose that he intended an exact measure of time in the action of his poem. There are eighteen days between the expulsion of the rebel Angels from Heaven and the completion of the new Universe by the creation of Man—the first nine of these days being possibly metaphorical, but the second nine avowedly literal or human days. To this he was partly obliged, as we have seen, by his adherence to the Mosaic account of the Creation. But from this point onwards, through a certain portion of the action of the poem, we find him using his poet's privilege (which the very conditions of his subject made especially
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legitimate in his case) of changing the rate of events, and making himself independent of consistency in his measure of time. For example, if the deliberations in Hell took place on the nineteenth day according to the above reckoning, or the first Sabbath of the new Universe, then, as one reads the account of what immediately followed these deliberations—Satan's swift ascent to Hell-gates to perform his mission; the opening of the gates to him by Sin and Death; his toilsome journey upwards, in two main stages, through superincumbent Chaos, till he reaches the confines of the new Universe; his wanderings round the outer shell, or *primum mobile*, of that Universe, till he discerns the light of the opening into it underneath Heaven's gate at the zenith; his first view of the whole interior of the Universe from that opening; his plunging down into that interior through its successive spheres; his alighting on the body of the Sun, and conversation with Uriel there; and, finally, his winging from the Sun to the Earth, and his first contact with that planet of his search at the top of Mount Niphates near Eden—it might seem as if all these events, occupying a portion of the Second Book, and the whole of the Third, might well have been transacted in the course of a single day, making, let us say, the twentieth day from the point first dated. For, if Raphael had ascended from Hell-gates back to the Empyrean in but a portion of a day, so as to arrive by Sabbath-eve, might not one whole day have sufficed for the complete voyage of the ruined Archangel from Hell's depths to his alighting on our Earth at the centre of the new Universe? As one reads, it is some such conception that occurs to one, if time is thought of at all. Or if, remembering that the fall through Chaos into Hell had occupied nine days, and that the ascent might be more arduous, one were to substitute a calculation of time for the mere natural impression of the text, still one could not prolong the time of Satan's journey to Earth over more than a very moderate number of days. Yet, in the sequel, a considerable lapse of time in this part of the general action of the poem is found to be necessary. If Satan arrived on the Earth in but one day's flight from Hell, Adam and Eve had been but two days in existence when his machinations for their ruin began. Created on Friday, if we may speak so definitely,
they were but in the first Sunday or Monday of their life. Or, even if Satan's journey to Earth should be calculated at nine days, or twice nine days, the first man and woman were still but tiros in Eden when he arrived. But the whole tenor of their subsequent story assumes that their Paradisaic life had for some time been going on, and that the new Universe had been wheeling for some time in quiet beauty, diurnal and nocturnal, round the central Earth which bore them, before the advent of the Fiend. Thus, in that first dialogue of the Happy Pair which the Fiend overhears as soon as he has descended from Niphates into Eden, and found his way into Paradise, Eve is made to say to Adam (IV. 449—452)—

"That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed
Under a shade on flowers, much wondering where
And what I was."

This language, it is evident, would be at fault unless the day so remembered by Eve were supposed to be at a considerable distance; and, if Eve were supposed to have been only two days in existence, it would be absurd. Again, Eve is made to say, addressing Adam (IV. 639, 640)—

"With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons and their change; all please alike."

Here, even if the word "seasons" should be interpreted, by the rest of the passage, as meaning only different times of the day, and changing aspects of morning and evening, in sunlight, shower, or starlight, the implication certainly is that there had been a considerable experience of these phenomena. And so in many other places where Adam himself talks—particularly in his narrative to Raphael of his recollections of his first awakening to life, and of Eve's presence beside him (VIII. 250—559). In short, Milton assumed that the Paradisaic life had lasted some time before the arrival of the Fiend to put an end to it.

Unless we revert to the supposition that Milton was oblivious in all this (which is very unlikely), we must accept the inconsistency as intentional. By the very nature of his poem, Milton
was bound to the human measure of time only for events within our astronomical Universe. For events in the regions transcending that Universe—in the Empyrean, in Chaos, or in Hell—he might take a transcendental measure of time, or none at all. True, for the purpose of making certain events in those transcendent regions *contemporary*, to the human imagination, with the Biblical week during which our Universe was evolved into being, he had dared to fit on the human measure of time to a special period of the vast transactions of the infinitude surrounding the World. He had marked out *eighteen* or *nineteen* days during which, or at least during the last nine or ten of them, the imagination might apply the human measure of time even to those transactions. But, this over, he resumes his poetic liberty, and lapses into a vagueness as to time—into a discrepancy between the rate of things within our Universe and the rate of things beyond it. All that had taken place *beyond* the Universe, from that Sabbath of contemplative admiration in Heaven over the finished creation, and of diabolic scheming against it down in Hell, had taken place at a different rate from that at which things went on *within* it. That journey of Satan upwards through Chaos on his fatal errand, and that dialogue between the Father and Son in Heaven as to the redemption of the World from the consequences of Satan's foreseen success (III. 56—415), have to be conceived according to a transcendental measure of time. As we read of Satan's expedition up through Chaos, it seems as if a day were sufficient for it; but, when his journey is ended, and we stand with him on the top of Niphates, lo! the Earth has been for many a day in the midst of the wheeling spheres, and that Sabbath which we thought to be but yesterday is a long way in the distance.

From the moment, however, that the action of the poem begins to be on Earth, the ordinary measure of time is resumed. However long the Earth had been in existence in the midst of the sphery system, and however long Adam and Eve had been becoming familiar with Paradise, and with each other, on that fatal day when Satan alighted on the top of Niphates, the story from that time forward is comprised within a definite number of ordinary days and nights. The following is the scheme of time,
Bibliographical, Biographical, and Expository.

from the arrival of Satan on the Earth at the end of Book III.,
on to the close of the poem:—

First Day.—Satan, who has alighted on Niphates exactly at
noon (IV. 29—31), spends the rest of that day in surveying
Eden from the mountain-top, in descending into Eden, and in
making his way into Paradise in the neighbourhood of Adam
and Eve. It is towards evening when he first sees them and
listens to their conversation (IV. 331, and IV. 355); he leaves
them for a while at sunset (IV. 536—543) and roams through
Paradise; but at night he is found by Ithuriel and Zephon in
Eve’s nuptial bower, squat like a toad, and insinuating dreams
into her ear. Arrested, and brought, in his own shape, before
Gabriel and the rest of the night-watch of angels, about or
shortly after midnight, he listens to Gabriel’s denunciations, replies de-
fiantly, and then, towards daybreak (IV. 1014, 1015), hurries
away in a permitted flight. Book IV. contains the whole action
of this day.

Second Day.—This day spreads over no less than four Books
of the poem—viz. Books V., VI., VII., and VIII. For, Eve
having awoke in the morning, troubled with her dream, and
Adam having comforted her, and the two having gone forth to
their work in the garden, the Archangel Raphael, who has been
sent down from Heaven to warn them of their danger, arrives at
noon, when their day’s work is over (V. 299—301), and the rest
of the day is taken up with his long colloquy with Adam. It
is into this colloquy that Milton has inwoven, by way of retro-
spect, much that is essential to his story—the account of the
rebellion and wars in Heaven, of the defeat and expulsion of
the rebel Angels, of the creation of the Universe, &c. The col-
loquy is protracted till evening, when (VIII. 652, 653) Raphael
departs.

Interval of Six Days.—During the six days following the de-
parture of Raphael we are left to suppose Adam and Eve still
in their happiness, and going about their duties in Paradise.
We are left to suppose this; for we have no account of these
days, save that we learn afterwards (IX. 53—67) that Satan had
not quitted the Earth, but was all the while circling it, and medit-
tating his re-approach to the innocent pair. He had fled at night
on the first day; and it was not till the eighth night from that, inclusively, that he thought it prudent to return. During these seven days he had not ceased going round and round the globe; adjusting his circuits, however, so as always to be in Night, or within the Earth's shadow, lest Uriel, the Angel of the Sun, whom he had deceived once, and who was now on the alert, should be aware of his movements.

Ninth Day.—This is the day of the Temptation and the Fall. On the previous night—i.e. on the night of what, in our present reckoning, is the eighth day—Satan, having returned from compassing the Earth, has re-entered Paradise (IX. 67—75), and hidden himself in the Serpent (IX. 179—191), waiting for the morning. When the morning comes, Adam and Eve come forth to begin the new day (IX. 192—199). Adam at length yielding to her request that they should betake themselves separately to their tasks in the Garden, the Serpent has the opportunity of tempting Eve alone. It is about noon (IX. 739) when he succeeds in making her eat of the forbidden fruit (IX. 780, 781). Adam's participation in the sin (IX. 995—998), and the mutual upbraiding and shame which follow the act, and conclude Book IX., are to be supposed as filling up the afternoon. But the incidents of the same fatal day extend into Book X. It is still but the evening of the same day when the Son comes down from Heaven into Paradise (X. 90—102) to pronounce judgment on the trembling pair. From the terms of the judgment Adam learns that it was not to be as might have been feared from the original threatening—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" but that, though on that very day the liability to death had been incurred, the actual stroke was deferred (X. 209—211). Left again to themselves, the unhappy pair spend the night in sad discourses. This we learn only incidentally, by being told that Satan, who had slunk away into a wood immediately after the temptation of Eve, and had thence seen the events of the afternoon, but had fled terrified in the evening on beholding the descent of the Son of God, had returned in the night, and had then gathered from the sad talk of Adam and Eve the nature of his own doom (X. 332—344).

Tenth Day.—There is a difficulty about this day. Addison and other critics omit it altogether, and suppose the whole of
Book X. to be but a continuation of the Ninth Day, or the day of the Fall and the subsequent evening and night. Examination, however, will prove that the poem assumes at least one complete day and night as having been spent by Adam and Eve in Paradise after the day of their fall and the immediately following night of their first sad discourse on the consequences. Thus, Sin and Death, whom Satan had left at Hell-gates, eager to follow him if his enterprise should succeed (II. 865—870), and who had followed him, and not only followed him, but built in their track through Chaos that wondrous bridge or causey which was thenceforth permanently to connect Hell with the new Universe (II. 1024—1033, and X. 229—311)—these two horrible visitants from Hell had just completed their strange labour of engineering, and fastened the end of their bridge on the outside shell of the new Universe near the opening under Heaven's gate, when they behold Satan emerging in radiant triumph out of the starry involutions of the new Universe on his way back to Hell to report his victory (X. 311—331). Now, although the transit of Sin and Death from Hell-gate to the new Universe is an extra-mundane event, and need not have the mundane measure of time applied to it, yet Satan's appearance to them, being within the extreme mundane limits, has a time assigned to it. What is that time? It is at what would be sunrise on the Earth (X. 229)—i.e. the morning immediately following the night after the Fall. Satan is then returning in exultation to Hell, to carry thither the news of his success. The rest of his journey thither, and what occurred in Hell on his arrival (X. 410—584), are extra-mundane, and may or may not be referred to the same day. To this day, however, must be referred the descent of Sin and Death, after their parting from Satan, into the Mundane Universe, their arrival in Paradise and their dialogue there (X. 585—613); and to the same day, necessarily, also those modifications for the worse of the physical arrangements of the Mundane Universe which were decreed by the Almighty in consequence of its moral ruin (X. 613—706). It is in the night of the same day that we have Adam's long soliloquy of lamentation (X. 714—862; see especially lines 845, 846), followed by that discourse with Eve which, beginning with new upbraidings on his part, ends in their reconciliation and
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joint prayers to Heaven (X. 863—1104). It is precisely, however, with respect to this soliloquy of Adam "through the still night," and the subsequent dialogue with Eve till morning, that the difficulty has been felt by commentators. There are phrases in both the soliloquy and the dialogue which, at first sight, seem to imply that this sleepless night of misery was the night immediately after the Fall. See lines 773, 811, and 962. But this would not be consistent with the fact that the soliloquy and dialogue are plainly announced (X. 714—716) to have taken place after Sin and Death had arrived on the Earth and begun to work their destructive effects on vegetation and animal life there, and also after those physical derangements of the Universe by Almighty decree which brought in tempests, and cold, and noxious planetary influences—both which sets of events are distinctly represented as subsequent to Satan's exit from the Universe on the morning after the day of the Fall. Either, then, the phrases in question are not to be interpreted literally (and, after all, they need not be so), or it must be assumed that Milton was oblivious in this particular instance, and forgot that he had already disposed of the night immediately following the Fall, and the day succeeding that night. It does not seem impossible to me that, in composing the poem, he did originally intend to refer Adam's long soliloquy and the dialogue with Eve to the night immediately following the Fall. This is the more probable because we are told that on that night immediately following the Fall the hapless pair did hold sad discourse together (X. 341—343), and because there is a coincidence between their actual discourse as we have it on the subsequent night and what we are told was their discourse then. Satan, we are told, had gathered the nature of his doom from their discourse on the first night; but there is a passage in their discourse on the second night exactly such as would have conveyed this information to him (X. 1030—1040). May not Milton, then, have originally intended this second night's discourse as it now stands to have been the sad discourse of the first night to which Satan listened, and may not the interposition of the intervening events have been an afterthought? In any case we are now obliged, as the poem stands, to suppose a night, and then a whole day, and then another night, to have been passed
by Adam and Eve in Paradise after their sin. One may even
find, if one chooses to do so, a poetic fitness in the haziness
with which, so far as Adam and Eve are concerned, the record of
this time of their wretchedness is kept. One night passes over
them woefully talking together; the next day, while the world is
growing darker and less lovely around them, they are apart some-
where, as if separately stunned and in horror; and, on the second
night, when, after Adam's long recovering lamentation by himself,
Eve re-approaches him and they converse, it still seems as if it
were but the one protracted night after the day of their guilt.

Eleventh Day. This is the day of the expulsion from Paradise.
We had already been informed (X. 1069—1070) that the previous
night's converse of Adam and Eve had been protracted till day-
break, and this information is repeated (XI. 133—140). It is
now, therefore, the morning of the Eleventh Day. Adam and
Eve have just ended their orisons and find themselvescomforted,
but are again perplexed by strange omens of an alteration in
nature, when the Archangel Michael, who has been sent down
with an Angelic band to perform the expulsion, appears within
the Garden (XI. 208—250). He announces the errand on which
he has come, and we have the lamentations of Adam and Eve on
the prospect of their leaving their native ground (XI. 251—333).
But Michael has it in charge to fortify Adam, first of all, with a
vision of the future of the human race, and the hope of the
ultimate restoration to be effected in the Incarnate Son. Accord-
ingly, while Eve is left asleep below, the Archangel and Adam
ascend the hill-top, whence, in a vision, which the Archangel
interprets, Adam looks forward through the coming ages, seeing
human history evolve itself, first to the Flood, and thence onward
more rapidly, through the annals of the Jewish nation, to the
advent of Christ. The account of this vision, and of Michael's
interpretation of it to Adam, extends from XI. 366 to XII. 605.
The last experience of Adam within his Paradise Lost may be
said therefore, to be the hope thus revealed to him of Paradise
Regained—of Satan, Sin, and Death revanquished, and the World
renewed for ever by the "one greater Man" of promise, his own
descendant in the flesh, and yet the Lord of all things. The day,
it may be supposed, is far spent when, after this long vision, the
Archangel and Adam descend the hill, and find Eve awaiting them at the foot. The flaming ministers of terror meanwhile having taken possession of Paradise, Michael executes his final duty. Leading Adam and Eve direct to the eastern gate, and through it, and then down to the plain beneath, he there leaves them. Behind them all the eastern side of Paradise is ablaze, the burning brand waving over it to prevent return, and the gate thronged with dreadful faces and fiery arms. And so the poem closes with this last glimpse of the outcasts:–

"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."
PARADISE LOST:

A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS.

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON.
COMMENDATORY VERSES,

PREFIXED TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN PARADISUM AMISSAM SUMMI POETÆ JOHANNIS MILTONI.

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 penetralia Mundi,
   Scribitur et toto quicquid in Orbe latet;
Terræque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum,
   Sulphureumque Erebi flammivomumque specus;
Quæque colunt terras, pontumque, et Tartara cæca,
   Quæque colunt summi lucida regna poli;
Et quodcunque 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.
Hæc qui speraret quis crederet esse futurum?
   Et tamen hæc hodie terra Britannia legit.
O quantos in bella duces, quæ protulit arma!
   Quæ canit, et quantà prælia dira tubâ!
Cœlestes acies, atque in certamine Cœlum!
   Et quæ cœlestes pugna deceret agros!
Quantus in ætheriis tollit se Lucifer armis,
   Atque ipso graditur vix Michaele minor!
Quantis et quam funestis concurritur iris,
   Dum ferus hic stellas protegit, ille rapit!
Dum vulsos montes ceu tela reciproca torquent,
   Et non mortali desuper igne pluunt,
Stat dubius cui se parti concedat Olympus,
   Et metuit pugnae non superesse suæ.
Commendatory Verses.

At simul in coelis Messiae insignia fulgent,
   Et currus animes, armaque digna Deo,
Horrendumque rotæ strident, et sæva rotarum
   Erumpunt torvis fulgura luminibus,
Et flamæ vibrant, et vera tonitrua rauco
Admistis flammis insonuere polo,
Excidit attonitis mens omnis, et impetus omnis,
   Et cassis dextris irrita tela cadunt;
Ad poenas fugiunt, et, ceu foret Orcus asylum,
   Infernis certant condere se tenebris.
Cedite, Romani Scriptores; cedite, Graii;
Et quos fama recens vel celebravit anus:
Hæ quicunque leget tantum cecinisse putabit
   Mæonidem ranas, Virgilium culices.

S. B., M.D.

ON PARADISE 'LOST.

When I beheld the Poet blind, yet bold,
In slender book his vast design unfold—
Messiah crowned, God's reconciled decree,
Rebelling Angels, the Forbidden Tree,
Heaven, Hell, Earth, Chaos, All—the argument
Held me a while misdoubting 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, soon 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;
Lest he perplexed the things he would explain,
And what was easy he should render vain.
   Or, if a work so infinite he spanned,
Jealous I was that some less skilful 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 a share.
Thou hast not missed 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.

   The 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 the Paradise you sing
So never flags, but always keeps on wing.

   Where could'st thou words of such a compass find?
Whence furnish such a vast expense of mind?
Just Heaven, thee like Tiresias to requite,
Rewards with prophecy thy loss of sight.

   Well might'st thou scorn thy readers to allure
With tinkling rime, of thy own sense secure;
While the Town-Bayes 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 rime.

A. M.
THE VERSE.

The measure is English heroic 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 metre; graced 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, than else they would have expressed 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 itself, 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 esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.
This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon 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 battle; 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 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, 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 that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, 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 brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the highth of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state;
Favoured 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,
Stirred 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,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled 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 vanquished, 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 witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as Angel's 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
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
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.
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell! There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire, He soon discerns; and, writhing 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 called SATAN, with bold words Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—

"If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen! how changed From him!—who, in the happy realms of light, 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,

Joined with me once, now misery hath joined

In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest

From what highth 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 fixed 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 armed,

That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring, His utmost power with adverse power opposed

In dubious battle 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,
Irreconcilable 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,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:

“O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered 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 swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered 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 yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied:—

"Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure—
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 oftentimes 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 recalled
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,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
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, re-assembling 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."

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 warred on Jove,
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,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chained 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, shewn
On Man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.

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 i' 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
He lights—if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate;
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal 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 sovrain can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from Him is best,
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernall World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor—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:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished 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
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered:—"Leader of those armies bright
Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled!
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
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 cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand—
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called
His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore 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 called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded:—"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 battle 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
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?—
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"

They heard, and were abashed, 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 obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o' er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope 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
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
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 in Heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
By their rebellion from the Books 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 the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities:
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the Heathen World.
   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, throned
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, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led 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, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroar 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 Elealè to the Asphaltic Pool:
Peor 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
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth—those male,
These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous 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
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth, whom the Phœnicians called
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,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsel 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, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,
In his own temple, on the grusel-edge,
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshipers:
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharpar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king—
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown—
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train—
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox—
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.

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 filled
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 with 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 renowned
The Ionian gods—of Javan's issue held
Gods, yet confessed 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,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reigned. 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 roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief
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 fainting courage, and dispelled their fears:
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazoned,
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
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, 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 highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
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 charmed
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 warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
Had to impose. He through the armèd 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 embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes—though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed 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 Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, 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. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the Archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, 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), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain—
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singèd 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 enclose him round
With all his peers: Attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn, 
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last 
Words interwove with sighs found out their way:—
"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty!—and that strife
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 feared
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 re-ascend,
Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
If counsels different, or danger shunned
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 concealed—
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 pry, 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 despaired;
For who can think submission? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved."

He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched 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, winged with speed,
A numerous brigad hastened: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell.
From Heaven; for even 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 enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the Centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged 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 their 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.
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 scummed the bullion-dross.
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
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
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed 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 archèd 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 entered; and the work some praise,
And some the architect. His hand was known
In Heaven by many a towered 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 inAusonian land
Men called him Mulciber; 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
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle. Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd Haralds, 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 called
From every band and squar'd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
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
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state-affairs: so thick the aery crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless—like that pygmean 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 overhead 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.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.
The consultation begun, 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 them 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 at length they are opened, and discover to him the great Gulf between Hell and Heaven. With 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 East 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 untaught, His proud imaginations thus displayed:—

"Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!— For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,  
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent  
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 fixed laws of Heaven,  
Did first create your leader—next, free choice,  
With what besides in council or in fight  
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,  
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more  
Established 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 deemed
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 recked 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
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Armed 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
Mixed with Tartarean 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 benumb 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 feared! 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 destroyed! What can be worse Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned 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 destroyed than thus, We should be quite abolished, 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."

He ended frowning, 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 seemed For dignity composed, and high exploit. But all was false and hollow; though his tongue Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear 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 filled
With arm'd 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, 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;
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 strook
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those 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 opened, 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 hurled,
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespitied, unpitied, unreprimed,
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
War, therefore, open or concealed, 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 expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
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 in time may 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 conformed
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope 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,
Counselled ignoble ease 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,
Mustering 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
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 finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnacle, 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 seemed
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 called
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 doomed
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 foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Voutsafed 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 Conqueror 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, called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favoured more
Of Him who rules above; so was His will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed.
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 are 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,
Hurled 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 Beëlzebub
Pleased his devilish counsel—first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence,
But from the author 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 renewes:—
"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, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight,
Upborne with indefatigable 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
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 appeared
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,
Astonished. None among the choice and prime
Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchical pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—

"O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. 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,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night 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, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorned
With splendour, armed 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,
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 honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror 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 feared,
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 failed they to express how much they praised
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished 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, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or shower,
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
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 damned
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, and seemed
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 enclosed
With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers
Paradise Lost.

Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, 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 shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades 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 acry knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhoean 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 Æchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Æta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
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 enthrall 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 reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—
Fixed 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 obdurèd breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
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 disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
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 Damiata 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 damned
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 Lethean 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
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 adventrous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, 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 feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, 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 scour[s] 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 descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
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,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable Shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape—
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either,—black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
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 feared (God and his Son except,
Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),
And with disdainful look thus first began:—

"Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
That dar'st, 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 asked 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 rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons,
Conjured against the Highest—for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage 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 Terror, 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 burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled 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,—then stand front to front
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe. 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 rushed 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, ordained his drudge to execute  
Whate'er his wrath, which He calls justice, bids—  
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!"

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest  
Forbore: then these to her Satan returned:—  
"So strange thy outcry, 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-formed, 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 deemed 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 armed,  
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized  
All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid  
At first, and called 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,
Becam'st enamoured; 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 remained
(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 hands 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,
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
Transformed: 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 sighed
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 dismayed,
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Engendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'lt—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 terrors 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 tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
Save He who reigns above, none can resist.”

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered 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
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Besotten 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 armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth 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 designed, 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, embalmed
With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey.”

He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed 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’ermatched 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 compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?  
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou  
My being gav'st 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 beseems  
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.”

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,  
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 key-hole 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 opened; but to shut  
Excellèd her power: the gates wide open stood,  
That with extended wings a bannered host,  
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through  
With horse and chariots ranked 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—a dark  
Illimitable ocean, without bound,  
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and highth,  
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night  
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold  
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms: they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered 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 embroils 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 mixed
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 looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
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 steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad 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 vacuity. 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,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed—
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon through the wilderness
With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
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
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
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, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
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 bounds
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 expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect 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,
Answered:—"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 frightened 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,
Encroached on still through our 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, linked in a golden chain
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;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo passed
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool steered.

So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labour he;
But, he once passed, 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 endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb
Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse
With easy intercourse pass 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 outmost 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 waste, 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 adorned
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,
Accurst, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK,
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK III.

THE 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 withstood 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 towards 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, offspring of Heaven first-born! 
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light, 
And never but in unapproach’d light
Dwelt from eternity—dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? 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 detained
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
Through utter and through middle Darkness 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 re-ascend,
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 quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. 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 hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
So were I equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
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 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 Empyrean 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; 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, unrivalled love,
In blissful solitude. He then surveyed
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 seemed
Firm land imbosomed 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, seest thou what rage
Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds
Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
Heaped 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 failed;
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 appeared,
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 despoiled,
Made passive both, had served Necessity,
Not Me? They, therefore, as to right belonged
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making; or their fate,
As if Predestination overruled
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 formed them free, and free they must remain
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; they themselves ordained 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 ambrosial fragrance filled
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 expressed; and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appeared,
Love without end, and without measure grace;
Which uttering, thus He to his Father spake:—

"O Father, gracious was that word which closed
Thy sovrán 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
Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
For, should Man finally be lost—should Man,
Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
With his own folly—-! That be from thee far,
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
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 accomplished, 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 questioned 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 voutsafed. Once more I will renew
His lapsèd powers, though forfeit, and enthralled
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 warned
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
The incensed Deity, while offered 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 endeavoured 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,
They who neglect and scorn shall never taste;
But hard be hardened, 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 ye will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime, and just, the unjust to save?
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?"

He asked, but all the Heavenly Quire stood mute,
And silence was in Heaven: on Man's behalf
Patron or intercessor none appeared—
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 renewed:

"Father, thy word is passed, Man shall find grace;
And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy wingèd 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 vanquished. 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,
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, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed;
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 shalt look down and smile.
While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes—
Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave:
Then, with the multitude of my redeemed,
Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger 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 offered, 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!
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, ransomed 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 destroyed, 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 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 arraigned 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 filled
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 amaranth, 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.
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung; and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony 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 sitt'st
Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine
Dark with excessive bright 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
Impressed 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 drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.
Back from pursuit, thy Powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extolled, 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 discerned,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offered himself to die
For Man's offence. O unexampled love!
Love nowhere 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 opacous globe
Of this round World, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior Orbs, enclosed
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
It seemed; 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 vexed with tempest loud.
Here walked 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 yearling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light;
So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend
Walked 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 filled 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 mixed,
Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution, wander here—
Not in the neighbouring Moon, as some have dreamed:
Those argent fields more likely habitants,
Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold,
Betwixt the angelical and human kind.
Hither, of ill-joined sons and daughters born,
First from the ancient world those Giants came,
With many a vain exploit, though then renowned:
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Sennara, and still with vain design
New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
Others came single; he who, to be deemed
A god, leaped fondly into Ætna flames,
Empedocles; and he who, to enjoy
Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
Cleombrotus; and many more, too long,
Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.
Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
In Golgotha him dead who lives in Heaven;
And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that first moved;
And now Saint Peter at Heaven’s wicket seems
To wait 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, tost
And fluttered into rags; then reliques, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds: all these, upwhirled aloft,
Fly o’er the backside of the World far off
Into a Limbo large and broad, since called
The Paradise of Fools; to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled and untrod.

All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed;
And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste
His travelled 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, appeared
The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Embellished; 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 flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from Earth sailing arrived
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 opened 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
Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beër-saba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore.
So wide the opening seemed, 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 unavare
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,
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 (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,
Down right 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 seemed other worlds.
Or other worlds they seemed, 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 staid 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 turned
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 informed
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.
If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron's breast-plate, 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
Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
Drained through a limbec 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 mixed,
Here in the dark so many precious things
Of colour glorious and effect so rare?
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,
Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray
To objects distant far, whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
The same whom John saw also in the Sun.
His back was turned, 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 employed
He seemed, or fixed 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 feigned.
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore
Of many a coloured 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 turned,
Admonished 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
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 ordained,
Hath brought me from the quires of Cherubim
Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph, tell
In which of all these shining orbs hath Man
His fixèd seat—or fixèd 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 bestowed
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured;
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;
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus returned:—

"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 of Heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That rolled orbicular, and turned 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 borrowed 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."

Thus said, he turned; 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 aery wheel, Nor staid till on Niphates' top he lights.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK IV.

THE 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 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; over-hears 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 temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further 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 after 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, which he who saw The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud, Then when the Dragon, put to second rout, Came furious down to be revenged on men, Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now, While time was, our first parents had been warned
The coming of their secret foe, and scaped,  
Haply so scaped, 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 battle, and his flight to Hell.  
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, 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 slumbered; 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 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 glory crowned,  
Look’st from thy sole dominion like the god  
Of this new World—at whose sight all the stars  
Hide their diminished 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 disdain'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?
Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
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 armed!
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 rues.
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
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 hitherto recollect high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
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 dimmed his face,
Thrice changed with pale—ire, envy, and despair;
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For Heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel, once warned; 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 marked 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 highth 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,
Appeared, with gay enameled colours mixed;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth: so lovely seemed
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 past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles;
So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend
Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.
Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
All path of man or beast that passed that way.
One gate there only was, and that looked east
On the other side. Which when the Arch-Felon saw,
Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt,
At one slight bound high overleaped 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 hurdled 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 burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross-barred 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 hirelungs climb.
Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
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 stretched 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 ordained.
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
Passed underneath ingulfed; 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
Watered 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 crispèd brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrowned 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, burnished 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 crowned
Her crystal mirror 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 Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered—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 Nyseian 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
True Paradise) under the Ethiop 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, seemed lords of all,
And worthy seemed; 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 seemed;
For contemplation he and valour formed,
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
Dishevelled, 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 concealed;
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 banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they passed, 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.
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 make ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked 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 linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled 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
Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hasting 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,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:

"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 formed them on their shape hath poured.
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 entered; 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,
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, loath, to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
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
To do what else, though damned, 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
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn
By word or action marked. About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close; then, rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
Griped in each paw: when Adam, first of men,
To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
Turned 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, whate'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
Conferr'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
And from whom I was formed 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 nowhere find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
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 seemed another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me. I started back
It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned 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
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 turned;
Thou, following, cried'st 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 excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.”

So spake our general mother, and, with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreprouved,
And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
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 the clouds
That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:—
“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 unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines!
Yet let me not forget what I have gained
From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems;
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless! Why should their Lord
Envy them? 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 further would be learned. 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 turned,
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
Levelled 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
The unarmed 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 thwart the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and shows 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 hight of noon came to my sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man,
God's latest image. I described his way
Bent all on speed, and marked his aery gait,
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks
Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured.
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him. One of the banished 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 returned:—
"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'erleaped these earthy 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
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now fallen
Beneath the Azores; whether the Prime Orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
Diurnal, or this less volúbil 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
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. Now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveiled 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 eye-lids. Other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unemployed, 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
Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:—
"My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
Unargued I obey. 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 forget 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 star-light, 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 Man, accomplished 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  
On Earth, made hereby apter to receive  
Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.  
These, then, though unbeheld 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
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven."

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
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 odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Brodered the ground, more coloured than with stone
Of costliest emblem. Other creature here,
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none;
Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espousèd Eve decked first her nuptial bed,
And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,
What day the genial Angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed 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 turned, 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 employed,
Have finished, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropt 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, eased the putting-off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, 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 unbefitting 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, unendeared,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. 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 accustomed hour, stood armed
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,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:

"Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed
Search through this Garden; leave unsearched 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 whom 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, phantasm 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 distempered, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits engendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;
So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.
Back stept 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
Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,
Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?"

"Know ye not, then," said Satan, filled 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 undiminished 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. Abashed 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 impaired; yet seemed
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 reined, went haughty on,  
Champing his iron curb. To strive or fly  
He held it vain; awe from above had quelled  
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh  
The western point, where those half-rounding guards  
Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,  
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,  
Gabriel, from the front thus called 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—  
Not likely to part hence without contest.  
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours."

He scarce had ended, when those two approached,  
And brief related whom they brought, where found,  
How busied, in what form and posture couched.  
To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake:—  
"Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed  
To thy transgressions, and disturbed 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;  
Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those  
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?"

To whom thus Satan, with contumacious brow:—  
"Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise;  
And such I held thee; but this question asked  
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?  
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,  
Though thither doomed? 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 bound us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked:
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 incurrst 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
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 answered, frowning stern:—
"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The blasting volleyed 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 Warrior-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 fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I areed thee now: Avaunt!
Fly thither whence thou fled'st. If from this hour
Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee chained,
And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred.”

So threatened he; but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but, waxing more in rage, replied:—
“Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
Proud limitary 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 compeers,
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
Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd 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 ploughman doubting stands
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed 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, disturbed 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 Astræa and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weighed,
The pendulous round Earth with balanced air
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight:
The latter quick up flew, and kicked 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 weighed, and shown how light, how weak
If thou resist." The Fiend looked up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
Murmuring; and with him fled the shades of Night.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK V.

THE 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 inexcusable, 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 rosy steps in the eastern clime Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl, When Adam waked, so customed; 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 unwakened 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 enamoured, 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, whispered 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 startled 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 returned; for I this night
(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
If dreamed, 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 called 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-laboured song; now reigns
Full-orbed the moon, and, with more pleasing light,
Shadowy sets off the face of things—in vain,
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 passed through ways
That brought me on a sudden to the tree
Of interdicted knowledge. Fair it seemed,
Much fairer to my fancy than by day;
And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood
One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven
By us oft seen: his dewy locks distilled
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 offered good, why else set here?’
This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
He plucked, he tasted. Me damp horror chilled
At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold;
But he thus, overjoyed: ‘O 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 author not impaired, but honoured more?
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve!
Partake thou also: happy though thou art,
Happier thou may’st 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,
Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had plucked: the pleasant savoury smell
So quickened appetite that I, methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew, and underneath beheld
The Earth outstretched 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 answered 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 disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private cell when Nature rest's.
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,
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 disheartened, 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 bosomed smells,
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheered he his fair spouse; and she was cheered,
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,
Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, 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 east
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains—
Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style; for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
More tuneable than needed lute or 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 gained, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fliest,
With the fixed Stars, fixed 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 called up Light.
Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
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, dusky 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 uncoloured 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 gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."
So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recovered 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, reached too far
Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called
Raphael, the sociable Spirit, that deigned
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-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 disturbed
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, unadmonished, unforewarned."

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled
All justice. Nor delayed the wingèd Saint
After his charge received; but from among
Thousand celestial Ardours, where he stood
Veiled with his gorgeous wings, upspringing light, 250
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-opened wide,
On golden hinges turning, as by work
Divine the sovran Architect had framed.
From hence—no cloud or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed, however small—he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth, and the Garden of God, with cedars crowned
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
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 phoenix, gazed by all, as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his relics 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 winged. 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 dipt in heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
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 guessed him bound.
Their glittering tents he passed, 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
Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
Him, through the spicy forest onward come,
Adam discerned, 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 called:—
"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 voutsafe
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 bestowed, 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 joined, 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
Alcinous reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough or smooth rined, 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 meaths
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams—nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews 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 besmeared 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 deigned a while To want, and honour these, voutsafe 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 answered 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 decked and fragrant smells. But Eve, Undecked, save with herself, more lovely fair Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove, Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel "Hail!"
Bestowed—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 heaped 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. A while 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, unmeasured-out, descends,
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
Intelligential 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 sustained and fed. Of Elements
The grosser feeds the purer: Earth the Sea;
Earth and the Sea feed Air; the Air those Fires
Ethereal, and, as lowest, first the Moon;
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
Vapours not yet into her substance turned.
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. Though 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
Covered 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
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence
Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
Enamoured at that sight. But in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's hell.
Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam not to let the occasion pass,
Given him by this great conference, to know
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 voutsafed
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 wingèd 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 spiritous and pure,
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned 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 corporal 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
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 joined, If ye be found
Obedient? Can we want obedience, then,
To him, or possibly his love desert,
Who formed 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—ordained 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
Aerial 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 passed in Heaven some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange, 560
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard.
And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of heaven."

Thus Adam made request; and Raphael, 570
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
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
Reigned where these heavens now roll, where Earth now rests
Upon her centre poised, when on a day
(For Time, though in Eternity, applied 580
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future), on such day
As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host
Of Angels, by imperial summons called,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
Forthwith from all the ends of Heaven appeared
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 hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazoned
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 embosomed 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, which unrevoked 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 engulfed, his place
Ordained without redemption, without end.'

"So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
All seemed well pleased; all seemed, 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 fixed 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 smooths her charming tones that God's own ear
Listens delighted. Evening now approached
(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 crowned,
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 showered
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 roseate 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 reared,
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept
Fanned 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,
In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
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
Unworshiped, unobeyed, 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 rememberest what decree,
Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips
Of Heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thought;
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;
New 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, there to prepare
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 disencumbered Heaven,
The great hierachal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity. But all obeyed
The wonted 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 that guides
The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host.
Meanwhile, the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising—saw in whom, how spread
Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:—

"Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,
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
PARADISE LOST.

Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle 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
Lightening 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 which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
Regions they passed, 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
Stretched into longitude; which having passed,
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
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 called;
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 engrossed
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 proclaimed?
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 possessed 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 ordained to govern, not to serve!'

"Thus far his bold discourse without control
Had audience, when, among the Seraphim,
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
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, ingrate,
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 formed 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 joined 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,
Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, 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,
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 formed, then, say'st thou? and the
Of secondary hands, by task transferred [work
From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learned! 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
Beseeching or besieging. 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 applause
Through the infinite host. Nor less for that
The flaming Seraph, fearless, though alone,
Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:—

"'O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,
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 voutsafed; other decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall;
That golden sceptre which thou did 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, 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 passed,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
And with retorted scorn his back he turned
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed."

THE END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK VI.

THE 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, [Morn, Through Heaven's wide champaign held his way, till Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand Unbarred 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—which makes through Grateful vicissitude, like day and night; [Heaven 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, arrayed in gold
Empyreal; from before her vanished Night,  
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain,  
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,  
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,  
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.  
War he perceived, war in procinct, and found  
Already known what he for news had thought  
To have reported. Gladly then he mixed  
Among those friendly Powers, who him received  
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,  
That of so many myriads fallen yet one,  
Returned 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 maintained  
Against revolted multitudes the cause  
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,  
And for the testimony of truth hast borne  
Universal reproach, 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 scorned 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, of celestial armies prince,  
And thou, in military prowess next,  
Gabriel; lead forth to battle these my sons  
Invincible; lead forth my armed Saints,
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
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awaked; 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 joined
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
Their march was, and the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread. As when the total kind
Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
Came summoned over Eden to receive
Their names of thee; so over many a tract
Of Heaven they marched, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
Far in the horizon, to the north, appeared
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched
In battailous aspect; and, nearer view,
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portrayed,
The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
With furious expedition: for they weened
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
To win the Mount of God, and on his throne
To set the envier of his state, the proud
Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain
In the mid-way; though strange to us it seemed
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 joined,
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
Came towering, armed in adamant and 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
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 him defied:

"'Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached
The highth of thy aspiring unopposed—
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandoned at the terror 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 finished thee, and whelmed
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
Seemed 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 answered:—'Ill for thee, but in wished 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 com'st
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest. This pause between
(Unanswered 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, trained up in feast and song:
Such hast thou armed, 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 deprav'st 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 rebelled
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;
Yet lewdly dar'st our ministering upbraid.
Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.
Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect: meanwhile,
From me returned, 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 recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstayed: as if, on earth,
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half-sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout,
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battle: whereat Michaël bid sound
The Archangel trumpet. Through the vast of Heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosannah to the Highest; nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now
Was never; arms on armour clashing brayed
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.
So under fiery cope together rushed
Both battles 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 numbered such
As each divided legion might have seemed
A numerous host, in strength each armed hand
A legion! Led in fight, yet leader seemed
Each warrior single as in chief; expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battle, 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. Deeds of eternal fame
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 seemed then
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
The battle 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 felled
Squadrons at once: with huge two-handed sway
Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
A vast circumference. At his approach
The great Archangel from his warlike toil
Surceased, and, glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in Heaven, the Arch-foe subdued,
Or captive dragged 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 disturbed
Heaven’s blessed peace, and into Nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instilled
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, winged from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.’

“So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus
The Adversary:—‘Nor think thou with wind
Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquished—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 addressed 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 hight
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seemed,
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 horror; 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 imminent, one stroke they aimed
That might determine, and not need repeat
As not of power, at once; nor odds appeared
In might or swift prevention. But the sword
Of Michael from the armoury of God
Was given him tempered 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 stayed,
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 gridding sword with discontinuous wound
Passed through him. But the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible; and from the gash
A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed
Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
And all his armour stained, erewhile 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
Gnashing 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 healed; 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 ear,
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 pierced the deep array Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied, And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven Refrained his tongue blasphemous, but anon, Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing Uriel and Raphaël his vaunting foe, Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed, Vanquished—Andramelech and Asmadai, Two potent Thrones; that to be less than Gods Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned 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, scorched and blasted, overthrew. I might relate of thousands, and their names 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 Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory, Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell! For strength from truth divided, and from just, Illaudable, nought 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 quelled, the battle swerved, With many an inroad gored; deformed rout
Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shivered armour strown, and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,
And fiery foaming steeds; what stood recoiled,
O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host,
Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised—
Then first with fear surprised and sense of pain—
Fled 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 armed;
Such high advantages their innocence
Gave them above their foes—not to have sinned,
Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
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 vanquished. On the foughten field
Michaël and his Angels, prevalent
Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
Cherubic waving fires: on the other part,
Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
Far in the dark dislodged, and, void of rest,
His potentates to council called by night,
And in the midst thus undismayed began:
"'O now in danger tried, now known in arms
Not to be overpowered, companions dear,
Found worthy not of liberty alone—
Too mean pretence—but, what we more affect,
Honour, dominion, glory, and renown;
Who have sustained 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
Omniscient thought! True is, less firmly armed,
Some disadvantage we endured, and pain—
Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned;
Since now we find this our empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,
Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound,
Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.
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, of Principalities the prime.
As one he stood escaped from cruel fight
Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake:—

"'Deliverer from new Lords, leader 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 unpained, impassive; from which evil
Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails
Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled 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, 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.'

"Whereto, with look composed, Satan replied:—
'Not uninvented that, which thou aright
Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
Which of us who beholds the bright surface
Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand—
This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned
With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems and gold—
Whose eye so superficially surveys
These things as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep under ground: materials dark and crude,
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touched
With Heaven's ray, and tempered, 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 long and round
Thick-rammed, 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
To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed
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 joined
Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'

"He ended; and his words their drooping cheer
Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
The invention all admired, and each how he
To be the inventor missed; so easy it seemed
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 turned
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 conveyed.
Part hidden veins digged 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 day-spring, under conscious Night,
Secret they finished, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.
"Now, when fair Morn orient in Heaven appeared, 
Up rose the victor Angels, and to arms 
The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood 
Of golden panoply, refulgent host, 
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills 
Looked round, and scouts each coast light-armèd 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 nigh, 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 flight; 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, gripe fast his orbed shield, 
Borne even or high; for this day will pour down, 
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower, 
But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.'
"So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon 
In order, quit of all impediment. 
Instant, without disturb, they took alarm, 
And onward move embattled: when, behold, 
Not distant far, with heavy pace the foe 
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube 
Training his devilish enginry, impaled 
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep, 
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood 
A while; but suddenly at head appeared 
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 overture, 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 scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended, when to right and left the front
Divided, and to either flank retired;
Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled),
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 tipt 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 appeared,
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
Embowell'd with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes; which, on the victor host
Levelled, 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 rolled,
The sooner for their arms. Unarmed, they might
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse
Repeated, and indecent overturn
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter—for in view
Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire
Of thunder; back defeated to return
They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision called:—
"'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 seemed
Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps
For joy of offered 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 have besides—
They show us when our foes walk not upright.'

"So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, hightened 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
A while 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-glimpse they ran, they flew;
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. Amaze,
Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
When coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turned,
Till on those cursed engines' triple row
They saw them whelmed, 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 armed.
Their armour helped their harm, crushed 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.
The rest, in imitation, to like arms
Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore;
So hills amid the air encountered hills,
Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire,
That underground they fought in dismal shade:
Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game
To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped
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 transferred. 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 passed,
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 armed:
For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st
Equal in their creation they were formed,
Save what sin hath impaired—which yet hath wrought
Insensibily, for I suspend their doom:
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War wearied hath performed what war can do,
And to disordered rage let loose the reins,
With mountains, as with weapons, armed; which makes
Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are, therefore, passed; the third is thine:
For thee I have ordained it, and thus far
Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immense I have transfused, that all may know
In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare,
And this perverse commotion governed 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 expressed
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'st thy will
Fulfilled, 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
For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st.
But whom thou hat'st I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things: and shall soon,
Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled,
To their prepared ill mansion driven down,
To chains of darkness and the undying worm,
That from thy just obedience could revolt,
Whom to obey is happiness entire.
Then shall thy Saints, unmixed, and from the impure
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount,
Unfeigned halleluias 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 began to shine,
Dawning through Heaven. Forth rushed with whirlwind
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel; undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
By four cherubic Shapes. Four faces each
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between;
Over their heads a crystal firmament,
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber and colours of the showery arch.
He, in celestial panoply all armed
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow,
And quiver, with three-bolted thunder stored;
And from about him fierce effusion rolled
Of smoke and bickering flame and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came; far off his coming shone;
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen.
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 embodied 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 renewed,
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, hardened more by what might most reclaim.
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy, and, aspiring to his highth,
Stood re-embattled 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 battle 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 armed; this day from battle rest.
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
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 ordained,
Nor multitude; stand only and behold
God's indignation on these godless poured
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 honoured me, according to his will.
Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned,
That they may have their wish, to try with me
In battle 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 voutsafe.'

"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 rolled, as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as Night. Under his burning wheels
The steadfast 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 infixed
Plagues. They, astonished, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;
O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
That wished the mountains 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 withered all their strength,
And of their wonted vigour left them drained,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
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 thronged,
Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide,
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful Deep. The monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward; but far worse
Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heaven: eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

"Hell heard the unsufferable noise; Hell saw
Heaven ruining 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 roared,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild Anarchy; so huge a rout
Encumbered 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.
Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired
Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.
Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
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 may'st beware
By what is past, to thee I have revealed
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 rebelled
With Satan: he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st 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."

THE END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK VII.

THE 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, Urania, 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 appeared or fountain flowed, 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 unreined (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 compassed 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 wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
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 forewarned
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
To those apostates, lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted Tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obeyed amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was filled
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 in 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 repealed
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 allayed, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
Proceeded thus to ask his Heavenly Guest:—

“Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed,
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 voutsafed
Gently, for our instruction, to impart
Things above Earthly thought, which yet concerned
Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,
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 adorned
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
In Chaos; and, the work begun, how soon
Absolved: if unforbid thou may'st 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 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, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.”
Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:—
“This also thy request, with caution asked,
Obtain; though to recount almighty works
What words or tongue of Seraph 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 hope
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
Only omniscient, hath suppressed 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.

"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 returned
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 failed, 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 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 deemed—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!
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 vacuous the space,
Though I, uncircumscribed, 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 ordained
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 appeared,
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
Of majesty divine, sapience and love
Immense; and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were poured
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots winged
From the armoury of God, where stand of old
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
Celestial equipage; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord. Heaven opened 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
They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains to assault
Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.

"'Silence, ye troubled waves, and, thou Deep, peace!'
Said then the omnific Word: 'your discord end!'
Nor stayed; 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
Followed in bright procession, to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
Then stayed 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 turned
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 unformed and void. Darkness profound
Covered 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, tartareous, 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
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 passed 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 filled,
And touched 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, elemental 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 formed, but, in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryon immature, involved,
Appeared not; over all the face of Earth
Main ocean flowed, 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 gathered 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, uprolled,
As drops on dust conglobing, from the dry:
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste; such flight the great command impressed
On the swift floods. As armies at the call
Of trumpet (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 underground, or circuit wide
With serpent error 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 called Seas;
And 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, unadorned,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet; and, these scarce blown,
Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept
The smelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
Embattled in her field: add 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 gemmed
Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were crowned,
With tufts the valleys and each fountain-side,
With borders long the rivers, that Earth now
Seemed 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 rained
Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
None was, but from the Earth a dewy mist
Went up and watered 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, altern; 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 sowed 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 gathered 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
His longitude through heaven's high road; the grey
Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the Moon,
But opposite in levelled west, was set,
His mirror, 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 appeared
Spangling the hemisphere. Then first adorned
With her bright luminaries, that set and rose,
Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth Day.

"And God said, 'Let the waters generate
Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul;
And let Fowl fly above the earth, with wings
Displayed 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 blessed 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 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,
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
Stretched 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 feathered soon and fledge
They summed 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, fanned with unnumbered 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 aerial sky. Others on ground
Walked firm—the crested cock, whose clarion sounds  
The silent hours, and the other, whose gay train  
Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue  
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus  
With Fish replenished, and the air with Fowl,  
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth Day.  

"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 obeyed, and, straight  
Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth  
Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,  
Limbed and full-grown. Out of the ground up rose,  
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 walked;
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 appeared
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 underground
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 decked 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 sinuous 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 appeared
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 gav'st them names,
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
The serpent, subtlest 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 rolled
Her motions, as the great First Mover’s hand
First wheeled their course; Earth, in her rich attire
Consummate, lovely smiled; Air, Water, Earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
Frequent; and of the sixth Day yet remained.
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 that creeps the ground!’
This said, he formed 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 becam' st a living soul.
Male he created thee, but thy consort
Female, for race; then blessed 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,
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 may' st 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 finished He, and all that he had made
Viewed, and, behold! all was entirely good.
So even and morn accomplished the sixth Day;
Yet not till the Creator, from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode,
Thence to behold this new-created World,
The addition of his empire, how it showed
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
Followed 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 stations listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
‘Open, ye everlasting gates!’ they sung;
‘Open, ye Heavens, your living doors! let in
The great Creator, from his work returned
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 opened 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
Powdered 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, fixed for ever firm and sure,
The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
With his great Father; for he also went
Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained,
Author and end of all things, and, from work
Now resting, blessed and hallowed 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,
Tempered soft tunings, intermixed 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
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 repelled, while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
The number of thy worshipers. Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose, serves
To manifest the more thy might; his evil
Thou usest, and from thence creat'st 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 worshipers
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 fulfilled, that asked
How first this World and face of things began,
And what before thy memory was done
From the beginning, that posterity,
Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say."

THE END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK
Adam inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, 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 a while
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed 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 allayed
The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsafed
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 numbered stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal) merely to officiate light
Round this opacous 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
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 sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light:
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.”

So spake our Sire, and by his countenance seemed
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 prospered, bud and bloom,
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
And, touched 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 preferred
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. Oh, when meet now
Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined?
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:—
“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 scanned 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 infers 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, unactive 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 stretched 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
Ordained 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 softened soil, for some to eat
Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,
With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,
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 unpossessed
By living soul, desert and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
Each Orb a glimpse of light, conveyed 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 along—
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 revealed
Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven."

To whom thus Adam, cleared 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
Unchecked; and of her roving is no end,
Till, warned, 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: what is more is fume,
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, deigned.
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 yet not 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 answered, heavenly meek:—
“Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of Men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also poured,
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 honoured 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,
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 mixed.
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 lament, and furious rage.
Glad we returned 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 turned,  
And gazed a while 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 walked or flew,  
Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled;  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.  
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb  
Surveyed, 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 obeyed, and readily could name  
Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair light,  
And thou enlightened 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 came I 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 called, and strayed I knew not whither,  
From where I first drew air, and first beheld  
This happy light, when answer none returned,  
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 ordained
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
Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree
Loaden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
My wandering, had not He who was my guide
Up hither from among the trees appeared,
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at his feet I fell
Submiss. He reared 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
Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,
From that day mortal, and this happy state
Shalt lose, expelled 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
Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:
'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 summoned, since they cannot change
Their element to draw the thinner air.'
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two—these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.
I named them as they passed, 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 brightened, thus replied:—
"'What call'st thou solitude? Is not the Earth
With various living creatures, and the Air,
Replenished, 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 seemed
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 inferior far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
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.'

"Where to the Almighty answered, not displeased:—
't 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 possessed
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 inferior infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?'

"He ceased. I lowly answered:—'To attain
The girth and depth of thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of Things!
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficiency 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.
Thou, in thy secrecy 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 erect
From prone, nor in their ways complacence find.'
Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained
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,
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 spak'st,
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 couldst 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 earthly, by his heavenly overpowered,
Which it had long stood under, strained to the highth
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
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, opened 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 filled up and healed.
The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
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 disappeared, 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, adorned
With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
To make her amiable. On she came,
Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen,
And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud:
"This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled
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, my Self
Before me. Woman is her name, of Man
Extracted; for this cause he shall forgo
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 wooed, 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 turned.
I followed 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;
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whispered 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 failed 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 bestowed
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of Nature her the inferior, 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, virtuousetest, discreetest, best.
All higher Knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
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 diffident
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 perceiv'st.
For, what admir'st 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
Than 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 may'st 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 voutsafed
To cattle and each beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulged, if aught
Therein enjoyed 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 may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.”

To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:—
"Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
In procreation, common to all kinds
(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, mixed with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
Union of mind, 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 foiled,
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing, yet, still free,
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To love thou blam'st me not—for Love, thou say'st,
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 glowed
Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,
Answered:—"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 pure
Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more: the parting Sun
Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles
Hesperean sets, my signal to depart.
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!
I 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
Followed 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 honoured 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.
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, loth 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 flattery 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 a while 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 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 disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplexed 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,
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battles feigned (the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung), or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshalled 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 skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depressed; 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, and now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veiled 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 returned.
By night he fled, and at midnight returned
From compassing the Earth—cautious of day
Since Uriel, Regent of the Sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim
That kept their watch. Thence, full of anguish, driven,
The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness—thrice the equinoctial line
He circled, four times crossed the car of Night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure—
On the eighth returned, 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 under ground, 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 searched and land,
From Eden over Pontus, and the Pool Maëotis, up beyond the river Ob;
Downward as far antarctic; and, in length,
West from Orontes to the ocean barred
At Darien, thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb he roaming
With narrow search, and with inspection deep
Considered every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
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
Proceeding, 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 poured:—
"O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred
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 officious lamps,
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concentrating all their precious beams
Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven
Is centre, yet extends to all, so thou
Centring receiv'st 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 summed 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 crowned,
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 destroyed,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made, all this will soon
Follow, as to him linked 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 marred
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 impaired—
Whether such virtue, spent of old, now failed
More Angels to create (if they at least
Are his created), or to spite us more—
Determined to advance into our room
A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With heavenly spoils, our spoils. What he decreed
He effected; 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 earthy charge. Of these the vigilance
I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt 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 constrained
Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of deity aspired!
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
As high he soared, 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 aimed,
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, us 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-rolled,
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, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth
The Devil entered, and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
With act intelligental; but his sleep
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.

Now, whenas sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
Their morning incense, 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 joined 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 enjoined; but, till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
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 intermixed
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 objects new
Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned!"  
To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:—
"Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear!
Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assigned 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 joined.
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, severed from me; for thou know'st
What hath been warned us—what malicious foe,
Envying our happiness, and of his own
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 joined, 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
Enjoyed 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,
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 informed I learn,
And from the parting Angel overheard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.
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?"
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 offered 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 overreached,
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 renewed:—
"If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit straitened 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 shunned or feared
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, unassayed
Alone, without exterior help sustained?
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 ordained 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 suborned,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.
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 securer than thus warned thou seem'st,
Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.
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 submiss, though last, replied:—
"With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned,
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touched 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 surpassed and goddess-like deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,
But with such gardening tools as Art, yet rude,
Guiltless of fire had formed, or Angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,
Likest she seemed—Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus—or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
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 returned by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
O much deceived, 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
Despoiled 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 wished his hap might find
Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half-spied, so thick the roses bushing round
About her glowed, oft stooping to support
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
Hung drooping unsustained. 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
Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve:
Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
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
Adjoined, 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 seemed 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,
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 remained
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
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 ordained. 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 approached by stronger hate,
Hate stronger under show of love well feigned—
The way which to her ruin now I tend.”

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnished 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 transformed
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen,
He with Olympias, this with her who bore
Scipio, the hight of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access but feared
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river’s mouth or foreland, where the wind
Vears oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail,
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound

A.A 2
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, uncalled before her stood,
But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed
His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck,
Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turned at length
The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began:—
"Wonder not, sovran 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
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
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
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 glozed 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 expressed!
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 cam'st 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 obeyed.
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 discerned
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 mixed,
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,
Unsucked 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, quickened 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 retained.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Considered 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 compelled
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
Sovran of creatures, universal Dame!"

So talked 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 untouched,  
Still hanging incorruptible, till men  
Grow up to their provision, and more hands  
Help to disburden Nature of her bearth."

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 rolled  
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,  
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy  
Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,  
Compact of unctuous 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 swallowed up and lost, from succour far:  
So glistered 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; our Reason is our Law.'
To whom the Tempter guilefully replied:—
"Indeed! 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 disturbed, yet comely, and in act
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renowned
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
Stood in himself collected, while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue
Sometimes in hight began, as no delay
Of preface brooking through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to hight upgown,
The Tempter, all impassioned, 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, deemed however wise.
Queen of this Universe! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die.
How should ye? 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 attained 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,
Deterred 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 shunned?
God, therefore, cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.
Why, then, was this forbid? Why but to awe,
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshipers? He knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof your eyes, that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
That ye should 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 wished,
Though threatened, 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,
Warmed 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?
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.
Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
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 a while, 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, author unsuspect,
Friendly to Man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I, then? rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and 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 plucked, 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 only on her taste, naught else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
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 hightened as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:—

"O sovran, 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, offered 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 remained
In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way,
And giv'st 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 Forbidder, 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! Confirmed, 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 turned,
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 delayed;
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 gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.
To him she hasted; in her face excuse
Came prologue, and apology to prompt,
Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:

“Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
Thee I have missed, 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,
Or not restrained 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 prevailed 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 glowed.
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 relaxed.
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropt, 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 excelled
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,
Defaced, deflowered, 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 ruined; for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die.
How can I live without thee? how forgo
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
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 disturbed,
Submitting to what seemed remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:—
"Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred food, sacred to abstinence;
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; perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous now—foretasted fruit,
Profaned first by the Serpent, by him first
Made common and unhallowed ere our taste,
Nor yet on him found deadly. He yet lives—
Lives, as thou saidst, 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, demi-gods.
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 ruined, now Mankind; whom will he next?'—
Matter of scorn not to be given the Foe.
However, I with thee have fixed 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 severed; 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, linked 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 unequalled. But I feel
Far otherwise the event—not death, but life
Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine that what of sweet before
Hath touched 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,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky loured, 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 feared, 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 breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the Earth. But that false fruit
Far other operation first displayed,
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 purveyed.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish, tasting. If such pleasure be
In things to us forbidden, it might be wished
For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come; so well refreshed, 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, adorned
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 overhead with verdant roof embowered,
He led her, nothing loth; 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,
The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.

Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumbered, now had left them, up they rose
As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty Shame: he covered, but his robe
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean 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 strucken mute;
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
At length gave utterance to these words constrained:—

"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 in our promised rising; since our eyes
Opened 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 wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
Even 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 Shapes
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 sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
And brown as evening! Cover me, ye pines!
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 sewed,
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 counselled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood. There soon they chose
The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,
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 pillared shade
High overarched, 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 gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
And with what skill they had together sewed,
To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feathered cincture, naked else and wild,
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep. Nor only tears
Rained 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 tossed and turbulent:
For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
Usurping over sovergn Reason, claimed
Superior sway. From thus distempered breast
Adam, estranged in look and altered style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:

"Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possessed thee! We had then
Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled
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 passed thy lips, Adam severe?
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happened thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
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 saidst?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me."

To whom, then first incensed; Adam replied:

"Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed
Immutable when thou wert lost, not I—
Who might have lived, and joyed 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 warned thee, I admonished 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 erred in overmuch admiring
What seemed 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 women overtrusting,
Lets 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 appeared no end.

THE END OF THE NINTH BOOK.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK X.

THE ARGUMENT.

Man's transgression known, the guardian Angels forsake 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 transgressors; 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 boasting, 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 of 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 Elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolence 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 revenged 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,
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed
Complete to have discovered and repulsed
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,
The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying
Incurred (what could they less?) the penalty,
And, manifold in sin, 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
That time celestial visages, yet, mixed
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new-arrived, in multitudes,
The Ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell. 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 uttered thus his voice:—

"Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismayed
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 crossed the gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
On his bad errand—Man should be seduced,
And flattered 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 feared,
By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.
Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorned.
But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferred
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 designed
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
Expressed, and thus divinely answered 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,
May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On Earth these thy transgressors; 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 condemned,
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 winged.

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 intercessor both,
To sentence Man. The voice of God they heard
Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,
And from his presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,
Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:—

“Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
My coming, seen far off? I miss thee here,
Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
Where obvious duty erewhile appeared 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, discountenanced 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 answered 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 oft hast heard, and hast not feared,
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:—
"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,
Lest 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 mad'st to be my help,
And gav'st 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 seemed 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 excelled  
Hers in all real dignity? Adorned  
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract  
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts  
Were such as under government well seemed—  
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 has done?”  
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,  
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge  
Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied:—  
“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  
Concerned not Man (since he no further knew),  
Nor altered 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
Enmity, and between thine and her seed;
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel."

So spake this oracle—then verified
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall like lightning down from Heaven,
Prince of the Air; then, rising from his grave,
 Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
In open show, and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the Air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurped,
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet,
Even he who now foretold his fatal bruise,
And to the Woman thus his sentence turned:—

"Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule."

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:—
"Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree concerning which
I charged thee, saying, *Thou shalt not eat thereof,*
Curs'd 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 thou shalt 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, disdained not to begin  
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume.  
As when he washed his servants’ feet, so now,  
As father of his family, he clad  
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, 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, covered from his Father’s sight.  
To him with swift ascent he up returned,  
Into his blissful bosom reassumed  
In glory as of old; to him, appeased,  
All, though all-knowing, what had passed with Man  
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.  

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned 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 passed through,  
Sin opening; who thus now to Death began:—  

“O Son, why sit we here, each other viewing  
Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives  
In other worlds, and happier seat provides  
For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be  
But that success attends him; if mishap,  
Ere this he had returned, 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 answered 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 there that live.
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.”

So saying, with delight he snuffed 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 encamped come flying, lured
With scent of living carcases designed
For death the following day in bloody fight;
So scented the grim Feature, and upturned
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
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tossed 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 fixed as firm
As Delos, floating once; the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move,
And with asphalitic slime; broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on
Over the foaming Deep high-arched, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immovable 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 joined,
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.  
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical—a ridge of pendent rock
Over the vexed 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
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 discerned, 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 unweaving, 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, returned
By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gathered his own doom; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned,
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped
Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendious 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 author and prime architect.
For I no sooner in my heart divined
(My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet)
That thou on Earth hadst prospered, which thy looks
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 her bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track.
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
Within Hell-gates till now; thou us empowered
To fortify thus far, and overlay
With this portentous bridge the dark Abyss.
Thine now is all this World; thy virtue hath won
What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gained,
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 battle 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 answered 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
Triumphant with triumphant 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 dismissed them; they with speed
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,
And planets, planet-strook, real eclipse
Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
The causey to Hell-gate; on either side
Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,
And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,
That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
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 called
Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.
There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance
Might intercept their Emperor 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
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 desert 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 unmarked,
In show plebeian Angel militant
Of lowest order, passed, and, from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne, which, under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
PARADISE LOST.

Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen.
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appeared, 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 wished beheld,
Their mighty Chief returned: loud was the acclaim.
Forth rushed in haste the great consulting Peers,
Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approached him, who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention, won:

"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers!—
For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye, and declare ye now, returned,
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,
And dungeon of our tyrant! Now possess,
As lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven
Little inferior, by my adventure hard
With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
What I have done, what suffered, with what pain
Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded Deep
Of horrible confusion—over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
To expedite your glorious march; but I
Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
The untractable Abyss, plunged in the womb
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, a while 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 wondered, 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
Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
According to his doom. He would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue
To forked tongue; for now were all transformed
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 horned, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,
And Dipsas (not so thick swarmed 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
Engendered in the Pythian vale on slime,
Huge Python; and his power no less he seemed
Above the rest still to retain. They all
Him followed, 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 instead—a crowd
Of ugly serpents! Horror 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 renewed, and the dire form
Catched by contagion, like in punishment
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
Turned 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 fixed, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now risen, to work them further woe or shame;
Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curled Megæra. Greedily they plucked
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed;
This, more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived; they, fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected. Oft they assayed,
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,
With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws
With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as Man
Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they
plagued,
And, worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed—
Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo
This an annualhumbling certain numbered 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 called
Ophion, with Eurynome (the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps), had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the Hellish pair
Too soon arrived—Sin, there in power 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; to whom Sin thus began:—

"Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!
What think'st thou of our empire now? though earned
With travail difficult, not better far
Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?"

Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answered soon:—
"To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven—
There best where most with ravin I may meet:
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound 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 transcendent seat the Saints among,
To those bright Orders uttered thus his voice:—
"See with what heat these dogs of Hell 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 ease
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 called 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, crammed and gorged, nigh burst
With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
Both Sin and Death, and yawning Grave, at last
Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then Heaven and Earth, renewed, 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,
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  
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call  
Decrepit winter, from the south to bring  
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon  
Her office they prescribed; to the other five  
Their planetary motions and aspect,  
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,  
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join  
In synod unbienign; and taught the fixed  
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 terror through the dark aerial hall.  
Some say he bid his Angels turn askance  
The poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more  
From the Sun's axle; they with labour pushed  
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 east or west—which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland, and south as far
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned
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, and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,
Boreas and Cæcias and Argestes loud
And Thrascias rend the woods, and seas upturn;
With adverse blasts upturns them from the south
Notus and Afer, black with thundrous clouds
From Serraliona; thwart of these, as fierce
Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libecchio. 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 all leaving
Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe
Of Man, but fled him, or with countenance grim
Glared on him passing. These were from without
The growing miseries; which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandoned, 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 hight
Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
The misery! I deserved it, and would bear
My own deserving. 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
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound—
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
Concurred 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; then 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  
Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive?  
Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened 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  
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 sinned: 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 further knows.
For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so,
But mortal doomed. 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 punished 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:
Nor I on my part single; in me all
Posterity stands cursed. Fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons! Oh, were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
So disinherited, how would ye 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! Fond 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 desir'st,
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
Outstretched 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,"
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 repelled:
"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 disdained
Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,
Though by the Devil himself; him overweening
To over-reach; but, with the Serpent meeting,
Fooled 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
Crooked 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! Oh, 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 gained By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld By parents; or his happiest choice too late Shall meet, already linked 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 turned; but Eve, Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing, And tresses all disordered, 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 unweeting 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 joined in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assigned 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 sinned; 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,
Immovable till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration. Soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress—
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid.
As one disarmed, 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 desir’st
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 denounced, 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 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, devoured
By Death at last (and miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursed world a woeful 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
PARADISE LOST.

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 our selves 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 entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.
but adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,
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 armed his vengeful ire than so
To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death
So snatched 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
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 proposest; so our foe
Shall scape his punishment ordained, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mentioned, 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 further 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 benumbed—ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gathered 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 pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine 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, sustained
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 sights the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure, in whose look serene,
When angry most he seemed 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 confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek.

THE END OF THE TENTH BOOK.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK XI.

THE 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 that 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 lowliest 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 Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight Than loudest oratory. Yet their port Not of mean suitors; nor important less Seemed 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 drowned, before the shrine Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then, clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,
By their great Intercessor, 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, mixed
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
Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),
To better life shall yield him, where with me
All my redeemed 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  
Distempered all things, and of incorrupt  
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts  
Created him endowed—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 renewed.  
But let us call to synod all the Blest  
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 confirmed."

He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
To the bright Minister that watched. He blew  
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps  
When God descended, and perhaps once more  
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast  
Filled all the regions: from their blissful bowers  
Of amarantinie 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 softened, 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 renewed.
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,
Charmed 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 embalmed
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 linked;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed:—

"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
Even to the seat of God. For, since I sought
By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
Kneed 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 returned
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 called, 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 transgressor, who, for thee ordained
A help, became thy snare; to me reproach
Rather belongs, distrust and all dispraise.
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 voutsaf'st,
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
Though after sleepless night; for see! the Morn,
All unconcerned 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 enjoined
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 wished, much-humbled Eve; but Fate
Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impressed
On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed,
After short blush of morn. Nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove, stooped 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; 190
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 further change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven by these mute signs in Nature shows,
Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn
Us, haply too 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 erred not; for, by this, the Heavenly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now 200
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt—
A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious, when the Angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilioned with his guardians bright;
Nor that which on the flaming mount appeared
In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch 210

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In their bright stand there left his Powers to seize
Possession of the Garden; he alone,
To find where Adam sheltered, took his way;
Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,
While the great visitant approached, thus spake:—

"Eve, now expect great tidings, which, perhaps,
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observed; for I descry,
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."

He ended; and the Archangel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man. Over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flowed,
Livelier than Melibcean, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce; Iris had dipt the woof.
His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
In manhood where youth ended; by his side,
As in a glistening zodiac, hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.
Adam bowed low; he, kingly, from his state
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:—

"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 may'st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May'st 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."

He added not; for Adam, at the news
Heart-strook, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound; Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discovered 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 adorned
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, accustomed 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 scattered spirits returned,  
To Michael thus his humble words addressed:—  
“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  
Inhospitable appear, and desolate,  
Nor knowing us, nor known. And, if by prayer  
Incessant I could hope to change the will  
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 voutsafed  
Presence Divine, and to my sons relate,  
‘On this mount He appeared; under this tree  
Stood visible; among these pines his voice  
I heard; here with him at this fountain talked.'
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre 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, recalled
To life prolonged 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 warmed.
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,
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 may'st believe, and be confirmed
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 drenched her eyes)
Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak'st,
As once thou slept'st while she to life was formed."

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
Stretched out to the ampest 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
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 Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born; nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus to his utmost port
Ercoco, and the less maritime 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,
Marocco, 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 Atabalipa, and yet unspoiled
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 euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
And from the well of life three drops instilled.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Even to the inmost 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 recalled:—
"Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
The effects which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee, who never touched
The excepted tree, nor with the Snake conspired,
Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive
Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds."

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
New-reaped, the other part sheep-walks and folds;
I' 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,
Unculled, as came to hand. A shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choiest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strewed,
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 talked,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life; he fell, and, deadly pale,
Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused.
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismayed, 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 avenged, 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.  
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 may’st know  
What misery the inabstinence of Eve  
Shall bring on men.” Immediately a place  
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;  
A lazar-house it seemed, 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 phrenzy, 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 delayed 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 quelled
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess,
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:—

"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 offered, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismissed 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?"
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 may’st thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother’s lap, or be with ease
Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature.
This is old age; but then thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To withered, weak, and grey; thy senses then,
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo
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 this cumbersom 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 liv’st
Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven.
And now prepare thee for another sight."

He looked, 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
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 washed by stream
From underground); the liquid ore he drained
Into fit moulds prepared; from which he formed
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 seemed, 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 walked 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, appeared; 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, attached the heart
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
The bent of Nature; which he thus expressed:—
"True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,
Much better seems this vision, and more hope
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past:
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
Here Nature seems fulfilled 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 seemed
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 appetite, 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
(Erelong to swim at large) and laugh; for which
The world erelong a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:—
"O pity and shame, that they who to live well
Entered 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 looked, 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.
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 scattered lies
With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field
Deserted. Others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamped, 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 haralds call
To council in the city-gates: anon
Grey-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
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 snatched 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 turned full sad:—"Oh, what are these?
Death's ministers, not men! who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousandfold 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 matched; who of themselves
Abhor to join, and, by imprudence mixed,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these Giants, men of high renown;
For in those days might only shall be admired,
And valour and heroic virtue called.
To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Manslaughter, 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 called, 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 beheld'st
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,
Rapt 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 looked, and saw the face of things quite changed.
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
All now was turned 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 preached
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,
Smeared 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 entered in, as taught
Their order; last, the sire and his three sons,
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 thickened sky
Like a dark ceiling stood: down rushed the rain
Impetuous, and continued till the earth
No more was seen. The floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with beaked prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water rolled; sea covered sea,
Sea without shore: and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
And stabled: of mankind, so numerous late,
All left in one small bottom swum embarked.
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 drowned,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared
By the Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
Though comfortless, as when a father mourns
His children, all in view destroyed 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 crowned
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 conquered, also, and enslaved by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,
And fear of God—from whom their piety feigned
In sharp contest of battle found no aid
Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, 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 beheld’st,
To save himself and household from amidst
A world devote to universal wrack.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged
And sheltered 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
Above the highest hills. Then shall this Mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be moved
Out of his place, pushed by the horned flood,
With all his verdure spoiled, 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 orcs, and sea-mews' 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 further shall ensue behold."

He looked, 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 decayed;
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 fixed.
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 destroyed than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect and so just
That God voutsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven:
Distended as the brow of God appeared?
Or serve they as a flowery verge to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest 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
The whole Earth filled 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-coloured 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."

THE END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK.
PARADISE LOST.

BOOK XII.

THE 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, in his journey, bates at noon,

Though bent on speed, so here the Archangel paused
Betwixt the world destroyed 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 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 poured, 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,
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)
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 sovranty,
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 tyrannize,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find
The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
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 rase
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 mocked 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."

Where to thus Adam, fatherly displeased:—
"O execrable son, so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not given!
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his donation: but man over men
He made not lord—such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free.
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
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.
Reason in Man obscured, or not obeyed
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 enthral
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 annexed,
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—
A nation from one faithful man to spring.
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship—Oh, that men
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch lived who scaped 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 voutsafes
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;
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.
I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the ford
To Haran—after him a cumbrous train
Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude—
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who called him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
Pitched 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 revealed. 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 called
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 sequester 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 (those 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 compelled by signs and judgments dire:
To blood unshed the rivers must be turned;
Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill
With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;
His cattle must of rot and murrain die;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,
Hail mixed 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 tamed at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice
More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage
Pursuing whom he late dismissed, 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 embattled ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war. The race elect
Safe towards Canaan, from the shore, advance
Through the wild Desert—not the readiest way,
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
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
Untrained 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 ordained.
God, from the Mount of Sinai, whose grey top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself,
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's 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 terror 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
Established, such delight hath God in men
Obedient to his will that he voutsafes
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; and at length they come,
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 destroyed, 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 revealed, those chiefly which concern
Just Abraham and his seed. Now first I find
Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,
Erewhile perplexed 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,  
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, 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 who shall quell  
The adversary Serpent, and bring back  
Through the world's wilderness long-wandered 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 renowned
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,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him as shall be registered
Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll:
Whose foul idolatries and other faults,
Heaped 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 called.
There in captivity he lets them dwell
The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
To David, stablished as the days of Heaven.
Returned from Babylon by leave of kings,
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
They first re-edify, and for a while
In mean estate live moderate, till, grown
In wealth and multitude, factious 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
Barred 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 squadroned 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 dewed in tears,
Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:—
"O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain—
Why our great Expectation should be called
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 condemned
A shameful and accursed, nailed 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 offered 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,
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.
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 learned
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 preached, but to the sons
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world;
So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
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."

So spake the Archangel Michæl; then paused,
As at the World's great period; and our Sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:—
"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 occasioned, or rejoice
Much more that much more good thereof shall spring—
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God—and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven
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,
Poured 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 performed, 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, though feigning still to act
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
Left them enrolled, 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? what but unbuild
His living temples, 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 from Heaven to be revealed
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, Ages of endless date
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 fixed! 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 deemed 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 learned, thou hast attained 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,
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 called 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; for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards,
By me encamped 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 calmed, 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 cheered 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, 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 banished hence. This further consolation yet secure I carry hence: though all by me is lost, Such favour I unworthy am voutsafed, By me the Promised Seed shall all restore.”

So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard Well pleased, but answered not; for now too nigh The Archangel stood, and from the other hill To their fixed station, all in bright array,
The Cherubim descended, on the ground
Gliding 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 brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
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 seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, 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.

END OF VOL. I.
Milton, John
Poetical works