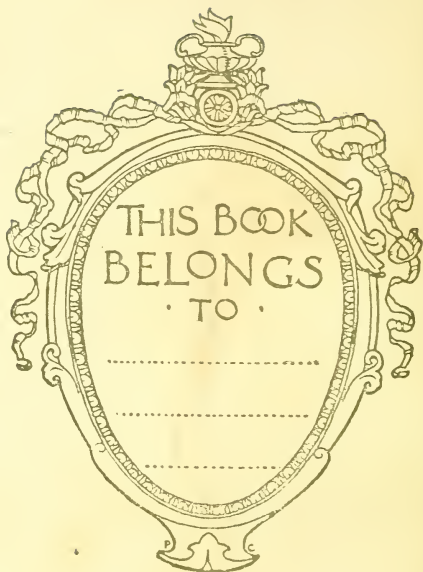


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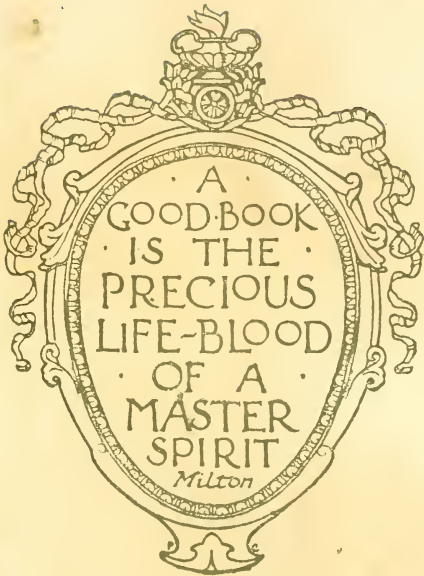
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The **KINGS TREASURIES**
OF LITERATURE



GENERAL EDITOR
SIR A. T. QUILLER COUCH



JOHN MILTON

NEW YORK E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

MILTON'S
**PARADISE
LOST**

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PREFACE

THIS volume represents an attempt to present *Paradise Lost* in a form in which the poem can be read *as a whole* by classes of boys or girls of the age of sixteen or so. Books I. and II. are given entire, and the selection from the other ten Books is nearly equal in length to the first two Books combined. The whole, that is to say, consists of a little over 3,500 lines, being about a third of the whole poem as Milton wrote it. Care has been taken, not only to select the passages of greatest poetic merit, but to preserve the general structure of the original work. The task of selection is necessarily a delicate one, and I am very glad to have had the advice in this matter of Dr. A. C. Bradley, not only because the selection made with his help is a better one than I should have made unaided, but also because the reader will naturally feel greater confidence in a selection guided by a critic known to fame, than in one made by an unknown schoolmaster.

In my notes I have tried throughout to bear in mind that what Milton wrote was an Epic Poem—not a General Knowledge paper. *Paradise Lost* is full of learned allusions, the explanation of which, in many cases, simply does not matter at all to the

appreciation of the poem. The "reader for pleasure" would not dream of searching them out in "notes," and unless *Paradise Lost* is "read for" and "with" pleasure, in schools as elsewhere, it had better not be read at all.

If a schoolmaster gets a class through a stiff examination in a Book of *Paradise Lost*, and leaves the impression that the poem is "awful rot," he has done much more harm than good. I have placed at the bottom of the pages of the text such brief explanatory notes as seemed to me really useful, and collected at the end some longer notes discussing, it is hoped, matters of general interest rather than points for examination.

I cannot overstate my debt to Sir Walter Raleigh's *Milton* and to Dr. Verity's annotated edition of the poem. I owe my general idea very largely to the insight of the former and my information on points of detail to the industry of the latter. My excuse for pillaging their works so extensively must be that Sir Walter's book is not likely to find its way into the class-room, except perhaps to the teacher's desk, and Dr. Verity's notes, while invaluable to the student, are far too extensive for the school-boy making his first acquaintance with the epic.



INTRODUCTION

I. THE POET AND HIS WORK

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,

Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;

So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

W. WORDSWORTH.

THIS sonnet is one of the most splendid acts of homage ever paid by one great poet to another. It was written during the great war of a hundred years ago, the struggle against the devouring ambition of Napoleon. It is dated 1802, a time of facile jubilation, no doubt, to those who did not or could not look ahead, but a time of utter gloom to one who, like Wordsworth, exalted the war as a holy war for great principles of Liberty and Good Faith;

for during that year by the Treaty of Amiens our government bartered away those principles and confessed defeat, in exchange for a little peace and quietness—a very little, as it turned out. In such a moment Wordsworth's mind goes back a hundred and fifty years: he turns to Milton. "England hath need of thee." It is then worth while for the reader of *Paradise Lost* to consider what manner of man Milton was. "Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea": but a voice is nothing but a messenger from the soul within. If there is no soul, let the voice strain itself to the uttermost and we shall have nought but "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." "Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart." *Paradise Lost*, being Milton's greatest work, is also the completest exposition of his "soul," his character.

Milton was born in London in 1608, at the time when Shakespeare was writing his last plays, and King James I. levying his first illegal taxes. When he reached manhood his gifts unfolded themselves and he recognised his vocation—to be not merely a poet, but a great poet—with a quite startling candour. Circumstances seemed to have combined to favour him from the first. His father was a prosperous lawyer, and withal a man of true culture and devoted to music. He gave his son the best of education, at St. Paul's, and Christ's College, Cambridge, with a view to his taking Holy Orders. When this course became repugnant to the son's puritan views, the

father not only acquiesced, but was apparently quite content that he should stand aside from all professional careers and devote himself to further preparation for some as yet dimly defined great task before him. This great task was to be dedicated to the glory of God, and also to the enrichment of English poetry. During the first ten years of Milton's manhood, the ten years of Charles I.'s government without Parliament, a small sheaf of lyric masterpieces appeared, *The Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. But the main preoccupation of these years was a strict preparation, by literary study of encyclopædic breadth, for that great task ahead towards which he moved without haste, but without rest. He writes, early in these years and while still at Cambridge:

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

Had no interruption come, Milton would stand forth as a pattern of those who set themselves a great task and pursue it in one long straight line from youth and aspiration to maturity and completion.

But the line was not to be straight. The Long Parliament met and drifted into the Great Rebellion. Milton felt a new call, not deeper but more immediate, and put aside poetry for politics and pamphleteering. The time seemed to have come for

a radical reconstruction of society on a basis of liberalism, as we should say to-day. Just as novelists, playwrights and philosophers in our own day have turned from their special callings to set forth schemes of social reconstruction, so Milton wrote on Reformation, on Education, on Divorce, on Freedom of the Press, on Tenure of Kings. In 1649, the new Commonwealth government appointed him Latin Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. The post seems to have entailed duties more properly belonging to a "ministry of propaganda," and from being a free pamphleteer of opposition, Milton became a hired pamphleteer in his government's defence—which was hardly a change for the better. No doubt he was doing his duty as he saw it: and he sacrificed his eyesight in his country's service.

Then came the crash. All those high public aims for which he had turned aside from his self-appointed task had collapsed in utter disillusionment. He himself was at one moment not far from the scaffold, and it is still somewhat of a mystery why his name did not appear, along with those of Vane and Lambert, to whom he had dedicated two of the scanty sonnets of those turbulent years, among the list of exceptions from the general amnesty. Still, all was lost save life—and honour. It was under these circumstances that Milton returned indomitably to his great task. In 1663 *Paradise Lost* was finished, and in 1667 it was published. Seven years of life yet remained, and bore fruit in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.

Paradise Lost is a vast narrative poem, an epic, modelled on the classic lines of the works of Homer and Virgil, setting forth the story of the Fall of Man through the first sin of Adam and Eve. Round this central event is woven the tale of the rebellion and fall of the rebel angels, their first fortunes in Hell, Satan's journey thence to Earth and the Garden of Eden, the story of the Creation, the judgment passed by God upon Adam and Eve, the promise of the Redemption, and their expulsion from the Garden. For the central event Milton's authority is, of course, the first chapters of Genesis. For the rest he had to rely, in part on a mass of literary tradition accumulated round certain mysterious passages in the Bible,¹ but also very largely on his own powers of invention. The narrative of *Paradise Lost* has itself become a part of our popular tradition, and probably many a man attributes to the Bible itself details that belong only to Milton. *Paradise Lost*, therefore, presents a Biblical tale in a Classical guise. The poem is the meeting point of the two great schools of culture, the Hebraic and the Hellenic, upon which our modern culture is

¹ For instance: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . Yet shalt thou be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."—Isaiah xiv. 12–15.

And: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."
—Jude 6.

based. Add to this the fact that Milton had ransacked modern literature, English and Italian, in his preparation for his work; that he had himself travelled in Italy and knew its scenery, and had met there the great pioneer of modern science, Galileo, blind and persecuted like himself; that his mind was stored, overcharged it may be, with memories of one of the most critical epochs in English History, an epoch in which he had been a leading actor; and it will be plain that Milton brought to the embellishment of his austere and superhuman theme an unrivalled wealth of human learning and human experience.

It is a good custom of story-telling—if the story is a long one—to begin in the middle. The first thing is to enlist the sympathy and grip the imagination of the reader, and an elaborate analysis of antecedents is not well suited to this purpose. Everyone knows, for instance, how long it takes to “get started” in many of the Waverley Novels. Modern novelists often start us off in the middle of a conversation, and spare us the description of their characters till the second chapter. But the traditions of epic offered a much more drastic precedent. Virgil’s *Æneid* launches us almost at once into a storm sent by Juno which scatters the fleet of Æneas midway on their journey from Troy to Latium. Æneas is wrecked on the coasts of Carthage, and it is only in Books II. and III. that we hear from his own mouth the narrative of the beginning of his adventures, starting from the sack of Troy. Milton

adopts and even extends this method, as the following brief outline will show:

Book I. Satan rises with Beelzebub from the burning lake of Hell, whither he has been cast. He rouses his stupefied legions, and calls them to fresh effort against the Almighty, telling them of Earth and its new inhabitants.

Book II. A Council of War in Hell; as a result of which Satan sets forth through Chaos to discover what he may of this New World.

Book III. God, looking down from Heaven, foretells the success of Satan's mission, and the Son offers Himself as a ransom for Man. Meanwhile Satan visits the "outermost orb" of the World (as figured in mediæval astronomy), and, disguised, enquires his way of the Angel of the Sun; finally he alights on Earth.

Book IV. Satan enters the Garden of Eden, and sees Adam and Eve. Gabriel, the warder of the garden, is warned of Satan's presence, discovers and interviews him. A combat is prevented by a sign from Heaven, and Satan flees.

Book V. Raphael is sent to warn Man of the enemy that threatens him.

Book VI. Raphael describes to Adam and Eve the War in Heaven and the defeat of the rebel Angels.

Book VII. Raphael describes the Creation of the World.

Book VIII. Further conversation: Adam relates to Raphael his own first memories. Raphael departs.

Book IX. Satan returns. The Temptation and Fall of Man.

Book X. God sends his Son to judge Man. Sin and Death leave the gates of Hell, their previous station, and build a bridge across Chaos from Hell to Earth. Satan returns to Hell.

Book XI. God accepts the repentant prayers of Man, but sends Michael to lead them forth from Paradise. Michael shows Adam and Eve in a vision the fortunes of their descendants until the Flood.

Book XII. Michael relates the further fortunes of Man, and reveals the future Redemption of Man by Christ, the Seed of the Woman. Adam and Eve are led forth from the Garden.

Such is the scheme of the poem, a vast plot set upon a vast stage. "Heaven opening to reject her rebellious children; the unvoyageable depths of ancient Chaos with its 'anarch old' and its eternal war of wrecks; these traversed by that great leading Angel that drew after him a third part of the heavenly host; earliest Paradise dawning upon the warrior-angel out of this far-distant 'sea without shore' of Chaos; the dreadful phantoms of Sin and Death, prompted by secret sympathy and snuffing the distant scent of 'mortal change on earth,' chasing the steps of their great progenitor and sultan; finally the heart-freezing visions, shown and narrated to Adam, of human misery through vast successions of shadowy generations; all these scenical opportunities offered in the *Paradise Lost* become in the hands of the

mighty artist elements of undying grandeur not matched on earth." So wrote De Quincey in a rapid summary which catches something of the sweeping magnificence of its subject.

Scenically, the episodes of the poem fall into three main divisions, Heaven, Earth, and Hell; and there is a very general agreement that the last division comprises most of what is best in the poem, and the first most of what is worst. In Heaven, to tell the truth, Milton was not at all at ease, and he has not succeeded in putting his reader at ease there either. In these parts of the poem his Classic masters were an embarrassment rather than a guide to him. Homer presumably believed in the gods and goddesses he wrote of, but they are simple, primitive deities of a simple and primitive people. They move at ease among men and share their passions. Virgil wrote, it is true, in a highly sophisticated age, but an age to which Jupiter and Juno were mere conventions of art and literature, long deposed by philosophy from their claim on the religious devotion of educated men. But Milton was adapting their methods to the treatment of the Divine Persons of the Trinity, for the purity of whose worship Englishmen, and Milton among them, had been fighting with sword and pen and were to fight again. Hence it is not surprising that Milton's poetry strikes a false note here. What he has to give us is wonderful rhetoric, but neither good art nor good theology.

The scenes in the Garden of Eden abound in beautiful descriptive passages; their weakness,

such as it is, comes, paradoxically enough, from their lack of humanity. Adam and Eve are human beings, no doubt, but human beings so placed as none of their descendants have been. They have no memories of childhood, no traditions, no living to earn, no friends to love or quarrel with. They are the ambassadors and representatives of the whole human race, types of Man and Woman, but in themselves and by their very condition something more or less than human. Only after their Fall do they become truly interesting and pathetic.

And so, whether Milton liked it or not, Satan became the hero of the poem, for he satisfies so many of the requirements of the hero. He has known a mighty past; he has dared all for a great venture and lost; and still he struggles on, against hopeless odds, unconquered and undismayed. Little by little, Milton comes to invest him surreptitiously with noble traits, remorse for his rebellion, pity for his associates in ruin, pity—strangest of all—for his hapless human victims. He is in the grips of Destiny and is but living out the law of his existence. Splendid criminal against humanity, he enlists the generous sympathy of the race he scourges, even as Napoleon always will. Here we suffer none of the religious qualms that afflict us when we accompany Milton in Heaven. For the Personal Devil has ceased to be a reality to most of us, and the story of Eden has become a beautiful myth. Thus the change that has come over our religious ideas since Milton wrote is to the advantage rather than the loss of the reader of his poem.

And there was doubtless another reason that led Milton to put his finest work into the figure and the fortunes of Satan. For if Satan was a rebel, so was Milton. If the rebel angels had launched forth upon the great adventure and had crashed down in ruins, so had the Puritans. It is no accident that Milton's God is a monarch surrounded by angelic courtiers, and his Satan the presiding genius of a rebel Parliament. How far Milton consciously prefigured the fortunes of his own party in the fortunes of the rebel angels, it is hard to say; perhaps not at all. That he did so unconsciously lies writ all over the poem. Later, in *Samson Agonistes*, he chose as his hero another rebel whose fortunes he could with decency use as a symbol of his own, and there the parallel is unmistakable. However it may be, this strange analogy between the author and the hero of *Paradise Lost* gives the poem many touches of almost lyrical passion that otherwise, with all its magnificence, it would certainly lack.

And so we see that Milton's sacrifice of poetry for politics in the best years of his life was not all loss. If the Puritan revolution produced nothing else of abiding value—and it produced a great deal, though those who lived through it could hardly guess as much—it produced *Paradise Lost*. What form Milton's masterpiece would have taken had the great interruption never come, we cannot say; but it would certainly have been something very different from what he has actually left us.

II. METRE AND RHYTHM

The whole of Milton's own brief and emphatic preface is devoted to this subject. He writes:

"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."

The metre, then, is "blank verse," the five-foot iambic¹ line without rhyme, familiar in Shakespeare's plays, and used for one purpose or another by practically every English poet of repute who has written during the last hundred years. The point seems hardly to call for remark to-day. It would be the use of any *other* metre than blank verse for a poem of this scale that would seem to call for comment. But it was Milton who founded the blank verse tradition we have since come to accept as a matter of course. Before *Paradise Lost* blank verse had only once been used outside drama, and that only in a single poem, meritless and forgotten. The critics in Milton's day were discussing the comparative claims of the rhymed couplet and some form of stanza (such as Spenser's) as the better metre for narrative poetry. In the very year in which *Paradise Lost* appeared, Dryden declared that blank verse was unsuited to tragic purposes, and fittest for the lighter and more colloquial parts of comedy! Into this barren controversy Milton cut abruptly. "The measure is English heroic verse without rime."

But formal *metre* supplies to the poet no more than a framework upon which his *rhythms* are embroidered. Metre alone can afford no more "true musical delight" (to adopt Milton's phrase) than a series of

¹ An "iambus" consists of two syllables, the second accented.

drum-taps. Milton's metre can be stated in such a formula as this:

. \ | . \ | . \ | . \ | . \
or, ti-tum, ti-tum, ti-tum, ti-tum, ti-tum.

Anyone can see that exact repetition of this metrical formula through a long series of lines would be quite intolerable; not music, but a positive incitement to deeds of violence. Indeed, since the material of poetry is not drum-taps but human speech, such repetition is impossible. Every prose sentence has a rhythm of its own. For instance, we could roughly express the rhythm of the last sentence, "Every prose sentence has a rhythm of its own," as follows:

\ . . | \ | \ . | . . \ . | . . \

The art of poetic rhythm lies in striking a balance between the metre (in this case the five-foot iambic line) and the rhythm of the sentence. Thus the metre of *Paradise Lost* is invariable throughout, but no two lines have absolutely identical rhythms. Yet, in every line, beneath the diversity of the rhythms we must be made to feel the invariability of the metre. Thus, to take an analogy, all human faces have a certain common character. If they lack this common character, we say they are deformed. But each human face has certain qualities of its own. If it is deficient in such quality, we might describe it as featureless or characterless. So in poetry: if metre obtrudes its monotony and variety of rhythm is deficient, poetry degenerates into

jingle. If rhythm has too free a play and metre cannot be traced, poetry degenerates into prose. The same pitfalls that beset the poet beset the reader-aloud. Nothing is more vexatious than the slave of metre who lays an accent with a weight of lead on every alternate syllable, irrespective of its natural value :

Of *Man's* first disobedience and the fruit.

A lesser fault, but still a fault, is his who reads exactly as though the divisions into lines had no value or significance.

Once the poet has chosen his metre, he will treat it after his own fashion as regards rhythm. Quite apart from the variation of rhythm from line to line, the rhythm of Milton's blank verse has a different character *as a whole* from the rhythm of Shakespeare's, or Tennyson's, or Browning's blank verse. Again, within the same poem, different types of subject matter will demand a different type of rhythm. The rhythm of Hamlet's passionate soliloquy,

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,

is very different from the rhythm of the formal political speech with which the King opens the same scene (*Hamlet*, I. ii.).

The leading characteristics of Milton's rhythm are two.

First, he attains a greater variety of rhythmic pattern than any other English poet, without ever for a moment blurring or obscuring the regular framework of the metre. He writes, not so much by

lines as by "periods," great rolling sentences, each of which seems to constitute a kind of paragraph to itself. These periods, more often than not, end in the middle of a line. We pause and breathe again before setting out upon the next period. And yet the line, broken in two though it be, retains its own metric vitality. The opening invocation of Book I. (lines 1-26) will illustrate this as well as any other passage.

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, 5
 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 10
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues 15
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
 And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that does 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, 20
 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, 25
 And justify the ways of God to men.

The first period ends in the middle of line 10; the second at the end of line 16; the third in the middle

of line 19; the fourth in the middle of line 22; the fifth at the end of line 23; the sixth at the end of line 26. The passage is evidently constructed with the utmost cunning—art, as Ruskin says, is full of little pieces of concealed cunning. Each period, until the last, is shorter than that which precedes it. Again, in the first sixteen lines, previous to the full stop, it is only three times that so much as a comma, a minor pause, coincides with the end of a line. In the last ten lines, however, the comma-endings become more frequent. Further, in the last three lines the rhythmic pauses of the sentence coincide exactly with the metrical divisions of the lines. Finally, to take but one more detail, the rhythm of the opening line, considered in itself, diverges very widely from the five-foot iambic pattern. We might express its rhythm as:

. / | / | .. / . | .. /

We have here only four accented syllables. The last two lines, on the other hand, conform almost perfectly to the “drum-tap” iambic pattern. What is the point of all this? Has it any point? Certainly it has a point; but the point can be only very imperfectly expressed in terms of criticism. The passage bears within it its own explanation, and any “explanation” of mine can catch no more of the inner meaning of the original than a guide-book description of Switzerland can catch of the spirit of the Alps. Roughly, the passage strikes me as follows: Milton, opening, overflows with exuberant

inspiration; his "heart is inditing of a good matter"; he can hardly contain himself. As the passage proceeds he passes from invocation of "the Muse" into an attitude of prayer before "the Spirit." His mood grows quieter; he acquires a completer sense of direction; finally his subject opens out before him in perfect clarity and he settles himself to his task, in the ringing confidence of the two final lines.

The reader can apply for himself the same method to other passages. Many of the speeches offer interesting material. Milton had listened to much political oratory, and he knew how the speaker often starts on a note of diffidence; he hesitates; feels his way; leaves a sentence unfinished and begins again. As he proceeds he warms to his task and works up to a polished peroration. Satan's first speech (Book I. 84-124) might well be studied from this point of view.

Such is the first grand characteristic of Milton's rhythm. The second is perhaps but a different application of the same idea. No poet knew better than Milton how to vary his rhythms to suit the moods of his subject. The sound echoes the sense. Here we enter on the topic described as "onomatopœia," which has been the subject of much crude and inadequate criticism. People have sometimes spoken as if it was the practice of poets to turn aside from time to time and imitate physical noises, the beat of horses' hoofs or the buzzing of bees. Such literal imitations can only be unsuitably comic interruptions in great poetry, and in fact they do

not occur. No hard and fast line should be drawn between onomatopœia and "ordinary poetry." In all good poetry the sound will in a mysterious way *reinforce* the sense, and that is why all poetry should be read "as though aloud." The reader must listen for the music, even though no physical sound escapes his lips. On the other hand, no good poetry will do more than suggest, not a physical noise, but the emotion we associate with a particular physical noise. Take for example the oft-quoted line of Virgil:

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.¹

The line does not *imitate* the *sound* of galloping horse-hoofs; it *suggests* the *emotions* natural to galloping, the emotion of the rider, not the sound made by the horse. Music offers a parallel case. All music, if it have merit, must be charged with and expressive of emotion; but there are certain kinds of music, called "programme music," which suggest much more definitely a particularised emotion. Many musicians, for example, have written pieces named "Papillons," butterflies. Such pieces do not imitate the noise made by the butterfly! On the other hand, their airy texture, their light whimsicality, is to be taken as somehow suggestive of the emotions that butterflies evoke in the human breast.

A very few examples from *Paradise Lost* will suffice to illustrate the range and variety of Miltonic rhythm from this point of view. Here is a famous

¹"The hoof shakes the hollow plain with a four-footed sound."

passage (Book II. 577-86) describing the rivers of Hell. Each river symbolises, as the words tell us, a different emotion, and in each little descriptive sentence the rhythm and the very vowel qualities of the syllables, the "colour" of the passage as musicians would say, reinforces indefinitely the idea simultaneously expressed in the words.

Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.

No mere description will do justice to the power of these lines. Much, of course, is achieved by alliteration (the repetition of consonants) and assonance (the repetition of vowel-sounds). The magic reaches its climax, of course, when we come to where "Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls her watery labyrinth."

A few lines further on (Book II. 621), Milton is making us feel the appalling nature of the country through which the lost angels travelled in their first voyage of exploration through the coasts of Hell. We come upon the line:

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death.

Was ever such an obstacle race compressed into a single line?

Another single line of almost equal length serves

a very different purpose. Milton is describing the power of grave and solemn music, such as is fit to stir man to "deliberate valour" in war:

Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thought, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal and immortal minds.

BOOK I. 556-9.

But the selection of special passages gives a false notion of Milton's art, for every line of the poem in greater or less degree bears evidence of the same careful workmanship, the same wedding of sound and sense.

III. THE SIMILES OF "PARADISE LOST"

One of the dangers that beset the writer of a long narrative poem is the danger of monotony, and the simile, enabling the reader to turn his attention, be it but for a moment, to a new subject, is a favourite and traditional device of the epic poets of Greece and Rome, Homer and Virgil. The inhuman character of Milton's subject increased the danger of monotony, and so the simile, with the glimpse it affords as a rule into the doings of common humanity, counts for more, perhaps, in *Paradise Lost* than even in the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*. The simile also gave Milton an opportunity of diversifying his work with some small fraction of his own vast store of curious learning and experience. He draws freely upon the Old

Testament, and upon the legends, familiar and unfamiliar, of classical Greece; he makes use of his Italian travels, and works in a reference to Galileo; he introduces all kinds of nautical allusions, from the "ancient marinere" who anchored his ship in the flank of Leviathan, "deeming" him "some island," to the contemporary East India merchants, whose traffic owed so much to the policing of the seas by the very government to which Milton had been Latin Secretary.

The Miltonic simile serves two purposes which might seem at first sight flatly contradictory. A figure or an incident outside the story is set beside a figure or an incident in the story, primarily because the two are alike, secondly because they are unlike. The very first simile in the poem may serve as an illustration (Book I. 192-210):

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.

Milton is perpetually on his guard to jog our feeble imaginations, and to remind us that the Devils bore the appearance of something more than human. They did not externally resemble men, or even magnified men; they were something altogether vaster and stranger. (On this point Milton's pictorial illustrators, such as Doré, are constantly defeating Milton's own purpose as expressed in his similes.) Before we ever reach the simile, the first five lines quoted above have done something to destroy this false conception. Then, after some tentative classical parallels, comes the simile of Leviathan, and the poet probably assumes that the reader's notions of Leviathan will be based on a vivid recollection of the portentous description of that monster in Job xli. (The reader who has forgotten it cannot do better than turn it up.) So Satan's bulk is like Leviathan, and Leviathan is easily mistaken for an island! So much for the primary object of the simile, the *likeness*. But in all respects except mere bulk, in situation, in "atmosphere," Leviathan "slumbering on the Norway foam" is as *unlike* Satan "chained on the burning lake" as anything can be. This is no mere accident. Hell is a monotonous place; its prevailing impression is torture; its air is fire. If we are to escape for a minute, we may as well escape as far as possible, and what is further from Hell than the cool calm of the northern sea? Again, the note of Hell is tragedy, and here we have a touch of comedy in the thought of the confusion wrought in the mariner's charts by his unfortunate

choice of anchorage. Or perhaps, as Milton quietly hints, the whole is a sailor's "yarn," and then the Comic Muse merely shifts her ground and broadens her smile.

So we drift into an atmosphere as far from Hell as may be. All the more powerful, then, is the shock when Milton remorselessly plunges us back again. Here is a subtle example of the uses of rhythm. In the last line of the simile, Milton makes us pronounce the second syllable in "wishèd," a type of usage common enough in many poets, but so rare in Milton that it conveys, where it occurs, an unmistakable suggestion of daintiness and fantasy. The next line, which plunges us back in Hell, moves with the tramp of a giant, an unbroken series of monosyllables, and, eight of the ten, heavy monosyllables at that.

So the simile gives us a respite from Hell; but it also prevents us from ever becoming quite acclimatised, in such a way that familiarity might breed contempt. The reader of Book II. will find that some of the Devils themselves expected that Hell would lose its terrors after long trial (lines 217-20). But Providence had guarded against that danger even as Milton guards against it in the case of his readers (lines 587-603), though in a less agreeable manner.

Such are the general principles of Miltonic simile, some or all of which the reader can apply for himself to each simile as it occurs.



PARADISE LOST

BOOK I

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 10
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that does 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, 20

* Here and in all places the sign * indicates a note at the end of the book.

8. *That shepherd.* Moses, the reputed author of Genesis.

15. *Aonian mount.* Helicon, the abode of the Muses.

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 30
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, 40
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, 51

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 Angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild. 60
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 70
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, weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named 80
BEËLZEBUB. 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 90
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 contentions brought along 100
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.

109. *And what is else, etc. I.e.* : If we maintain the unconquerable will, that is but another way of saying we are not beaten. As all history shows, victory is a psychological, not a purely military, concept.

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 120
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 130
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, 140
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, 150
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 ought good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160
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 ofttimes 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 170
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, 180
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, 190
If not, what reeolution 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,

177. *To bellow, etc.* A good example of onomatopœia, good not least because it is unobtrusive. To obtrude such devices is to spoil them, and the reader shall be left henceforth to notice them for himself. *Deep. I.e. Chaos.*

192-210. On this passage as a whole, see Introduction III., on Milton's Similes, page 28.

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 200
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 210
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. 220
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames

198-200. The Giants or Spirits of Earth made war, according to Greek legend, on Zeus and the deities of Heaven. They were defeated and confined in caves or under mountains which thus, *e.g.* Etna, became volcanoes.

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 * 230

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, 240

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 sovran can dispose and bid

What shall be right: farthest from him is best,

Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme

232. *Pelorus*. The north-east promontory of Sicily, close to Messina (which was destroyed by earthquake in 1908).

241. *Supernal*. Supernatural.

Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail, 250
Infernal 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: 260
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 271
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

268. *Mansion*. Abiding place. In the strict Latin sense (and Milton often uses words thus) the word does not suggest “building.”

Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Grovvelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280
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, 290
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 300
His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades

288. *Tuscan artist.* Galileo, whom Milton had visited. The places named in the following lines and in l. 303 are near Florence.

294. *Ammiral.* Flagship.

High over-arched embower; or scattered sedge *
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
 Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'er-
 threw

Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses 310
 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 320
 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

305. *Orion*. The rising and setting of this constellation (June and November) was associated with storms by Latin poets.

307. *Busiris*. A Greek name for some Egyptian king unknown. Milton merely picks the name for its sound.

Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?—

Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen! " 330

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 340

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: 350

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, 360
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 370
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. 380

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 cursèd things
 His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, 390
 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
 Worshipt 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 400
 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, 410
 And Elealè to the Asphaltic Pool:
 Peor his other name, when he enticed *

389. *Abominations*. Cf. the N.T. phrase, "abomination of desolation."

404. *Hinnom*. Valley outside Jerusalem; scene of Moloch-worship, and afterwards desecrated and used as a place where bodies of executed criminals were cast forth, hence a "type" of Hell; Greek name, Gehenna.

411. *Asphaltic Pool*. Dead Sea. In this and other passages where Milton overflows with learning, the wise reader will be content to take a good deal for granted.

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 420
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, 430
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 440
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;

422. *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth*. The Sun-god and Moon-goddess of the Phœnicians.

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 damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native rock 450
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 grunsel-edge, 460
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers:
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 Pharphar, lucid streams.

444. *Uxorious king*. Solomon with his six hundred concubines.

469. *Abbana*. Accent the first syllable.

He also against the house of God was bold: 470
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 480
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 490
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 500
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
 Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.*

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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 511
 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, 520
 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

508. *Javan*. Son of Japhet, son of Noah, and identified with Ion, the reputed ancestor of the Ionian Greeks.

520. *Hesperian*. Italian. The Greek deities passed to Italy and, with the spread of the Roman Empire, to Britain.

Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears: 530
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 emblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: 540

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 550

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 fixèd thought, 560
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; 570
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, 580
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptised or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,
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

568. *Traverse.* From side to side.

580. *Uther's son.* Arthur.

Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent, 590
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 600
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 610
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 620
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? 630
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 640
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 650

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; 660
For who can think submission? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved.”

He spake; and, to confirm his words, outflew
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 670
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 680

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 690
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, 700
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,

703. *Founded.* Melted. Milton describes the various architectural and engineering processes with an astonishing amount of concrete detail.

To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
 Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710
 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 god, or seat 720
 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 730
 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,

711. *Exhalation*. A breath from the mouth.

715. *Architrave*. Beam across the top of the pillars. The building is in the Renaissance, not the Gothic, style, and suggests the work of Milton's contemporary, Sir Christopher Wren.

And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell * 740
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, 750
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd Heralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came 760
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall

739. *Ausonian*. Italian.

740. *Mulciber*. Vulcan. Milton here, as so often, deliberately prefers the less familiar and more stately names.

(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 770
In clusters; they among fresh dewes and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd 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 780
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.

764. *Soldan*. Sultan.

765. *Panim*. Pagan.

769. *Taurus*. One of the signs of the zodiac, through which the sun passes from 19th April to 20th May.

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
 Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
 Though without number still, amidst the hall 791
 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.

BOOK II

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:— 10
 “ Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!—
 For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
 Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,

795. *Conclave*. Strictly speaking, the secret meeting of Cardinals to elect a Pope. Milton may be intending a mild anti-papist joke.

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 20
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 30
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, 40
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, 51
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, 60
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 70
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 80
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 abhorrèd deep to utter woe !
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge 90
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 100
On this side nothing ; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,

76. Cf. note on Book I. 634.

82. Moloch states the case of a supposed objector, in order to refute it. Inverted commas are similarly used in later speeches.

97. *Essential*. Substance of the angelic body.

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 110
 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 120
 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 armed watch, that render all access 130

104. *Fatal*. Upheld by fate; secure.

124. *Fact*. Deeds; prowess.

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 140
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, 150
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, 160
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, 170
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, 180
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,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
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 190
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 200
 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 210
 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

201-3. *This was at first resolved, etc. I.e.:* We should have resolved in the first instance, had we been wise, to accept bravely either victory or defeat, seeing the foe was so powerful and the issue so doubtful.

216. *Or, inured, not feel.* This forecast proved mistaken. Cf. lines 596-603.

In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light; 220
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 disenthroned the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain 230
Our own right lost. Him to unthroned 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 240
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

228. *Not peace.* There was none of that good-will towards the former enemy which is the essential ingredient of real peace. The “armed peace” that preceded the Great War was not “real peace.”

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 250
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 so'er 260
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 270
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise

263-8. Mammon avails himself of the verbal confusion between the heaven of theology and the heaven of the atmosphere.

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 280
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 pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard 290
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 Beëlzebub perceived—than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat—with grave 300
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, 310

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 320
 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 330
 Irreparable; terms of peace yet none

330. *Determined.* Fixed our destiny.

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? 340
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 350
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, 360
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 370
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
 In our confusion, and our joy upraise
 In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
 Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
 Their frail original, and faded bliss—
 Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
 Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
 Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised
 By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence, 380
 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
 Pleas'd highly those Infernal States, and joy
 Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
 They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—
 "Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, 390
 Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,

370. *Abolish his own works.* As all but occurred in the Flood.

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, 400
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, 411
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

405. *Abyss*. Milton exerts to the full his gift for the majestic and the vague in the following lines devoted to Chaos, and in the later description 890-916.

His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
 To second, or oppose, or undertake
 The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, 420
 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! Empyreal Thrones! 430
 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 440
 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?

418. *Suspense*. Suspended.

439. *Void profound of unessential Night*. The vacuum of Chaos (though vacuum, strictly, it is not).

441. *Abortive*. Monstrous.

But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranity, 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 450
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 460
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, 470
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 481
 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'er-spread
 Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element 490
 Scowls o'er the darkened landskip 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 500
 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 511
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 herald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell 519
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers
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; 530
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal

517. *Alchymy*. The science of turning metals into gold, hence meaning gold.

531. *Shun the goal*. The goal was the post at the end of the ancient stadium or racing-track, round which the racers had to pass before making the return lap of the race.

With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:
 As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
 Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
 To battle in the clouds; before each van
 Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
 Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
 From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
 Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
 Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air 540
 In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:—
 As when Alcides, from Œchalia crowned
 With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
 Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
 And Lichas from the top of Œta 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 550
 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—

533. *War appears waged in the troubled sky.* Aurora borealis.

542. *Alcides.* Hercules, tortured by the poisoned robe sent him by his deserted wife.

Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, 560
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, 570
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton, 580
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

577-83. *Styx, etc.* The rivers are those of Virgil's "Hades," *Æneid*, vi. The names are Greek, and bear, of course, the meanings that Milton assigns in his descriptions.

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 590
 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 600
 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 611
 The ford, and of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on

595. *Frore*. Frostily. The innermost part of Dante's *Inferno* consisted of ice, not fire.

596. *Harpy-footed*. I.e. with claws. The harpies were disgusting pests in the likeness of birds.

In confused march forlorn, the adventurous 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, 620
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, 630
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours 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, 640
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, 650
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 660
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, 670
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head

660. *The sea.* The Straits of Messina, between Italy and Sicily. The figures of Scylla and Charybdis no doubt originally personified the earthquakes common in the neighbourhood.

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:— 680

“ 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 691
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, 700
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 710
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 721
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 731
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute

721. *For never but once more, etc. I.e. in the Last Day, when both shall be destroyed.*

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 740
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 750
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 760
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won

752-8. Minerva was thus born from the head of Jove.

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 770
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. 780
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, 790
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'st—hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me; for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth 800
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 810
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
Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of—know, 821
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 831
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 840
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 850
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— 860
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." 870

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, 880
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
Excelled 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 890
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 embryo atoms: they around the flag 900
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, 910

900. *Embryon atoms.* The atoms out of which matter, as we know it, has been created, the *semina rerum* of Lucretius, the Roman poet who set forth a materialistic theory of the world in his *De Rerum Natura*.

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 920
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 spread for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930
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—

912. The traditional "four elements," Water, Earth, Air, and Fire.

922. *Bellona*. Goddess of war.

927. *Vans*. Wings.

Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea, 940
 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 Arimasbian, 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. 950
 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 960
 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.

940. *Syrtis*. Quicksand.

964-5. *Orcus*, *Ades*, *Demogorgon*. The names of these shadowy deities have no significance here.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus:—"Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy 970
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: 980
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 991
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,

988. *Anarch*. I.e. the ruler who rules not. Cf. 895 and 907.

Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend, 1000
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, 1010
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 Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered. 1020
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

1004. *Heaven.* I.e. the atmosphere of the Earth. Two lines later the same word denotes the abode of the Almighty.

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 1031
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; 1040
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, 1050
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.

1035. *Light.* But for similes, our scene has lain in total darkness hitherto.

BOOK III

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 unapproachèd 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 10
 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, 20
 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,

2. *Or of the Eternal, etc.* Light is either the first-born of God, or has existed with him from the beginning.

7. *Or hear'st thou rather.* Or dost thou prefer to be called.

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, 30
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 40
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. 50
So much the rather thou, *Celestial Light*,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence

35. *Mæonides*. Homer.

36. *Tiresias*. The blind prophet of Thebes, who appears in the tale of *Œdipus*. *Thamyris* and *Phineus* are obscure figures of Greek legend.

Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

[In the passage omitted here, the Father foretells the Fall of Man, and the Son offers himself for Man's ultimate Redemption.]

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 420
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. 430
As when a vulture, on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs

431-9. *As when a vulture, etc.* Imaus is a mountain range far up north in China. The vulture (Satan) is making for fertile India (Earth), but on his way alights in barren Thibet (the Primum Mobile).

Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chinese drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light;
So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend 440
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. 450
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, 460
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,

461. *Translated Saints.* Those who met such ends as Elijah and Enoch.

With many a vain exploit, though then renowned:
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Sennaar, 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, 470
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. 480
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 them with his keys, and now at foot
Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!
A violent cross wind from either coast
Blows them transverse ten thousand leagues awry,
Into the devious air. Then might ye see
Cows, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost
And fluttered into rags; then reliques, beads, 491
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.

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[In the remainder of Book III. Satan descends to the Sun, and approaches Uriel, the archangel of the Sun, in disguise. From here he is directed to Earth, and in the last lines of the book alights upon a mountain in Armenia.]

BOOK IV

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, 10
 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,

1-5. *O for that warning voice, etc.* The voice of St. John, writer of The Revelation. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down among you, having great wrath."—Rev. xii. 12.

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 20
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: 30
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, 40
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 sdained subjection, and thought one step higher 50
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 60
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. 70
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? 80
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, 90
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery: such joy ambition finds!
But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state; how soon
Would highth recal high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void
(For never can true reconciliation grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep);
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse 100
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 110
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, 120
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. 130

125. *Uriel*. The angel of the Sun, who had previously directed Satan to Earth, believing him to be a heavenly angel.

126. *Assyrian mount*. Niphates, where Satan had alighted at the end of Book III.

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 140
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 enamelled colours mixed;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow, 151
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 160

134. *Champain head.* A level summit of open land.

Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabeian 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 Asmodæus with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent 170
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, 180
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, 190
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold:
So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb.*
Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest 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 201
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 210
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;

211-12. *From Auran . . . to Seleucia.* Roughly speaking,
from Damascus to Babylon.

And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to life, 220
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 230
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 240
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:

233. The famous "four rivers" of Genesis (ii. 10-14).

Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
 Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true, 250
 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 260
 Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
 That to the fringèd 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 270
 Was gathered—which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world—nor that sweet grove

250. *Hesperian fables.* I.e. the golden apples of the Hesperides, sought by Hercules, existed here if anywhere.

266. *Universal Pan.* All Nature.

269. *Proserpin gathering flowers, etc.* Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, was carried off to the lower world by Pluto (Dis). No ordinary reader should burden himself with seeking solutions to all the little learned riddles of the next dozen lines.

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, 280
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,
God-like erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all, 290
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 300
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 unadornèd 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, 310
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: 320
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 330
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs

305. *Unadornèd*. Such accentuation is rare in *Paradise Lost*, and conveys a suggestion of delicacy and daintiness.

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 340
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 350
Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hastening now with prone career
To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,
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, 360
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 370
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, 380
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 390
By conquering this new World—compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.

.

[Satan stalks around disguised in animal form and overhears the converse of Adam and Eve.]

.

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird, 600
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, 611
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 slumberous 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; 620
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, 630
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 women's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change; all please alike. 640
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 650
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.

.

[In the remainder of Book IV., Gabriel, warned by the angel of the Sun of an evil spirit seen in the Garden, sends forth two scouts who arrest Satan while he is squatting disguised as a toad, whispering evil dreams into the ear of Eve as she lies asleep. He is brought before Gabriel, and a terrible conflict is only averted by God's Providence. Satan flees from the Garden.

In Book V., Raphael is sent from Heaven to warn Man of the danger that besets him. Questioned by Adam he proceeds to narrate the origin of the War in Heaven, and the formation of Satan's party.

Book VI. is wholly occupied with the War; from which a few short selections here follow.]

BOOK VI

.

“ 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. 60
At which command the Powers Militant

58. *Reluctant*. Struggling (through the smoke); **Latin** sense of the word.

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 71
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 80
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

69. *Obvious*. Lying in their path.

75. *Came summoned over Eden, etc.* N.B.—Throughout this book Raphael is speaking to Adam.

Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain
 In the mid-way; though strange to us it seemed 91
 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, 100
 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." 110

.
 [Then follows, after the style of all the old heroic
 tales of battle, a combat of words between the leaders
 on either side; on the one hand, Satan; on the other,
 Abdiel.]

" So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell 190

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 201
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 210
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 220

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 230
A numerous host, in strength each armèd 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 240
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." *

.

[Satan then hastens to confront Michael, who is carrying all before him. A duel ensues and Satan is wounded. Michael's sword

“ deep entering, shared
 All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain
 And writhed him to and fro convolved: so sore
 The griding sword with discontinuous wound
 Passed through him. But the ethereal substance
 closed 330

Not long divisible. . . .
 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.”

A battle, in fact, between Immortals comes near being an absurdity. Milton struggles manfully with the impossible situation, but, for all its tempestuous vigour, the War in Heaven lacks that suggestion of reality which Milton imparts to nearly all the rest of his superhuman Epic. On the second day of the battle Satan brings artillery into play:

“ Immediate in a flame,
 But soon obscured with smoke, all Heaven appeared,
 From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
 Embowelled with outrageous noise the air,
 And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul 589
 Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
 Of iron globes.”

The angels reply by hurling mountains upon Satan's artillery. On the third day the Father sends his Son forth to battle.]

.

“ 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 830
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 helmèd heads he rode
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate, 841
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, 851
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 861
 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. 870
 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.”

.

[Here we leave Satan and his host at the point at which we found them at the beginning of Book I. The remainder of the Book records the Son's return in triumph. Raphael's narrative continues through Book VII., which recounts the Work of Creation. The following passage describes the Son setting forth on this great task.]

BOOK VII

.

“ 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 200
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, 211
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.”

.

BOOK VIII

[IN Book VIII. Adam relates to Raphael his own first memories. In the extraordinarily beautiful passage that follows Adam tells of the creation of Eve.]

.

“ 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. 460
 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, 471
 Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair

453. *He.* The Almighty, assenting to Adam's prayer for a companion.

454. *Earthly.* Earthly powers.

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 480
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 and 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. 490
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.’ 500

“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 510
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 520
On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp."

BOOK IX

[THE long extract that follows contains the central episode of the Epic, the story of "the Fall." Eve has proposed that, since so much gardening labour lies before them, they should work apart; less time will thus be wasted in loving endearments and talk. Adam is reluctant, fearing disaster. At this Eve takes offence, seeing in Adam's attitude a slight upon her strength and integrity, and Adam reluctantly

gives way. Meanwhile Satan, having fled from the Garden (end of Book IV.) and wandered in the uttermost parts of the Earth for a week, has now returned and taken on himself the guise of the Serpent.]

.

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, 390
 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 400
 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

388. *Delia*. Artemis (Diana), the goddess of Delos.

393-5. *Pales*, *Pomona*, *Vertumnus*, *Ceres*. Deities of agriculture.

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 410
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 420
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 430
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 440
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, 450
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 460
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
That space the Evil One abstracted stood

441. *Laertes' son*. Odysseus (Ulysses); he reached Phæacia, the kingdom of Alcinous, in the final stage of his wanderings, and was there hospitably entertained and sent on his way homeward, as the *Odyssey* records.

442. *Sapient king*. Solomon, as described in Song of Solomon.

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 470
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 480
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, 490

490-1. *Though terror be in love, etc. I.e.:* Love and beauty inspire awe, unless there be hate, stronger than love, to steel one against love's effects.

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; 500
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 highth of Rome. With tract oblique 510
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
Veers 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
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
To such disport before her through the field 520
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, 530
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, 540
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.

522. Circe, the witch, changed some of the followers of Odysseus into swine.

549. *Proem*. Prelude; introduction.

Into the heart of Eve his words made way, 550
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 560
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. 570

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,

558. *The latter I demur. I.e. The latter (human sense) I can well imagine them to possess.*

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 580
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 591
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 600
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,

585. *Apples.* Is *Paradise Lost* responsible for the popular tradition that the forbidden fruit was an "apple"? It is not so described in Genesis.

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 610
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 620
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.” 630

“Lead, then,” said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled

606-12. Milton characteristically makes Satan appeal in what is always the most telling part of a speech, the end of it, to the Woman's vanity.

613. *Spirited*. Possessed by a devil.

624. *Bearth*. Produce; what Nature “bears.”

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, 639
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! 650
But of this tree we may not taste or 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; 660
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 670
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 highth began, as no delay
Of preface brooking through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown,
The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began:—

“ O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,
Mother of science! now I feel thy power 680
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. 690
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; 700
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 worshippers? 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, 710
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, 720
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. 731
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, impregn'd
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth.
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell 740
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:—

.

[In the speech here omitted Eve recapitulates Satan's arguments and finds them convincing. The latter part of this Book is somewhat diffuse, and passages have been omitted here and there for the sake of curtailing the length of the work.]

.

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour 780
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.
Greedy she ingorged without restraint, 791
And knew not eating death. Sate 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, 800
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—

781. *She plucked, she eat.* These four words contain the central incident towards which we have been approaching from the opening line of the poem through three-quarters of its length. The remaining quarter serves to trace its results down to their final consequences in Man's Redemption.

797. *Infamed.* Unknown.

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. 810
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 820
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 830
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."

806-33. Notice the unconscionable meanness of Eve's attitude to Adam, in contrast with that of Adam towards Eve, as we find it later, 904-59.

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 840
 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 850
 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 too prompt,
 Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed.

[In the speech omitted Eve simply tells Adam what
 we already know.]

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
 But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
 On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard

845. *Divine of.* Divining.

846. *Faltering measure.* Faltering beat of his heart.

The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill 890
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, 900
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? 910
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.”

.
“ However, I with thee have fixed my lot, 952
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." *

[Eve is touched by Adam's devotion, but, in the speech here omitted, shows herself confident she has acted for the salvation, not the damnation, of them both.]

So saying, she embraced him, and for joy 990
 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 1000
 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,

1002. *Some sad drops.* The first mention of rain upon Earth immediately follows the first sin.

As with new wine intoxicated both,
 They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
 Divinity within them breeding wings 1010
 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.

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 1050
 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 1060
 Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
 Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
 Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
 Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute;
 Till Adam, though not less than Eve 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 1070
 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.”

[In the passage omitted they go forth and with
 leaves cover their nakedness.]

Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
 Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind, 1120
 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 tost 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 sovran Reason, claimed 1130
 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 1141
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; 1150
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, 1160
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? 1170
 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 1180
 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.

BOOK X

[THE first part of the Book records the descent of
 the Son, sent by the Father to pass judgment. He
 gives sentence on Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, as
 described in Gen. iii. 8-21.]

.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on
Earth,

Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death, 230
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 240
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; 250

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 260
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 270
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 carcasses designed
For death the following day in bloody fight;
So scented the grim Feature, and upturned
His nostril wide into the murky air, 280
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 290
 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 asphaltic 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 301
 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, 310
 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

290. *Cronian*. Arctic.

292. *Beyond Petsora, etc.* To the north of Siberia.

297. *Gorgonian*. Medusa, the Gorgon, turned men to stone by her look.

298. *Broad*. "Broad is the path that leadeth to destruction."

313. *Pontifical*. Bridge-building. Milton may intend an anti-papist pun. Cf. use of "conclave" in Book I. 795.

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 320
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 330
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 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 340
Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned
By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,

328–9. *Betwixt the Centaur, etc.* Satan keeps a safe distance from the Sun, whose angel, Uriel, had detected him previously.

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, unhopèd
 Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
 Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight 350
 Of that stupendous bridge his joy increased.

[Speeches of mutual congratulation have been omitted.]

So saying, he dismissed them ; they with speed
 Their course through thickest constellations held, 411
 Spreading their bane ; the blasted stars looked wan,
 And planets, planet-strook,* real eclipse
 Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
 The causeway 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 420
 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

425-6. *Lucifer*. Satan was so named because, before his fall, he excelled the other angels as Lucifer (Light-bearer, the Evening or Morning Star, Venus) excels in brightness the other planets and stars. *Paragoned*. Compared.

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. 430
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 realms 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 439
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
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 451
Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,

433. *Bactrian Sophi*. The Shah of Persia. For the past two hundred years Russia had been gradually pushing back her Asiatic invaders.

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! 460

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 471
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 480
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, 490
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, 500
Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the accounts
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. 510
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,

513. *Supplanted*. Tripped up; the literal Latin sense of the word.

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 forkèd tongue
 To forkèd tongue; for now were all transformed
 Alike, to serpents all, as accessories 520
 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 Amphisbæna 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, 530
 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 540
 They felt themselves now changing. Down their arms,

515. *Reluctant*. Struggling.

524. *Amphisbæna*, etc. Greek names of mythical serpent-monsters. The ugliness of the names exactly suited Milton's purpose.

Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast,
And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form
Caught 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. Therestood
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 550
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 560
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 570
Into the same illusion, not as Man

560. *Megæra*. One of the Three Furies.

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 annual humbling certain numbered days,
To dash their pride, and joy for Man seduced.

[The story has returned to Eden. Adam pours forth
a long lamentation upon his fate and that of his de-
scendants. Then he turns upon Eve, addresses her in
words beginning, "Out of my sight, thou serpent!"
and falls to abuse of the whole female sex and the
marriage tie. To all which Eve makes this touchingly
beautiful reply.]

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 930
 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 940
 Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
 Now at his feet submissive in distress—
 Creature so fair his reconcilment 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.

BOOK XI

[ADAM and Eve have prayed for forgiveness, which the Father grants at the Son's intercession. He sends Michael to lead them forth from the Garden. Adam has just descried Michael's approach and warned Eve.]

He ended; and the Archangel soon drew nigh,
Not is his shape celestial, but as man *
Clad to meet man. Over his lucid arms 240
A military vest of purple flowed,
Livelier than Melibœan, 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:— 250
“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, 260
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

244. *Iris*. Goddess of the rainbow.247. *Zodiac*. Belt.

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 hoped to spend, 271
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 280
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? ”

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[Adam accepts his fate, and is led to a hill, whence
is revealed to him the misfortunes of his descendants.
After a vision of vice and disease, Adam cries:]

“ Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much—bent rather how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge,
Which I must keep till my appointed day 550
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution.” Michaël replied:—

“Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv’st
Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven.”

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BOOK XII

[THE visions are continued through Book XII. Adam is told of the coming of Christ, of the work of the Apostles, and of the corruption of the Church which follows their death, and shall endure until the Second Coming. The passage that follows is the conclusion of the whole Epic.]

.

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; 610

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 620

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, 630
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. 640
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.

635. *Vapour*. Heat. *Adust*. Scorched. The Garden is already turning into desert as they leave it.

“Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv’st
Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven.”

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This further consolation yet secure

620

606. *He. Michael.*

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

30

635. *Vapour*. Heat. *Adust*. Scorched. The Garden is already turning into desert as they leave it.



BOOK I

1. In announcing his theme with his very first words Milton follows the precedent of the three great classical epics. Cf. Virgil's *Æneid*, "Arma virumque cano"; Homer's *Iliad*, Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεὰ, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος (Sing, Goddess, the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus); Homer's *Odyssey*, Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον (Tell me, Muse, the tale of the man of many wiles).

6. Here and throughout this invocation Milton is welding together classic and Hebrew tradition; he is "coaxing the Muses from Hellas to the Holy Land." His "Muse" (Greek) is "Heavenly" and dwells on "Oreb or Sinai." Conversely, the Hebrew Temple is described as an "oracle."

26. To *justify the ways of God to Man* was the one part of his task in which Milton conspicuously failed. *Paradise Lost*, it has been said, has been responsible for more bad theology than any other work in the language. His "God the Father" is a chilly despot, and the Redemption of Man by the sacrifice of the Son becomes under Milton's treatment a political transaction devoid of mystery or significance. Milton is not a great *religious* poet, but a great epic poet who chose a tale from Scripture for his theme. If we want to find the true spirit of Christianity expressed in great poetry, we must turn to his contemporaries Crashaw and Vaughan, or to Browning or Francis Thompson among the moderns.

157. *Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable.* The inevitable process by which, in response to the claims of

Art, Satan becomes the hero of the poem, is clearly well on its way. Satan stands out as dauntless beside his despondent companion. Then, as so often, Milton the theologian steps in to correct Milton the artist. *To do ought good will never be our task.* But why? merely because "good" is another name for the will of God, and Milton quite fails to create conviction that the will of his God is "good" in any ordinary sense.

217-20. *How all his malice served, etc.* As the reader will feel, this passage is artistically an irrelevant intrusion of Milton the theologian.

230-7. *And such appeared in hue, etc.* Not a very effective simile, perhaps because it aims too much at being scientific. By "subterranean wind" Milton presumably means a release of pent-up gases.

254-5. *The mind is its own place, etc.* Milton here clearly breaks through the thin ice of his own allegory. Heaven and Hell are often pictured by modern thought, not so much as places, but as states of mind:

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on Fire.

FITZGERALD, *Omar Khayyam.*

But such language is inconsistent with the whole narrative of *Paradise Lost*. Another passage of the same kind will be found in Book IV. line 75:

Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell.

259. *Here at least We shall be free.* Author and hero are fellow-rebels, and Milton cannot avoid attributing to Satan that love of freedom which is the rebel's final glory.

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven,

says Satan a few lines below. Even so the most radical of modern British Prime Ministers said, "Good govern-

ment is no substitute for self-government." Milton may have had in mind a famous passage in the *Odyssey*, where Achilles, visited by Odysseus in the Lower World (not Hell, but the abode of all Dead, good and bad alike), expresses the opposite opinion: "Rather would I live above ground as the hireling of another, with a landless man who had no great livelihood, than be a king over all the perished ghosts." (*Od.* xi. 488.)

304-11. *Or scattered sedge, etc.* An ingeniously "double-barrelled" simile. The prostrate rebel angels resemble *sedge* on the Red Sea, where once the waves overwhelmed the *floating carcasses* of Pharaoh's host (which the prostrate rebel angels also resemble).

314. *He called so loud, etc.* The abruptness of the change of subject indicates the sudden shock of Satan's call on the ears of the prostrate rebel angels.

301-55. The whole process of the rousing of the rebel angels is described in a series of six similes:

(i.) Three similes describe their prostration: autumn leaves; sedge; floating carcasses.

(ii.) One describes their awakening: the sentry.

(iii.) One describes their rise into the "air": locusts.

(iv.) One describes their settlement on "earth": the host of barbarians that wrecked the Roman Empire.

Notice that every simile but one suggests vast numbers, and every simile but one attaches itself to definite time or place: the "autumn leaves" are "in Vallombrosa," etc.

376. *Say, Muse, their names, etc.* Here follows (376-522) a "catalogue" (the word is Greek and not merely commercial) of the rebel angels, for which Milton had precedent in the catalogue of ships in *Iliad*, ii. and the catalogue of Italian chieftains in *Æneid*, vii. Homer's

catalogue is a memorial of local patriotism, and Virgil's affords him an opportunity of commemorating many a provincial legend. So Milton's gives scope for some account of heathen cults known to the Bible or classical mythology. Strictly speaking, Milton gives us to understand that the rebel angels were at the moment nameless! Their heavenly names had been blotted out (l. 361, based on Revelation iii. 5). The names they later won as heathen deities on Earth were as yet unknown, but Milton employs them, as though by anticipation, here and henceforth.

392. *Moloch*. "Then did Solomon build a high place of Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." (1 Kings x. 7.)

"And he (Josiah) defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech." (2 Kings xxiii. 10.)

406. *Chemos*. See note on *Moloch* above.

412. *Peor*. Numbers xxv. tells the story of how Israel sinned in this matter on the journey from Sinai to Canaan, and was delivered by the prompt action of Phinehas.

446. *Thammuz*. Greek Adonis. Legend describes him as a lovely youth, slain by a boar, the boar being sent, according to one version, by Aphrodite (Venus), who was enraged at having fallen in love with a mortal. The river Adonis in Syria is reddened every spring flood by some deposit it washes from its banks.

"Then He brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and behold, there sat the women, weeping for Tammuz." (Ezekiel viii. 14.)

462. *Dagon*. "And the Philistines took the ark of

God, and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands lay cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him." (1 Samuel v. 2-4.)

Observe how Milton adapts his rhythm to the somewhat brutal humour of this story:

Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish!

In contrast to this is the rhythm fitted to the sickly sentimentalism of Thammuz-worship:

In amorous ditties all a summer's day.

467. "And king Ahaz went to Damascus . . . and saw the altar that was at Damascus; and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar, according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus." (2 Kings xvi. 10, 11.)

490. *Belial*. Here is a respite indeed from our somewhat crabbed "catalogue." The phrase "man of Belial" in O.T. simply means a man of worthlessness, though simple people have often, perhaps by confusion with Baal, supposed the existence of a heathen god of that name. Of this error Milton avails himself, and proceeds to trounce the "men of Belial" who now held sway in London, and set forth by nights for the court of the "Merry Monarch" to disturb sober citizens with their unseemly revels.

502. I have cut out three lines which follow here:

Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.

The second allusion is to an unsavoury story in the Book of Judges. It seems incredible that Milton should have marred the splendour of the previous passage by the addition of these ugly and uninteresting allusions. The explanation may be that the passage is a piece of "camouflage" put in to beguile the censor, who was on the look-out for "disloyal" passages in *Paradise Lost* and did in fact delete lines 596-9 of this Book from the first edition. If the "sons of Belial" referred to are not those of London after all, but those of Sodom and Gibeah, who can take offence? But, since *Paradise Lost* is no longer subject to censorship, the lines may be withdrawn. It is, however, also possible that the passage is simply an untimely eruption of Miltonic learning.

534. *Azazel*. The scape-goat is described as dedicated to Azazel. (Leviticus xvi. 8.)

550. *Dorian mood*, or mode. The Greek "scale," specially associated by Plato with martial music. It seems to have corresponded roughly to our scale of E minor.

575. *That small infantry*. A pun, of course, and, like most of Shakespeare's puns, not *intended* to be funny, but rather ingenious or, in the strict sense of the word, witty.

Notice Milton's method in the passage that follows. We have a kind of "proportion sum." The host of the rebel angels stands to all the accumulated armies of history as these armies stand to the "pygmies" of Herodotus. He then bombards the reader's imagination

with a list of some of these accumulated armies, piling them up to a magnificent climax in "Fontarabbia."

599. *Perplexes monarchs*. See note on 502.

634. *Self-raised*. The rebel angels, so far from being subject to the force of gravity, would naturally float upwards. Moloch makes of this a point in favour of renewing the War (Book II. 75, 76). Most of Milton's narrative, as the reader may have already noticed, is inconsistent with this singular notion.

648. *Who overcomes By force hath overcome but half his foe*. If the reader will excuse an irrelevant remark,—could the case against "militarism" be more neatly stated?

679. *Mammon, the least erected Spirit*. Just as Milton attributes virtues to Satan after his fall, so he with similar inconsistency attributes a vice to Mammon before his fall, when, presumably, he was perfect.

740-7. *And how he fell, etc.* A reminiscence of a most delightful passage in Homer, worth transcribing in full, as illustrating the contrast between Milton's unbending dignity and Homer's broad humanity. Father Zeus has been heavily rebuking Hera, his wife, for questioning him over-closely as to his plans, "and Hera the ox-eyed queen was afraid, and sat in silence, curbing her heart, but throughout Zeus' palace the gods of heaven were troubled. Then Hephaistos (Vulcan) the famed craftsman began to make harangue among them, and to do kindness to his dear mother, white-armed Hera: 'Verily this will be a sorry matter, neither any more endurable, if ye twain thus fight for mortals' sakes, and bring wrangling among the gods; neither will there any more be joy of the goodly feast, seeing that evil triumpheth. So I give counsel to my mother, though herself is wise, to do kindness to our dear father Zeus, that our father upbraid us not again and cast the banquet

into confusion. What if the Olympian, the lord of the lightning, will to dash us from our seats! for he is strongest far. Nay, approach thou him with gentle words, then will the Olympian forthwith be gracious unto us.'

"So speaking he rose up and set in his dear mother's hand the two-handled cup, and spake to her: 'Be of good courage, mother mine, and endure, though thou art vexed, lest I behold thee, that art so dear, chastised before mine eyes, and then shall I not be able for all my sorrow to save thee; for the Olympian is a foe hard to face. Yea, once ere this, when I was fain to save thee, he caught me by my foot, and hurled me from the heavenly threshold; all day I flew, and at the set of sun I fell in Lemnos, and little spirit was left in me by that time.'

"He spake, and the white-armed goddess Hera smiled, and smiling took the cup at her son's hand. Then he poured wine to all the other gods from right to left, ladling the sweet nectar from the bowl. And laughter unquenchable arose among the blessed gods to see Hephaistos bustling through the palace." (*Iliad*, i. 570-600: translation, slightly altered, of Lang, Leaf, and Myers.)

"Thus they relate, erring," says the implacable Milton!

781. *Or faery elves, etc.* This fascinating simile carries us straight to the atmosphere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the belated peasant may well be Bottom himself. The homely touch is only surpassed in effectiveness by that in last simile of the poem, Book XII. 629-32.

BOOK II

1. Book II. falls into three clearly recognisable divisions: first, the Council of War in Pandemonium (1-505); second, the diversions of the rebel angels during Satan's absence (506-628); third, Satan's journey from Hell through Chaos to within sight of Earth (629 to end).

A brief summary of the Council may be of use. SATAN opens proceedings from "the chair," and puts the question whether open war or covert guile be the best method of renewing the struggle (11-42). MOLOCH advocates open war, not so much for victory as for revenge: complete extinction would be preferable to submission (51-105). BELIAL, in an extremely ingenious debating speech, rejoins that revenge is impossible; destruction probably impossible also, and in any case undesirable: that much might be worse than their present lot, and that their wisest course is not to provoke the Almighty further (119-225). MAMMON continues in the same strain. Heavenly restoration would now be odious to those who had tasted freedom: even Hell is not without its merits (229-83). BEËLZEBUB rebukes the craven tone of the last two speakers, and, rejecting equally Moloch's counsel, suggests a "flank attack" through the new inhabitants of Earth. When this idea is welcomed he suggests that someone be sent to explore the possibilities of such an enterprise (310-416). SATAN undertakes the task (430-66).

233. Milton here and elsewhere adopts the rather bewildering theology of Homer in setting Fate above the "Almighty" himself. It may be said that some modern theologians seem to attempt to solve the Problem of Evil by the same device, but that subject is too vast to be discussed here.

237-49. Mammon's argument, as well as one of Belial's which Mammon later recapitulates, has been summed up in the following verse:

The burning at first
Would p'raps be the worst,
But ages that anguish will soften;
While those who are bored
By praising the Lord
Will be more so by praising Him often.

The fact of the matter is that victory over Evil is so entirely the essence of Good upon Earth that we are unable to form a tolerable picture of Heaven, where all is Good and there is no Evil to conquer. Browning boldly declares in his last Epilogue that in Heaven also we "fight on—there as here." But the intelligence that enquires what we fight against cannot be satisfied.

386. *But their spite still serves His glory to augment.* Milton seems suddenly to become mindful of his theological purpose, to "justify the ways of God to men." Apart from this, the sentence seems an unnatural intrusion.

467-73. *Prudent lest, etc.* I am told by one who has attended almost as many committees as Milton himself doubtless had, that such tiresome persons as those described in these lines are exceedingly common.

482-5. *For neither do Spirits damned, etc.* Milton here seems to become acutely conscious of the fact that he is endowing the rebel angels with virtues. Like a wise man, he does not apologise to his critics but preaches them a sermon; perhaps that will make them more chary of criticism.

488-95. *As, when from mountain tops, etc.* A lovely simile, but at first reading obscure, since the point of comparison, the outbreak of sunshine, does not appear till the fifth line. The magnificent apostrophe which

follows (496-506) will be applied by every age to its own evils. Milton was probably thinking less of international than of party strife, of those endless schisms, Presbyterian against Independent, Republican against Cromwellian, Zealot against Leveller, civilian against soldier, that had wrecked his own party.

555-65. *In discourse more sweet, etc.* Milton is generally supposed to be ridiculing the theological discussions of his own age in this passage—somewhat unworthily, since any intelligent approach to religion involves such controversies, and Milton had himself taken his share in them.

582-6. *Far off from these, etc.* On this passage as a whole see page 26. Lethe, like the other rivers, is borrowed from Virgil's description (*Æneid*, vi. 703-15), but it can have no real place or meaning in Miltonic theology, belonging as it does to the theory of re-birth, or transmigration of souls. The passage in Virgil runs as follows: "Meantime Æneas sees in a valley apart a secluded grove of rustling brushwood, and river Lethe which flows by quiet homes. And tribes and peoples innumerable flitted around it. . . . And Æneas in ignorance asked what this river might be, and what men these in such numbers on the banks. And Anchises his father answered, 'Souls to whom Fate allots new bodies come to this river, and drink the long oblivion of its dreamy waters.' "

Since Milton has brought in Lethe, however, he must find a use for it, and he does so, after a somewhat strained fashion, in lines 604-14.

636-42. *As when far off, etc.* Never does Milton suggest more effectively by simile the vastness of Satan; nor does any other simile call up a more surprising and effective contrast. The East India Company was a prime interest of the mercantile community that con-

trolled Cromwell's parliaments, and it was under the Commonwealth that the Company first became a prosperous concern on a large scale. Milton draws another simile from its fleets in Book IV. 159-67. *Ternate* and *Tidore* are spice islands in the East Indies.

648-814. This allegory is an application of the classical figures of Scylla and Charybdis to a text in the Epistle of St. James. "Then Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth Sin, and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death." (James i. 15.) Magnificent as is the poetry, especially the description of Death (666-73), the episode is one of the weak points of the story. For why should Sin and Death have been entrusted with the guardianship of the Infernal Prison when, belonging as they did to the party of the prisoners, they were certain to let them out on the first convenient opportunity? To this question there seems no answer except the general one that the Almighty in His wisdom allowed to the rebel angels a measure of success that, being Almighty, he could have withheld.

932. *A vast vacuity*. Milton's imagination pictured the "air-pockets" which are an actual experience of the modern airman.

942-6. *As when a gryphon, etc.* This astonishingly absurd simile is drawn from a tale of Herodotus (iii. 116), re-told by Pliny. He says the Arimaspians live "toward the pole Arkticke," and "maintaine warre ordinarily about the metall mines of gold, especially with griffons, a kind of wild beasts that flie, and use to fetch gold out of the veines of those mines: which savage beasts strive as eagerly to keepe and hold those golden mines, as the Arimaspians to disseize them thereof, and to get away the gold from them." (English translation published 1601.)

981-6. *Directed, no mean recompense it brings, etc.*

Satan presumably invented diplomacy, as he originated war. It will be noticed that the terms offered to Chaos are incompatible with those already offered to Sin and Death (cf. lines 837-44).

1024-33. *Strange alteration, etc.* The event here alluded to is described in Book X. 229-324.

BOOK III

1-56. This beautiful invocation of "Light" introduces a scene laid in Heaven in which God the Father foretells the Fall of Man, and God the Son offers himself for our redemption. The best commentary that can be offered on the passage is Milton's own sonnet on his blindness:

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,—
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
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 mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state

Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:—
They also serve who only stand and wait.

418. *The firm opacous globe, etc.* Milton employs for the purposes of his celestial "geography" the ancient

astronomy, according to which the Earth was the centre of the Universe. It may be conceived as a central kernel with ten shells, or spheres, enwrapping it. Moving outwards from the Earth are, first, seven spheres, one for each of the six known planets and one for the Sun; then the sphere of the fixed stars; then the Crystalline sphere, which is somehow responsible for the angle of the earth's axis; lastly the *Primum Mobile*, or outermost shell. It is this outermost shell on which Satan now alights. (Cf. lines 481-3 for an enumeration of the spheres. "First-moved" is a translation of *Primum Mobile*: as for why Milton calls the ninth sphere the "Trepidation Talked," I spare the reader an explanation which, I assure him, he would find both difficult and tedious.)

444-97. *None yet ; but store thereafter, etc.* No passage in the whole Epic is more entirely Milton's own idea than this, and none is more bitterly unchristian. Milton evidently felt, like many others, that a fool is every bit as bad as a knave, and so some place must be provided for him, since he was fit neither for Heaven nor Hell. He calls his "Paradise of Fools" Limbo, a region imagined by early Christian writers sometimes as the abode of children that died unbaptised (cf. line 474), and sometimes as the abode of the saints of the Old Testament that knew not Christ, an idea Milton rejects (line 461). Anyhow, Milton's main use for the place is as an abode for the "saints" of the Roman Church that he and his party so bitterly hated. Passages like this, written by a man of Milton's elevated scholarship, help to explain the *deeds*—as at Drogheda and Wexford—of Milton's hero, Cromwell.

BOOK IV

32-113. *O thou that, with surpassing glory crowned, etc.* In all literature there is surely no more magnificent expression of passionate remorse than this speech. There is no repentance, for repentance is fruitful of good and leaves the character purified. Satan recognises that as he is he must be; yet that he is so is his own fault. He is too noble and too honest to shift the blame on to the shoulders of Fate, after the manner of so many meaner sinners. The whole conception is superhuman. The ordinary "stage villain" (who is infra-human) offers a parallel which is also, of course, a parody. Shakespeare's nearest approach to the vulgar stage villain of melodrama is Richard III., whose

I am determinèd to prove a villain
is a semi-comic echo of Satan's

Evil, be thou my good.

But Richard seems to *enjoy* his villainy throughout the play, as does also Iago in *Othello*. Satan is too great for that. A truer parallel might be furnished by Macbeth in his later stages:

I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

But Macbeth's resolve is tinged with sheer weariness, and he is in some sort the sport and plaything of the Witches. Satan's powers are unimpaired and he is his own master.

167-71. *Though with them better pleased, etc.* These ugly and superfluous lines refer to a story in the Apocrypha not worth troubling the reader with. (Tobit viii.) Possibly it is our fault rather than Milton's that we are

unfamiliar with the story of Tobit, but in any case the parallel seems ignoble, especially coming, as it does, after a truly lovely simile. Cf. Book I. 503-5, and note thereon. The excuse that may explain that passage cannot of course possibly explain this.

193. *So since into his Church, etc.* Cf. St. John's Gospel x. 1: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Milton no doubt had specially in view the courtly High Church divines who had ousted the Puritans from their benefices in 1661, possibly the very year in which he wrote these lines. He had already attacked this party in a famous passage in *Lycidas* more than twenty years before. St. Peter is mourning over the bier of "*Lycidas*," the young man of godly promise drowned at sea:

How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
 Enow of such, as for their bellies' sake
 Creep and intrude and climb into the fold!
 Of other care they little reckoning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
 That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!
 What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
 And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel 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 wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said:
 —But that two-handed engine at the door
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

319. *So passed they naked on.* The supreme moments of poetry come often when the poet is at his simplest.

This little phrase surely achieves such a moment, and is worthy to be set beside such lines of Shakespeare as

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

345-50. *The unwieldy elephant, etc.* The picture is a slightly absurd one, no doubt, but Milton never hesitates before absurdities when the logic of events seems to dictate the absurd. (Cf. for instance Book IX. 494-9.) Notice the skill, however, with which Milton fits the rhythm and colour of his lines to their meaning. The consonants in "wreathed his lithe proboscis" are delightfully suggestive of clumsy effort. Why the reiterated a's and i's of the next two lines should suggest the metallic colours and cold slimy substance of the snake, I know not, but to me they do.

BOOK VI

244. *All air seemed then Conflicting fire.* It is perhaps hardly necessary to call the reader's attention to the many phrases that suggest the most recent quite as much as the First of Wars. Phrases that must have suggested mere horrible impossibilities to veterans of Marston Moor and Naseby might pass for a literal description of what has come to pass in Flanders. This is especially true of Milton's artillery, a few lines from the description of which are quoted later.

827. *The Four.* Milton has already described the chariot and the creatures that drew it (lines 749-66); his account is closely modelled on a vision in Ezekiel i.:

Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
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.

BOOK VII

205-9. *Heaven opened wide, etc.* This passage deserves comparison, as a study in Miltonic rhythms, with the description of the opening of the gates of Hell (Book II. 879-83).

BOOK IX

432. *Fairest unsupported flower.* The description recalls Milton's own lines on Proserpine, the victim of the God of Death, in Book IV.:

Proserpin gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
 Was gathered.

The tales of Eve and Proserpine might seem at first sight to present a parallel. Both are tales of innocent women, caught by evil deities. But the story of Proserpine has no moral significance. It is a Nature-myth. Her descent to Hades typifies autumn, and her annual return to visit her mother Ceres typifies the "resurrection" of spring.

445-51. *As one who, etc.* This lovely quiet simile is

quite unlike Milton's usual manner. For once, we have no historical, mythical or geographical allusions. "As one who, long in populous city pent": This "one" is doubtless Milton himself. The poet has put much of his own political passion into *Paradise Lost*, much also of his own strong feeling about Woman and Marriage. These things have strengthened the fibre of the poem, and in places may have spoiled its splendid balance. Only here, perhaps, does a personal touch come in that makes wholly for sweetness and serenity. Milton was a confirmed "Londoner," but even he at times felt, no doubt, as Wordsworth the confirmed "countryman" felt, after too long sojourn in town:

The World is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;

It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

496-9. *Not with indented wave, etc.* A good example of the unfaltering logic with which Milton bases his tale on the narrative of Genesis. Some say that a stronger sense of humour would have saved Milton from writing passages like this, and that his work would thereby be the gainer: it may be so.

505-10. *Not those that in Illyria, etc.* A medley of

classical illusions. Matthew Arnold has a charming passage, rather Miltonic in style, describing the first of these classical serpents:

Far, far from here,
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea, and in the brakes.
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.
And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes,
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
In breathless quiet, after all their ills.
Nor do they see their country, nor the place
Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills,
Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes.
They had staid long enough to see,
In Thebes, the billow of calamity
Over their own dear children roll'd,
Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
For years, they sitting helpless in their home,
A grey old man and woman: yet of old
The gods had to their marriage come,
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days
In sight of blood; but were rapt, far away,
To where the west wind plays,
And murmurs of the Adriatic come
To those untrodden mountain lawns: and there
Placed safely in changed forms, the Pair
Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
And all that Theban woe, and stray
For ever through the glens, placid and dumb.

671. *When eloquence Flourished, since mute.* Milton no doubt felt that, with the proscription of his own party, all eloquence worthy of the name had vanished from England. A period of courtiers had succeeded a period of tribunes.

729. *Or is it envy?* Satan's task in this most ingenious speech is not, after all, a very difficult one. The famous tale of Genesis iii. is a primitive myth, and the notion of God on which it is based is, from the Christian point of view, a very imperfect one. God, according to the story, was a "jealous" God in the most literal sense of the word. He intended man to be a kind of tame domestic animal. His very innocence was the badge of his inferiority. When Man had eaten of the tree "the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." (Gen. iii. 22, 23.) In a very real sense Man "rises" by his Fall, and God is afraid he may rise still further.

959. *To lose thee were to lose myself.* "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat: and she gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." (Gen. iii. 6.) On this plain foundation Milton builds his elaborate version with all its displays of passion and analysis of motives. It is to be noticed that the motives attributed to Eve are base and contemptible, whereas those of Adam are so nearly noble that we feel no generous lover could have done otherwise than he did.

We have said nothing hitherto of Milton's attitude to sex, and little need be said, for the poet makes his point

of view superabundantly plain. One line from the first description of all (IV. 299),

He for God only, she for God in him,

sets the tone of all Milton's references to Eve. It may be true that Milton is only following his authority in making Woman the prime agent of the Fall, but every reader has always felt that Milton does not merely follow his authority: he stresses it with passionate emphasis. One excerpt may illustrate this. Shortly after the passage from Book VIII. given in the text, describing the Creation of Eve, Adam speaks of her to Raphael as follows:

Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
All higher Knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses, 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.

Nothing could be more charming as poetry, nor, one would say, more creditable to a husband. But Raphael, who presumably knows best, meets this speech with a rebuke:

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.

Milton had been unhappy in his relations with women. His first wife deserted him for a time almost immediately after marriage, and at the time of the writing of *Paradise Lost* her three daughters, mere girls whom their father had very possibly neglected, repaid his neglect by heartless ingratitude and petty persecution. All this had its effect on the portrayal of Eve's character, and when Milton came to choose the subject for his last poem it was perhaps no accident that he took Samson, a tale in which a rebel could be glorified with more propriety than could Satan, and a woman castigated even more severely than Eve. Milton uses the Samson story for a simile in lines 1059-62.

1131-end. *From thus distempered breast, etc.* *Paradise Lost* is often called "inhuman," and such for the most part it is bound to be, because the subject-matter is "superhuman." Here however, for the first time, we meet with the stuff of ordinary daily life, poor sinful humanity like ourselves, and surely never was the quality of ill-natured family "wrangles" presented with more deadly accuracy. He is lucky who has never heard nor taken part in a conversation of this type.

BOOK X

317. *To the outside bare Of this round World.* The bridge built by Sin and Death reached not to Earth, in our sense, but to the outermost sphere of the World as conceived in the old astronomy employed by Milton—to the *Primum Mobile*, in fact. Cf. Book III. 418, note. The bridge touches the *Primum Mobile* close to the staircase leading up to Heaven, and also close to the "trap-door" (if so we may conceive it) descending

through the *Primum Mobile* to the inner sphere and ultimately to Earth (cf. lines 320-4). Both these last are described in the latter part of Book III., not printed in this edition.

413. *Planet-strook*. The planets were supposed to exercise a malign influence when in certain positions: cf. our phrase, "moon-struck." Here, it seems, the evil influence of the planets falls on themselves or on each other.

488. *Worth your laughter! etc.* This speech and the following scene make up our last view of Satan, and Milton has taken pains to degrade his character, as shown in the speech, and his person, as revealed in the grotesque horrors that follow. Those who somewhat indignantly deny that Satan is the hero of the poem draw their evidence from this passage.

936. Milton is never tired of reminding us, from his own mouth and through the mouths of all his characters, that Eve is Adam's inferior. But nothing we are told of Adam makes us love him as we love Eve for this speech—"A Woman's Last Word" as we might call it, borrowing the title of a little lyric of Browning's.

We insert this speech of Eve's, since it is so greatly to her credit. We omit Adam's reply from similar motives. He replies with a mild lecture, full of kindly advice and reproof, intensely reasonable, no doubt, and worthy of an archdeacon rather than a mere lover. Still, though it does not greatly please us, it would no doubt have been approved by Raphael, from whom Adam had taken his lessons in the craft of husbandship.

BOOK XI

239-48. *Not in his shape celestial, but as man, etc.* Michael's appearance, as fits his errand, is in pointed contrast with that of Raphael on his arrival in Book V. 275-87:

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.

BOOK XII

614. *But now lead on.* It is impossible to leave the passage beginning with these words and continuing to the end of the poem, without offering a word of homage to its wonderful and varied beauties. As a critic quaintly says of Milton's Adam and Eve, "Nothing in their life (in the Garden) became them like the leaving it." Adam and Eve are lonely and pathetic figures indeed, setting forth upon Man's "great adventure."

The world was all before them

—the world that has broadened out from myth into history, our own history, and stretches on ahead of us

into the blank unknown. And behind them, those
remotely beautiful and dreadful things

To their fixed station, all in bright array,
The Cherubim descended, on the ground
Gliding meteorous,

and

The gate

With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.

Set in this immensity:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon,
and

They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.



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