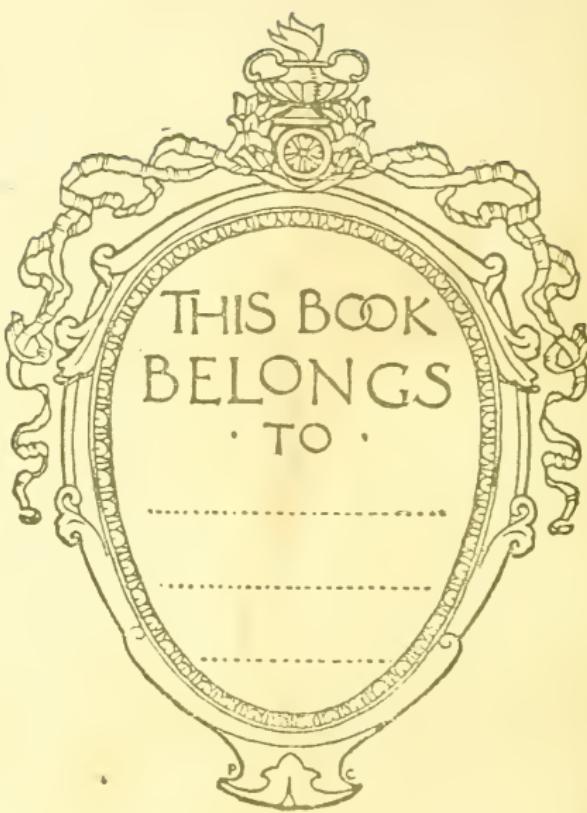


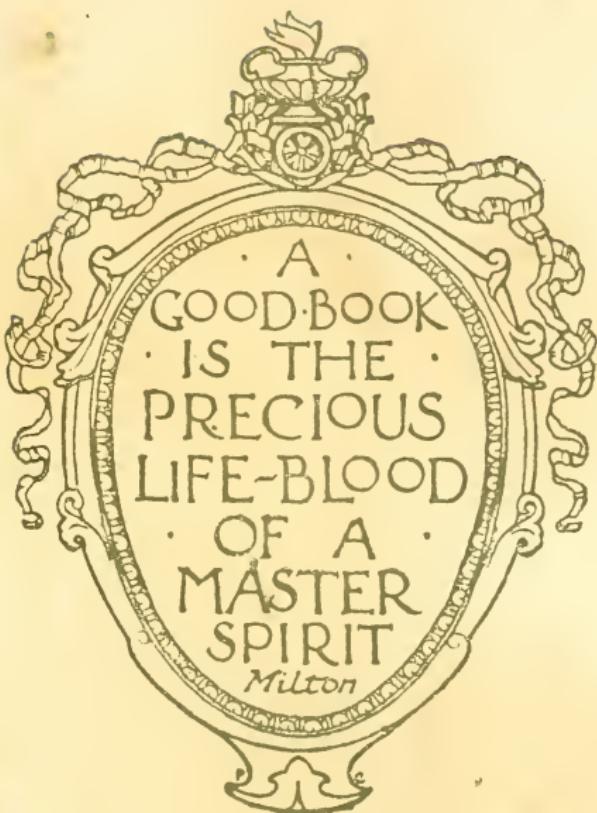
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*The* KINGS TREASURIES  
OF LITERATURE



GENERAL EDITOR  
SIR A.T. QUILLER COUCH



JOHN MILTON

HC

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 schoolboy 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,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 *Aeneid* 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 warden 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 iambic<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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:

$\lambda_{\text{eff}} = \lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4$

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,  
 Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top  
 Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
 That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed  
 In the beginning how the heavens and earth  
 Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill  
 Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook that flowed  
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
 Invoke thy aid to my 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,  
 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.

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.<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup>“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 indefinably 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 *Aeneid*. 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 wished morn delays.  
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,  
Chained on the burning lake.

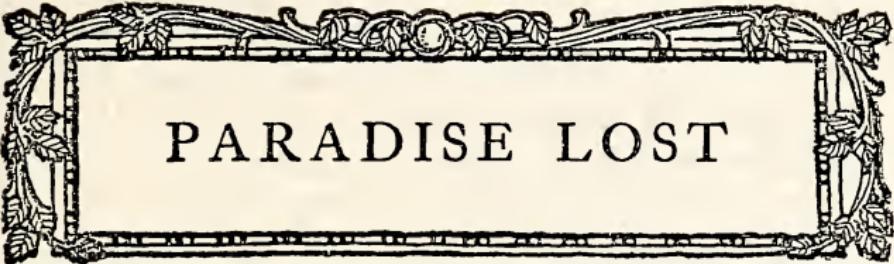
Milton is perpetually on his guard to jog our feeble imaginations, and to remind us that the Devils bore the appearance of something more than human. They did not externally resemble men, or even magnified men; they were something altogether vaster and stranger. (On this point Milton's pictorial illustrators, 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 "wished," 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 adventrous song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that 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  
 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.

70

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 hight 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,  
 Though all our glory extinct, and happy state  
 Here swallowed up in endless misery.  
 But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now  
 Of force believe almighty, since no less  
 Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)  
 Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,  
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,  
 That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,  
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls  
 By right of war, whate'er his business be,  
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,  
 Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?  
 What can it then avail though yet we feel  
 Strength undiminished, or eternal being  
 To undergo eternal punishment?"

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend re-  
 plied:—

" 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,  
 As being the contrary to his high will  
 Whom we resist. If then his providence  
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
 Our labour must be to pervert that end,  
 And out of good still to find means of evil;  
 Which oftentimes may succeed so as perhaps  
 Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb  
 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.  
 But see! the angry Victor hath recalled

140

150

160

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 resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,  
 With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
 That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides  
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large,

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  
 Grovelling 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 carcases      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:  
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 airy 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. *Uxorius 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      491  
 Vice for itself. To him no temple stood  
 Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he  
 In temples and at altars, when the priest  
 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled  
 With lust and violence the house of God?  
 In courts and palaces he also reigns,  
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise  
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,

And injury and outrage; and, when night  
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons  
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.\*

500

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  
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,

550

BOOK ONE

51

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 Trebisond,  
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore  
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell  
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond  
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed

**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 graspèd 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 dews 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 airy 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 abhorred deep to utter woe!  
 Where pain of unextinguishable fire  
 Must exercise us without hope of end  
 The vassals of his anger, when the scourge      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 hight 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 arm'd 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  
 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 transfix'd, 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, unrerieved,  
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,  
 Counsellec ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,  
 Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:—

“ Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven  
 We war, if war be best, or to regain 230  
 Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then  
 May hope, when everlasting Fate \* shall yield  
 To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.  
 The former, vain to hope, argues as vain  
 The latter; for what place can be for us  
 Within Heaven’s bound, unless Heaven’s Lord  
 Supreme

We overpower? Suppose he should relent,  
 And publish grace to all, on promise made  
 Of new subjection; with what eyes could we  
 Stand in his presence humble, and receive 240  
 Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne \*  
 With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing  
 Forced Halleluiyahs, 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 soe'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,  
 Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse  
 Their frail original, and faded bliss—  
 Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth  
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here  
 Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beëlzebub  
 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  
 Pleased highly those Infernal States, and joy  
 Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent  
 They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—  
 “ Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,      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 airy 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 sentries 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 monarchal 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 sovranty, adorned  
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed  
And judged of public moment in the shape  
Of difficulty or danger, could deter  
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume      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,

491. *Scowls*. A transitive verb here.

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 airy 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 Æchalia crowned  
 With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore  
 Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,  
 And Lichas from the top of Æta threw  
 Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,  
 Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
 With notes angelical to many a harp  
 Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall  
 By doom of battle, and complain that Fate      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,  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

560

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 obdurate 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," *Aeneid*, 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 embryon 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 founded, on he fares,  
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,  
 Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.  
 As when a gryphon \* through the wilderness  
 With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,  
 Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth  
 Had from his wakeful custody purloined  
 The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend  
 O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,  
 With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,  
 And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies. 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 frighted Deep,  
 With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,  
 Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates  
 Poured out by millions her victorious bands,

Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here  
 Keep residence; if all I can will serve  
 That little which is left so to defend,      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 Bosporus 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 Oedipus. *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 opacious 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 Chineses 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  
 Cowls, 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.

[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 inhabiter 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

20. *For within him Hell, etc.* Cf. note on Book I. 254.

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

50. *Sdained.* Disdained.

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 reconcilement 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  
 Sabean odours from the spicy shore  
 Of Araby the Blest, with such delay  
 Well pleased they slack their course, and many a  
 league

Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles ;  
 So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend  
 Who came their bane, though with them better  
 pleased \*

Than Asmodœus 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 climb 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 noon tide bowers. Thus was this place,  
 A happy rural seat of various view:

Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm ;  
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,  
 Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true,                   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 fringed bank with myrtle crowned  
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.  
 The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs,

Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune  
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,  
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,

Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field  
 Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,  
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis                   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,  
 Glistering 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,  
 Glistering 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 hastening 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 1190

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

330

“ 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

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:

589

“ 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  
 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 prostráte,

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 unfehl 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 ful-  
     filled  
 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 informidable, 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;  
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  
From every beast, more duteous at her call

500

510

520

Than at Circean call the herd disguised.  
 He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,  
 But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed  
 His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck,  
 Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.  
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length  
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad  
 Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue  
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air,  
 His fraudulent temptation thus began:—

530

“ Wonder not, sovran mistress (if perhaps  
 Thou canst who art sole wonder), much less arm  
 Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,  
 Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze  
 Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared  
 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.  
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,  
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine  
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore,  
 With ravishment beheld—there best beheld  
 Where universally admired. But here,  
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,  
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern  
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except,  
 Who sees thee (and what is one!) who shouldst be seen  
 A Goddess among Gods, adored and served  
 By Angels numberless, thy daily train? ”  
 So glazed the Tempter, and his proem tuned.

540

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 hight began, as no delay  
 Of preface brooking through his zeal of right:  
 So standing, moving, or to hight 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, impregned  
 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth.

Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked  
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell      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  
Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.  
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe  
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk  
The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve,  
Intent now only on her taste, naught else,  
Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,  
In fruit she never tasted, whether true,  
Or fancied so through expectation high  
Of knowledge; nor was Godhead from her thought.  
Greedily she ingorged without restraint,  
And knew not eating death. Satiate at length,  
And hightened as with wine, jocund and boon,  
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:—

“ O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees  
In Paradise! of operation blest  
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,  
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end  
Created! but henceforth my early care,  
Not without song, each morning, and due praise, 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 Forbider, 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:—

1061. *Dalilah*. Milton accents the first syllable.

"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  
 Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead. 260  
 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 carcases 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  
 Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way      290  
 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 de-  
 struction.”

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, unhoped  
 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 causey to Hell-gate ; on either side  
 Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,  
 And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,  
 That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,  
 Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,  
 And all about found desolate ; for those      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, Prinedoms, 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  
 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  
 Catched by contagion, like in punishment  
 As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant  
 Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame  
 Cast on themselves from their own mouths. 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

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 descendants. 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                    911  
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 reconcilement seeking,  
 His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid.  
 As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,  
 And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon.

## 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 described 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? ”

[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."

## 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."

E  
A  
tl  
w  
S

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

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



# COMMENTARY

## 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 *Aeneid*, "Arma virumque cano"; Homer's *Iliad*, Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεὰ, Πηληιάδεω 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 carcases* 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 carcases.
- (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 *Aeneid*, 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

i. 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). BEELZEBUB 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 (*Aeneid*, 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 opacious 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,  
Enew 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 herdman'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 scannel pipes of wretched straw;  
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;  
Besides what the grim 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 bollow 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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