

Paradise Lost: Book One

1. Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
2. Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
3. Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
4. With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
5. Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
6. Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
7. Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
8. That Shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
9. In the beginning how the heavens and earth
10. Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
11. Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
12. Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
13. Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
14. That with no middle flight intends to soar
15. Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
16. Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
17. And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
18. Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
19. Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
20. Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
21. Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
22. And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
23. Illumine, what is low raise and support;
24. That, to the height of this great argument,
25. I may assert Eternal Providence,
26. And justify the ways of God to men.
27. Say first--for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
28. Nor the deep tract of Hell--say first what cause
29. Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
30. Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
31. From their Creator, and transgress his will
32. For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
33. Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
34. Th' infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,
35. Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
36. The mother of mankind, what time his pride
37. Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
38. Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
39. To set himself in glory above his peers,
40. He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
41. If he opposed, and with ambitious aim
42. Against the throne and monarchy of God,
43. Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
44. With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power

45. Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
46. With hideous ruin and combustion, down
47. To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
48. In adamant chains and penal fire,
49. Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
50. Nine times the space that measures day and night
51. To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
52. Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
53. Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
54. Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
55. Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
56. Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
57. That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
58. Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
59. At once, as far as Angels ken, he views
60. The dismal situation waste and wild.
61. A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
62. As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
63. No light; but rather darkness visible
64. Served only to discover sights of woe,
65. Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
66. And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
67. That comes to all, but torture without end
68. Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
69. With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
70. Such place Eternal Justice has prepared
71. For those rebellious; here their prison ordain'd
72. In utter darkness, and their portion set,
73. As far removed from God and light of Heaven
74. As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole.
75. Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!
76. There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
77. With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
78. He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,
79. One next himself in power, and next in crime,
80. Long after known in Palestine, and named
81. Beelzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
82. And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words
83. Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:--
84. "If thou beest he--but O how fallen! how changed
85. From him who, in the happy realms of light
86. Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
87. Myriads, though bright!--if he whom mutual league,
88. United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
89. And hazard in the glorious enterprise
90. Joined with me once, now misery hath joined

91. In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
92. From what height fallen: so much the stronger proved
93. He with his thunder; and till then who knew
94. The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
95. Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
96. Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
97. Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
98. And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
99. That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
100. And to the fierce contentions brought along
101. Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
102. That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
103. His utmost power with adverse power opposed
104. In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
105. And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
106. All is not lost--the unconquerable will,
107. And study of revenge, immortal hate,
108. And courage never to submit or yield:
109. And what is else not to be overcome?
110. That glory never shall his wrath or might
111. Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
112. With suppliant knee, and deify his power
113. Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
114. Doubted his empire--that were low indeed;
115. That were an ignominy and shame beneath
116. This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,
117. And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
118. Since, through experience of this great event,
119. In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
120. We may with more successful hope resolve
121. To wage by force or guile eternal war,
122. Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
123. Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
124. Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."
125. So spake th' apostate Angel, though in pain,
126. Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
127. And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:--
128. "O Prince, O Chief of many throned Powers
129. That led th' embattled Seraphim to war
130. Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
131. Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,
132. And put to proof his high supremacy,
133. Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate,
134. Too well I see and rue the dire event
135. That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
136. Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host

137. In horrible destruction laid thus low,
138. As far as Gods and heavenly Essences
139. Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
140. Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
141. Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
142. Here swallowed up in endless misery.
143. But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now
144. Of force believe almighty, since no less
145. Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
146. Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
147. Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
148. That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
149. Or do him mightier service as his thralls
150. By right of war, whate'er his business be,
151. Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
152. Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
153. What can it the avail though yet we feel
154. Strength undiminished, or eternal being
155. To undergo eternal punishment?"
156. Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied:--
157. "Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
158. Doing or suffering: but of this be sure--
159. To do aught good never will be our task,
160. But ever to do ill our sole delight,
161. As being the contrary to his high will
162. Whom we resist. If then his providence
163. Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
164. Our labour must be to pervert that end,
165. And out of good still to find means of evil;
166. Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
167. Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
168. His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
169. But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
170. His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
171. Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,
172. Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
173. The fiery surge that from the precipice
174. Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
175. Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
176. Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
177. To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
178. Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn
179. Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
180. Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
181. The seat of desolation, void of light,
182. Save what the glimmering of these livid flames

183. Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
184. From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
185. There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
186. And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
187. Consult how we may henceforth most offend
188. Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
189. How overcome this dire calamity,
190. What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
191. If not, what resolution from despair."
192. Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
193. With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
194. That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
195. Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
196. Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
197. As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
198. Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
199. Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
200. By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
201. Leviathan, which God of all his works
202. Created hugest that swim th' ocean-stream.
203. Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
204. The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
205. Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
206. With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
207. Moors by his side under the lee, while night
208. Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.
209. So stretched out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay,
210. Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
211. Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
212. And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
213. Left him at large to his own dark designs,
214. That with reiterated crimes he might
215. Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
216. Evil to others, and enraged might see
217. How all his malice served but to bring forth
218. Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
219. On Man by him seduced, but on himself
220. Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.
221. Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
222. His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
223. Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
224. In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
225. Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
226. Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
227. That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
228. He lights--if it were land that ever burned

229. With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
230. And such appeared in hue as when the force
231. Of subterranean wind transprots a hill
232. Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
233. Of thundering Etna, whose combustible
234. And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
235. Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
236. And leave a singed bottom all involved
237. With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole
238. Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate;
239. Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
240. As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
241. Not by the sufferance of supernal Power.
242. "Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
243. Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
244. That we must change for Heaven?--this mournful gloom
245. For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
246. Who now is sovereign can dispose and bid
247. What shall be right: farthest from him is best
248. Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
249. Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
250. Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
251. Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
252. Receive thy new possessor--one who brings
253. A mind not to be changed by place or time.
254. The mind is its own place, and in itself
255. Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
256. What matter where, if I be still the same,
257. And what I should be, all but less than he
258. Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
259. We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
260. Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
261. Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
262. To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
263. Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
264. But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
265. Th' associates and co-partners of our loss,
266. Lie thus astonished on th' oblivious pool,
267. And call them not to share with us their part
268. In this unhappy mansion, or once more
269. With rallied arms to try what may be yet
270. Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"
271. So Satan spake; and him Beelzebub
272. Thus answered:--"Leader of those armies bright
273. Which, but th' Omnipotent, none could have foiled!
274. If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge

275. Of hope in fears and dangers--heard so oft
276. In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
277. Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
278. Their surest signal--they will soon resume
279. New courage and revive, though now they lie
280. Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
281. As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
282. No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height!"
283. He scare had ceased when the superior Fiend
284. Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
285. Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
286. Behind him cast. The broad circumference
287. Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
288. Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
289. At evening, from the top of Fesole,
290. Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
291. Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
292. His spear--to equal which the tallest pine
293. Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
294. Of some great ammiral, were but a wand--
295. He walked with, to support uneasy steps
296. Over the burning marl, not like those steps
297. On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
298. Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
299. Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
300. Of that inflamed sea he stood, and called
301. His legions--Angel Forms, who lay entranced
302. Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
303. In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
304. High over-arched embower; or scattered sedge
305. Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
306. Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
307. Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
308. While with perfidious hatred they pursued
309. The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
310. From the safe shore their floating carcasses
311. And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrown,
312. Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
313. Under amazement of their hideous change.
314. He called so loud that all the hollow deep
315. Of Hell resounded:--"Princes, Potentates,
316. Warriors, the Flower of Heaven--once yours; now lost,
317. If such astonishment as this can seize
318. Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
319. After the toil of battle to repose
320. Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find

321. To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
322. Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
323. To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
324. Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
325. With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
326. His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
327. Th' advantage, and, descending, tread us down
328. Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
329. Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
330. Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"
331. They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
332. Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
333. On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
334. Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
335. Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
336. In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
337. Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
338. Innumerable. As when the potent rod
339. Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
340. Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud
341. Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
342. That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
343. Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;
344. So numberless were those bad Angels seen
345. Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
346. 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
347. Till, as a signal given, th' uplifted spear
348. Of their great Sultan waving to direct
349. Their course, in even balance down they light
350. On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:
351. A multitude like which the populous North
352. Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
353. Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
354. Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
355. Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
356. Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,
357. The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
358. Their great Commander--godlike Shapes, and Forms
359. Excelling human; princely Dignities;
360. And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,
361. Though on their names in Heavenly records now
362. Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
363. By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
364. Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
365. Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the earth,
366. Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,

367. By falsities and lies the greatest part
368. Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
369. God their Creator, and th' invisible
370. Glory of him that made them to transform
371. Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
372. With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
373. And devils to adore for deities:
374. Then were they known to men by various names,
375. And various idols through the heathen world.
376. Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
377. Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
378. At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
379. Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
380. While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?
381. The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell
382. Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix
383. Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,
384. Their altars by his altar, gods adored
385. Among the nations round, and durst abide
386. Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
387. Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
388. Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
389. Abominations; and with cursed things
390. His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
391. And with their darkness durst affront his light.
392. First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
393. Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
394. Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
395. Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
396. To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
397. Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,
398. In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
399. Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
400. Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
401. Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
402. His temple right against the temple of God
403. On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
404. The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
405. And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
406. Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moab's sons,
407. From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
408. Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
409. And Horonaim, Seon's real, beyond
410. The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
411. And Eleale to th' Asphaltic Pool:
412. Peor his other name, when he enticed

413. Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
414. To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
415. Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
416. Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
417. Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
418. Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
419. With these came they who, from the bordering flood
420. Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
421. Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
422. Of Baalim and Ashtaroth--those male,
423. These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,
424. Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
425. And uncompounded is their essence pure,
426. Not tried or manacled with joint or limb,
427. Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
428. Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
429. Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
430. Can execute their airy purposes,
431. And works of love or enmity fulfil.
432. For those the race of Israel oft forsook
433. Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
434. His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
435. To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
436. Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
437. Of despicable foes. With these in troop
438. Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians called
439. Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
440. To whose bright image nightly by the moon
441. Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
442. In Sion also not unsung, where stood
443. Her temple on th' offensive mountain, built
444. By that uxorious king whose heart, though large,
445. Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
446. To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
447. Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
448. The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
449. In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
450. While smooth Adonis from his native rock
451. Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
452. Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
453. Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
454. Whose wanton passions in the sacred proch
455. Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
456. His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
457. Of alienated Judah. Next came one
458. Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark

459. Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,
460. In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,
461. Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers:
462. Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
463. And downward fish; yet had his temple high
464. Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
465. Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
466. And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
467. Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
468. Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
469. Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
470. He also against the house of God was bold:
471. A leper once he lost, and gained a king--
472. Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
473. God's altar to disparage and displace
474. For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
475. His odious offerings, and adore the gods
476. Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
477. A crew who, under names of old renown--
478. Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train--
479. With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
480. Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
481. Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
482. Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
483. Th' infection, when their borrowed gold composed
484. The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
485. Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
486. Likening his Maker to the grazed ox--
487. Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
488. From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
489. Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
490. Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd
491. Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
492. Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
493. Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
494. In temples and at altars, when the priest
495. Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
496. With lust and violence the house of God?
497. In courts and palaces he also reigns,
498. And in luxurious cities, where the noise
499. Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
500. And injury and outrage; and, when night
501. Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
502. Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
503. Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
504. In Gibeah, when the hospitable door

505. Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.
506. These were the prime in order and in might:
507. The rest were long to tell; though far renowned
508. Th' Ionian gods--of Javan's issue held
509. Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
510. Their boasted parents;--Titan, Heaven's first-born,
511. With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
512. By younger Saturn: he from mightier Jove,
513. His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
514. So Jove usurping reigned. These, first in Crete
515. And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
516. Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
517. Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
518. Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
519. Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
520. Fled over Adria to th' Hesperian fields,
521. And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.
522. All these and more came flocking; but with looks
523. Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
524. Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief
525. Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
526. In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
527. Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
528. Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
529. Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
530. Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears.
531. Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
532. Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
533. His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed
534. Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
535. Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
536. Th' imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
537. Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
538. With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
539. Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
540. Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
541. At which the universal host up-sent
542. A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
543. Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
544. All in a moment through the gloom were seen
545. Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
546. With orient colours waving: with them rose
547. A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
548. Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
549. Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
550. In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood

551. Of flutes and soft recorders--such as raised
552. To height of noblest temper heroes old
553. Arming to battle, and instead of rage
554. Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
555. With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
556. Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
557. With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
558. Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
559. From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
560. Breathing united force with fixed thought,
561. Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
562. Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now
563. Advanced in view they stand--a horrid front
564. Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
565. Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
566. Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
567. Had to impose. He through the armed files
568. Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
569. The whole battalion views--their order due,
570. Their visages and stature as of gods;
571. Their number last he sums. And now his heart
572. Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
573. Glories: for never, since created Man,
574. Met such embodied force as, named with these,
575. Could merit more than that small infantry
576. Warred on by cranes--though all the giant brood
577. Of Phlegra with th' heroic race were joined
578. That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
579. Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
580. In fable or romance of Uther's son,
581. Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
582. And all who since, baptized or infidel,
583. Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
584. Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,
585. Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
586. When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
587. By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
588. Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
589. Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
590. In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
591. Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
592. All her original brightness, nor appeared
593. Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
594. Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen
595. Looks through the horizontal misty air
596. Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,

597. In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
598. On half the nations, and with fear of change
599. Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
600. Above them all th' Archangel: but his face
601. Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
602. Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
603. Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
604. Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
605. Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
606. The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
607. (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
608. For ever now to have their lot in pain--
609. Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
610. Of Heaven, and from eteranl splendours flung
611. For his revolt--yet faithful how they stood,
612. Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
613. Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
614. With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
615. Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
616. To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
617. From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
618. With all his peers: attention held them mute.
619. Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
620. Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
621. Words interwove with sighs found out their way:--
622. "O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
623. Matchless, but with th' Almighth!--and that strife
624. Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire,
625. As this place testifies, and this dire change,
626. Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
627. Forseeing or presaging, from the depth
628. Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
629. How such united force of gods, how such
630. As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
631. For who can yet believe, though after loss,
632. That all these puissant legions, whose exile
633. Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,
634. Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
635. For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
636. If counsels different, or danger shunned
637. By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
638. Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
639. Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
640. Consent or custom, and his regal state
641. Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed--
642. Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.

643. Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
644. So as not either to provoke, or dread
645. New war provoked: our better part remains
646. To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
647. What force effected not; that he no less
648. At length from us may find, who overcomes
649. By force hath overcome but half his foe.
650. Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
651. There went a fame in Heaven that he ere long
652. Intended to create, and therein plant
653. A generation whom his choice regard
654. Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
655. Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
656. Our first eruption--thither, or elsewhere;
657. For this infernal pit shall never hold
658. Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' Abyss
659. Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
660. Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;
661. For who can think submission? War, then, war
662. Open or understood, must be resolved."
663. He spake; and, to confirm his words, outflew
664. Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
665. Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
666. Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
667. Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
668. Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
669. Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.
670. There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
671. Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
672. Shone with a glossy scurf--undoubted sign
673. That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
674. The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
675. A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands
676. Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
677. Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
678. Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on--
679. Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
680. From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts
681. Were always downward bent, admiring more
682. The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
683. Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
684. In vision beatific. By him first
685. Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
686. Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
687. Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
688. For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew

689. Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
690. And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
691. That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
692. Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
693. Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
694. Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
695. Learn how their greatest monuments of fame
696. And strength, and art, are easily outdone
697. By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
698. What in an age they, with incessant toil
699. And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
700. Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
701. That underneath had veins of liquid fire
702. Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
703. With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
704. Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.
705. A third as soon had formed within the ground
706. A various mould, and from the boiling cells
707. By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;
708. As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
709. To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
710. Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
711. Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
712. Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet--
713. Built like a temple, where pilasters round
714. Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
715. With golden architrave; nor did there want
716. Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;
717. The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
718. Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
719. Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
720. Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
721. Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
722. In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile
723. Stood fixed her stately height, and straight the doors,
724. Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
725. Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
726. And level pavement: from the arched roof,
727. Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
728. Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
729. With naptha and asphaltus, yielded light
730. As from a sky. The hasty multitude
731. Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
732. And some the architect. His hand was known
733. In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
734. Where sceptred Angels held their residence,

735. And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
736. Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
737. Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright.
738. Nor was his name unheard or unadored
739. In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
740. Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
741. From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
742. Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
743. To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
744. A summer's day, and with the setting sun
745. Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
746. On Lemnos, th' Aegaeon isle. Thus they relate,
747. Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
748. Fell long before; nor aught aviled him now
749. To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape
750. By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
751. With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.
752. Meanwhile the winged Heralds, by command
753. Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony
754. And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
755. A solemn council forthwith to be held
756. At Pandemonium, the high capital
757. Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
758. From every band and squared regiment
759. By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
760. With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
761. Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
762. And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
763. (Though like a covered field, where champions bold
764. Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
765. Defied the best of Paynim chivalry
766. To mortal combat, or career with lance),
767. Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
768. Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
769. In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides.
770. Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
771. In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
772. Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
773. The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
774. New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
775. Their state-affairs: so thick the airy crowd
776. Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
777. Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
778. In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
779. Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
780. Throng numberless--like that pygmean race

781. Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
782. Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
783. Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
784. Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
785. Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
786. Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
787. Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
788. At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
789. Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
790. Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
791. Though without number still, amidst the hall
792. Of that infernal court. But far within,
793. And in their own dimensions like themselves,
794. The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
795. In close recess and secret conclave sat,
796. A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
797. Frequent and full. After short silence then,
798. And summons read, the great consult began.