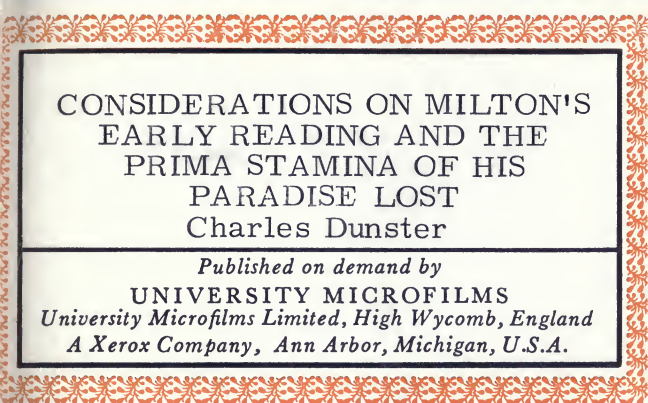


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CONSIDERATIONS ON MILTON'S
EARLY READING AND THE
PRIMA STAMINA OF HIS
PARADISE LOST
Charles Dunster

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

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MILTON'S

EARLY READING,

AND THE

PRIMA STAMINA

OF HIS

PARADISE LOST;

TOGETHER WITH

EXTRACTS FROM A POET

OF THE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

IN A LETTER

TO

WILLIAM FALCONER, M. D.

FROM

CHARLES DUNSTER, M. A.

PRINTED BY AND FOR JOHN NICHOLS,

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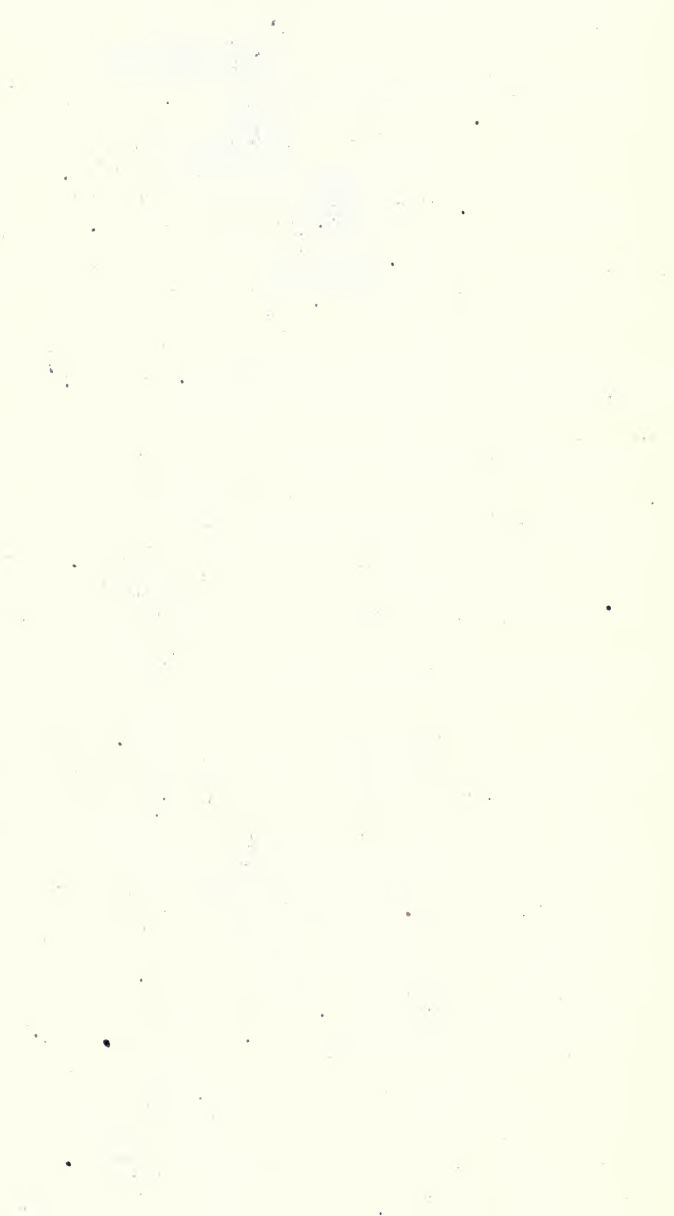
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1800.

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GOVERNMENT

OF

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AND

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MINISTRY

OF

INDUSTRIES AND LABOUR

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LOAN STACK

VEREOR NE, DUM OSTENDERE CUPIO QUANTUM VIRGILIUS NOSTER EX ANTIQUIORUM LECTIO-
NE PROPECERIT, ET QUOS EX OMNIBUS FLORES
VEL QUÆ IN CARMINIS SUI DECOREM EX DIVER-
SIS ORNAMENTA LIBAVERIT, OCCASIONEM REPRE-
HENDENDI VEL IMPERITIS VEL MALIGNIS MINIS-
TREM EXPROBRANTIBUS TANTO VIRO ALIENI USUR-
PATIONEM.—*At* quis fraudi VIRGILIO VER-
TAT, SI AD EXCOLENDUM SE QUÆDAM AB ANTI-
QUIORIBUS MUTUATUS SIT? CUI ETIAM GRATIA
HABENDA EST QUOD NONNULLA AB ILLIS IN OPUS
SUUM, QUOD ÆTERNO MANSURUM EST, TRANS-
FERENDO FECIT NE OMNINO MEMORIA VETERUM
DELERETUR: QUOS, SICUT PRÆSENS SENSUS OS-
TENDIT, NON SOLUM NEGLECTUI VERUM ETIAM
RISUI HABERE JAM CÆPIMUS. DENIQUE ET JU-
DICIO TRANSFERENDI ET MODO IMITANDI CONSE-
CUTUS EST, UT QUOD APUD ILLUM LEGERIMUS
ALIENUM, AUT ILLIUS ESSE MALIMUS, AUT ME-
LIUS HIC QUAM UBI NATUM EST SONARE MI-
REMUR.

MACROB. SATURNAL. vi, i.

MY DEAR SIR,

New Grove, Nov. 1, 1799.

AMONG the various obligations which I owe to your friendship, the advice you gave me, when first I became much an invalid, "to have always some literary object in pursuit, but not of a fatiguing kind," is not one of the least. I have found the best effects from it; and, in forming from desultory reading collections for illustrating the works of our great classic and divine poet, I am confident, that I have passed through many hours of invalid langour and morbid oppression with infinitely less sensibility of them, than I should have done, if devoid of some such mental occupation.

The various branches of reading which such a pursuit insensibly leads to, and the numerous stores of amusement and information which it casually and unexpectedly opens, I can truly say, have often operated upon me the effect ascribed by the old poet to the sorrow-foothing daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne ;

Soothing my pains, and respiting my cares *.

I particularly experienced this at the latter end of last year ; at which season I generally droop most, which I believe is the case with valetudinarians of my class.

In passing through Salisbury to this place, the summer before last, I amused myself, in the evening, with a volume of the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE ; a complete series of which valuable miscellany

* *Ἀσημοσύνην τε κἀκῶν, ἀμπαύματα τε μεριμνῶν.*

Hesiod THEOGON. 45.

does

does credit to the respectable * circulating library adjoining to the Inn.—I found, in the Magazine for November 1796, a brief account of *Sylvester's Du Bartas*, shewing it to have been a popular work, and pointing out some parallelisms, (not very striking indeed,) between Milton and the translator of *Du Bartas*. These notices were accompanied with an observation, attributed to Dr. Farmer †, that “ the
 “ subject of Milton's great poem must
 “ naturally have led him to read in Syl-
 “ *vester's Du Bartas*.”—This awakened in

* It were much to be wished, that the proprietors of our *Caffés Literaires* at Bath, and at other public places, would carefully preserve, and regularly bind up the more valuable periodical publications which they take in. They would by this means gradually amass a valuable *stock* of literary *amusement* and *reference*; which would do more credit to their reading-room and catalogue, than the large quantity of totally uninteresting books, which often swell the one, and incumber the other.

† I do not, however, find it in his excellent *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*.

me a wish to be acquainted with it; and, a few months after, I had an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity. In passing through Southampton I purchased, for *three shillings*, the folio edition; a little worm-eaten indeed, and *caret titulo*. I did not, I confess, at the moment feel raptures equal to those of Mr. *Shandy*, when he first became possessor of *Bruscamille*; and, on my first looking into it, I was so little captivated, that, I suspect, had I been going home, I should have consigned it to repose undisturbed in a corner of my book-room. I carried, however, my new purchase with me into my autumn quarters, at Lymington; where, as the fine air, and beautiful scenery of the country, lead to amusements out of doors, it is less necessary for the libraries of the place to be *farther provided*, than with *light summer-reading*, for the sultry hour, the rainy day, or the occasional confinement of a slight cold, caught by too late an excursion on the water. Here, as winter drew on, I

was

was occasionally *driven* to look deeper into my worm-eaten folio; and I found it *operæ pretium*. It soon *fully* caught my attention; and I value it much above its price, for the pleasure and gratification which it afforded me.——To make some extracts from it, (not without a view to Milton,) was my *medicinal* occupation of the month of November, in last year. *These* are now before me; and, to say something to you from them on the book itself, and the probability of our great poet's early acquaintance with it, and predilection for it, shall be my employment of the same returning season.

The folio edition of Sylvester's Du Bartas was published in 1621; when Milton was just at the age of thirteen. It was accompanied with highly encomiastic testimonials of its merit from the *Laudati Viri* of the times; as Ben Jonson, Daniel, Davis of Hereford, Hall afterwards

Bishop of Exeter, Vicars, and others *. I would suppose that Milton, who was an early † and passionate reader, became acquainted with this edition of Sylvester's Du Bartas on its first publication; and that he then perused it with the *avidity* of a young poetical mind; hence, perhaps,

Smit with the love of SACRED SONG.—

I am not, indeed, without an opinion,

* Drayton dedicated his *MIRACLES OF MOSES* to Sylvester and Du Bartas.

Sallust, to thee, and Sylvester thy friend,

Comes my high poem peaceably and chaste;

Your hallow'd labours humbly to attend,

That wretched Time shall not have power to waste.

† Milton tells us himself, that, from his twelfth year, he was so passionately fond of reading, as hardly ever to retire from his books to bed before midnight; which laid the foundation of his blindness.—“ Pater me puerulum humaniorum literarum studiis destinavit; quas ITA AVIDE ARRIPUI, ut, AB ANNO ÆTATIS DUODECIMO, vix unquam ante mediam noctem a lucubrationibus discederem; quæ prima oculorum perniciës fuit, &c.”

DEFENSIO SECUNDA.

that

that the true *origin* of PARADISE LOST is, in this respect, to be traced primarily to SYLVESTER'S DU BARTAS; and I would precisely reverse Dr. Farmer's observation, by supposing, that "this led to "Milton's great poem;" not only by awakening his passion for sacred poesy, but by absolutely furnishing what Dr. Johnson, in his preface to Lauder's Pamphlet, terms the PRIMA STAMINA of PARADISE LOST. This idea occurred to me, before I had observed by whom the book in question was printed. And it certainly corroborated it, when I found it recorded, at the end of the book, to have been "*printed by Humfrey Lownes, dwelling on "Bread-street-hill *.*" At this time Milton was actually living with his father in Bread-street; and it is very possible that

* Humfrey Lownes, printer and stationer, dwelt at the Star, on Bread-street-hill, from the year 1613. His predecessor in the house was Peter Short, printer; among the books printed by whom, as noticed by Ames, is, "1598, Part of Du Bartas's Divine Weeks, translated by Joshua Sylvester."

his early love of books made him a frequent visitor to his neighbour the printer, who, from his address to the reader *,

* The address is as follows:

THE PRINTER TO THE READER.

The name of JOSHUA SYLVESTER is garland enough to hang before this doore; a name worthily dear to the present age, to posterity. I do not therefore go about to apologize for this work, or to commend it: it shall speak for itself louder than others' friendship or envy. I only advertise my reader, that, since the death of the author, (if at least it be safe to say those men are dead, who ever survive in their living monuments,) I have carefully fetched together all the dispersed issue of that divine wit, as those which are well worthy to live (like brethren) together under one fair roof, that may both challenge time and outwear it. I durst not conceal the harmless fancies of his inoffensive youth, which himself had devoted to silence and forgetfulness. It is so much the more glory to that worthy spirit, that he, who was so happy in those youthful strains, would yet turn and confine his pen to none but holy and religious ditties. Let the present and future times enjoy so profitable and pleasing a work; and at once honour the author, and thank the editor.

appears to have been a man of a poetical taste; and who, as such, was probably much struck with our young poet's early attention to books, and his other indications of genius.

I have never seen Du Bartas's poems in their original French. They have been much condemned by some critics; and it has been said "on ne trouve dans ses ouvrages ni invention ni genie poetique." The style of them has also been censured as *ampoulé*. By others they have been as much applauded and approved*. It is probable that Milton, before he wrote his great poem, had seen them in the original; but this is a very immaterial consideration. To the *English* DU BARTAS we certainly *must* trace him, in some of

* Gulielmus Sallustius DU BARTAS, poemate Gallico *de Creatione Mundi* edito, tantum sibi gloriae concivit, ut intra quinque et sex annos tricies editio rediutegrari necesse haberet.

his earliest poetry, as well as in his latest.

The *English* Du Bartas reads with a high spirit of originality*; and I am fully

* The testimony of Ben Jonson's *Epiconiastic Verses* may here well be adduced.

EPIGRAM,

To Mr. Joshua Sylvester.

If to admire were to commend, my praise
Might then both thee, thy work, and merit raise;
But as it is, (the child of ignorance,
And utter stranger to all airs of France,)
How can I speak of thy great pains but err?
Since they can only judge, that can confer,
Behold! the rev'rend shade of Bartas stands
Before my thought, and in thy right commands,
That to the world I publish for him this,
"Bartas doth wish thy English now were his."
So well in that are his inventions wrought,
As *his* will now be the *translation* thought;
Thine the *original*; and France shall boast
No more the maiden glories she has lost,

B. JONSON.

Ben Jonson indeed, in a general censure of the poets of his time, (recorded from his conversation by

fully persuaded, that it strongly caught the willing attention of the young poet.

Nothing can be farther from my intention than to insinuate that Milton was a plagiarist, or servile imitator; but I conceive, that, having read these sacred poems of very high merit, at the immediate age when his own mind was just beginning to teem with poetry, he retained

by Drummond of Hawthornden,) says, "Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas was not well done; but he wrote his verses, before he understood to confer. By which we may understand Jonson censuring the *exactness* of the translation: which he must have done on the report of others, as his verses confess that he did not understand the original. The poetry of Sylvester (which is my object) stands unimpeached.

Drummond himself commends Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *Judith* as excellent, and speaks of "his happy translations in sundry places equaling the original." Drummond is great authority; especially for that age.—The *works of Drummond* were published in 1656, with a preface by Edward Phillips the nephew of Milton.

numberless

numberless thoughts, passages, and expressions therein, so deeply in his mind, that they hung inherently on his imagination, and became, as it were, naturalized there. Hence many of them were afterwards insensibly transfused into his own compositions. — In common conversation we, imperceptibly to ourselves, adopt the particular phraseology or tone of voice of those persons whom we peculiarly admire; and we frequently catch their characteristic manners, without meaning in any respect to copy them, or being at all aware of any observable resemblance between us. — From Milton's frequent adoption of Sylvester's language, I similarly infer his having been *much conversant* with it, and his earnest admiration of his poetry.

Du Bartas's principal poem, intitled **DAYS AND WEEKS**, was well calculated, both from its *plan* and *execution*, to attach the attention of Milton. — Having for its
argument

argument the most weighty and interesting subjects of scripture history;—commencing with the *Creation* and the *Fall*; proceeding, as the poet marks his plan, through the types of *the Law* and *Jewish History*, to the completion of them in the *Messias*;—and meaning, (had he lived to complete his subject,) to have wound up all in the eternal happiness of *the Heavenly Sabbath*;—decorated and enriched with every ornament of classic literature and scientific knowledge, not without collateral aid from the gothic ages and legendary tales;—how could it fail to strike a young mind, ardently disposed to learning, poetry, and devotion?

The versification of our translator, Joshua Sylvester, has in it, it must be confessed, numerous highly obsolete and vulgarised expressions; frequent discordant and disgusting rhymes; and, very often, a most offensive jingle of adjunct rhyming,

or similarly founding words *. It has also.

* I cite a few instances.

Causing the *rocks* to *rock*,—————
p. i.

Of all those *mountains mounting* to the skies.
P. 54.

Th' other by Tours Charles *Martell martyr'd* so,
That never since could Afric army show.
P. 279.

The ugly *bear bears* to his high renown
Sev'n shining stars,—————
p. 296.

The sea *obey'd*, as *bay'd*,—————
P. 362.

Baal's bawling priests,—————
P. 483.

A *boundless, groundless, sea*,—————
P. 442.

A *smoother footber*, e'en our own self love,——
P. 444.

————— each *assault salt* tears
Draws from mine eyes,—————
P. 413.

I add one more ;

O *LOT!* alas ! what *lot* hast thou elect !
P. 309.

which cannot but remind us of Milton's

O *Eve!* in *evil* hour thou did'st give ear,
To that false worm, &c.——

PAR. LOST. ix. 1067.

some passages so highly bombastic *, as to be most completely ludicrous. In spite of all this, his language is at times admirably condensed, and it abounds in passages which, I conceive, cannot but reclaim our most unbounded admiration; and which, I firmly believe, made a forcible appeal to the finely-tuned ear of Milton.

* Dryden, in the *Translation of Boileau's ART OF POETRY*, with his application of it to English Writers, cautioning against *Bombast*, produces an eminent instance of it from Sylvester's *Du Bartas*.

Nor, with Du Bartas "bridle up the floods,"
And "periwig with wool the baldpate woods."

I should observe, that Boileau does not mention *Du Bartas* at all in his original poem. The verse, here selected from Sylvester by Dryden, well deserves the derision, to which he holds it up. He has also introduced *Du Bartas* himself in another part of the poem; where, I may perhaps find occasion to shew, he has *not* done it very judiciously.

The

The earliest pieces of poetical composition, published by the author of *Paradise Lost*, are his versification of the 114th and 136th Psalms, written when he was only fifteen; in which Mr. Warton has pointed out several *foreshewings* of future poetical eminence. The archetypes of several of these, (or at least something that materially contributed towards them,) I fancied that I found in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*; the folio edition of which had been published by Humfrey Lownes, only two years before. This induced me to make the experiment, how far I could trace Milton, in these and some others of his early poems, to the publication of his neighbour.

The result of that experiment I now submit to your better judgement. — I must apprise you that the passages, which I cite as parallel, or in some respect strikingly similar, must not be expected all
to

to have equal force. Some, I think, will speak for themselves with strong claims; others with less powerful ones. On the whole, they may *jointly go near* to prove the point, which I have fancied myself able to shew.

PSALM CXIV.

8. —————*froth-becurled*—]

This epithet, (a *bold* effort for a poet of fifteen,) I mean only in general to attribute to the compound epithets of Sylvester. These, I believe, have been censured *; but he has used many of a very fine

* Dr. Warton, (in a note on Pope's *Imitation* of Horace, 2 Ep. ii. 167,) gives the substance of a conversation between Pope and the Rev. Mr. Walter Harte, respecting the reviving obsolete words in poetry.— Among other things it is observed,

fine effect: and to some of them I shall possibly endeavour to draw your attention. Many of these I suspect to have been not a little relished by Milton, on his first reading

“ *Compound Epithets* first came into their great
 “ vogue about the year 1598. Shakespeare and
 “ Ben Jonson both ridiculed the immoderate use
 “ of them, in their prologues to *TROILUS AND*
 “ *CRESSIDA*, and to *EVERY MAN IN HIS HU-*
 “ *MOUR*. By the above prologue it appears, that
 “ *Bombast* grew fashionable about the same æra.
 “ The author of *Hieronimo* first led up the dance.
 “ Then came the bold and self-sufficient translator
 “ of *Du Bartas*; who broke down all the flood-
 “ gates of the true stream of eloquence, (which
 “ formerly preserved its river clear, within due
 “ bounds, and full to its banks,) and, like the
 “ rat in the low-country’ dikes, mischievously, or
 “ wantonly, deluged the whole land.”—I can-
 not but observe on this passage, that Ben Jonson
 certainly did *not* consider Sylvester as offending in
 point of bombast and immoderate use of compound
 epithets; or he would scarcely have complimented
 his work *con amore*, as he has done in the verses
 which I have exhibited in a preceding note.—
 It may be remarked also, that a poet must
 have

reading Sylvester. Perhaps he was jointly indebted to Sylvester and to Homer, for his primary predilection for compound epithets; which so eminently distinguish and elevate his poetry.

9. ——— *Jordan's clear streams—*]

The river Jordan is similarly characterized by Sylvester; where there is a resemblance also to the preceding verse of Milton's psalm :

CLEAR JORDAN'S self, in his dry ozier bed,
Blushing for shame, was fain TO HIDE HIS HEAD.

P. 954 *.

have no small degree of merit, and no common powers, who could be considered as materially instrumental in giving quite a new cast and character to our national poetry. I consider Sylvester to have had a richly-abundant stream of poetic language, perhaps not always sufficiently restrained, and often rather turbid; but it flowed at times with much dignity. Flood-gates belong to artificial navigations; while rivers, sufficiently wide and deep, neither have them, nor need them.

* My references are to the *pages*, in the folio edition of 1621: where is printed Hudson's Transla-

———*Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath receiv'd the foil.*]

To *recoil* is frequent with Sylvester for to *retire*; and without implying any particular *impetus*. *Foil*, for *defeat*, is also very common with him. In the following passage they both meet;

Ay Satan aims our constant faith to FOIL,
But God doth seal it, never to RECOIL. P. 337.

II. *The high huge-bellied mountains—*]

I always thought *huge-bellied* a singular epithet for the young poet to apply to mountains; and I have not been without expectations of finding an instance of

tion of Du Bartas's *Judith*; from which I also cite parallel passages, without particularising them.—It is not by any means my object to shew the *exact proportion* of Milton's obligations to Sylvester, or Hudson, or indeed to Du Bartas; but his general obligation to Lownes's publication, in folio, of what is commonly termed *Sylvester's Du Bartas*: but which includes other poems of Sylvester, as well as Hudson's Version of the *Judith*.

it in Sylvester. I can, however, present you with something very like it, from that quarter :

Moses by faith, heard by the God of power,
Compels THE MOUNTAINS' BURLY SIDES to shake,
Commands the earth to rent, to yawn and quake.
P. 552.

14. *Why turned Jordan tow'rd his crystal fountains ?*]

And TOW'RD THE CRYSTAL OF HIS DOUBLE
SOURCE
Compelled JORDAN TO RETREAT his course.
P. 49.

16. ——— *that ever was, and ay shall last,*]

In the very opening of Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, *ay*, as here, is the reduplication of *ever* ;

Clear fire FOR EVER hath not air embrac'd,
Nor air for AY environ'd waters vast. p. 2.

And, in the conclusion of one of the *Parts*, the people are called upon to

—————praise and pray
Th' ALMIGHTY-MOST, whose mercy LASTS FOR AY.
p. 408.

Ay, for *ever*, is indeed most frequent in Sylvester; and is to be found in some energetic passages :

—where an immortal May
In blissful beauty flourisheth for *AY*. p. 42.

—his high name as far
Might *AY* resound as sun-burnt Zanzabar. p. 281.

Tremble therefore, O tyrants, tremble *AY*,
Poor worms of earth, proud ashes, dust and clay ! p. 358.

From Indian shore to where the sun doth fall ;
Or from the climate of the northern blast
Unto that place where summer *AY* DOETH LAST. p. 695.

Ay, for *ever*, is not often to be found in Milton's other poems; at least not in his later ones*. But I conceive that he had at this time no small predilection for this since-discarded monosyllable:

* It is however used with good effect, *PENSEROSO*, ver. 48; and, *VERSES AT A SOLEMN MUSIC*, ver. 7.

otherwise he would not have used it in this fine characterisation of the Eternal Being, and again in the choral tribute of praise, which forms the *burthen* of the ensuing 136th Psalm ;

For his mercies AV indure,
EVER faithful, EVER sure.

17. ——— *glassy floods* —]

Glassy, as an epithet for water, is not unfrequent in Sylvester's Du Bartas. Previous to the description of the creation of land and water, the Deity is invoked as

——king of grassy, and of GLASSY plains, p. 47.

17. *That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,* :
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush.]

The similar rhyme occurs in Sylvester's description of rain ;

Whether the upper cloud's moist heaviness
Doth with his weight the under cloud oppress ;
And so one humour doth another CRUSH,
'Till to the ground their liquid pearls do GUSH.

p. 30.

Gush indeed is scriptural. In the Psalmist's reference to this miracle of Moses bringing the water out of the rock, it is particularly said to *gush out*. Psalm lxxviii. ver. 17.—cv. ver. 40. See also Isaiah, xlviii. 21. And to this we might attribute the young poet's *gushing* rill.—At the same time Sylvester not only similarly describes this miraculous production of water, when, on Moses' striking the rock with his rod,

—————with rapid rush

Out of the stone a plenteous stream doth GUSH;
p. 368.

but he had also, in other places, shewed his young reader the fine poetical and expressive effect of the word *gush*, in describing *the impetuous flowing* of water. He thus powerfully describes the snow melting and flowing in torrents;

—————down the water leaps,

On every side it foams, it roars, it rushes,
And through the steep and stony hills it GUSHES.

p. 50.
and,

and, in his **LITTLE DU BARTAS**, speaking of man as the lord of the creation ;

For him the rocks a thousand rivers GUSH ;
Here rolling brooks, there silver torrents rush.

P. 775.

In this psalm, Milton's first-avowed poetical attempt, the style of versification, (being heroic rhyme, which he has not often attempted,) seems to have been adopted from Sylvester. Two years after, when he wrote his **VERSES ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT**, he was palpably become acquainted with Spenser ; who is there his model. Hence I suppose the *priority* of his acquaintance with *Sylvester's Du Bartas* ; which I would consider as his *primary attachment* *.

* I might carry my *hypothesis*, of Milton's primary acquaintance with *Sylvester's Du Bartas*, to an earlier date, than I have yet supposed ; as, since the above was written and sent to the press, I find that the 4to edition, in 1613, was also printed by Humfrey Lownes. Milton was then only five years old, at the most.

PSALM

PSALM CXXXVI.

29. ——— *the golden-tressed sun.*]

Mr. Warton particularly notices this expression as highly poetical. I cannot avoid referring it to Sylvester's *Du Bartas*; where the sun is not only described

WITH GOLDEN TRESSES and attractive grace,
but it is also said ; p. 85.

Scarce did the glorious Governor of Day
O'er Memphis yet HIS GOLDEN TRESS display.
p. 360.

33. *The horned moon to shine by night.*]

The moon is several times termed by Sylvester, "*Night's horned queen* ;"

—————under night's HORNED QUEEN. p. 40.

—————how sea doth ebb and flow,
As th' HORNED QUEEN doth either shrink or
grow. p. 82.

34. ——— *her*

34. ————*her spangled sisters bright.*]

This expression is also admired by Mr. Warton as very poetical. But Sylvester had before termed the stars

—————those BRIGHT SPANGLES that the heavens
adorn. p. 13.

And

—The twinkling SPANGLES of the firmament.
p. 72.

He has also

—————heaven's STAR-SPANGLED canopy. p. 43.

And

—————the BRIGHT STAR-SPANGLED regions. p. 143.

He *bespangles*, indeed, the stars upon various other occasions.

37. —————*his thunder-clasping hand.*]

This fine epithet is justly admired by Mr. Warton. It is much superior to any attempts, in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, similarly to characterise "the glorious God, that
" maketh

“ maketh the thunder ;” but possibly not without obligations to them. Mankind, for instance, are there termed

—vassals only of the THUNDER-THROWER ;—

p. 959.

and the Deity is styled

—the immortal, mighty THUNDER-DARTER ;

p. 7.

and we have,

—the only-THUNDERING HAND of God. p. 46.

38. *Smote the first-born of Egypt land.]*

———slain by the angel's hand

Among the elder heirs of EGYPT LAND. p. 703.

41. *And in despright of Pharaoh fell,*

He brought from thence his Israel.]

In Sylvester's Du Bartas, Pharaoh is similarly described as *fell*, or cruel ;

So Israel, fearing again to feel

Pharaoh's FELL hands, who hunts him at the
heel.—

p. 361.

Where

Where also the Miltonic rhyme frequently occurs ;

—————those proud TYRANTS FELL,
Those bloody foes of mourning ISRAEL. P. 357.

—————through the sandy horror
Of a vast desert, * * * *
Of thirst and hunger, and of serpents FELL,
He by the hand conducted ISRAEL. P. 377.

—————what tempest FELL
Beats on the head of harmless ISRAEL ! P. 438.

And finally doth punish TYRANTS FELL,
With their own swords, to save his ISRAEL.
P. 478.

I could refer you to various other instances.—These, indeed, are mere *minutiæ*, hardly worth our notice ; but a number of such, in addition to more palpable obligations, may contribute to prove my point.

45. *The ruddy waves be cleft in twaine,
Of the Erythræan main.]*

His dreadful voice, to save his antient sheep,
Did CLEAVE the bottom of TH' ERYTHREAN *
DEEP, P. 48.

This passage alone seems nearly sufficient to fix on Milton an acquaintance with, and recollection of, Sylvester's *Du Bartas*; especially as I can also refer his "RUDDY waves" of the Erythræan, or Red Sea, to the same source;

———along the sandy shore,
Where the Erythrean RUDDY billows roar.

P. 967.

* Sylvester is habitually negligent of Latin quantities. Thus he writes Euphrâtes, (which I believe Spenser has likewise done,) Niphâtes, Cinnâtus; and here Erythrean instead of Erythræan. He is not, however, uniform in his false quantities. Though he sometimes writes Idūmæan, Osiris, Orion; at other times he restores them to their classical quantity.

53. *But*

53. *But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power.]*

Thus exactly, and with the same fine effect, Sylvester;

BUT CONTRARY the Red Sea DID DEVOUR
THE BARB'ROUS TYRANT WITH HIS MIGHTY
POWER. P. 704.

65. *He foil'd bold Seon—]*

To foil, for to defeat, is perfectly Sylvestrian;

Shall FOIL the Pagan, and free Israel. P. 415.

——giants FOIL'D in single fight. P. 430.

Subdueth Soba; FOILS the Moabite. ibid.

I FOIL'D your troops—— P. 519.

66. ——*the Ammorean coast.]*

Ammorean, for Amcrite, is of the same school. The Amorites flying before Joshua are termed,

——the AMMOREAN hare,

Foil'd with the fear of his victorious war. p. 298.

69. ——*large-*

69. ————*large-limb'd Og—*]

And as a LARGE and MIGHTY-LIMBED steed.

p. 98.

70. ————*his over-bardy crew—*]

Senacharib's proud OVER-DARING HOST,

That threaten'd Heaven, and 'gainst the earth
did boast.

p. 17.

89. *Let us therefore warble forth.*]

Thus also Sylvester ;

O Father! grant I sweetly WARBLE FORTH

Unto our feed the world's renowned birth. p. 1.

94. *Above the reach of mortal eye,*]

This is admired by Mr. Warton, as a
very poetical expression ; and so it is.
But Sylvester had before spoken of

—————all that is, or MAY BE SEEN

BY MORTAL EYE under Night's horned Queen.

p. 40.

ANNO ÆTATIS XVII.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT,
DYING OF A COUGH.

8. ———— *since grim Aquilo, his charioteer,
By boist'rous rape th' Athenian damsel got,]*

In Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, Scythia is described with allusion to the same mythologic story ;

————— the cold frozen Scythia,
Too often kiss'd by th' HUSBAND OF ORYTHIA,
p. 29.

To which we might refer the "*kiss of winter,*" in the preceding stanza.

Milton's making Aquilo the *Automedon* of winter, may also be attributed to the same source ;

The shiv'ring COACHMAN with his icy snow
Dares not the forest of Phœnicia strow : p. 104.

12. ————— *th' infáamous blot,*]

Infamous is thus accented by Sylvester ;
I believe uniformly.

Fly then those monsters, and give no access
To men INFÁMIOUS for their wickedness : p. 444.

A sink of filth, where ay th' INFÁMOSEST,
Most bold and busy, are esteemed best : p. 402.

15. ————— *icy-pearled ear]*

Ice-pearl is used for *bail* by Sylvester
more than once ;

The incensed hand of Heaven's Almighty King
Never more thick doth slipp'ry ICE-PEARLS fling ;
p. 310.

The bounding balls of ICE-PEARL slipp'ry shining ;
p. 1096.

20. ————— *with his cold kind embrace.]*

Pierc'd with the glance of a KIND CRUEL EYE,—
p. 116.

21. *Unhous'd*

21. *Unhous'd thy virgin soul,—]*

We have the same expression in Sylvester's Funeral Elegy on the Wife of M. D. Hill;

For her own father Nature had UNHOUS'D,
And *Metkerk* had her mother re-espous'd. p. 1168.

ANNO ÆTATIS XIX.

A VACATION EXERCISE.

5. ————— *dumb silence—]*

Through all the world DUMB SILENCE doth distill,——
p. 13.

19. *Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight,
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight,]*

In Sylvester's Du Bartas it is said, that Sir Thomas More and Sir Nicholas Bacon first improved the English language, and

weaned first

Our infant phrase, till then but homely nurst,
 And childish roxs; and, rudeness chacing
 thence,
 To civil knowledge join'd sweet eloquence.

p. 265.

And, a little before, the change of languages is ascribed, among other causes, to the fabrications, or new-fanglings, of “fame-thirsting wits.”

Or else because fame-thirsting wits, who toil
 In golden terms to trick their gracious style,
 With NEW-FOUND beauties prank each circumstance, &c. &c.

p. 261.

29. *Yet I had rather, if I were to chuse,
 Thy service in some graver subject use:—
 Such where the deep transported mind may soar
 Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
 Look in, and see each blestful Deity,
 How he before the thund'rous throne doth lie,
 Lissning to what unshorne Apollo sings
 To th' touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
 Immortal Nectar to her kingly sire;
 Then passing thro' the spheres of watchful fire,
 And misty regions of wide air next under,
 And hills of snow and lofts of piled thunder,*

May

*May tell at length how green-ey'd Neptune raves,
In Heaven's ætance must'ring all his waves;
Then sing of secret things that came to pass,
When beldam Nature in her cradle was.]*

I have often thought, that these were not exactly the *original* ideas of a poet, *anno ætatis* 19: even though that poet was Milton.—I beg you to compare the following *mental excursion*, into the elementary and celestial regions, of the sacred poet, with whom I suppose Milton to have made an early acquaintance.

And though our soul live as imprison'd here
In our frail flesh, and buried, as it were,
In a dark tomb; yet at one flight she flies
From Calpe to Imau, from th' earth to skies,
Much swifter than the chariot of the sun,
Which in a day about the world doth run.
For sometimes, leaving these base slimy heaps,
With chearful spring above the clouds she leaps,
Glides through the air, and there she learns to
know
The original of wind, and air, and snow,
Of lightning, thunder, blazing stars, and storms,
Of rain and ice, and strange exhaled forms.

By th' air's steep steps she boldly climbs aloft
 To the world's chambers; Heaven she visits oft,
 Stage after stage; she marketh all the spherics,
 And all th' harmonious various course of theirs:
 With sure account, and certain compasses,
 She counts the stars, and metes their distances,
 And diff'ring paces; and, as if she found
 No object fair enough in all this round,
 She mounts above the world's extremest wall,
 Far, far beyond all things corporeal;
 Where she beholds her Maker face to face,
 His frowns of Justice, and his smiles of Grace,
 The faithful zeal, the chaste and sober port,
 And sacred pomp of the Celestial Court. p. 133.

Let the soberest admirer of Milton and of true poetry judge, if *such* a passage was not likely to captivate the attention of the young poet!—Milton has, in fact, compressed Du Bartas's description; only reversing the order of it, and *heathenising*, with some fine classical touches, the *Ολυμπια δωμελια* of his predecessor.

Had not this passage precluded the necessity of looking farther, we might have referred Milton, in some part of the above citation,

citation, to the encomiastic verses of Bishop Hall, prefixed to the English Du Bartas; which, on account of their merit, I am not sorry to bring forward to your notice.

TO MR. JOSHUA SYLVESTER,

OF HIS

B A R T A S

METAPHRASED.

I dare confess; of Muses more than nine,
 Nor list, nor can I envy none but thine.
 She, drench'd alone in *Sion's* sacred spring,
 Her Maker's praise hath sweetly chose to sing,
 And reacheth nearest th' Angels's notes above;
 Nor lists to sing of tales, or wars, or love.
 One while I find her, in her nimble flight,
 Cutting the brazen spheres of Heaven bright;
 Thence straight she glides, before I be aware,
 Through the three regions of the liquid air:
 Thence, rushing down thro' Nature's Closet-
 door,
 She ransacks all her Grandame's secret store;
 And, diving to the darknes of the deep,
 Sees there what wealth the waves in prison keep:

And, what she sees above, below, between,
She shews and sings to others' ears and eyne*.

33. — *where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
Look in, &c. &c.]*

I must here also request you to compare the following passage in Du Bartas's URANIA, or *Heavenly Muse*; a poem highly congenial to the immediate poetical cast of Milton's mind;

“ I am URANIA,” then aloud said she,
“ Who human-kind ABOVE THE POLES TRANSPORT,
Teaching their hands to touch, and eyes to see
THE INTER-COURSE OF THE CELESTIAL COURT.”
SYLVEST. DU BART. p. 526.

* I subjoin the remainder of these verses, as a material testimonial of the allowed high merit of Joshua Sylvester.

Tis true, thy Muse another's steps doth press;
The more's her pain, nor is her praise the less.
Freedom gives scope unto the roving thought;
Which by restraint is curb'd. Who wonders ought,
That feet unfetter'd walk both far and fast,
Which pent in chains must want their custom'd haste?
Thou follow'st Bartas's diviner strain,
And sing'st his numbers in his native vein:
BARTAS was some French angel, girt with bays;
And thou a BARTAS art, in English lays.

36. —————*the thund'rous throne*—]

Dr. Jortin would here read “ the *thun-*
“ *d'rer's* throne;” not being acquainted
with the adjective *thund'rous*. But Dr.
Newton observes, that “ he *thinks* he has
“ seen the word *thund'rous* in other old
“ authors; though he cannot recollect
“ where.” Mr. Warton notices the word,
as “ more in Milton's manner than *thun-*
“ *derer's* ;” and as “ conveying a new
“ and a stronger idea.” He also illus-
trates it by *slumb'rous* from *Slumber*, Par.
Lost. x. 702 ; but he gives no instance of
thunderous from our older poets, with
whom he was so conversant.—I find it
used in a fine passage of Sylvester : where
Goliath, when slain by David, is com-
pared, in falling, to a wall or tower, of a
besieged city, under-worked by miners ;

Till at the length, rushing with THUND'ROUS
roar,

It ope a breach to the hardy conqueror. p. 420.

41. *And misty regions of wide air next under,
And hills of snow and lofts of piled thunder.*]

————— the mountains strangely steep
Those heaven-climb ladders, labyrinths of wonder,
Cellars of wind, and SHOPS OF SULPHRY THUNDER,
Where stormy tempests have their ugly birth ;
p. 282.

Mr. Warton, in his note on this part of the VACATION EXERCISE, observes, “ there “ is *something like it* in Sylvester’s Du “ *Bartas*, JOB, p. 944, of the edition “ 1621.”— The page which he refers to, in JOB TRIUMPHANT, has only two lines, that have any material resemblance ;

Haft thou the treasures of the snow survey’d ?
Or seen the store-house of my hail uplaid ?

‘The passage is a fine one : and I wish it had induced Mr. Warton, to have looked more deeply into the volume.

The

The same page has other * passages, that might have attached the tasteful curiosity of my much-respected friend. But, when he published his valuable edition of Milton's *Juvenilia*, he was certainly little acquainted with *Sylveſter's Du Bartas* †; and the reference to it, which I have just noticed, was probably suggested by Mr. Bowles,

* I could instance the following :

Hast thou gone down into the sea itself ?
Walk'd in the bottom ? searched ev'ry shelf ?
Survey'd it's springs ? or have the gates of death
Been open'd to thee, and the doors beneath
Death's ghastly shadows ?—————

Which is the way where lovely light doth dwell ?
And, as for darkness, where hath the her cell ?
Canst thou restrain the pleasant *influing*
Of *Pleiades*, the ushers of the Spring ?
Or canst thou loose *Orion's* icy bands,
Who rules the Winter with his chill commands ?

Wilt thou command the clouds, and Rain shall fall ?
Will Light ning come, and answer, at thy call ?

† In the posthumous edition of Mr. Warton's Milton, there are indeed references not unfrequently to Sylveſter's Du Bartas; but it is seldom noticed, that Milton had any *material obligations* to it.

Bowles, who supplied him with others to that work. Dryden's citation from Sylvester, in the ART OF POETRY *, has possibly prevented many readers of taste from ever looking into his Du Bartas; and it must be owned, that in most pages they would meet with something to confirm the impression. To find his *brilliant* passages, we certainly have often to pass through a quantity of *stercoraceous* and disgusting matter.

23. ————Trent, *who spreads*
His thirty arms along th' indented meads.]

Sylvester to Du Bartas's Catalogue, of the most famous rivers in the world, adds,

it. The fine passage, which I have cited in p. 38, is there referred to, and six verses of it are cited; but coldly, and without any admiration of it. I had not seen the second edition of Warton's Milton, since my acquaintance with Sylvester's Du Bartas, till this sheet was absolutely in the press.

* See note, p. 15, respecting Dryden, &c.

—silver Medway, which doth deep indent
THE FLOW'RY MEADOWS of my native Kent;

p. 50.

and he apostrophises the

vales with hundred brooks INDENTED;

p. 517.

ON THE MORNING OF
CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

COMPOSED 1629.

3. *Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,]*

That MARY shall AT ONCE be MAID AND MO-
THER,

p. 17.

14. ——— *a darksome house of mortal clay,]*

The humours caused in THIS HOUSE OF CLAY,—

p. 185.

19. ——— *the sun's team*——]

———the sun's proud-trampling TEAM———

p. 34

THE SUN, to flun this tragic sight, apace

Turn'd back HIS TEAM,———

p. 226.

21. ——— *the*

21. ——— *the spangled host keep watch in squadrons
bright.]*

—————before mine eyes
HEAVEN'S GLORIOUS HOST in nimble SQUA-
DRONS flies. P. 13.

33. *Had d'ff'd her gaudy trim,]*

DOFF'D mourning weeds, and deck'd it passing
fine. P. 12.

95. *As never was by mortal finger struck ;
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,]*

Suffer, at least, to my sad dying VOICE
My doleful FINGERS to consort their NOISE :
P. 101.

131. ——— *your nine-fold harmony,]*

HER NINE-FOLD VOICE did choicely imitate
Th' HARMONIOUS music of Heaven's nimble
dance. P. 526.

140. ——— *peering day,]*

A mountain top, that over-PEERS the plain,—
P. 252.

142. *Will*

142. *Will down return to men,
 Orb'd in a rainbow——
 Thron'd in celestial Sheen,
 With radiant feet the tiffu'd clouds down steering.]*

We might, I think, conjecture, that this description is from some picture; and to Sylvester's Translation of Du Bartas's TRIUMPH OF FAITH there is a Frontispiece, that might have furnished it. The subject is from Revelat. ii. ver. 10, *Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee a crown of life.* The design is, Christ descending to judgment, and the FAITHFUL appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, (Romans, xiv. 10,) and receiving their rewards.

The judge is seated, "amidst a blaze of light," on a small rainbow; and is completely encircled by another "orbicular," or rather oval one. Under him are some wreathed, or "tiffued," clouds; which he may be imagined in the act of propelling, or "directing with his feet."

Just

Just beneath these clouds, a large rainbow extends over the Holy City; in front of which the dead are seen rising out of their graves.

In the midst of these, a little raised above the level of the ground, lie the *mortales exuviae* of Queen Elizabeth. The body is in robes of state, with her ruff on the neck: her head rests on two pillows, laced and ornamented with tassels; and a globe is at her feet. On the ground, beside her, lie a crown, scepter, and sword of state. At the same time, her *Spirit* is seen above kneeling before the Judge; and receiving from him the *crown of life*. She is kneeling just before his right hand, with her hair loosely flowing, habited in a white robe; and is attended by four virgins similarly habited, bearing in their hands *their lamps burning*. — This is indeed beside my immediate purpose; which was only to notice, what particularly illustrates Milton's description.

But this circumstance makes the print curious; and gives reason to imagine, that it was likely to have attracted the attention of a young observant mind *.

172. *Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.]*

A lion is described in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*,

—————SWINDGING, with his finewy train,
Sometimes his fides, sometimes the dusty plain,—
p. 123.

I might refer to the same source, for other constituent parts of this fine Miltonic line. — Among the *meteorous* appearances of the aërial region, the poet describes a dragon with a voluminous fiery tail;

Here a fierce dragon FOLDED all in fire; p. 33.
and he terms the desert, through which the Lord conducted the Israclites,

* This print is also in the 4to edition of 1613.

— the **SANDY HORROR** of the
Of a vast desert,————— p. 377.

183. *A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament ;]*

To pearly tears mournings and sad **LAMENTS** ;
p. 439.

————— deep sighs and sweet **LAMENTS**. p. 455.

200. ————— *mooned Ashtaroth—]*

The **MOONY** standards of proud *Ottoman*. p. 29.

202. ————— *girt with taper's holy shine,]*

————— all illuster'd with light's radiant **SHINE**,—
p. 12.

————— in Wisdom's radiant **SHINE**,—————
p. 448.

223. ————— *his dusky eyn ;—]*

Eyn for *eyes* is frequent with *Sylvester* ;
as is *teen* for *teeth*, and *treen* for *trees*.

THE PASSION.

34. *The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
And letters where my tears have wash'd a wannish white.]*

Mr. Warton, who justly brands this idea as "childish," points out the source of it. "Conceits," says he, "were now not confined to words only. Mr. Steevens has a volume of elegies, in which the paper, in all the title-pages, is black, and the letters white. Every intermediate leaf is also black."—But it happens that I can, in this instance, refer you to the *wannish white tears* of Joshua Sylvester, imprinted on a *black leaf*, by Humfrey Lownes. Actually *inter scribendum* *, I happen to have become possessed of the quarto edition of Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, printed by H. Lownes, in 1613; prefixed to which is the *third* Edi-

* Since the first sheet was printed off.

tion of Sylveſter's Funeral ELEGY on Prince Henry, moſt curiouſly decorated with emblems of mortality. There are two title-pages; or leaves. The firſt contains, in a white page, (the back of which is black,) the date of the year and the name of the printer, together with a Star, the *ſign* of his houſe, as a central ornament, inſtead of a title. This page is ſupported by four erect figures, two on each ſide. One is a corpe in a winding ſheet, which is collected at the head and feet in a knot or taffel; but ſo as to leave three parts of the face viſible. The other three figures are deaths; or ſkeletons. I know not exactly which to denominate them; as they have none of the uſual *inſignia* of the *Grim Tyrant*: and yet they are marked by an air of *character* and *vitality*, that is very ſtriking. You would remark in the drawing ſome ignorance of anatomy; but the attitudes of the figures, and the expreſſion of the countenances, have much merit. The ſecond leaf is black
on

on both sides; the title-page is of a deeper black than the other black pages; and the letters in which the title is printed are now exactly of a *wannish white*. Some allowance must be made for time; but I conceive they were never of a clear white. I must not omit to mention, that the title is “ LACHRYMÆ LACHRYMARUM, or “ THE SPIRIT OF TEARS, distilled for “ the untimely Death, &c. &c.” The ELEGY itself, which consists of eleven pages, has the back of each leaf black, with the royal arms upon it, in the same wan white; and the sides of the printed pages are decorated, or supported, in the same manner as the first-mentioned title-page: except, that, in four pages, the corpse in the winding-sheet is omitted, and a *fourth OSSEA LARVA* is substituted in its place*. Of these *ossea larvæ* there are,

* Tum quoque factorum veniam memor *umbra*
tuorum,

Insequar et vultus *ossea larva* tuos.

Ovid. IBIS. 144.

in the whole, nine or ten different figures; which are designed with material variations. Some are standing among a heap of human skulls and bones, which rise quite up to their middle; some have a smaller quantity, only up to their knees; and others are seen *pede libero* on a plain unincumbered ground. Some are drawn variously *en profil*; in some, the figure is exhibited *par derriere*; in others, it is presented *direct*, with the countenance *full*, and grimly expressive. Some of these latter materially serve to illustrate Milton's

Grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile,————

PAR. LOST. ii. 846.

“The Grim Feature,” in more than one instance, expresses a high degree of delight, through its characteristic ghastliness: which is admirably preserved. The publication is curious; and would not fail to attract the attention of any person. I have trespassed on your patience, by this description of it, from a wish to shew,
how

how impossible it was for it not to impress a young and curious mind.—Milton was only five years old, when this 4to edition of Sylvester's *Du Bartas* was published.—Possibly Milton's father and Lownes were in habits of intimacy; and books, printed by the one, soon found their way to the house of the other; and there made a part of the library, which furnished young Milton with his earliest reading.—I might hence suggest an earlier date for Milton's first acquaintance with Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, than I had at first done; and I might, not unfoundedly perhaps, conjecture it to have been one of the first books of poetry, (if not the very first,) which he perused.—At all events you will, I think, allow, that the wannish white letters, produced by the tears of the mourner on the black leaves of his lugubrious page, are the *Lachrymæ Lachrymarum* of Sylvester, from the press of Lownes; a circumstance, that cannot but strengthen my general *hypothesis*.

41. *There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.]*

And yet far higher is this HOLY FIT,
When, ——— from flesh cares acquit,
The wakeful soul itself assembling so
All selfly dies, —————
But above all that's the DIVINEST TRANCE,
When the soul's eye beholds God's countenance.

p. 178.

————— ECSTASIED in a HOLY TRANCE ; —

p. 528.

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC.

17. *That we on earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise ;
As once we did, till disproportion'd Sin
Farr'd against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience and their state of good.]*

The FURIES, or iii d. Part of the 1st.
Day of the ii d. Week, of Sylvester's Du
Bartas,

Bartas, describes the fatal consequences of the FALL. The ARGUMENT of it opens thus :

The world's transform'd from what it was at first;
For Adam's sin all creatures else accurf'd;
THEIR HARMONY DISTUNED BY HIS JAR :
Yct all again CONCENT, to make him war; &c.

p. 201.

where the two last lines may illustrate a preceding verse in this finely-conceived, and exquisitely-finished, little poem ;

That UNDISTURBED song of pure CONCENT,—

The Book itself, after an invocation, thus begins ;

Ere that our sire, (O too too proudly base !)
Turn'd tail to God, and to the fiend his face,
This mighty world did seem an instrument
True-strung, well-tun'd, and handled excellent ;
Whose symphony refounded, sweetly shrill,
The Almighty's praise,—————

While

While man serv'd God, the world serv'd him;
 the live
 And lifeless creatures seem'd all to strive
 In sweet accord; the base with high rejoic'd,
 The hot with cold, the solid with the moist;
 And innocent Astræa did combine
 All with the mastic of a LOVE DIVINE.

For th' hidden love that now a days doth hold
 The steel and loadstone, *Hydrargire* and gold,
 Is but a spark and shadow of that love,
 Which at the first in every thing did move,
 When the earth's Muses with harmonious sound
 To Heaven's sweet musick humbly did resound,
 But Adam, being chief of all the strings
 Of this large lute, o'er-reach'd, quickly brings
 All out of tune; and now, for melody
 Of warbling charms, it yells so hideously,
 That it affrights fell *Enyon**, who turmoils
 To raise again old Chaos' antique broils. p. 202.

I must request you here to make some allowance for the *stylus Enniani seculi*.

* The same as Bellona, sister to Mars, and Goddess of Battle. *Glossary to Sylvester*. See Milton's ivth. ELEGY, ver. 75.

I might

I might observe to you, that “ *Phan-*
“ *tasy*,” ver. 5, “ *Noise*” for Music, ver.
18, and “ *Diapason*,” ver. 23, similarly
used, are all to be found in Sylvester.
At present I hasten to the two delightful
poems of L’ALLEGRO and IL PENSE-
ROSO : in each of which I shall point
out an obligation, or two, to my worm-
eaten volume.

L ’ A L L E G R O .

10. — *dark Cimmerian desert,* —]

Mr. Warton, having observed that
“ Cimmerian darkness was a common al-
“ lusion in the poetry then written and
“ studied,” cites instances from Shake-
speare, Fletcher, and Spenser. It is also
frequent in Sylvester;

The sad black horror of CIMMERIAN mists,—

P. 7.

—————blind ignorance

Groping about in such CIMMERIAN nights,—

P. 272.

From a CIMMERIAN dark deep dungeon,—

P. 435.

Man's eyes are sealed up with CIMMERIAN mist.

P. 527.

II. ————*thou Goddess fair and free,*]

In Sylvester's Du Bartas, it is said, God
created the Angels,

—————immortal, innocent,

Good, FAIR, and FREE;————

P. 14.

25. *Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee*

Jest and youthful Jollity;

Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,

Nods and Becks and wreathed Smiles,

Such as hang on Hebe's cheek, &c. &c.]

Pray just cast your eye on Du Bartas's
groupe of attendants on the "laughter-
"loving" goddess;

Fair

Fair dainty Venus,——
 Whom wanton Dalliance, Dancing, and Delight,
 Smiles, witty Wiles, Youth, Love, and Beauty
 bright,
 With soft blind Cupids evermore consort. p. 81.

45. *Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
 And at my window bid good-morrow.]*

Bishop Newton takes occasion, from this passage, to admit, with Dryden, that “*rhyme was not Milton’s talent.*” “Several things,” he observes, “are said by Milton, which would not have been said, but for the sake of the rhyme;” and he particularly refers to the “*in spite of sorrow,*” in this place; which he intimates to be, what we used to call at school a *botch*, a mere expletive, foisted in *pro carminis usu*. You and I, (who have a higher opinion of Milton’s talent for rhyme,) should not, I believe, easily accede to this accusation against him.—I had once supposed it intended strongly to characterise the enlivening

livening effect of the lark's matin song, so as to dispel at once any sorrows of the preceding night; and possibly with a recollection of the Psalmist's, *Sorrow may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning.* Psalm xxx. 5. — But I think you will agree with me, that we must, in this instance, look *only* to Sylvester's Du Bartas: where the Poet is describing the happiness of him, who leads a country life;

The chearful birds, CHIRPING HIM SWEET GOOD
MORROW,

With Nature's music DO BEGUILE HIS SORROW.

p. 70.

50. *While the cock, &c.*

Stoutly struts his dames before.]

Ev'n as a peacock —————

To woo his mistress, STRUTTING STATELY BY
HER, &c. &c.

p. 76.

78. *Meadows trim with daisies pied,]*

Trim is no unfrequent epithet for meadows in Sylvester:

—the

the flowers that paint THE FIELDS so
TRIM. p. 48.

The eternal verdure, and the TRIM PROSPECT
Of plenteous pastures, p. 309.

Pied, for variegated, is also *Sylvestrian*.—
Most readers, I suspect, have applied *pied*
to the daisies themselves; and I confess,
that I attributed Milton's "pied daisies"
to Shakespeare's

—— DAISIES PIED and violets blue,

in the song, at the end of AS YOU LIKE
IT. But we may as well understand his
meadows to have been *variegated* with
daisies; as are those in Sylvester's Du
Bartas:

In May THE MEADS are not so PIED WITH
FLOWERS. p. 974.

Where, in his description of Eden, we
have the same idea;

With thousand *dies* he *mosleys* all the *meads*.

p. 171.

Pied

Pied is there also applied to flowers themselves ;

—————each bed and border

Is, like *PIED POSIES*, diverse dies and order.

p. 180:

85. —————*their sav'ry dinner—*

Of herbs and other country messes,

Which the neat-banded Phyllis dresses.]

Sylvester describes the fruits of the Garden of Eden, yielding

More wholesome food than all *THE MESSES*,

That now taste-curious wanton plenty *DRESSES*.

p. 171.

94. —————*the jocund rebecks sound,]*

The *rebeck*, as Mr. Warton has noticed in the second edition of his Milton, is mentioned, by Sylvester, as an instrument with strings of catgut ;

But wieri cymbals, *REBECKS' SINEWS TWIN'D*,

Sweet virginals, and cornet's curled wind.

p. 231.

95. To

95. *To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing, &c.]*

I think I have seen it somewhere observed, that this line much expresses the *bounding* of a dance. I will beg you to compare the festive dance of Solomon's Courtiers, masked as Heathen Deities, in the revels celebrating his nuptials ;

Here MANY A Phœbus, and here MANY A Muse,—
Here MANY A Juno, MANY A Pallas here,
Here MANY A Venus, and Diana clear,
Here MANY A horned Satyr, MANY A Pan,
Here Wood-Nymphs, Flood-Nymphs, MANY A
Fairy Fawn,
With lusty frisks and lively *bounds*, &c. &c. p. 459.

125. *There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe,——]*

Mr. Warton exhibits several instances of our old poets' introducing Hymen in "his saffron coat." Sylvester gives him *robes* of that colour :

IN SAFFRON ROBES and all his solemn rites,
Thrice-sacred HYMEN shall with smiling cheer
Unite in one two loving Turtles dear,

And chain with holy charms their willing hands,
Whose hearts are link'd in Love's eternal bands.

P. 1213.

131. *Then to the well-trod stage anon.]*

I have formerly thought the “anon” in this place a feeble expletive, or rather an intolerably awkward botch; and felt inclined to apply to it Bishop Newton’s objections to verse 45.—But I begin to suspect, that it is not without its effect in quick transitions of description: at least I am in a great degree reconciled to it, from some passages in Sylvester’s *Du Bartas*.—At present I will only just lay before you, from thence, the various *cheerful* Paradisiacal delights of Adam in a state of Innocence;

Here he beneath a fragrant hedge reposes,
Full of all kinds of sweet all-coloured roses;
ANON he walketh in a level lane,
On either side beset with shady plane;—
ANON he stalketh, with an easy stride,
By some clear river’s lily-paved side;—

Musing

Musing ANON through crooked walks he wanders,
 Round-winding rings, and intricate meanders;—
 p. 180.

Anon is a most frequent word with Syl-
 vester; perhaps more repeatedly used by
 him than any other, if we except *ay* for
ever.—Milton has used *anon* with good
 effect in his greater poems. PAR. LOST.
 i. 549. PAR. REG. i. 304.

136. ——— *soft Lydian airs,*
Married to immortal verse,]

This expression, of *marrying* words and
 music, is most abundant in Sylvester's *Du*
Bartas. Thus, where the birds in Paradise
 are described accompanying with their
 songs the hymns of the Angels;

Where thousand sorts of birds both night and
 day,
 MARRYING THEIR SWEET TUNES TO THE AN-
 GELS' LAYS,
 Sung Adam's bliss, and their great Maker's praise.
 p. 172.

And, where the Israelites are rejoicing
after having passed through the Red
Sea ;

They skip and dance, and MARRYING ALL THEIR
VOICES

To timbrels, haut-boys, and loud cornets' noises,
Make all the shores resound, and all the coasts,
With the shrill praises of the Lord of Hosts.

p. 364.

And again ;

But, when to the music choice
Of those nimble joints she MARRIES

The echo of her angel-voice,

Then the praise and prize she carries,

Both from Orpheus and Amphion,

Shaming Linus and Arion.

p. 1206.

IL PENSEROSO.

1. *Hence vain deluding joys, &c.—*]

Among the various works, which compose the folio edition of Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, (as it is commonly called,) are the **TROPHIES AND TRAGEDY OF HENRY THE GREAT**, translated from the French of *Piere Mathiew*. The part termed the *Tragedy*, which describes the death of the King, opens with the following exclamation ;

Hence, hence, FALSE PLEASURES, MOMENTARY
JOYS!

Mock us no more WITH YOUR ILLUDING
TOYS!

A strange mishap, hatched in hell below,
Has plung'd us all in deepest gulf of woe ;
Taught us that ALL WORLD'S HOPES AS DREAMS
DO FLY, &c. p. 1084.

6. *And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay moats that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams, &c.]*

Here we must, beyond all question, refer to the following description of dreams, in Du Bartas's *Cave of Sleep* ;

Confusedly about the silent bed,
FANTASTIC SWARMS OF DREAMS THERE HO-
VERED,
GREEN, RED, AND YELLOW, TAWNY, BLACK,
AND BLUE ;
They make no noise but tight resemble may
TH' UNNUMBER'D MOATS THAT IN THE SUN-
BEAMS PLAY ;

p. 316.

Where, afterwards,

The GAUDY swarm of dreams is put to flight.

Mr. Warton also, in the second edition of his *Milton*, positively refers the imagery in this part of the *Penferoso* to Du Bartas's *Cave of Sleep*.

22. ——— *thou art higher far descended* — — —

31. ——— *pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure, — — —
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies, &c.]*

Some of these *traits*, in Milton's "Pen-
" sive Nun," might be referred to the
following personification of Wisdom;

Last Wisdom come SWITH SOBER COUNTENANCE;
To the Heavenly bowers her oft aloft t' advance,
The light Mamuques' * wingless wings she has;
Her GESTURE COOL, AS COMELY GRAVE HER
FACE, — P. 447.

Where she is described;

Ay, like herself; and she doth always trace
Not only THE SAME PATH, but THE SAME FACE.
P. 448.

* The Mamuque, or Bird of Paradise, is de-
scribed in the Fifth Day of the First Week; where
it is said,

Wingless they fly; and yet their flight extends,
Till with their flight their unknown life's date ends.

p. 108.

And she is likewise characterised

—— a HIGH-DESCENDED Queen: p. 449.

43. *With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast ;]*

Du Bartas's *Geometry* is described

That fallow-fac'd, sad, stooping nymph, whose

EYE

Still ON THE GROUND IS FIXED STEDFASTLY ;

p. 289.

66. *On the dry smooth-shaven green,]*

Smooth-shaven, for *new-mown*, is used by Sylvester : he is describing a luminous summer meteor,

Seeming amidst the NEW-SHAV'N FIELDS to light.

p. 432.

97. —— *gorgeous tragedy*

In scepter'd pall come sweeping by ;]

The constellation *Virgo* is represented in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*,

SWEEPING Heaven's azure globe

WITH STATELY TRAIN of her bright golden
robe ;

p. 77.

I do

I do not mean *materially* to refer the “scepter’d pall” of Milton to a fine use of the same epithet in Sylvester. I beg, however, to cite it.—Moses is represented,

Arm’d with his wand, wherewith he was to quell
The SCEPTER’D PRIDE of many an Infidel;

p. 965.

By the by! Had not Gray read Sylvester’s Du Bartas? And has he not some obligations to this passage, for two fine images in his sublime Ode?

Such were the sounds, that o’er the CRESTED
PRIDE

Of the first Edward scatter’d wild dismay,

BARD. St. i. 1.

Be thine despair, and SCEPTER’D CARE,—

Ibid. iii. 3.

In his other Ode, he has also the
Eagle,

Perching on the SCEPTER’D HAND

Of Jove,—————

PROGRESS OF POETRY, St. i. 2.

Where

Where his fortunate translation of Pindar's

Εὐδὴν ἀνα σκαπίῳ Διὸς αἰετοῦ,

PYTH. Ode i. 10.

might solely have supplied his "scepter'd
"care;" and his "crested pride" he has
himself attributed to Dryden's

————CRESTED Adder's PRIDE,————

INDIAN QUEEN.

That you may not think me indecently
flippant, in my *ready* imputation of imita-
tion, from very slight grounds, on a man
of such abundant and elevated genius as
Gray, I must observe to you, that I have
other reasons for supposing him to have
enriched his compositions from my old
folio. His intended History of English
Poetry, you know, made his acquaintance
with it a necessary task.—But to the point!
No part of his noble ode has, I believe,
been more generally and justly admired,
than his description of the desolation of
France

France by the victories of Edward, the
Black Prince ;

———what terrors round him wait !

Amazement in his van, with Flight combin'd,
And Sorrow's faded form and Solitude behind !

But how shall we acquit this of mate-
rial obligations to Sylvester's Du Bartas ?
After a fine personification of WAR, it is
there said ;

FEAR and DESPAIR, FLIGHT and DISORDER
coast,
With hasty march, BEFORE HER MURD'ROUS
HOST ;
And SORROW, POVERTY, AND DESOLATION,
FOLLOW HER ARMY'S BLOODY TRANSMIGRA-
TION.

P. 207.

I conceive, that Gray could not look
with attention into Sylvester's Du Bartas,
without carrying off in his mind many
poetical images and expressions. I could
bring more proofs of this, were it not be-
side my present purpose.

99. *Presenting Thebes, or Pelop's line,
Or the tale of Troy divine.]*

For the subjects of tragedy, Du Bartas
had before suggested

—————tyrants' bloody gests

Of THEBES, MYCENÆ, or proud ILION.

P. 525.

102. —————*the buskin'd stage.]*

Sylvester has, "the BUSKIN'D muse,"
but only in the sense of *lofty*, and not
meaning particularly to distinguish the
Muse of Tragedy;

Leaving therefore his war's discourse to those,
Whose BUSKIN'D MUSE Bellona's march out-
goes,—

p. 1065.

121. *Thus night oft see me in thy pale career.]*

"*Pale career*" is the moon's course.
The night of the poet's pensive man is a
moon light night; and what had been said,
from ver. 77, must be understood in a
great degree parenthetical.

Career,

Carreer, for the course of the sun, moon, and planets, is the *regular* word of Sylvester;

———— the sun's bright eye,
CARREERING daily once about the sky— p. 11.

———— thy brave steeds stood still,
In full CARREER stopping thy whirling wheel.
p. 90.

When we can stop th' accustomed CARREER
Of Heaven's bright champion, mounted on the
dawn, p. 1176.

Where also the moon is not only termed
the

———— PALE Queen of Night, p. 149.

but she is likewise represented driving

———— her PALE COURSERS———— p. 88.

which may corroborate a reading, PAR.
Loft, i. 786, suggested by Mr. Capel
Loft, of *coursers* for *course*.

123. ——— *trick'd and frounc'd*—]

Trick'd, for gorgeously drest, is used by Sylvester in his translation of Du Bartas's JUDITH; where the heroine, ornamented for her purpose, is described,

So brave a gallant, TRICK'D and trimmed so,
p. 986.

141. ——— *day's garish eye,*]

DAY'S glorious EYE, ——— p. 84.

157. ——— *the high embow'd roof,*]

Thus, respecting Solomon's Temple;

And what huge strength of HANGING VAULTS

EMBOWD

Bears such a weight above the winged cloud.

p. 465.

A R C A D E S.

23. *Juno dares not give her odds;
Who had thought this elime had held
A duty so unparallel'd?]*

When a literary lady, of your acquaintance, once asked Dr. Johnson, “ why
“ Milton, who could write so sublimely
“ on other occasions, produced such poor
“ sonnets * ?” his answer was, “ Ma-
“ dam ! Milton could cut a Coloffus out
“ of a rock, but he could not carve
“ a head upon a cherry-stone.” The
same *colossal* critic has also predicated of

* It remains to be shewed, that Milton's sonnets
“ are poor ;” as well as that sonnet-writing is a
mere *knack*, the “ cherry-stone-carving of poetry.”
Several of Milton's sonnets would contradict both
these ideas : but, although he has dignified them
with sublime thoughts, and numbers highly poetic,
there is, it must be allowed, frequently a want of
that nicer and more artificial finishing, which is
justly required in short compositions.

Milton,

Milton, that “ he never learned the art
 “ of doing little things with grace ;” and
 that “ he was a *lion*, who had no skill in
 “ *dandling the kid.*”—The Miltonic muse
 indeed was little accustomed

———— Dionæo sub antro
Quærere modos leviorè plectro ;

neither was she any ways calculated for the
legèreté of common song writing. The three
 principal songs in *Comus*; although Dr.
 Johnson has censured the diction of them
 as harsh, are exquisitely beautiful; but they
 are not *common* songs, and the subjects of
 them are in fact *majoris plectri*. Milton’s
 song on May Day has been justly ad-
 mired; as the greatest part of it well de-
 serves. Lord Monboddo, in some ob-
 servations with which he favoured me, re-
 specting Milton’s rhyming verse, says it
 is the prettiest little poem in our lan-
 guage: but I confess that, to my ear, it
 closes in a manner rather flat and insipid.
 The conclusion of the two last songs, in
 this

this ENTERTAINMENT, is perfectly vapid and spiritless ;

Such a rural queen,
All Arcadia hath not seen.

I am tempted to say with Desdemona, " O most lame and impotent conclusion ! " This first song is also rather stiff throughout, and by no means fortunate in its conclusion ; especially where, in comparing the lady patroness to the heathen deities, he borrows the language of a Newmarket jockey :

Juno dares not give her odds :

The same thought has been much better managed by Sylvester, in a masque sonnet to Queen Anne, consort of James I. Old Joshua was certainly not a *cherry-stone-carving* poet : at least he did himself no credit, by his attempts in the *minutiae* of poetry. I do not, indeed, present him to you as the *lion* of poets ; but I think you will agree with me, that, in the fol-

lowing song, he "dandles his kid" not unskilfully; and with much grace, for the age in which he wrote. Ben Jonson's MASQUES are now before me; and I do not, at this moment, stumble upon any thing there, by any means so pleasing.

I.

Hie we, hie we, sifter fairies!

Dead our comfort, deep our care is,

While we miss our mistress' grace;

In the mirror of whose face

Majesty and mildness meet,

Stately shining, smiling sweet:

In whose bosom

Ay repose 'em

All the honours of Diana:

Say who saw, our Glory, Anna?

II.

This way, this way, Grace did guide her;

Could so rich a jewel hide her,

So unseen, that none can say,

Whether she is gone this way?

Or doth Envy make you munn?

Or hath wonder struck you dumb?

Io, sisters!

Here's our mistress!

Io, fairies! we have found her;
Dance we, rapt with joy, around her!

III.

Hail, all hail, O Queen of Graces!
Whose aspect auspicious chafes
All our fears and cares away,
Clearing all with chearful ray;
Whom whoever never saw
Knows not Virtue's love nor law!
Bounty's presence,
Beauty's pleasance!
Model and divine idea,
Both of Pallas and Astrea!

IV.

Welcome, welcome, Phenix royal!
Wills and walls thee echo loyal;
In all Faerie is not found
A more happy piece of ground,
Than your presence maketh here;
Where, together with your pheere*,
All we wish you,
And your issue,
With all joys of Grace internal,
Outward Glory and eternal.

* Companion, consort, lover.

This little poem you will not find in the folio edition of 1621. It first appeared among the *Posthumi*, (or, verses of Sylveſter never before published,) at the end of the *ſecond* folio edition, 1633; which I have only juſt now ſeen. As I do not mean to ſuppoſe any obligations to this ſong, on the part of Milton, it is needleſs to enquire, whether the *Arcades* was then written *. But I muſt obſerve to you, that theſe *Posthumi*, or at leaſt ſome of them, were, I ſuſpect, known to Milton in the year 1625. They were probably communicated to H. Lownes, after the appearance of his edition of 1621 †. In 1625 Milton wrote his little
poem

* The *ARCADES* was probably written in 1633.

† The ſecond folio edition was printed, in 1633, by Robert Young; who probably ſucceeded to the preſs of Humfrey Lownes, as the plates and ornaments of Lownes's 4to and folio edition are retained in this. There is alſo, at the end of the *poſthumous* ſonnets, a plate, repreſenting probably the ſign of Young's houſe. The deſign is, two
hand.

poem ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT; which opens beautifully;

hands holding an anchor, with a snake twined round it; and it is supported on one side by Lownes's star, or sign, and on the other by Peter Short's star. Though the sign of these two printers was equally a *star*, yet Lownes adopted a very *different* star from his predecessor. The sign of Peter Short is a bible open, held by a hand in the middle of a very bright star with twenty *radii*, of which eight are tortuous, and twelve are direct; and the motto round it is, *Et usque ad nubes veritas tua*. Lownes's sign was a star, singly, with twelve radiations, six tortuous and six direct; and his motto is, *Os homini sublime dedit*. The *former* star is prefixed to six elegies on the death of Prince Henry, in 1613, printed at the Bread-street Hill press; and the letters P. S. under it, indicate it to have been Peter Short's sign. To the same elegies is prefixed a poetical address to the reader, signed H. L. (*i. e.* Humfrey Lownes,) and R. S. (probably Rachael or Rebecca Short, the widow of his predecessor). Lownes's *own* star is prefixed to Sylvester's Funeral Elegy on the Prince, printed the same year; and the letters H and D, on each side of it, indicate it to have been originally the sign of Henry Denham, a printer of eminence at the Star in Pater Noster Row about the year 1564.

O Fairest Flower, no sooner blown but blasted !
Sweet silken Primrose, fading timelessly !
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak Winter's force,——

Amongst Sylvester's *Posthumi*, is an
ELEGY ON DAME HELEN BRANCH, which
thus laments her children, who died
young ;

But all these joys, alas! BUT LITTLE LASTED,
All these FAIR BLOSSOMS WERE UNTIMELY
BLASTED ;—

Surely here is something more than bare
coincidence!

26. *Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle thro' your eyes,*]

Thus, speaking of Solomon masked ;

But yet, whate'er he do or can devise,
DISGUISED GLORY SHINETH IN HIS EYES *.

P. 459.

* This similarity is noticed by Mr. Todd, in his
much-enriched edition of *Comus*. Part i. p. 32.

63. *To the celestial Syren's harmony*
[that sit upon the nine infolded spheres,]

For, as they say, for superintendant there,
The supreme voice placed IN EVERY SPHERE
A SYREN SWEET; that from HEAVEN'S HAR-
MONY

Inferior things might learn best melody. p. 301.

I need not point out to *your* ear, that the *rythm* of the second verse of this passage is frequent with Milton. It is, indeed, one of those, which Bentley would have proposed to amend by reading

The voice supreme,————

64. ——— *the nine-infolded spheres,]*

Of Du Bartas's *Urania* it is said,

Her NINE-FOLD voice did choicely imitate
Th' harmonious music of Heaven's nimble dance.

p. 526.

72. ——— *the heavenly tune, which none can hear,*
Of human mold, with gross unpurged ear,]

In Sylvester's Du Bartas, being *purged from passion* is a necessary qualification for

being admitted to the chorus of the heavenly muses, and of the *Sirens of the Spheres*. The poet addresses the Deity,

Father of light! fountain of learned art!

Now, now, or never, PURGE my purest part!—

That, PURG'D FROM PASSION, thy divine address
May guide me thro' Heaven's glist'ring palaces;

Where happily my dear *Urania's* grace,

And her fair sisters, I may all embrace;

And THE MELODIOUS SYRENS OF THE SPHERES,

Charming my senses with those sweets of theirs.

p. 286.

84. ——— *smooth enamell'd green,*]

Mr. Warton says, that he had “supposed
“ modern poetry to have been originally
“ obliged to Milton for the epithet *en-*
“ *amell'd* in rural description.” But it
occurs, as he has observed, repeatedly in
Sylvester's *Du Bartas*;

Th' ENAMELL'D meads————— p. 208.

Just in the midst of this ENAMELL'D vale, p. 262.

Th' ENAMEL'D vallics, where the liquid glass,
Of silver brooks in curled streams do pass,

p. 282.

89. — *branching*

89. ——— *branching elm: star-proof—*]

In the description of Eden we have

————— SUN-PROOF arbors ————— p. 171.

C O M U S.

13. ——— *that golden key,*
That opes the palace of eternity,]

The blessed God shall, WITH HIS KEYS OF
GRACE,

OPEN HEAVEN'S STORE-HOUSE to thy happy
race. p. 375.

20. ——— *'twixt high and nether Jove,]*

Both UPPER JOVE'S and NETHER'S diverse
thrones; p. 1003.

116. ——— *wavering morrice—]*

The *morisco*, or old moorish dance, is
mentioned in Sylvester's Du Bartas;

Here

Here Wood-Nymphs, Flood-Nymphs, &c.
With lusty frisks and lively bounds bring in
Th' antique, MORISCO, or the *mattachine*. p 459.

131. ——— when the dragon woom
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,]

The commentators on Milton, before Mr. Warton, were not at all aware that *spets* for *spits* is of the old school of poesy. If Mr. Warton had been acquainted with my old folio, he would probably have cited,

Maugre the deluge that ROME'S DRAGON SPET,
p. 60.

Spet for *spit* is very common with Sylvester; and more especially respecting dragons, and all the serpent kind:

With betony fell serpents round beset,
Lift up their heads, and fall to his and SPET,
p. 62.

Into a serpent it did wholly change;
Crawling before the king, and all along
SPETTING and hissing with his forked tongue.
p. 356.

Which instantly turn into serpents too,
Hissing and SPETTING, ——— ibid.

145. THE MEASURE.]

The following passage will illustrate Mr. Todd's explanation of "the measure," as "a court dance of a stately turn." The poet is representing the revels at Solomon's nuptials.

Of all the sports I'll onely choose one measure,
 One STATELY MASK, compos'd of sage sweet
 pleasure,
 A dance so chaste, so sacred, and so grave.

P. 459.

207. — *calling shapes and beck'ning shadows dire,
 And airy tongues, that syllable men's names
 On sands and shores, and desert wildernesses.]*

This tradition, as Mr. Warton has observed, is in Sylvester's Du Bartas ;

—— the desert Op, where oft
 By strange Phantasmas passengers are scot.

P. 274.

214; *Thou hov'ring Angel, girt with golden wings.]*

I surely know the cherubims do HOVER

WITH FLAMING WINGS,——

p. 241.

219. ——— a glistr'ing guardian—]

Glistr'ing is the Sylvestrian epithet, characteristic of celestial radiance :

Thou glorious guide of Heaven's star-GLISTR'ING
motion ! p. i.

May guide me through Heaven's GLISTR'ING
palaces. p. 286.

————— the Angel—————

No sooner enter'd, but the radiant shine
Of 's GLISTR'ING wings, and of his glorious cyn,
As light as noon makes the dark house of night.
p. 316.

230. *Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell,
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroider'd vale, &c.]*

————— AIR'S DAUGHTER Echo!————— p. 172.

Loud her bugle-horn she blew ;
Babbling Echo, VOICE OF VALLIES,
AIRY ELF EXEMPT FROM VIEW,
With the forest music dallies ;———— p. 1250.

232. *By slow Meander's margent green,*]

—— on Cedron's MARGENT GREENLY GAY ;—

P. 342.

259. —— *fell Charybdis*—]

Through FELL CHARYBDIS, and false Syrtes'
nessè ;

p. 216.

297. *Their port was more than human,*]

A MORE THAN HUMAN knowledge beautifies

His princely actions ;——

P. 449.

And richly arm'd in MORE THAN HUMAN arms ;—

p. 508.

301. —— *the plighted clouds*.—]

Mr. Warton says he does not remember the word *plighted* in any other writer.— But, in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, Elijah is described,

—— smiting Jordan with his FLIGHTED cloak ;—

where “ *plighted* ” is *folded*, i. e. *collected together by compressing in the hand*.—Mr. Warton supposes, that *plighted*, in this passage of Milton, means *braided* or *embroidered* ;

broidered; but I conceive it to have literally the meaning of plighted, or *plaited*, and to be merely intended to designate the triple *plaits, folds, or rows of colour* in the rainbow.

331. *Unmuffle, ye faint stars—*]

Mr. Warton, to shew that *muffle* was at that time a poetical word, having cited the use of it in Drayton and Browne, exhibits also the following passage from Sylvester's *Du Bartas*;

While night's BLACK MUFFLER HOODETH up the
skies. p. 198.

Had he looked a little farther into the book, he might have found instances more in point, and not so nearly bordering on the ludicrous. For instance;

The fable fumes of hell's infernal vault
MUFFLED the face of that profound abyfs. p. 7.

A night of clouds MUFFLED their brows about ;
P. 44.

As when THE MUFFLED HEAVENS have wept
amain, p. 48.

A fable

A sable air so MUFFLES UP the sky; P. 491.

And speaking of the moon,

If then her brows be MUFFLED with a frown,—
P. 770.

335. *In double night of darkness and of shades ;]*

DOUBLE-NIGHTED in dark error,— P. 1177.

This passage from Sylvester is in one of his SPECTACLES ; short poems of an epigrammatic form, and highly moral or religious cast. They are intitled, *Perspective Spectacles, of especial Use to discern the World's Vanity, Levity, and Brevity.* As a specimen, I will beg to present you not only with the one in question, but its counterpart also.

DIES.

Now the day, the sun's bright son,
New-awake begins discover,
Mountain tops new-gilded over,
With his ruddy rays thereon :
That, methinks, should make us think
Of that true eternal morning,
When no night shall be returning,
When both Heaven and earth shall shrink.

Nox.

Nox.

When the night's black curtain spread
 Hides the day and light bereaveth,
 Then my wak'ning thought conceiveth
 Other night, more dark, more dread;
 There where wordlings, wilful-blind,
 Loath instruction, leave light's mirror,
 Double-nighted in dark-error;
 Quenching inborn light of mind.

342. ——— *Cynosure*.—]

I neglected to observe to you, where
 this word is used in the ALLEGRO, that
 it occurs in a passage of Sylvester; which
 I conceive is not unworthy your atten-
 tion.

As iron, touch'd by the Adamant's effect,
 To the north pole doth ever point direct;
 So the soul, touch'd once by the secret power
 Of a true lively faith, looks every hour
 To the bright lamp, which serves for CYNOSURE
 To all that sail upon the sea obscure. p. 151.

353. *Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now.*]

This kind of verse, (where the second
 and third feet, being *spondees*, completely
 break

break the Iambic rythm,) is not unfrequent with Milton: and it is upon many occasions highly pleasing to my ear. Verses of this rythm are most abundant in Sylveſter; and they are ſometimes forcibly illuſtrated by a verſe immediately following of a highly muſical caſt, or peculiarly ſonorous effect. The following paſſage is, in ſome degree, an inſtance;

Another certifies his reſurrection
 Unto the women, whoſe faith's imperfection
 Suppos'd HIS COLD LIMBS IN the Grave were
 bound,
 UNTILL TH' ARCH-ANGEL'S LOFTY TRUMP
 SHOULD SOUND. P. 17.

Theſe obſervations, on the mere rythm of verſe, would to many perſons appear ſuperfluouſly minute: when addreſſed to you, they are

φωραία ΕΥΝΕΤΟΙΕΙΝ. —

421. ——— *clad in complete ſteel,*]

The following paſſage may tend to corroborate Mr. Warton's obſervation,
II
that

that "this was a common expression for
"being armed from head to foot." The
Poet is describing a challenger in a combat;

Who arms himself so COMPLETE every way,
That the defendant, in the heat of fight,
Finds no part open for his blade to light.

p. 120.

where you will observe the accentuation
cōmplēte. In the Paradise Lost it is uni-
formly *cōmplēte*.

If *complete* is in a certain degree *techni-
cal* for full armour, may we not simi-
larly understand Shakespeare's

— armorers ACCOMPLISHING the knights,

in the eminently fine chorus in his
HENRY Vth?

422. ——— a quiver'd Nymph—]

In Sylvester's Du Bartas, Diana is enti-
tled, from the classical *pharetrata*,

— fair Latona's QUIVER'D darling dear;

p. 5.

495. — 10

495. ——— to hear thy madrigal.]

Mr. Warton seems to think *madrigal* technical, rather than poetical; and supposes, that it had a reference to the madrigals composed by Lawes. But it is a word of much poetical effect. Du Bartas's URANIA, speaking of her sister Muses, says,

I grant, my learned sisters warble fine,
And ravish millions with their MADRIGALS.

p. 526.

561. ——— took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death,—]

It has been proposed to read,

——— took in strains might recreate a soul,——

In Sylvester's Du Bartas we have a passage *non prorsus alienum* ;

O cordial word ! O comfortable breath !

REVIVING SOULS, EV'N IN THE GATES OF
DEATH ;

P. 787.

605. *Harpies and Hydras, all the monstrous forms,
Twixt Africa and Inde,—]*

Harpies and *Hydras*, as Mr. Warton observes, are a combination in an enumeration of monsters, in DU BARTAS ;

The ugly Gorgons, and the Sphinxes fell,
HYDRAS and HARPIES, gan to yawn and yell:

p. 206.

Where also I might, perhaps, refer you, for the region *twixt Africa and Inde* ;

From Araby, FROM INDE, TO AFRIC SHORE,—

p. 705.

if not for the monsters themselves ;

————— some MONSTER

New-brought FROM AFRIC OR FROM INDE ;—

p. 992.

636. *And yet more med'c'nal is it, than that Moly,
Which Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave ;]*

In Du Bartas's EDEN, where the tree of life is addressed by the poet,

O holy peerless, rich, preservative !

it

it is enquired, what the fruit of it was ;
whether

Or holy Nectar, &c.

Or blest Ambrosia, Gods' immortal fare ?

Or else the rich fruit of the garden rare, &c.

(i. e. of the Hesperides.)

Or PRECIOUS MELY WHICH JOVE'S PURSUIVAN,
WING-FOOTED HERMES, BROUGHT TO TH' ITHA-
CAN ?

to which is added, (see Comus, 675, *infra*.)

Or else NEPANTHE, ENEMY TO SADNESS,
REPELLING SORROW, AND REPEALING GLAD-
NESS * ?

P. 174.

I need not observe to you, that this is
exactly Milton's mode of decorating scrip-
ture history, with illustration from Classic
Fable and Heathen Mythology.

639. ——— of sov'reign use
'Gainst all enchantments,—]

I should hardly have detained you with
the citation of a passage, in which this

* *Repealing, i. e. recalling.*

virtue is attributed by Du Bartas to the herb *Angelica*; but that I fancy Sylvester's versification of the two first lines has much of that "*mollities*," which pervades *every part* of the *COMUS*.

The enchanting airs of Syrens' blandishments,
Contagious air ingendering pestilence,
Infect not those, that in their mouths have ta'en
Angelica,————— p. 62.

641. ——— *ghastly furies' apparition*—]

It has been proposed by Peck, for *furies* to read *fairies*. But, as Mr. Todd observes, "ghastly furies is a combination " in Sylvester's Du Bartas ;"

Three GHASTLY FURIES; Sickness, War, and
Dearth. p. 201.

653. ——— *his curs'd crew*]

Thus, in Sylvester's Du Bartas, speaking of the fallen angels;

This CURSED CREW, with pride and fury fraught,
p. 14.

734. — *bestudd*

734. ——— *besudd with stars—*]

In vain hath God stor'd Heaven with glistring
STUDS, ——— p. 92.

Ev'n from the gilt STUDS of the firmament,
p. 149.

753. *Love-darting eyes—*]

Whofo beholds her sweet LOVE-DARTING EYES,
p. 399.

759. ——— *false rules prank'd in reason's garb,*]

Prank'd is used more than once, by Sylvester, for *meretricious* decoration of person. It is, sometimes, applied by him to style of language. Speaking of affected writers, he says;

In golden terms they trick their gracious style,
With new-found beauties PRANK each circum-
stance, ——— p. 261.

He also speaks of a

———— plain-PRANK'D style, ——— p. 265.

809. ————— *the lees*

And settlings of a melancholy blood :]

The pure red part, amid the mass of BLOOD,

The sanguine air commands; the clotted mud,

SUNK DOWN IN LEES, earth's MELANCHOLY
shews :

p. 21.

861. ————— *translucent—]*

Mr. Warton says, he always thought this epithet had been first used by Milton, till he met with it in Brathwaite's LOVE'S LABYRINTH, printed in 1615. But it is frequent in Sylvester; where, however, it is written *tralucent*, and *tralucing* :

the gliftring tent

Of the TRALUCING fiery element.

p. 27.

A soul TRALUCENT in an open breast,

p. 591.

From thy bright TRALUCENT eyes :

p. 611.

863. *The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair,]*

Mr. Warton supposes *amber* to relate to the colour of Sabrina's hair; and observes, that "amber locks" are given to the sun
more

more than once in Sylvester's Du Bartas. But, in this place, *amber* is ambergreece, rich ointment or perfume; and what is here said, is equivalent to

Dropping odours,————— ver. 106.

Solomon's bride is, similarly, described by Du Bartas, at their nuptials;

————— adorn'd DOWN TO HER VERY HEELS
With her FAIR HAIR, whence still SWEET DEW
DISTILLS; p. 462.

Where also, in the Epithalamium addressed to her, it is said,

—— what odours thy sweet tresses yield!
What AMBER-GREECE, what incense breath'st
thou out! p. 463.

I might refer you also to Sylvester's WOODMAN'S BEAR, (probably a juvenile performance,) where he is describing the beauty of his mistress;

Locks, like streams of LIQUID AMBER,
Smooth down-dangling,————— p. 1204.

886. ——— *from thy coral-paven bed,*]

Du Bartas's River Jordan is lodged in a large cave of beaten glafs,

Whose waved cieling, with exceeding coft,
The Nymphs his daughters rarely had imboft
With pearls and rubies, and INLAY'D the rest
With *nacre* * checks, and CORAL of the best.

P. 383.

930. *Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud,*]

————— dirty MUDDS

DEFIL'D THE CRYSTAL of smooth-sliding FLOODS.

P. 171.

960. ——— *without duck or nod,*]

Duck, for obsecance, is used in Sylvester's Du Bartas; and without any comic sense:

Then to her lady having made a DUCK, p. 821.

978. *Where day never shuts his eye,*]

We have this expression in Sylvester's Du Bartas; where he is speaking of the obscuration of the Sun, at the time of the Crucifixion:

* Mother of pearl.

What

What could'st thou do less, than thyself dishonour,
O chief of Planets, thy great Lord to honour?
Than, at his death, a mourning robe to wear, &c.
And, at high noon, SHUT THY FAIR EYE, to
shun

A sight, whose sight did Hell with horror stun?

p. 89.

992. *Iris there with humid bow
Waters the od'rous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue,
Than her purpled scarf can shew ;]*

This beautiful passage is not, perhaps,
without its obligations to the following :

Never mine eyes, in pleasant spring, behold
The violet's purple, gilded marygold, &c. &c.
But that in them the Painter I admire,
Who in more colours doth the fields attire,
Than fresh Aurora's rosy cheeks display,
When in the east she ushers a fair day ;
Or IRIS' BOW, WHICH, BENDED IN THE SKY,
BODES FRUITFUL DEWS, when as the fields be
dry. p. 60.

The rainbow is afterwards described,

A semicircle of a hundred HUES ; p. 247.

995. — *purpled*

995. ——— *purpled scarf—*]

“ Purpled” is *embroidered with various colours*. In Sylvester’s Du Bartas, a jaspir stone is described ;

PURPLED with veins, ——— p. 180.

98. *Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes.*]

In Du Bartas’s Eden, where the happiness of Adam in Paradise is described, it is said of him ;

Here underneath a fragrant hedge REPOSES,
Full of all kinds of sweet ALL-COLOUR’D ROSES ;
p. 180.

1015. ——— *the bow’d weikin—*]

IN HEAVEN’S BOW’D ARCHES, and the elements,
p. 149.

1020. *She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the spheery chime.*]

To *climb* up into Heaven is a *scriptural* expression. It is applied, by Sylvester, to Grace, Virtue, and Faith.

O Grace,

O Grace, whereby men CLIMB THE HEAVENLY
STAIR! p. 588.

For sacred Virtue CLIMBS so hard and high,
That scarcely can I her steep steps descry.
p. 1120.

But to CLIMB HEAVEN what ladder can suf-
fice us?

Faith. _____ p. 1175.

LYCIDAS.

2. _____ *ivy never scree,*]

_____ immortal bays

NEVER UNLEAV'D, _____ p. 70.

14. _____ *some melodious tear,*]

I cannot forbear here referring to the
ELEGY ON DAME HELEN BRANCH, which
I have already noticed, among the *Post-
buni Sylvestrienses*: where, I must observe
to you, it is entitled MONODIA. The
Monodist there calls upon the two Univer-
sities

fities for a *Luctus Academicus* on the death of their benefactor :

You Springs of Art, Eyes of this noble realm!
 Cambridge and Oxford, lend your LEARNED
 TEARS! p. 641. Ed. 1633.

The first line of which passage will, I am sure, remind you of Milton's description of *Athens*, in his PARADISE RE-GAINED :

Athens, the EYE of Greece, MOTHER OF ARTS
 And eloquence, ————— iv. 240.

26. ————— *the opening eyelids of the morn,*]

This image is scriptural. We find it, as a marginal reading of our English Bible, for *the dawning of the morning*, Job. iii. 9 ; and in Tremellius's Latin Bible, printed in 1585; the passage is rendered, *ne vidisset PALPEBRAS AURORÆ*; where, in a note, it is observed to be *metaphora ab eo qui expergiscitur et palpebras attollit, quocum Aurora POETICE comparatur*. Most poetical translations of the
 Book

Book of Job have been careful to retain this flower of divine poesy. Quarles has it, in his *JOB MILITANT*. But Sylvester, I believe, may claim the *priority* of transferring it into English poetry, in his *JOB TRIUMPHANT*:

May it no more see th' EYE-LIDS OF THE MORN-
ING,——— p. 899.

56. *Ay me ! I fondly dream, &c.]*

I must again beg to refer you to the
MONODY ON DAME HELEN BRANCH ;

No strength, no courage can Death's coming stay ;
No wealth can wage him, and no wit prevent him ;
No lovely beauty can at all relent him :
Against stern Death no virtue can avail ;
AY ME ! that Death o'er Virtue should prevail !

73. ——— *the fair guerdon when we hope to find,]*

Lo here the GUERDON OF HIS GLORIOUS PAINS,
p. 58.

your wit-gracing skill
Wears, in itself, itself's RICH GUERDON still,
p. 73.

86. *Smooth-*

86. *Smooth-sliding Mincius—*]

— the crystal of SMOOTH-SLIDING floods,

p. 171.

104. *His mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge,*]

The river Jordan is described, in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, as an

aged flood laid on his mossy bed,
And pensive leaning his FLAG-SHAGGY head,

p. 383.

Where *flag-shaggy* perfectly comprehends the “sedge bonnet” of the *Academic Elegiaft*. It is also said of this aged flood or river God,

About his loins a RUSH-BELT wears he deep,

p. 384.

110. *The golden opes, &c.]*

To what has been observed, by Mr. Warton and others, respecting the two keys of St. Peter, and the metals severally ascribed to them by Milton, I have to add, that, where Nature is finely personified

fied by Du Bartas, she is distinguished by
a GOLDEN KEY ;

————— down by her side she wears
A GOLDEN KEY, wherewith she letteth forth,
And locketh up, the treasures of the earth.

P. 393.

110. ——— *the iron shuts amain,*]

Amain is more than once similarly used
by Sylvester, for *with vehemence*. Thus,
where Sickness is described as one of the
Furies, that after the Fall were permitted
to wage war against mankind ;

Then this fierce monster musters in her train
Fell soldiers, charging poor mankind *AMAIN*.

p. 208.

132. ——— *the dread voice is past,*
That shrunk thy streams ;—]

May we not refer “ *dread voice*” to a
passage, which I have once before cited
to you ?

HIS DREADFUL VOICE, to save his antient sheep,
Did cleave the bottom of th’ Erythrean deep,

I

And

And to the crystal of his double source
Compelled Jordan to retreat his course. p. 48.

To shrink, I must observe, is used by Sylvester, as a verb active, with much Miltonic effect. The moon is termed,

the silver-fronted star,
That swells and SHRINKS THE SEAS,—— p. 51.

135. ——— *flowrets of a thousand hues,*]

Noah looks up, and in the air he views
A semicircle OF A HUNDRED HUES; p. 247.

136. ——— *where the mild whispers use]*

I do not recollect to have met with “*use*,” precisely in this sense, any where but in Sylvester; where Urania is represented exciting Du Bartas to the study of heaven-born poesy.

Dive day and night in the Castalian fount;
Dwell upon Homer and the Mantuan muse;
Climb night and day the double-topped mount,
Where the Pierian learned maidens USE.

P. 527.

136. — *the*

136. ——— *the mild whispers* ———
Of ——— *gushing brooks, &c. &c.*]

The stream's MILD MURMUR as it gently gushes,
P. 70.

181. *And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes,]*

I need not tell you, this is scriptural.
(Isaiah xxv. 8. Revelat. vii. 17. xxi. 4.)
But it is well used by Sylvester, with
respect to speech as the vehicle of con-
solation :

By thee we WIPE THE TEARS OF WOFUL EYES,
P. 128.

And again, in his description of the New
Jerusalem ;

Where shall no more be wailings, woes, or cries ;
FOR GOD SHALL WIPE ALL TEARS FROM WEEP-
ING EYES. P. 521.

S O N N E T,

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE
AGE OF XXIII.

1. *How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stol'n on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud nor blossom shew' th.]*

I think I have heard you particularly admire the opening of this sonnet. Let me beg you to compare the following moral reflection on the Spring, from Sylvester's SPECTACLES :

When youthful Spring the earth in green hath
drest,

When trees with leaves and blossoms them revest,

Their flowers, white, red, blue, yellow,

Betoken fruits to follow ;

But worldings, tho' they flourish in their prime,

Nor bud, nor bear, nor bring forth fruit in time ;

Their health, wealth, wit, miswasted,

Are but as blossoms blasted.

p. 1178.

SONNET,

SONNET,

TO

SIR HENRY VANE.

1. *Vane young in years, but in sage counsel old!*]

ISAAC IN YEARS YOUNG, BUT IN WISDOM
GROWN. P. 338.

SONNET,

TO THE

LORD GENERAL CROMWELL.

1. *Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud,
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crowned fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his work pursued;
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath. Yet much remains*

*To conquer still; peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war; —————]*

Thus much of this sonnet is, I believe generally, admired as a most dignified, energetic, address from a GREAT POET to a MAN, not only whom HE *considered* as GREAT, but who unquestionably was so.

I will beg you to compare Joshua Sylvester's version of

DU BARTAS'S 1st SONNET,

TO

HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.

Henry! triumphant tho' thou wert in war,
Though fate and fortitude conspir'd thy glory,
Though thy least conflicts well deserve a story,
Though Mars's fame by thine be darken'd far,
Though from thy cradle, infant conqueror,
Thy martial proofs have dimm'd Alcides' praise,
And though with garlands of victorious bays,
Thy royal temples richly crowned are;

Yet,

Yet, matchless prince, nought hast thou wrought
 so glorious.

As this unlook'd-for happy peace admir'd,

Whereby thyself art of thyself victorious:—

p. 587.

I much fear, my dear Sir, that I may have fatigued you by my too abundant citation, of supposed *parallel*, or in some respects *similar*, passages from Milton's JUVENILIA and Sylvester's DU BARTAS, and *other poems*.—I submit them to your accurate and tasteful judgment.—*Futile* and *irrelevant*, as some of them may appear *singly* considered, when taken altogether, I cannot but think, they go near to evince, that the author of PARADISE LOST had made an early acquaintance with his predecessor in Sacred Poetry. This might be strongly corroborated, and a much larger extent of obligation might be pointed out from various parts of his two great Poems;

Sed nunc non erat his locus,——

I shall conclude the present speculation, (which I hope you will not think totally unfounded,) by endeavouring to shew you from the beauty and sublimity of many passages in Sylveſter's Translation of Du Bartas's Weeks, that it is, in fact, a work very likely to have engroſſed no ſmall ſhare of Milton's attention, and, in many places, no common degree of his young poetic admiration. Here I ſhall lay before you paſſages broken, as well as connected; compound epithets of effect; elevated, or apparently highly-original phraſes;—in ſhort, whatever I *felt*, or *fancied*, was likely, in any ſhape, to have ſtruck either the ear, or the imagination, of the young poetical reader. I muſt apprize you, that I have, in ſome few inſtances, omitted or altered a ſingle highly obſolete or offensively jingling word, where it ſeemed to raiſe diſguſt to a paſſage of otherwiſe fine effect; and with which it was not materially connected. This being premiſed, I proceed, in the *modern* phraſe of our *bodi-
ernal*

ernal BOOK-MAKERS, to present you
with

THE
BEAUTIES
OF
SYLVESTER'S DU BARTAS.

THE
FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST WEEK;
THE CHAOS:

BEFORE all time, all matter, form, and place,
God all in all, and ALL in God it was:
Immutable, immortal, infinite,
Incomprehensible, all spirit *, all light,

* Sylvester almost always gives *spirit* as a monosyllable;
which Milton also very frequently does.

All Majesty, all self-omnipotent,
Invisible, impassive, excellent,
Pure, wise, just, good, God reign'd alone——

Thou scoffing Atheist! that enquirest——
What weighty work *his* mind was busied on
Eternally, before the world begun,
(Since such deep wisdom and omnipotence
Nought worse befits; than sloth or negligence,)
Know, bold blasphemer, know, that FIRST he
built

A HELL to punish the presumptuous guilt
Of those ungodly, whose proud sense dares cite,
And censure too, his wisdom infinite.

Climb they that list the battlements of Heaven,
And with the whirl-wind of ambition driven,
Beyond the world's wall let those eagles fly
And gaze upon the Sun of Majesty.

As SOL, without descending from the sky,
Crowns the fair Spring with painted bravery; —
* * * * *
So all obedient to *his* pleasure ranges,
Who, ALWAYS ONE, his purpose never changes.

—— the immortal, mighty Thunder-darter.

As yet no flowers with odours earth reviv'd,
 No scaly shoals yet in the waters div'd ;
 Nor any birds, with warbling harmony,
 Were born as yet thro' the transparent sky.

The dreadful darkness of the *Memphitiss* *,
 The sad black horror of Cimmerian mists,
 The sable fumes of Hell's infernal vault,
 Or if aught darker in the world be thought,
 Muffled the face of that profound abyss,——

Though the great Leader, who in dreadful awe
 Upon Mount Horeb learn'd th' eternal Law,
 Had not assur'd us that God's sacred power
 In six days built this universal bower †,
 Reason itself would overthrow the grounds
 Of those new worlds, that fond *Leucippus* founds.

Hence, vain astrologers ! nor dare to seek
 In Heaven's black darkness for the secret things
 Seal'd in the casket of the King of Kings !

* The Egyptians ; called by Sylvester more frequently *Mem-
 plians, Memphites, or Memphists.*

† Bower is used by Sylvester commonly for mansion, or
 dwelling place. Thus also Milton ;

Then in haste her BOWER she leaves.

ALLEG. 37.

Then,

Then, then, good Lord, shall thy dear Son descend,
 In complete glory from the glist'ring sky;
 Millions of Angels shall about him fly;
 Mercy and Justice, marching side by side,
 Shall his divine triumphant chariot guide,
 Whose wheels shall shine with lightnings round
 about,
 And beams of glory widely blazing out.

Those that were loaden with proud marble
 tombs,
 Those that were swallow'd in wild monsters'
 wombs,
 Those that the sea had swallow'd, those that the flames
 Of ruddy flames have burned all to ashes,
 Awaked all shall rise, and all reveſt *
 The flesh and bones which they at first possess'd.
 All shall appear, and hear, before the throne
 Of God, (the Judge without exception,)
 The final sentence, sounding joy or terror,
 Of everlasting happiness or horror.

O Father of the Light! of wisdom fountain!
 Out of the bulk of that confused mountain †,
 What should, or what could, issue first but light?
 Without it, beauty were no beauty bright.

* I rather wonder Milton has not adopted a word of such
 condensing effect, as *revert*. I believe it is used by Spenser.

† Chaos.

In vain *Timanthes* had his Cyclops drawn,
 In vain *Parrhasius* counterfeited lawn,
 In vain *Apelles Venus* had begun,
Zeuxis Penelope; if that the sun
 To make them seen had never shewn his splendor:
 In vain, in vain, had been those works of wonder,
 The *Ephesian Temple*, and high *Pharian Tower*,
 And *Carian tomb*, trophies of wealth and power;
 In vain had they been builded every one,
 By *Scopas*, *Sostrates*, and *Ctesiphon*,
 Had all been wrapp'd up from all human sight
 In th' obscure * mantle of eternal night.

No sooner said he "BE THERE LIGHT," but, lo!
 The formless lump to perfect form 'gan grow,
 And, all illustred with Light's radiant shine,
 Doff'd mourning weeds, and deck'd it passing
 fine.

All-hail pure Lamp, bright, sacred, and ex-
 celling,
 Scrow and care, darkness and dread repelling!
 Thou world's great taper! wicked men's just
 terror!
 Mother of truth! true beauty's only mirror!

* Milton, in one place in his *PARADISE LOST*, similarly accents *obscure* on the first syllable; but I believe only in one place. See B. ii. 132.

God's eldest daughter! O how thou art full
Of grace and goodness! O how beautiful!

But yet, because all pleasures wax unpleasant
If, without pause, we still possess them present,
And none can right discern the sweets of peace,
That have not felt war's cruel bitterness,
The ALL'S ARCHITECT alternately decreed
That night the day, and day should night succeed.

The night is she, that all our travalls easeth,
Buries our cares, and all our griefs appeaseth:
The night is she, that, with her sable wing
In gloomy darkness hushing every thing,
Through all the world dumb silence doth distill—
O night! thou pullest the proud mask away,
With which vain actors, in this world's great play,
By day disguise themselves. No difference
Thou mak'st between the Peasant and the Prince,
The Poor and Rich, the Prisoner and the Judge,
The Foul and Fair, the Master and the Drudge,
The Fool and Wise, *Barbarian* and the *Greek*;
For night's black mantle covers all alike.

He, that, condemn'd for some notorious vice,
Seeks in the mine the baits of avarice,
Or swelting at the furnace smelteth bright
Our soul's dire sulphur, resteth yet at night.
He, that still stooping tugs against the tide
The laden barge along a river's side,

With

With the day's toilsome labour weary quite,
 Upon his pallet resteth yet at night.
 He, that, in summer, in extremest heat,
 Scorched all day in his own scalding sweat,
 Shaves with keen scythe the glory and delight
 Of motley meadows, resteth yet at night ;
 And in the arms of balmy sleep foregoes
 All former troubles, and all former woes.
 Only the learned Sisters' sacred minions *,
 While silent night under her sable pinions
 Folds all the world, with painless pain they tread
 A sacred path that to the Heavens doth lead,
 And higher than the Heavens their readers raise
 Upon the wings of their immortal lays.

Ev'n now I listen'd for the clock to chime
 Day's latest hour ; that for a little time
 The night might ease my labours : but I see
 As yet Aurora has scarce smil'd on me.
 My work still grows ; and *now* before mine eyes
 Heaven's glorious host in nimble squadrons flies.

Whether, *this day*, God made you Angels bright,
 Under the name of Heaven, or of the Light ;
 Whether you, *after*, were in the instant born
 With those bright spangles that the Heavens
 adorn ;

* The favourites of the Muses.

Or whether you derive your high descent
 Long time before the world and firmament,
 I argue not; since curious search perchance
 Is not so safe as humble ignorance.

One thing is certain; the Omnipotent
 Created you immortal, innocent,
 Good, fair, and free—————

But, ev'n as those, whom Princes' favours oft
 Above the rest have rais'd and set aloft,
 Are oft the first, that, without cause or reason,
 Attempt rebellion, and do practise treason;
 Ev'n so, some legions of these lofty spirits,
 Envyng the glory of their Maker's merits,
 Conspir'd together, strove against the stream,
 To usurp his scepter and his diadem.

But He, whose hands do never light'nings lack
 Proud sacrilegious mutineers to wreck,
 Hurl'd them in the air, or in some lower cell:
 For, where GOD is not, every where is HELL.

This cursed crew, with pride and fury fraught,
 Of us at least have this advantage got,
 That by experience they can truly tell
 How far it is from highest Heaven to Hell;
 For by a proud leap they have ta'n the measure,
 When headlong thence they tumbled in dis-
 pleasure.

For,

For, ever since, against the King of Heaven
 The APOSTATE PRINCE OF DARKNESS still hath
 striven ;

* * * * *

With wanton glance of beauty's burning eye
 He snares hot youth in sensuality ;
 With gold's bright lustre he doth age entice
 To idolize detested avarice ;
 With grace of princes, with their pomp and state,
 Ambitious spirits he doth intoxicate.

—Night's black Monarch—

Nor have these fiends the bridle on their neck
 To run at random, without curb or check ;
 To abuse the earth, and all the world to blind,
 And tyrannise our body and our mind.
 God holds them chain'd in fetters of his power,
 That, without leave, one minute of an hour
 They cannot range. It was by his permission,
 The *Lying Spirit* train'd Ahab to perdition :
 Arm'd with God's sacred pass-port. HE did try
 Just, humble Job's renowned constancy.—
 But the only Lord, sometimes to make a trial
 Of firmest faith, sometimes with error's vial
 To drench the souls whom errors sole delight,
 Lets loose these Furies.—
 Mean time the unspotted Spirits, who nor intend
 To mount too high, nor yet too low descend,—

With willing speed they every moment go
 Where'er the breath of divine grace doth blow.—
 For God no sooner hath his pleasure spoken,
 Or bow'd his head, or given some other token,
 Or almost thought on an exploit, wherein
 The ministry of Angels shall be seen,
 But these quick Posts * with ready expedition
 Fly to accomplish their divine commission.—
 One follows Agar in her pilgrimage,
 And with sweet comforts doth her cares assuage;
 Another guideth Isaac's mighty host;
 Another Jacob on th' Idumean † coast;
 In Nazareth another, rapt with joy,
 Tells that a Virgin shall bring forth a Boy;—
 Another (past all hope!) doth pre-averr
 The birth of John, CHRIST's holy HARBINGER;
 Some in the desert tender'd consolation,
 When JESUS strove with Satan's strong temp-
 tation;
 One, in the garden, in his agonies,
 Cheers up his fears in that great enterprise;
 Another certifies his Resurrection
 Unto the women, whose faith's imperfection

* ——— thousands at his bidding speed,
 And POST o'er land and ocean without rest.

MILTON'S SONNET, ON HIS BLINDNESS.

† I have already noticed Sylvester's habitual neglect of quantity. See p. 30.

Suppos'd

Suppos'd his cold limbs in the grave were bound,
 Until the Arch-Angel's lofty trump should sound.

Then Hezekiah, as a prudent prince,
 Poising the danger of these sad events,
 His subjects' thrall, his city's woful flames,
 His children's death, the rape of noble dames,
 The massacre of infants and of eld,
 His royal self with force resistless quell'd,
 Humbled in sack-cloth and in ashes, cries
 For aid to God, the GOD OF VICTORIES*.

* My extracts from this first book have exceeded in quantity what I intended. But I could not bring myself to omit a single line of the Description of Night. The Transition from thence to the Creation of Angels struck me as poetical and well managed; and the Fall of the rebellious Angels, together with the Ministry of those who "stood unshaken," was all too much connected with my immediate object, for me to pass them by.

SECOND DAY;

THE ELEMENTS.

CLEAR source of learning! Soul of th' universe!
Since thou art pleas'd to choose my humble verse
To sing thy praises, —————
Rid thou my passage, and make clear my way
From all incumbrance! Shine upon *THIS DAY!*

————— a burning fever
Quickens the pulse, —————
And on the tables of our troubled brain
Fantastically with various pencil vain
Doth counterfaiit as many forms, or *moe* *,
Than ever Nature, Art, or Chance could show,

————— the All-creator, —————

As when we see Aurora passing gay
With opals paint the cieling of Cathay †, ———

* More; *Vox Enniani seculi.*

† The eastern sky.

For ev'n to-morrow will the Lord divide,
 With the right hand of his omnipotence,
 These yet confus'd and mingled elements,
 And lib'rally the shaggy earth adorn
 With woods, and buds of fruit, of flowers, and
 corn.

Of winged clouds the wide inconstant house,
 Th' unsettled kingdom of swift Æolus ;

From East to West, and from the West returning
 To th' honor'd cradle of the roscal morning.

So the swift coachman, whose bright-shining hair
 Doth ev'ry day gild either hemisphere,
 Two sorts of vapours by his heat exhales,
 From floating deeps and from the flow'ry dales.

But, if the vapour bravely dares adventure
 Up to th' eternal seat of thiv'ring winter,
 The small, thin humour by the cold is prest
 Into a cloud ; which wanders East and West
 Upon the wind's wings, till in drops of rain
 It falls into it's parent's lap again :
 Whether some boist'rous winds, with stormy puff,
 Juffling the winds with mutual counterbuff,

Do break their brittle sides——
Whether some milder gale, with sighing breath
Shaking their tent, their tears dissevereth——

——
Above the walls of winter's icy bower,——

——
But heark! what hear I in the Heavens? Me-
thinks

The world's wall shakes, and it's foundation
shrinks:

Th' air flames with fire, while the loud-roaring
thunder

Bursts forth amain, and rends the clouds afunder.—

The ocean boils for fear; the fish do deem

The sea too shallow safe to shelter them;

The earth doth shake; the shepherd in the field

In hollow rock himself can hardly shield;

Th' affrighted Heavens open; and in the vale

Of Acheron grim Pluto's self looks pale*.

—— the vulgar with affright

Behold at once three chariots of the light †;

* I have ventured on a little transposition in this extract.

† He had, in the first book, similarly characterized the sun.

The SUN'S BRIGHT CHARIOT, that enlightens all.

P. 12.

And

And in the welkin, on night's gloomy throne,
Tremble to view more shining moons than one.

By that tower-tearing stroak, I understand
The undaunted strength of the Divine right hand;
When I behold the light'nings in the skies,
Methinks I see the Almighty's glorious eyes;
And when in Heaven I view the rainbow bent,
I hold it for a pledge and argument,
That never more shall universal floods
Presume to mount above the tops of woods,
Which hoary Atlas in the clouds doth hide,
Or on the crown of Caucasus which ride.

Jews! no more Jews, no more of Abraham sons!—
Say what you thought! what thought you, when
 so long
A flaming sword over your temple hung,
But that the Lord would, with a mighty arm,
The righteous vengeance of his wrath perform,
On you and yours: and, what the plague did
 leave,
The insatiate gorge of famine should bereave?

All cry aloud, that the Turk's swarming host
Should pitch his proud moons on the Genoan coast.

O frantic France ! why dost thou not make use
 Of wak'ning signs, whereby the Heavens induce
 Thee to repentance? Canst thou fearless gaze,
 Ev'n night by night, on that prodigious blaze,
 That hairy comet, that long-streaming star *,
 Which threatens earth with famine, plague, and
 war ?

Th' empyreal palace, where th' eternal treasures
 Of Nectar flow, where everlasting pleasures
 Are heaped up, and an immortal May
 In blissful beauty flourisheth for ay ;
 Where the great God his glorious session holds,
 Environ'd round with seraphims and soules
 Bought with his precious blood, whose glorious
 flight
 Soar'd, above earth, to Heaven's blest region
 bright.

I see not why man's reason should withstand,
 Or not believe, that HE, whose powerful hand
 Bay'd up the Red Sea with a double wall,
 That Israel's host might 'scape Egyptian thrall,

* The famous comet of 1577. This marks the time when
 this book was written by Du Bartas. He was then aged 34.

Could prop as sure so many waves on high *
Above the Heaven's star-spangled canopy.

The eternal builder of this beauteous frame,—

————— instantly the Lord
Down to the *ÆOLIAN DUNGEON* speeds——
There muzzled close cloud-chacing Boreas,
And let loose Ausier and his low'ring race ;
Who soon set forward, with a dropping wing,
Upon their beard for ev'ry hair a spring ;
A night of clouds muffled their brows about,
Their wattled locks gush all with rivers out,
While with fierce hands, wringing thick clouds
afunder,
They send forth lightning, tempest, rain, and
thunder.
Brooks, lakes, and floods, rivers and foaming
torrents,
Suddenly swell ; and their confused currents,
Losing their old bounds, break a nearer way,
Rushing at once impetuous to the sea :
Earth shakes with fear—————
And thou thyself, O Heaven, did'st set wide ope,
Through all the marshes in thy spacious cope,

* The waters above the firmament.—From hence the poet takes occasion to conclude this book with a description of the flood, as arising from the conflux of the upper and lower waters.

All thy large sluices, thy vast seas to shed
 In sudden spouts on thy proud sister's head ;
 Whose aw-les, law-les, shame-les life abhorr'd,
 Only delighted to resist the Lord.

Th' earth shrinks and sinks ; now ocean hath
 no shore,

And rivers run to swell the sea no more ;
 'Themselves are seas ; th' innumerable streams
 Of sundry names, deriv'd from sundry realms,
 Make now but one great sea ; the world itself
 Is nothing now but one great standing gulph,
 Whose swelling surges strive to mix &c.——
 And for mankind ; imagine some got up
 To an high mountain's over-hanging top ;
 Some to a tower, some to a cedar tree,
 Whence round about a world of deaths they see ;
 But, wheresoever their pale fears aspire
 For hope of safety, ocean surgeth higher.

Safely, meantime, the sacred *ship* did float
 On the proud shoulders of that boundless moat ;
 Though mast-les, oar-les, and from harbour far,
 Secure ; for God her steersman was and star.

THE THIRD DAY;

THE SEA AND EARTH.

O KING of grassy and of glassy plains!
Whose powerful breath, at thy dread will, con-
strains
The deep foundations of the Hills to shake,
And Sea's salt billows Heaven's high vault to
rake;—

— the ALL-MONARCH's bounteous Majesty
Commanded Neptune straight to marshal forth
His floods apart, and to unfold the earth;—

On one side hills hoar'd with eternal snows,—

Never mine eyes in pleasant spring behold
The azure flax, the gilded marigold,
The violet's purple, the sweet rose's stammel,
The lily's snow, the pansy's bright enamel;
But that in them the PAINTER I admire,
Who in more colours doth the fields attire,

Than

Than fair Aurora's rosy cheeks display,
When in the east she ushers a fair day.

The Almighty voice, which built this mighty
ball,
Still, still rebounds and echoes over all;—

Within the deep folds of her fruitful lap,
So boundless mines of treasure earth doth wrap,
That th' hungry hands of human avarice
Cannot exhaust with labour or device.
For they be more than there be stars in Heaven,
Or stormy billows in the ocean driven,
Or ears of corn in Autumn in the fields,
Or savage beasts upon a thousand hills,
Or fishes diving in the silver floods,
Or scatter'd leaves in winter in the woods.

All hail, fair Earth! beater of towns and towers!
Fair, firm, and fruitful, various, patient, sweet!
Sumptuously cloathed in a mantle meet
Of mingled colours, lac'd about with floods,
And all-embroider'd with fresh-blooming buds!

The chearful birds, chirping him sweet good-
morrrows,
With Nature's music do beguile his sorrows,
Teaching the fragrant forests, day by day,
The *diapason* of their heavenly lay.

The stream's mild murmur, as it gently gushes,
His healthy limbs in quiet slumber hushes.

————— then he stirs betime,
To walk the mountains, or the flow'ry meads
Impearl'd with tears, that sweet Aurora sheds.

THE FOURTH DAY;

THE HEAVENS, SUN, MOON, &c.

—————
BUT, if conjecture may extend above
To that great orb, whose moving all doth move;—

————— Heaven's azure coasts, ———

————— bright Apollo's glory beaming car.

—————
I not believe, that the Arch-Architect,
With all these fires the heavenly arches deck'd,
Onely for shew; and with these glitt'ring shields,
To amaze poor shepherds watching in the fields.
I not believe, that the least flower which pranks
Our garden borders, or our common banks,

And

And the least stone, that in her warming lap
Our mother earth doth covetously wrap,
Hath some peculiar virtue of its own ;
And that the glorious stars of Heaven have
none.

————— from Hell

Alecto looses all her furies fell ;
Grim, lean-fac'd Famine, foul infectious Plague,
Blood-thirsty War, and Treason, hateful hag.——

— with cloudy horror of their wrathful frown,
Threat'ning again the guilty world to drown ;—

Not that, as Stoick, I intend to tye,
With iron chains of strong necessity,
The ETERNAL's hands,——

Life of the world ! Lamp of the universe !
Heaven's richest Gem ! O teach me how my
verse

May best begin thy praise !——
To sing how rising from the Indian wave'
Thou seem'st, O Titan, like a bridegroom brave,
Who from his chamber early issuing out,
In rich array with rarest gems about,

With

With pleasant countenance and lovely face,
 With golden tresses, and attractive grace,
 Cheers at his coming all the youthful throng,
 That for his presence earnestly did long,
 Blessing the day, and, with delightful glee,
 Singing aloud his *Epithalamy*.

Thou, glorious champion, in thy heavenly race,
 Runnest so swift, we scarce conceive thy pace;
 Nor comprehend, how fitly thou do'st guide
 Through the fourth Heaven thy flaming coursers'
 pride.

———— the sun's proud-trampling team,—

———— the moon's pale coursers——

———— the swarthy Moors,
 That sweating toil on Guinea's wealthy shores;—

———— forests, gloomy black,
 Wonder'd to see their mighty shades go back.

THE FIFTH DAY;

THE FISHES AND FOWLES.

*L*ATONIAN lamps, conducting diverse ways,
About the world, successive nights and days!
Parents of winged time! O haste your cars,
And, passing swiftly the opposed bars
Of East and West, with your returning ray
Th' imperfect world make older by a day.

———— the liquid mansion of Hyperion ————

And thou, Eternal Father, at whose wink
The wrathful ocean's swelling pride doth sink,
And stubborn storms of bellowing wind are dumb,
Their wide mouths stopp'd, and their wild pi-
nions numb!

Great Sov'reign of the seas! —————

When on the surges I perceive from far
The Orc, Whale, Whirlpool, or huge Phyceter,
Methinks I see the wandering isle again,
Ortygian Delos, floating on the main;

And.

And, when in combat these fell monsters cross,
Meseems some tempest all the seas doth toss.

And you, ye Fishes, who for recreation,
Or for your seed's securer propagation,
At times do change your ordinary dwelling,
Say, what Chaldean, learn'd in fortune-telling,
Or Heaven-taught prophet, your fit time doth
shew?

What herald's trumpet summons you to go?

— the pride of Greece,
That sail'd to Colchos for the golden fleece;

No more than doth the oak, which in the wood
Unmov'd hath thousand tempests' rage withstood,
Spreading as many massy roots below,
As mighty arms above the ground do grow.

O thou, Almighty! who, mankind to wreck,
Of thousand seas one sea didst whilom make,
And yet didst save from th' universal doom
One sacred household, that in time to come,
From age to age, should sing thy glorious praise!
Look down, O Lord, from thy supernal rays;
Look down, alas! upon a wretched man,
Half-tomb'd already in the ocean!

Herewith the seas their roaring rage restrain,
And straight the cloudy welkin clears again ;

—Gold, the dire bane of our seduced soul.—
O odious poison ! for the which we dive
To Pluto's dark den ; for the which we rive
Our mother earth ;—————
For which, beyond rich *Taprobān*, we roll
Through thousand seas, to seek another pole !

————— care-charming sleep, ———

There the fair Peacock, beautifully brave,
Wheeling his starry train, in pomp displays
His glorious eyes to Phœbus' golden rays.

————— not far from thence

Where love-blind *Hero's* hapless diligence,
Instead of Love's lamp, lighted Death's cold brand,
To waft *Leander's* naked limbs to land.

Consuming fever wanly did displace
The rose-mix'd lilies in her lovely face,

THE SIXTH DAY;

THE BEASTS AND MAN.

————— to anchor in the port,
Where Death's pale horrors never do resort.

Almighty Father! guide their Guide along!
And pour upon my faint unfluent tongue
The sweetest honey of th' *Hyanthian* fount,
Which freshly purleth from the Muses' mount!

My blood congeals, my sudden-swelling breast
Can hardly breathe, with chilling cold opprest;
My hair doth stare, my bones for fear do shake;
My colour changes, my sad heart doth quake;
And round about Death's image, ghastly grim,
Before my eyes already seems to swim.

Before that Adam did revolt from thee,
And rashly tasted the forbidden tree,
He lived King of Eden, and his brow
Was never blank'd with pallid fear as now;

But fiercest beasts would, at his word or beek,
Bow to his yolk their self-obedient neck.

In deepest perils Wisdom shineth prime ;
Through thousand deaths true Valour seeks to
climb,
Well-knowing, Conquest yields but little honour,
If bloody Danger do not wait upon her.

—— to the firmament
Raise the proud turrets of his battlement ;—

—— the supreme, peerless, Architect,—

Admir'd Artist, Architect divine,
Perfect and peerless, in all works of thine !

By thee we stop the stubborn mutinies
Of our rebellious flesh, whose restless treason
Strives to dis-throne, and to dis-sceptre reason.
By thee our souls with Heaven have conversation,
By thee we calm th' Almighty's indignation,
When faithful sighs from our souls' centre fly
Up to the bright throne of his Majesty.

Since first the Lord the world's foundations laid ;
Since Phœbus first his golden locks display'd,
And

And his pale Sister from his beaming light
Borrow'd her splendour to adorn the night.

———
——— who guidest with thy hand
The Day's bright chariot, and the Nightly brand!

——— from thence
He took a rib, which rarely he refin'd,
And thereof made the mother of mankind;
Graving so lively on the living bone
All Adam's beauties, that, but hardly, one
Could have the lover from his love descried,
Or known the bridegroom from his gentle bride;
Saving that she had a more smiling eye,
A smoother chin, a cheek of purer dye,
A fainter voice, a more enticing face,
A deeper tress, a more delighting grace.

O blessed bond! O happy marriage*!
'Twixt Christ and us which union doth presage!
O chafest Friendship, whose pure flames impart
Two souls in one, two hearts within one heart!

* I am aware of the disadvantage, under which this address to chaste connubial love will be read by those, to whose recollection cannot but recur Milton's

Hail wedded love, &c. &c. PAR. LOST, IV. 750.

They will be pleas'd, however, to see how a VIRGIL has improved and decorated the primary thought of an ENNIUS.

O holy knot, in Eden instituted,
 Not in this earth with blood and wrong polluted !
 O sacred cov'nant, which the sinless Son
 Of the blest Virgin, when he first begun
 To publish proofs of his dread power divine,
 By turning water into perfect wine,
 At lesser *Cana*, in a wondrous manner,
 Did with his presence sanctify and honour !

By thy dear favour *, after our decease,
 We leave behind our living images ;
 Change war to peace, in kindred multiply,
 And in our children live eternally.—
 For now the Lord commands the happy pair
 With chaste embraces to replenish fair,
 Th' unpeopled earth ; that, while the world en-
 dures,
 Here might succeed their living portraitures.

* Through the DEAR MIGHT of him who walk'd the
 waves,—

THE SEVENTH DAY;

THE SABBATH.

ONE while he sees, how th' ample sea doth take
The liquid homage of each other lake*.

Not that I mean to feign an idle God,
That lulls † in Heaven, nor ever looks abroad;
Blind to our service, deaf unto our sighs,
That crowns not virtue, and corrects not vice;
A pagan idol, void of power and pity,
A sleeping dormouse, a dead Deity.
For, though alas! sometimes I cannot shun
But some profane thoughts in my mind will run,
I never think on God, but I conceive
(Whence cordial comfort Christian souls receive)

* As I shall have to exhibit in this book some tolerably connected passages respecting the Power and Providence of the Deity, I should not have introduced this *aliene* couplet, but that the harmony and beautiful effect of the second line peculiarly struck me. What follows, in this book, is rather marked by a *momentous plainness*.

† To lull, is to be indolent, "suggisb."

In him care, council, justice, mercy, might,
To punish wrongs and patronise the right.

God is not sitting in regardless state,——
Content to have made, by his great word, to move
So many radiant stars as shine above,
And on each thing, with his own hand, to draw
The sacred text of an eternal law ;
Then, bosoming his hand, to let them slide,
With reins at will, where'er that law may guide.

God is the soul, the life, the strength, the sinew,
That quickens, moves, and makes this frame con-
tinue :

God's the main spring, that maketh every way,
All the small wheels of this great engine play :
God's the strong *Atlas*, whose unshrinking shoul-
ders

Have been, and still are, Heaven's huge globes'
upholders,

His high behest Heaven's course doth never break ;
The floating water waiteth at his beck ;

— — — — —
The earth is his ; and there is nothing found,
In all these kingdoms, but is mov'd each hour
With secret touch of his eternal power.

God is the Judge, who keeps continual sessions
In every place, to punish all transgressions ;——

Himself

Himself is Judge, Jury, and Witness too,
 Well-knowing what we all think, speak, or do ;
 He sounds the deepest of the double heart,
 Searcheth the reins, and sifteth ev'ry part ;
 He sees all secrets, and his Lynx-like eye,
 Ere it be thought, doth ev'ry thought descry.

Howe'er it seems, that human things oft slide
 Unbridledly with so uncertain tide,
 That, in the ocean of events so many,
 The HAND OF GOD is scarcely seen of any ;
 Who rather deem that giddy Fortune guideth
 All that beneath the silver moon betideth ;
 Yet art thou ever just, O God, tho' I
 Cannot always thy judgments' depth descry,
 Unable to pervade the great design
 Of thy dread councils, sacred and divine.
 O how it grieves me ! how am I amaz'd,
 That they, whose faith, like glist'ring stars, hath
 blaz'd
 Ev'n in the darkest night, should still object,
 Against a doctrine of so sweet effect,
 That " Oft, alas ! with weeping eyes they see
 'Th' ungodly man in most prosperity,
 Cloathed in purple, crown'd with diadems,
 Swaying bright sceptres, hoarding gold and gems,
 Crouch'd to, and courted, with all kind affection,
 As priviledg'd by Heaven's divine protection."

Know

Know then that God, (to th' end he be not
thought

A power-less Judge,) here scourgeth many a
fault;

And many a crime here leaves unpunished,
That guilty man may his last judgment dread.

Justly we credit that God's hand compos'd
All in six days; and that he then repos'd,
By his example giving us behest,

On the SEVENTH DAY for evermore to rest.

Now the chief end this precept aims at is,
To quench in us the flames of *covetize* * ;
That, while we rest from all prophaner arts,
God's spirit may work in our retiring hearts,
That, treading down all earthly cogitations,
Our thoughts may mount to heavenly meditations.

For, by th' Almighty, this great holy day
Was not ordain'd to dance, to mask, and play ;
To slug in sloth, and languish in delights,
And loose the reins to raging appetites ;
To turn God's feasts to filthy Lupercals,
To frantic Orgies, and fond Saturnals ;
To dazzle eyes with Pride's vain-glorious splen-
dour,——

[* Covetousness, Lust, *Cupido*.

As th' irreligion of loose times hath since
 Chang'd the prime church's chaster innocence.

He would this Sabbath should a figure be
 Of the blest Sabbath of Eternity.
 The one, as legal, heeds but outward things ;
 The other rest to soul and body brings ;
 The one a day endures ; the other's fate
 Eternity shall not exterminate ;
 Shadows the one, th' other doth truth include ;
 This stands in freedom, that in servitude ;
 With cloudy cares one's muffled up somewhiles,
 The other's face is wrapp'd in pleasing smiles.—
 'Tis the grand Jubilee, the Feast of Feasts,
 Sabbath of Sabbaths, endless Rest of Rests ;
 Which, with our Prophets, and Apostles zealous,
 The constant Martyrs, and our Christian fellows ;
 God's faithful servants, and his chosen sheep,
 Ere long we hope in Heaven's blest realms to keep.

See'st thou those Stars we wrongly wand'ring call ?
 Tho' diverse ways they dance about this ball,
 Yet evermore their manyfold career
 Follows the course of the first-moving sphere :
 This teacheth thee, that, though thine own desires
 Be opposite to what Heaven's will requires,
 Thou still must strive to follow, all thy days,
 God, the FIRST MOVER, in his holy ways.

The Moon, whose splendour from her Brother
springs,
May by example bid thee veil thy wings * ;
For thou, no less than the pale Queen of Nights,
Borrow'st all goodness from the PRINCE OF
LIGHTS.

The Sea, which sometimes down to Hell is
driven,
And sometimes heaves a frothy mount to Heaven,
Yet never breaks the bounds of her *precinct*,
Wherein the Lord her boist'rous arms hath link'd,
Instructeth thee, that neither tyrant's rage,
Ambition's winds, nor golden vassalage
Of Avarice, nor any love or fear,
From God's commands should make thee shrink a
hair.

Nor is there aught in our dear mother found,
But pithily some virtue doth propound.
O let the noble, rich, wise, valiant,
Become as base, poor, faint, and ignorant !
O let them learn, (the fields when Autumn shears,)
Humility among the bearded eares ;
Which still, the fuller of the flow'ry grain,
Bend down the more their humble heads again ;

* Humble thyself ; lower thy sight.

And ay, the lighter and the less their store,
They lift aloft their chaffy crests the more.

Canst thou the secret sympathy behold
Betwixt the bright Sun and the Marygold,
And not consider, that we must no less
Follow in life the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ?

As Iron, touch'd by th' Adamant's effect,
To the North pole doth ever point direct,
So the Soul, touch'd once by the secret power
Of a true lively faith, looks ev'ry hour
To the bright Lamp, which serves for *Cynosure*
To all that sail upon Life's sea obscure.

THE 1st DAY OF THE 2d WEEK;

ADAM.

PART THE FIRST; EDEN.

Grant me the story of thy Church to sing,
And gests of Kings; the total let me bring.

From

From thy first Sabbath to man's fatal tomb,
My stile extending to the day of doom.

Ye Pagan poets, who audaciously
Have sought to dark the ever memory
Of God's great works! from henceforth still be
dumb

Your fabled praises of Elysium,
Which by this goodly model you have wrought,
Through deaf tradition that your Fathers taught;
For the Almighty made his blisful bowers
Better, indeed, than you have feigned yours.

The all-clasping Heavens,—

— the crystal of smooth-sliding floods.

Yet, over-curious, question not the site,
Where God did plant this garden of delight;
Whether beneath the equinoctial line,
Or on a mountain near Latona's shine,
Nigh Babylon, or in the radiant East;
Humbly content thee, that thou know'st at least,
That that rare plenteous, pleasant, happy thing,
Whereof th' Almighty made our grandfire King,
Was a choice soil, thro' which did roaring slide
Swift Gihon, Pishon, and rich Tigris' tide,

With

With that fair stream, whose silver waves do kiss
The monarch towers of proud Semiramis.

———— the thunder-darter ————

Nor think that Moses paints, fantastic-wise,
A mystic tale of feigned Paradise,—
Ideal Adam's food fantastical,
His sin suppos'd, his pain poetical:
Such allegories serve for shelter fit
To curious ideots of erroneous wit.

———— Time, whose slippery wheel doth play
In human causes with inconstant sway,

No, none of these; these are but forgeries,
Mere toys and tales and dreams, deceit and lies;
But thou art true, altho' our shallow sense
May honour more, than sound thine excellence.

Mankind was then a thousand fold more wise
Than now; blind error had not blear'd his eyes
With mists; —————

———— Heaven-prompted Prophets ————

Now Heaven's eternal, all-foreseeing, King ———

— yet is it much admir'd
Of rarest men, and shines among them bright,
Like glist'ring stars thro' gloomy shades of night.

When the Soul's eye beholds God's countenance;
As when St. Paul on his dear Master's wings
Was rapt alive up to eternal things,
And he, that whilom, for the chosen flock,
Made walls of waters, waters of a rock.

— Heaven's great Architect —
Gloriously compass'd with the blessed legions,
That reign above the azure spangled regions.

Take all the rest, I bid thee; but I vow
By th' un-nam'd name, whereto all knees do bow,
And by the keen darts of my kindled ire,
More fiercely burning than consuming fire,
That, of the Fruit of Knowledge if thou feed,
Death, dreadful Death, shall plague thee and thy
feed.

Or cast me headlong from some mountain steep
Down to the whirling bottom of the deep.

And, yet not treading Sin's false mazy measures,
Sails on smooth surges of a sea of pleasures.

By some clear river's lily-paved side,
Whose sand's pure gold, whose pebbles pretious
 gems,
And liquid silver all the curling streams ;—

Then up and down a forest thick he paceth ;
Which, selfly op'ning in his presence, 'baseth
Her trembling tresses' never-fading spring,
In humble homage to her mighty King.

But seest thou not, my Muse, thou tread'st the
 same

Too curious path thou dost in others blame ?
And striv'st in vain to paint this work of choice ;
The which no human spirit, hand, nor voice,
Can once conceive, less pourtray, least express,
All overwhelm'd in gulphs so bottomless ?

If the sly malice of the serpent hated,
Causing their fall, had not defil'd their kin,
And unborn seed, with leprosy of sin.

So the world's soul should in our soul inspire
Th' eternal force of an eternal fire.

————— Man's proud apostacy ; ———

PART THE SECOND;

THE IMPOSTURE:

O who shall lend me light and nimble wings—
That in a moment, boldly-daring, I
From Heaven to Hell, from Hell to Heaven may
fly?—

What spell shall charm the attentive Reader's
sense?

What fount shall fill my voice with eloquence?

Ah! thou, my God, ev'n thou, my soul re-
fining

In holy Faith's pure furnace clearly shining,
Shalt make my hap far to surmount my hope,
Instruct my spirit, and give my tongue free scope:
Thou bounteous in my bold attempts shalt grace
me,

And in the rank of holiest poets place me;
And frankly grant, that, soaring through the sky,
Upborne on Eagle's pennons, I may fly.—

While Adam bathes in these felicities,
 Hell's Prince, fly parent of revolt and lies,
 Feels a pestiferous busy swarming nest
 Of never-dying dragons in his breast ;—
 While, above all, HATE, PRIDE, and ENVIOUS
 SPITE,

With ceaseless tortures vex him day and night.
 The *hate* he bears to God, who hath him driven
 Justly for ever from the glittering Heaven,
 To dwell in darkness of a sulphry cloud :—
 The *proud desire* to have in his subjection
 Mankind enchain'd in gyves of sin's infection :
 The *envious heart-break* to behold yet shine
 In Adam's face God's image all divine,
 Which *he* had lost :—————
 These barb'rous tyrants of his treach'rous will
 Spur on his course, his rage redoubling still.

—————
 The dragon, then, man's fortress to surprise,
 Follows some Captain's martial policies ;
 Who, ere too near an adverse place he pitch,
 The situation marks, and sounds the ditch ;
 With his eye's level the steep wall he metes,
 Surveys the flank, his camp in order sets ;
 And then approaching batters fierce the side,
 Which Art and Nature least have fortified :
 So this old soldier, having marked rise
 The first-born pair's yet danger-dreadless life,

Mounting his cannons, cunningly assaults
The part he finds in evident defaults,
Namely, poor woman, way'ring, weak, unwise,
Light, credulous,—————

“ Eve, second honour of this universe!
Is't true, I pray, a jealous God perverse
Strictly forbids to you and all your race
All the fair fruits these silver brooks embrace,
To you bequeathed, and by you possess'd,
Day after day, by your own labour dress'd?”

With breath of these sweet words the wily
snake

A poison'd air inspired, as he spake,
In Eve's frail breast; who thus replies:—“ O
know

(Whoe'er thou art, but thy kind care doth shew
A gentle friend,) that all the fruits and flowers
This garden yields are in our hands and powers,
Except alone that goodly tree divine,
Which in the midst of this green ground doth
shine;

The all-good God (alas! I wot not why)
Forbad us touch that tree, on pain to die.”
—She ceas'd; already brooding in her heart
A growing wish, that shall her weal subvert.

As a false lover, that thick snares hath laid
T' entrap the honour of a fair young maid,

If she (though little) list'ning ear affords
 To his sweet, courting, deep-affected words,
 Feels some asswaging of his ardent flame,
 And sooths himself with hopes to win his game;
 While, rapt with joy, he on this point persists,
 "That parleying city never long resists:"
 Ev'n so the serpent—————
 Perceiving Eve his flatt'ring gloze digest,
 He prosecutes, and jocund doth not rest——

"No, Fair," quoth he, "believe not, that the
 care,

God hath from spoiling death mankind to spare,
 Makes him forbid you, on such strict condition,
 This purest, fairest, rarest fruit's fruition!—

A double fear, an envy and a hate,
 His jealous heart for ever cruciate!

Since the suspected virtue of this tree
 Shall soon disperse the cloud of idiocy,

That dims your eyes; and, further, make you
 seem,

Excelling us, Gods equal ev'n to him.

O WORLD'S RARE GLORY! reach thy happy
 hand!

Reach, reach, I say; why dost thou stop or
 stand?

Begin thy bliss, and do not fear the threat
 Of an uncertain God-head, only great

Through self-aw'd zeal : put on the glist'ring pall
Of immortality *.

A novice thief, who in a closet spies
A heap of gold that on a table lies,
Fearful, and trembling, twice or thrice extends,
And twice or thrice retires, his fingers' ends ;
And yet again returns, the booty takes ;—
Ev'n so doth *Eve* shew, by like fearful fashions,
The doubtful combat of contending passions ;
She would, she should not ; sad, glad, comes,
and goes ;—
But, ah ! at last she rashly toucheth it,
And, having touch'd, tastes the forbidden bit.

Then, as a man, that from a lofty clift,
Or steepy mountain, doth descend too swift,
If chance he stumble, catches at a limb
Of some dear kinsman walking next to him,
And falling headlong, drags along his friend
To an untimely, sad, and sudden end ;

* I think the tasteful reader may be struck with this fine conclusion of the extract, which I have here given from the tempter's speech. Were I not suspicious of a little *editorial* partiality, I should appreciate it as a genuine poetical expression of the finest effect, and worthy of any age of poetry.

Indeed the whole of the speech is well-imagined, and finely condensed. It must be admitted that Milton has obligations to it.

Our

Our mother, falling, hales her spouse anon
 Down to the gulph of pitchy Acheron :
 For to the wish'd fruits beautiful aspect,
 Its nectar taste, and wonderful effect,
 Cunningly adding her sweet-smiling glances,
 Persuasive speech, and charming countenances,
 She so prevails, that her blind Lord at last
 A morsel of the fatal fruit doth taste.

Now suddenly wide open feel they might,
 Seal'd for their good, their mind and body's sight ;
 But the sad soul hath lost the character,
 And sacred image that did honour her :
 The wretched body, full of shame and sorrow,
 To cloath it's nakedness is forc'd to borrow
 The tree's broad leaves, whereof they aprons
 frame,
 From Heaven's fair eye to hide their filthy shame.
 Alas, fond deathlings ! Think you, silly souls,
 The sight, which swiftly through Earth's solid
 centres,
 As through a crystal globe transparent, enters,
 Cannot transpierce your leaves ? Or do you ween,
 Cov'ring your shame, so to conceal your sin ?
 Or that, a part thus clouded, all might lie
 Safe from the search of Heaven's all-seeing eye?—

As yet man's troubled dull intelligence
 Had of his fault but a confused sense ;—

When now the Lord, within the garden fair
 Moving betimes a supernatural air,
 Which midst the trees passing with breath divine
 Brings of his presence the undoubted sign,
 Awakes their lethargy—————
 Now more and more making their pride to fear
 The frowning visage of their Judge severe,
 While, for new refuge in more secret harbors,
 They seek the dark shade of these tufting arbors.

“Adam!” quoth God with thund’ring majesty,
 “Where art thou, wretch? What do’st thou?—

Answer me,

Thy God and Father; from whose hand thy health
 Thou hold’st, thine honour and abundant wealth.”

At this sad summons, woful man resembles
 The bearded rush, that in the river trembles :
 His rosy cheeks are chang’d to earthy hue ;
 His fainting body drops with icy dew ;
 His tear-drown’d eyes a night of clouds bedims ;
 About his ears a buzzing horror swims ;
 His tottering knees with feebleness are humble ;
 His fault’ring feet beneath him slide and stum-
 ble ;

He hath no more his free bold stately port,
 But downcast looks, in fearful slavish sort.
 Now nought of Adam doth in Adam rest ;
 He feels his senses pain’d, his soul oppress ;

A con-

A confus'd host of violent passions jar;
 His flesh and spirit are in continual war;
 No more, through conscience of his fatal error,
 He hears or sees th' Almighty, but with terror;
 And answers loth, as with a tongue distraught,
 Confessing thus his fear, but not his fault.

“ O Lord, thy voice, thy dreadful voice hath
 made
 Me fearful hide me in this covert shade;
 For, naked as I am, O Lord of might,
 I dare not come before thine awful sight.”

“ Naked?” quoth God, “ O faithless rene-
 gate!
 Apostate pagan! who hath told thee that?
 Whence springs thy shame? What makes thee
 thus to run
 From shade to shade, my presence still to shun?
 Hast thou not tasted of that sacred tree,
 Whereof, on pain of death, I warn'd thee?”

“ O righteous God!” quoth *Adam*, “ I am free
 From this offence. The wife thou gavest me,
 For my companion and my comforter,
 She made me eat that deadly meat with her.”

“ And thou,” quoth God, “ O thou false
 treach'rous bride!
 Why with thyself hast thou seduc'd thy guide?”
 “ Lord!”

“ Lord !” answers Eve, “ the serpent did entice
My simple frailty to this sinful vice.”

Hereon, the Almighty with just indignation
Pronounceth thus their dreadful condemnation.
“ Thou cursed serpent ! fountain of all ill !
Thou shalt be hateful 'mongst all creatures still.
Gro'ling in dust, of dust thou ay shalt feed ;
I'll kindle war between the woman's seed
And thy fell race ; her's on the head shall ding
Thine ; thine again her's in the heel shall sting.

“ Rebel to me ! and to thy kindred curst !
False to thy husband ! to thyself the worst !
Hope not thy fruit so easily to bring forth
As now thou slay'st it. ' Henceforth every birth
Shall torture thee—————

“ And thou, disloyal, which hast hearken'd more
To a wanton fondling than my sacred lore !
Henceforth the sweat shall bubble on thy brow,
Thy hands shall blister, and thy back shall bow ;
Henceforth the earth shall feel in her th' effect
Of the doom thunder'd 'gainst thy foul defect ;
Instead of sweet fruits, which she selfly yields
Seed-less and art-less over all thy fields,
With thorns and burs shall bristle up her breast ;
Nor henceforth shalt thou taste the sweets of rest,
Till ruthless Death, by his extremest pain,
Thy dust-born body turn to dust again.”

“ Hence !”

“Hence,” quoth the Lord, “hence, hence,
 accursed race,
 Out of my garden! Quick avoid the placé;
 This beauteous place, pride of this universe,
 A house unworthy masters so perverse.”

Imagine now the bitter agonies
 And luke-warm rivers gushing down the eyes
 Of our first parents out of Eden driven,
 Of pardon hopeless, by the hand of Heaven;
 While the Almighty set before the door
 Of th' holy park a seraphim that bore
 A waving sword tremendous, shining bright,
 Like flaming comet in the midst of night*.

* The selections from this book are, in general, made not so much for their poetical merit, as to shew Du Bartas's manner of describing the TEMPTATION and FALL.

Passages more poetical might have been produced.

PART THE THIRD;

THE FURIES.

THIS sea I sail, this troubled air I sip,
 Are not the first week's glorious workmanship;
 This wretched round is not the goodly globe
 Th' eternal trimm'd with such a various robe;
 'Tis but a dungeon and a dreadful cave,
 Of that first world the miserable grave.

Now mortal Adam, monarch here beneath,
 Erring draws all into the paths of death;
 And on rough seas, as a blind pilot rash,
 Against the rock of Heav'n's just wrath doth dash
 The world's great vessell, failing erst at ease,
 With gentle gales, secure on quiet seas.—
 Before his fall, which way soever roll'd,
 His wond'ring eyes God ev'ry where behold:
 In Heaven, in Earth, in Ocean, and in Air,
 He sees, and feels, and finds him every where.
 But, since his sin, the woful wretch finds none—

Mountain or valley, sea-gate, shore; or haven,
 But bears his Death's doom openly ingraven;
 In brief, the whole scope this round centre hath,
 Is now a store-house of Heaven's righteous wrath.
 Rebellious Adam, from his God revolting,
 Finds his once-subjects 'gainst himself insulting;
 The troubled sea, the air with tempests driven,
 Thorn-bristled earth, a sad and low'ring Heaven.

The greedy ocean, breaking wonted bounds,
 Usurps his heards, his wealthy isles and towns.

Once happy we did rule the scaly legions,
 That dumbly dwell in water's stormy regions;
 The feather'd songsters, and the stubborn droves,
 That haunt the desarts and the shady groves;
 — — — — —
 But now, alas!, through our first parent's fall,
 They of our slaves are grown our tyrants all.
 Sail we the sea? The dread Leviathan
 Turns upside-down the boiling ocean,
 And, on a sudden, sadly doth entomb
 Our floating castle in deep Thetis' womb.
 Go we by land? How many loathsome swarms
 Of speckled poisons, with pestiferous arms,
 In every corner ambush'd closely lurk,
 With secret bands our sudden bane to work!
 Besides the Lion and the Lëopard,
 Boar, Beare, and Wolfe, to death pursue us hard;
 And,

And, jealous vengers of the wrongs divine,
In pieces tear their Sov'reign's sinful line.

What hideous fight! what horror-boding shows!
Alas! what yells! what howls! what thund'ring
throws!

What spells have charm'd you from your dread-
ful den

Of darkest Hell, monsters abhorr'd of men?

O Night's black daughters! grim-fac'd Furies sad!

Stern Pluto's posts! what brings you here so mad?

O feels not man a world of woful terrors,

Besides your goaring wounds and ghastly horrors?

So soon as God from Eden Adam drave

To live in this earth, (rather in the grave,

Where reign a thousand deaths,) he summon'd up,

With thund'ring call, the damned crew, that sup

Of sulphry Styx, and fiery Phlegethon,

Bloody Cocytus, muddy Acheron.

Come snake-tress'd systers! come ye dismal elves!

Cease now to curse and cruciate yourselves!

Come, leave the horror of your houses pale!

Come, hither bring your soul; black, baneful gall!

Let lack of work no more, from henceforth, fear
you!

Man by his sin a hundred Hells doth rear you.

This eccho made whole Hell to tremble troubled;

The drowsy night her deep dark horrors doubled,

And

And suddenly Avernus' gulph did swim
 With rosin, pitch, and brimstone, to the brim;
 While the fierce Gorgons and the Sphinxes fell,
 Hydras and Harpies, 'gan to yawn and yell.—
 Now the three sisters, the three hideous *Rages*,
 'Mid thousand storms rush from th' infernal
 stages;
 Furious they rowl their adamantine cars,
 O'er th' ever-shaking ninefold steely bars
 Of th' Stygian bridge————

Having attain'd to our calm hav'n of light,
 With swifter course than Boreas' nimble flight,
 All fly at man, all, with invet'rate strife,
 Who most may torture his detested life.

Here first comes DEARTH, the lively form of
 Death,

Still yawning wide, with loathsom stinking breath,
 With hollow eyes, with meagre cheeks and chin,
 With sharp lean bones, piercing her sable skin:
 Her empty bowels may be plainly spy'd
 Clear thro' the wrinkles of her wither'd hide:

— — — — —
 Insatiate Orc! that ev'n at one repast
 Almost all creatures in the world would waste!
 With greedy gorge to fill her monstrous maw!—

Next marcheth WAR, the mistress of enormity,
 Mother of mischief, monster of deformity:

Laws, manners, arts, she breaks, she mars, she
chaces ;

Blood, tears, bow'rs, tow'rs, she spills, swills,
burns, and razes ;

Her brazen feet shake all the earth afunder,
Her mouth's a fire-brand, and her voice a thunder ;
Her looks are light'nings, every glance a flash—

— — — — —
Fear and Despair, Flight and Disorder, coast
With hasty march before her murd'rous host ;
Sack, Sacrilege, Impunity, and Pride,
Are still stern consorts by her barb'rous side ;
While Sorrow, Poverty, and Desolation,
Follow her army's bloody transmigration.

The other Fury * next man's life assails

— — — — —
With thousand weapons, sooner felt than seen ;
Where weakest, strongest ; fraught with deadly
teen ;

Blind, crooked, crippled, maimed, deaf, and mad,
Cold-burning, blister'd, melancholy, sad ;
Many-nam'd poison, minister of death,
Which from us creeps, but to us gallopeth !

— — — — —
Against the body all these champions stout
Strive ; some within, and other some without :—

— — — — —
* SICKNESS.

But

But lo four Captains far more fierce and eager,
That on all sides the soul itself beleaguer!

Sorrow's first leader of this furious crowd;
Muffled all over in a sable cloud;
Old before age, afflicted night and day,
Her face with wrinkles warped ev'ry way;
Creeping in corners, where she sits and vies
Sighs from her heart, tears from her big-swoln
eyes;

Accompanied with self-consuming Care,
With weeping Pity, Thought, and mad Despair.

The second Captain is excessive Joy;——
She hath in conduct false vain-glorious Vaunting,
Bold, soothing, shameless, loud, injurious, taunt-
ing;

The winged giant, lofty-staring Pride,
That in the clouds her braving crest doth hide;
And many others, like the empty bubbles,
That rise, when rain the liquid crystal troubles.

The third is blood-less, heart-less, witless FEAR,
Like Aspin tree, still trembling ev'ry where;
She leads black Terror, and base-clownish Shame;
And drowsy Sloth, that counterfeiteth lame,
With snail-like motion measuring the ground,
Having her arms in willing fetters bound.——
And thou, DESIRE, whom nor the firmament,
Nor air, nor earth, nor ocean, can content!

Thou art the fourth ; and under thy command
 Thou bring'st to field a rough unruly band :
 First secret-burning mighty-swoln Ambition,
 Pent in no limits, pleas'd with no condition,
 Whom Epicurus' many worlds suffice not,
 Whose furious thirst of proud-aspiring dies not,
 Whose hands, transported with fantastic passion,
 Grasp painted sceptres in imagination ;
 Then Avarice—————
 The more her wealth, the more her wretchedness ;
 Whose foul base fingers in each dunghill pore,
 Starving, like Tantalus, in midst of store ;
 Then boiling Wrath, stern, cruel, swift, and rash,
 That like a bear her teeth do grind and gnash ;
 Whose hair doth stare like bristled Porcupine,
 Who sometimes rows her ghastly-glowing eyne,
 And sometimes on the ground doth fix'dly glance,
 Now bleak, then bloody in her countenance.

Now if, but like the light'ning in the sky,
 These furious passions swiftly passed by,
 The fear were less ; but ah ! too oft they leave
 Keen stings behind in souls which they deceive.
 Alas ! how these (far worse than death) diseases
 Exceed each sickness which our body seizes !
 Those make us open war, and by their spight
 Give to the patient many a wholesome light,
 Whereby the Doctor, guessing at our grief,
 Not seldom finds sure means for our relief ;

But,

But, for the ills which rule our intellect,—
They rest unknown, or rather self-conceal'd ;
For soul-sick patients care not to be heal'd.

PART THE FOURTH;

THE HANDY-CRAFTS.

————— a coat so rare,
That it resembles Nature's mantle fair,
When in the sun, in pomp all glist'ring,
She seems with smiles to woo the gaudy spring.

—————
—— bright Olympus' starry canopy.

—————
Rein-searching God, thought-founding Judge,—

—————
—— a grove,
Upon the verdure of whose virgin boughs
Bird had not perch'd, nor ever beast did brouze.

—————
Think not to 'scape the storm of vengeance dread,
That hangs already o'er thy hateful head !

A burning mountain, from his fiery vein,
An iron river rolls along the plain.

— Echo rings

'Mid rocky concaves of the babbling vales,
And bubbling rivers roll'd by gentle gales.

———— our thought's internal eye.

With thee at once the threefold times do fly,
And but a moment lasts eternity.

———— azure-gilded Heaven's pavillion fair.

Th' eternal Sabbath's endless festival.

Lo, how he labours to endure the light,
Which in th' ARCH ESSENCE shineth glorious
bright!

From these profane and foul embraces sprung
A cruel brood, feeding on blood and wrong;
Fell giants strange, of haughty hand and mind,
Plagues of the world, and scourges of mankind.

THE 2d DAY OF THE 2d WEEK;
NOAH.

PART THE FIRST; THE ARK.

As some young river,————
From barren rocks first drop by drop proceeding,
Soon, tow'rd's the sea, the more he flees his source,
With growing streams strengthens his gliding
course,
Rolls, roars, and foams, raging with restless mo-
tion,
And proudly scorns the greatness of the ocean.

Wishing already to dis-throne th' ETERNAL,—

The heavy hand of the high Thunderer.

— I conceive aright
Th' ALMIGHTY-MOST to be most infinite;
That th' ONELY ESSENCE feels not in his mind
The furious tempests of fell passions' wind;

That, moveless, all he moves; that with one
thought

He can build Heaven, and builded bring to
nought;

That his high throne's inclos'd in glorious fire,
Past our approach; that our faint soul doth tire,
Our spirit grows spiritless, when it seeks, by
sense,

To sound his infinite Omnipotence.

I surely know the cherubims do hover,

With flaming wings, his starry face to cover:

None sees the Great, the Almighty, Holy ONE,

But passing-by, and by the back alone:

To us his essence is inexplicable,

Wond'rous his ways, his name un-utterable.

For in the Heavens, above all reach of ours,
God dwells immur'd in diamantine towers.

— O Heaven's fresh fans * ! —

O you, my heralds, and my harbingers!

My nimble posts, and speedy messengers!

Mine arms, my sinews, and my eagles swift,

That thro' the air my rolling chariot list,

When from my mouth in justly-kindled ire

Fly sulph'ry flames, and hot consuming fire,

* God addresses the winds.

When,

When, with my light'ning sceptre's dreadful
wonder,

I muster horror, darkness, clouds and thunder!
Wake, rise, and run; and drink these waters dry,
That hills and dales have hidden from the sky.

Th' Æolian croud obeys his mighty call;
The surly surges of the waters fall;
The sea retreateth;—————
—————

— hope-cher'd Noah————

———— now offers up in zealous wife
The peaceful scent of sweet burnt-sacrifice;
And sends withall, above the starry pole,
These winged sighs from a religious soul.

“ World-shaking Father! Winds' King! Calm-
ing seas!

With mild aspect behold us! Lord, appease
Thine anger's tempest,—————
And bound for ever in their antient caves
‘These stormy seas’ deep world-devouring waves!”

—————
The weeping woods of happy Araby,——
—————

Let the pearly morn,
The radiant noon, and rheumy evening, see
His neck still yoked with captivity!

PART THE SECOND;

BABYLON.

ENTHRONIS'D thus, the tyrant 'gan devise
To perpetrate a thousand cruelties;
Boldly subverting, for his appetite,
God's, Man's, and Nature's triple sacred right.

Arise betimes, while th' opal-coloured morn
In golden pomp doth May-day's door adorn;
Arise, and hear the different voices sweet
Of painted songsters, in the groves that greet
Their gentle mates, each in his phrase and fashion
Utt'ring in various strains his tender passion.

—— the forest-haunting heards——

—— the All-forming voice——

Gold-winged Morpheus——

Where May still reigns, and rose-crown'd Ze-
phyrus.

His Heaven-tuned harp shall still resound,
While the bright Day-star rides his glorious
round.

Sweet-number'd *Homer*—————

Clear-styl'd *Herodotus*—————

— choice-term'd *Petrarch*, in deep passions
grac'd,—

— — — — —
The fluent feigner of *Orlando's* error,—

PART THE THIRD;

THE COLONIES.

WHAT bright-brown cloud shall in the day pro-
tect me ?

What fiery pillar shall by night direct me
Towards each people's primer residence?—

———— the

———— the spicy morning,————

Where stately *Or*, the King of rivers, roars.

And *Niniveh*, more famous than the rest,
Above them rais'd her many-tower'd crest:—

———— where Titan's evening splendor sank;—
And tow'rd's where Phœbus doth each morning
wake,
With *Adel* ocean, and the *Crimson Lake* *.

———— Scepter'd *Elam*————

The pine-plough'd sea,————

Such was the *Goth*, who whilom, issuing forth
From the cold frozen islands of the North,
Encamp'd by *Vistula*;————
He with victorious arms *Sclavonia* gains,
The *Transylvanian* and *Falacchian* plains.

———— with eyes of faith they saw,
Th' invisible *Messias* in the Law.

* The *Æthiopian* ocean and Red Sea.

The sons of these, like flowing waters, spread
O'er all the country, which is bordered
By *Chiesel* river ;—————
—————

Then, passing *Sestos'* straits, they pitch their fold
In vales of *Rhodope* ; and plough the plains,
Where great *Danubius* near his death complains.
—————

With the far-flowing silver *Euphrates*,—
—————

To pearl'd *Aurora's* saffron-colour'd bed.
—————

— the shore,

Where th' azure seas of *Magelan* do roar.
—————

That from cold *Scythia* his high name as far
Might ay resound as sun-burnt *Zanzabar*.

PART THE FOURTH;

THE COLUMNES.

Much like a rock amid the ocean set,
Seeming great Neptune's furly pride to threat.

Upon Oblivion's dull and senseless lap,—

That pallid-fac'd, sad, stooping Nymph, whose eye
Still on the ground is fixed stedfastly.

Law of that law, which did the world erect!

A silver crescent wears *she* * for a crown,
A hairy comet to her heels hangs down,
Brows stately bent in mild majestic wise,
Beneath the same two carbuncles for eyes,
An azure mantle waving at her back
With two bright clasps buckled about her neck;
From her right shoulder sloping all athwart her
A watchet scarf, or broad embroidered garter,

* ASTRONOMY.

Flourish'd with beasts of sundry shapes, and each
With glist'ring stars imboast and powder'd rich,
And then for wings the golden plumes she wears
Of that proud bird which starry rowels bears.

—— that fair chariot flaming bravely bright,
Which, like a whirlwind, in it's swift career
Rapt up the *Thefbite*; ————— O

His Satan-taming son, whose cross abates *
Th' eternal hinges of th' infernal gates.

—— having with patience past
Such dreadful oceans, and such deserts vast,
Such gloomy forests, craggy rocks and steep,
Wide-yawning gulphs, and hideous dungeons deep.

The all-enlight'ning glorious firmament.

Day's princely planet, ————

While mild-ey'd Mercy stealth from his hand
The sulphry plagues prepar'd for sinful man.

* From the French *abattre*, to beat down; used in this sense,
I believe, by Dryden.

THE 3d DAY OF THE 2d WEEK;
ABRAHAM.

PART THE FIRST; THE VOCATION.

○
Th' iron-footed coursers, lusty, fresh, and light,
With loud proud neighings for the combat call.

While the thick arrows show'r on either side,
An iron-cloud Heaven's angry face doth hide.

Go, pay to Pluto, Prince of Acheron,
That tribute thou deny'ft unto thy own.

— thy habit and thy tongue,
Thine arms, and more thy courage, yet so young,
Shew that in Sodom's wanton walls accurst
Thou wert not born, nor in Gomorrha nurs't.

Sleep slowly harness'd his dull bears anon;
And in a noiseless coach, all darkly dight,
Takes with him Silence, Drowsiness, and Night;
Th' air thickens where he goes——
The wolf in woods lies down, the ox i' th' mead,
Th' Ore under water; and on beds of down

Men stretch their limbs,—————
The nightingale, perch'd on the tender spring
Of sweetest hawthorn, hangs her drowsy wing ;
The swallow's silent,—————
Th' yeugh moves no more, the asp doth cease to
shake,
Pines bow their heads, and seem some rest to take.

Methinks already on our glist'ring crests
The glorious garland of the conquest rests.

Youth paints his cheek with rose' and lilies' dies,
A lovely light'ning sparkles in his eyes ;
So that his gallant port, and graceful voice,
Confirm the faintest, make the sad rejoice.

———— his glist'ring shield,
Whose glorious splendor darts a dreadful light.

Death and Despair, Horror and Fury, fight
Under thine ensigns in the dismal night.

Melchisedec, God's sacred minister,
And King of Salem, comes to greet him there,
Blessing his blifs ; and thus with zealous cry
Pierces devout Heaven's starful canopy.
“ Blest be the Lord, that with his hand doth roll
The radiant orbs that turn about the pole !

Who

Who rules the actions of all human kind
With full command ! who with a blast of wind
Razes the rocks, and rends the proudest hills,
Dries up the ocean, and the empty fills !
Blest be the great God of great Abraham !
From age to age extolled be his name !
Let ev'ry place to him high altars build,
And every altar with his praise be fill'd !
His praise above the welkin ever ring
As loud, or louder than his angels sing !"-----

So from the sea to the *Euphratean* source,
And ev'n from *Dan* to *Nilus'* crystal course,
Rings his renown !-----

To the dry desert's sandy horror hied,-----

Hence, hence the high and mighty Prince shall
spring,
Sin's, Death's, and Hell's eternal taming King ;
'The sacred founder of man's sov'reign blifs,-----

A simple Spirit, the glitt'ring child of light,-----

Where solemn nuptials of the LAMB are held ;
Where angels bright, and souls that have excell'd,
All clad in white sing th' Epithalamy,
Carousing nectar of eternity.

PART THE SECOND;

THE FATHERS.

— the voice which made all things,
Which scept'reth shepherds, or uncrowneth Kings.

So Abraham, at these sharp-sounding words,
Seized at once with wonder, grief, and fright,
Is well nigh sinking in eternal night;
Death's ash-pale image in his eyes doth swim,
A chilling ice shivers thro' every limb,
Flat on the ground himself he grov'ling throws,
A hundred times his colour comes and goes;
From all his body a cold dew doth drop,
His speech doth fail, and all his senses stop.

Th' eternal pillar of all verity,——

Sometimes by his eternal self he swears,——

The sable night dislodg'd,——

O thou Ethereal palace Chrystalline!
Shut up for ever all thy gates of grace
Against my soul!—————

The glorious fun of righteousness——
Who shall the mountains bruize with iron mace,
Rule Heaven and Earth, and the infernal place.

———— the thund'ring voice of God,—

PART THE THIRD;

THE LAW.

———— that steepest mount,
Whose snowy shoulders with their stony pride
Eternally do Spain from France divide.

———— the conqueror of Hell,
The twice-born King,—————
Who dead shall live again,—————

A lovely babe, whose smiles implor'd the aid
And gentle pity of the royal maid ;
Love and the graces, state and majesty,
Appear'd about his infant face to fly ;
And on his head seem'd, as it were, to shine
Prefageful rays of something more divine.

Base of this universe ; uniting chain
Of th' elements ; the wisdom sov'reign ;
Fountain of goodness ; ever-shining light ;
Perfectly blest ; the One, the Good, the Right.

My sacred ears are tired with the noise
Of thy poor brethren's just-complaining voice ;
They've groan'd, alas ! and panted, all too long,
Under that tyrant's unrelenting wrong.

O seven-horn'd Nile ! O hundred-pointed plain !
O city of the Sun, O Thebes, and thou
Renowned Pharos ! do you all not bow
To us alone ? Are you not only ours ?
Ours at our beck ? Then to what other powers
Owes your great Pharaoh homage or respect ?
Or by what Lord to be controll'd and check'd ?

Now Omnipotence
At Egypt shoots it's shaft of pestilence ;——

—— the river's roaring pride
Is dried up,—————
—————

Then the THRICE SACRED brings a fable cloud
Of horned locusts,—————
—————

Death, ghastly Death, triumpheth * every where.
—————

Great King, no more bay, with thy wilfulness,
His wrath's dread torrent! He is King of Kings,—
And, in his fight, the greatest of you all
Are but as moats that in the sun do fall.
—————

Nile's stubborn monarch stately drawn upon
A curious chariot, chac'd with pearl and stone,
By two proud courfers,—————
Curseth the Heavens, the Air, the Wind, and
Waves,

And, urging his pursuit, blasphemes and braves:
Here a huge billow on his targe doth split;
Then comes a bigger, and a bigger yet,
To second these: the Sea grows ghastly great;
Yet stoutly still he thus doth dare and threat.
“Base juggler, think'st thou with thy hellish
charms

Thou shalt prevail against our puissant arms?—

* Thus accented by Milton, *triumpheth*: See PAR. LOST,
i. 123.—iii. 338.—xii. 452.

And thou, proud trait'rous sea, how darest thou
Falsely conspire 'gainst thine own Neptune now?

Dar'st thou presume 'gainst us to rise and roar?

I charge thee, cease! Be still, and rage no more!

Or I shall clip thine arms in marble stocks

And yoke thy shoulders with a bridge of rocks."

Here at the ocean more than ever swells,—

And a black pillow, that aloft doth float,

With salt and sand stops his blasphemous throat.

What now betides the tyrant? Water now

Hath rest his neck, his chin, his cheek, his eyes,
his brow,

His front, his fore-top: now there's nothing seen,

But his proud arm shaking his falchion keen;

Wherewith he seems, in spite of Heaven and Hell,

To fight with Death, and menace Israel*.

Eternal

* Against this passage, I would hope Dryden did not mean
to point his satire, where, speaking of those authors,

————— who themselves too much esteem,

Lose their own genius and mistake their theme,

he instances Du Bartas;

Thus in times past DU BARTAS vainly writ,

Allaying sacred truth with trifling wit;

Impertinently, and without delight,

Describ'd the Israelites' triumphant flight,

And, following Moses o'er the sandy plain,

Perish'd with Pharaoh in th' Arabian main.

Eternal issue of eternal Sire!
 Deep wisdom of the Father!——

I believe the generality of readers would very oppositely characterise Du Bartas's description of the death of Pharaoh. It is evidently given *con amore*, and *con spirito*.

But I must observe, that Dryden probably never read Sylvester's Du Bartas, after he was capable of judging of it. When he was a boy he read it; as he himself has told us in the preface to his Spanish Friar. At that time his favourite passage was the very one which he has justly *gibbeted* in the ART OF POETRY, as a warning to bombastic poets. "I remember," says he, "when I was a boy, I thought the inimitable Spenser a mean poet; in comparison of Sylvester's Du Bartas; and I was rapt into ecstasy, when I read these lines;

Now when the Winter's keener breath began,
 To crystallize the Baltic ocean;
 To glaze the lakes, to bridle up the floods,
 And periwig with snow the bald-pate woods."

"I am much deceived," adds he, "if this be not abominable *fustian*." I will venture to say, Milton, at 12 years old, could have told him as much. This is *not* one of the passages, which I suppose to have caught Milton when a boy, and to have hung on his mind after.—If in his *abominable fustian* Dryden includes the "bridling up the floods," he should let the Roman poet have his share of the merit, by attributing it to the

CURSUS FRÆNARET aquarum.

The passage from Sylvester (which I have already exhibited in a note, p. 15.) is in p. 223, of the folio Sylvest. Du Bartas, edit. 1621.

O Israel,

O Israel, see'st thou in this table pure,
In this fair glass, thy Saviour's pourtraiture;
The Son of God, Messias promised,
The sacred Seed, to bruise the Serpent's head;
The glorious Prince, whose sceptre ever shines,
Whose kingdom's scope the Heaven of Heaven
confines?

Then, when he shall, to light thy sinful load,
Put manhood on, dis-know him not for God.

Where th' EVERLASTING GOD, in glorious wonder,
With dreadful voice his fearful LAW did thunder.

Nymph-prompted Numa,———

Redoubled light'nings dazzle th' Hebrews' eyes,
Cloud-sund'ring thunder roars through earth and
skies.

I am Jehovah, I, with mighty hand,
Brought thee from bondage out of Egypt land.

But since in Horeb THE HIGH-THUND'RING ONE
Pronounc'd his Law,———

—— wherever, to descry,
Th' all-searching Sun doth cast his flaming eye.

PART THE FOURTH;

THE CAPTAINS.

HAIL holy Jordan, and you blessed torrents
Of the pure waters; of whose crystal currents
So many faints have sipp'd! O walls, that rest
Fair monuments of many a famous guest!
O Hills, O Dales, O Fields, so flow'ry sweet,
Where Angels oft have set their sacred feet!

So have I seen a cloud-crown'd hill some time,
Torn from a greater by the waste of time,—

The fight grows fierce, and winged Victory,
Shaking her laurels, rush'd confusedly
Into the midst;—

After the while from neighb'ring mountains arms
A hundred winters and a hundred storms,
With huge great hail-shot, driving fiercely fell
In the stern visage of the infidel.

Beam of th' Eternal! O all-seeing Sun!

———— all-hiding night, ———

————
The day-reducing chariot of the sun, —

———— no where shines the regal diadem,
But, comet-like, it bodes all vice extreme.

————
Democracy is as a toiled ship,
Void both of Pole and Pilot, in the deep.

———— shunning these extremities,
Let us make choice of men upright and wise;
Of such whose virtue doth the land adorn;
Of such whom Fortune hath made noble born;
Of such as Wealth hath rais'd above the pitch
Of th' abject vulgar; and to the hands of such,
(Such as for wisdom, wealth, and birth, excell,)
Let us commit the rule of Israel:
But ever from the sacred helm exclude
The turbulent, base, moody multitude!

———— Who more firm and fit
At careful stern of Policy to sit,
Than such as in the ship most venture bear?
Such as their own wreck with the State's wreck
fear?

Such as, content, and having much to lose,
Ev'n death itself, rather than change, would
choose?

In brief the scepter Aristocratike,
 And People-sway, have this default alike ;
 That neither of them can be permanent
 For want of Union,—————
 But MONARCHY is as a goodly station,
 Built skilfully upon a sure foundation :
 A quiet house, wherein, as principal,
 One Father is obey'd and serv'd of all ;
 A well-appointed ship, when danger's near,
 Where many masters strive not who shall steer.

'Tis better bear the youth-slips of a King,
 I' th' law some fault, i' th' Court some blemishing,
 Than to fill all with blood-floods of debate,
 While, to *reform*, you but *deform* the state.

One cannot, without danger, stir a stone
 In a great building's old foundation :
 Physicians thus seek rather to support,
 With order'd diet, and in gentle sort,
 A feeble body, tho' in sickly plight,
 Than with strong medicines to destroy it quite *.

* Some of these last passages are cited, more for the political axioms they contain, than for any high degree of poetical merit.

THE 4th DAY OF 2d WEEK;

DAVID;

PART THE FIRST; THE TROPHIES.

HEROIC force and princely form withall
Honour the scepter of courageous Saul;
Success confirms it; for the power Divine
Tames by his hand th' outrageous Philistine,
Edom and Moab, _____

Nor lead, behind my bright triumphal car,
So many nations vanquished in war.

Give me the laurel, not of war, but peace;
Or civic garland of green oaken boughs,
Thrice three times wreath'd about my glorious
brows.

Flight, Fear, and Death, his ghastly steps attend.

A moving rock, whose looks do terrify
Ev'n his own host; whose march doth seem to
make
The mountain tops of Succoth' self to shake.

Where is thy sweaty dust? thy sun-burnt scars?
The glorious marks of soldiers train'd in wars?

Such as in life, such in his death he seems;
For ev'n in death he curses and blasphemes.

She grows more ghastly, and more ghost-like
grim;—

Eternal Shades! Infernal Deities!
Death, Horrors, Terrors, Silence, Obsequies,
Dæmons, Dæmons, dispatch;—

From dismal darkness of your deep abyss,——

——— Poesy, whose pleasure is
To bathe in seas of Heavenly mysteries,
Her chastest feathers in that stream shall dip.

· Oft in fair flowers the baneful serpent sleeps:—

Her sparkling eye is like the morning star ;—

Thou sinn'dst in secret, but Sol's blushing eye
Shall be the witness of *their* villainy.—

PART THE SECOND;

THE MAGNIFICENCE.

Know that his eye can spy, in ev'ry part,
The darkest closets of the mazy heart.

With an observant mind the course survey
Of Night's dim taper, and the torch of Day.

— he in spirit sees,
While his sense sleeps, the God of Majesties,
The Lord of Hosts; who, crown'd with radiant
flames,
Offers him choice of these four lovely dames.

First

First GLORY, shaking in her hand a pike ;—
Among the stars her stately head she rears,
A silver trumpet by her side she wears ;
Her swelling robes, of tissue passing price,
All story-wrought with bloody victories,
Triumphs, and Trophies, Arches, Crowns, and
Rings ;
While at her feet there sigh a thousand Kings.—

Next her comes WEALTH, in treasures rich
bedight ;—
The glitt'ring stuff, which doth about her fold,
Is rough with rubies, stiff with beaten gold ;
With either hand from hollow steanes * she pours
Pactolian surges and *Argolian* showers.

Then chearful HEALTH ; whose brow no wrin-
kle bears,
Whose cheek no paleness, in whose eye no tears ;
— — — — — her seemly train
Mirth, Exercise, and Temperance, sustain.

Last WISDOM comes ;—————
She's God's own mirrour, she's a light whose
glance
Springs from the light'ning of his countenance ;
She's mildest Heaven's most sacred influence ;
— Never decays her beauty's excellence ;

* URNS, or Vases. *Scene is Stone.*

Aye like herself; and she doth always trace,
Not only the same path, but the same pace.

Having beheld their beauties bright, the Prince
Seems rapt already ev'n to Heaven from hence;
Sees a whole Eden round about him thine,
And, 'midst so many benefits divine,
Doubts which to choose;—————

Happy seems He, of countie's hearts possess'd;—
For whom alone a whole rich Country yields
The Corn and Wine of it's abundant fields;
Who boasts soft *Sereans'* yellow spoils, the gems
And precious stones of the *Arabian* streams;
The mines of *Ophir*, th' *Entidorian* fruits,
Sabaean odours, and rich *Tyrian* suits.

Let me for ever from her sacred lip
Th' ambrosial Nard, and roseal Nectar sip.

A more than human knowledge beautifies
His princely actions;—————

What burning wings the light'ning rides upon;
What curb the ocean in his bounds doth keep;
What power Night's princess beams upon the deep.

The eye-bold eagle—————
—————

See how a number of this wanton fry *
Do fondly chace the gaudy butterfly.

—————

The sumptuous pride of massy pyramids.
—————

* He is describing the sports of the Loves.—Mr. Warton's admired description of Leisure, in his ODE ON THE APPROACH OF SUMMER, shews that a century and a half make no great difference in the genius and fancy of true poets:

Leisure, that thro' the balmy sky
CHACES A CRIMSON BUTTERFLY.

Mr. Warton, who in that ode is eminently a poet, was certainly very little acquainted with Sylvester's Du Bartas.

PART THE THIRD;

THE SCHISM.

Ah! see we not, some seek the like in France *?
 With rageful swords of civil variance
 To share the sacred Gaulian diadem?
 To strip the Lilies from their native stem?
 And, as it were, to cantonise the state,
 Whose law did aw Imperial Rhine of late;
 Tiber and Iber too; and under whom
 Ev'n silver Jordan's captive floods did foam?

In Aza's aid fights th' arm omnipotent,
 (Which shakes the Heavens, rakes Hills; and
 Rocks doth rent,)
 Against black Zerah's over-daring boast;
 That with dread deluge of a million host
 O'erflow'd all Juda; and with fury fell
 Transported Afric into Israel.
 And Aza now, beholding th' Ammonite,
 The Idumean, and proud Moabite,

* The poet, speaking in his own person, laments the violence of civil war then distracting his country. Du Bartas was a zealous partisan of Henry IV.

In battle rang'd, caus'd all his host to sing
This song aloud ; them thus encouraging.

“ Come on, my hearts ! Let's cheerly to the
charge,

Having for Captain, for defence, and targe,
That mighty power, to whom the raging sea
Hath heretofore in foaming pride giv'n way ;
Who, with a sigh, _____

Can call the North, East, South, and West to-
gether ;

Who, at his beck, or with a wink, commands
Millions of millions of bright-winged bands ;
Who, with a breath, brings in an instant under
The proudest powers ; whose arrows are the
THUNDER ?

Thefbite Elijah _____

Zephyr is mute, and not a breath is felt,—

— the true, wise, wondrous _____
Omnipotent, victorious, glorious, God :—

If the blue Sea, and winged Firmament,
The all-bearing Earth, and stormful Element,
_____ if Heaven, Air, Sea, and Land,
And all in all, and all in every one,
By his own finger be sustain'd alone ;—

Amid the air tumultuous Satan rowls,
 And not the Saints, the happy heav'nly souls :
 For CHRIST, his flesh transfigur'd and divine,
 Mounted above the arches crySTALLINE ;
 And where CHRIST is, from pain and passion free,
 There, after death, shall all his chosen be.

Elijah therefore climbs th' empyreal pole ;—

This Jewry knows ; a soil, sometime at least,
 Sole Paradise of all the proudest East ;—

— pallid Fear, wild-staring, shiv'ring Hag, —

Clashing of arms, rattling of iron cars, —

The King of Winds calls home his churlish train,
 And Amphitritè smooths her front again :
 Air's cloudy robe returns to crystal clear,
 And smiling Heaven's bright torches re-appear.

God reaches out his hand, unfolds his frowns,
 Disarms his arm of Thunder, bruising crowns,
 Bows graciously his glorious flaming crest,
 And mildly grants, at th' instant, their request.

PART THE FOURTH;

THE DECAY; AN ODE

THE-blood-gain'd scepter lasts not long, we
know;

The throne of tyrants totters to and fro.

Through the thin air the winged shaft doth sing.

Unpuff'd in sun-shine, unappall'd in storms,

His fame he bears about, both far and nigh,

On the wide wings of Immortality.

Thine eye

Pierceth to Hell, and ev'n from Heaven beholds

The dumbest thoughts in our hearts inmost folds.

Thou art the Lord, th' Invincible alone,

The all-seeing God, the ever-lasting ONE:

And

And whoſo dares him 'gainſt thy powers oppoſe,
 Is but a blaſt which roaring Boreas blows,
 Weening to tear the Alps off at the foot,
 Or cloud-prop Athos from his maſſy root:
 Who but miſ-ſpeaks of thee, he ſpits at Heaven,
 And his own ſpittle in his face is driven.

Know you not, here beneath,
 We always fail unto the port of Death?
 That Death 's the end of all our ſtorms and ſtrife;
 The ſweet beginning of Immortal Life?

Lord, what are we? or what is our deſerving?
 That to confirm our faith, ſo prone to ſwerving,
 Thou deign'ſt to ſhake Heaven's ſolid orbs ſo
 bright,
 And to diſorder Nature's order quite?

Ye honey-dropping hills, we erſt frequented!
 Ye milk-ful vales, with hundred brooks indented!
 Delicious gardens of dear Iſrael!
 Hills! Gardens! Vales! we bid you all farewell.

Turn therefore, turn your bloody blades on me;
 But let theſe harmleſs little ones go free!
 O ſtain not with the blood of innocents
 Th' immortal trophies of your great attents!

So ever may the Riphëan mountains quake
 Under your feet ! so ever may you make
 South, East, and West, your own ! On ev'ry coast
 So ay victorious march your glorious host * !

* I am fortunate in being able to close my extracts with a passage of such fine effect. I might have exhibited the last line among the energetic passages, where *ay* is used for *ever* by Sylvester, (see p. 22) ; but I purposely reserved it for this place, that I might "leave the reader" of these Extracts "*con la bocca dolce.*"

The *ay*, in my opinion, is no disfigurement of the passage. It is true, *vetustatem redolet* ; but we shall scarcely quarrel with this. "*umbra et color quasi opacæ vetustatis.*"

Here Du Bartas's poem ends. Of his proposed plan, there remained to be written, three more DAYS ; *viz.* ZEDECHIAS, MESSIAS, and THE ETERNAL SABBATH ; with their subdivisions. "Of these," we are told by the printer of the English Du Bartas, "Death, preventing our NOBLE POET, hath deprived us."

I WISH you may have had resolution to proceed *so far* with me : but my EXTRACTS have swelled, under my hand, beyond my intention, although I have omitted many passages that, in my opinion, well deserved to be brought forwards. It is probable also, that I have inserted others, which to you may appear *feeble*, and such as might better have been kept back : but they *struck me* at the time, and, on a hasty retrospect, I feel unwilling to withdraw any of them.

And now, my dear Sir, what think you of my OLD POET, whom, before it is long, we shall be entitled to style OF THE ANTEPENULTIMATE CENTURY *? I do not ask you to concede to me, that his poetry is of that absolutely perfect kind, which deserves to be held out as a model to all succeeding ages. But,

* Joshua Sylvester was born in 1563; and he published his VERSION of part of DU BARTAS'S WEEKS in 1598.

I believe, you will agree with me, that, in many of those passages which I have produced, it far surpasses, in the *vividitas*, every thing on scriptural subjects that had preceded it in our language; and that it was calculated to elevate the *tone* of Sacred Poesy. At the time of its publication, we know, it produced much effect *. If we cannot assert that it constitutes its author the *ὁ πᾶσι* of poets, we may at least say, that it has wherewithall, even in this age of fastidious correctness, to strike every mind, in which are the genuine seeds of Poetry; and, at the time

* That the 4to edition of 1613 was the *second* edition, appears from Lownes's address to the reader, prefixed to Hudson's *JUDITH*; which, he says, was added, "to make the *second* edition more "complete." I have noticed the second folio edition, printed by Robert Young, in 1633, see p. 84. (To have passed through, in thirty years, two 4to and two folio editions, is a proof of the popularity of Sylvester's *Du Bartas*. Such a sale is not now, I believe, very common: at that time it was very rare.

when

when it appeared, must have operated forcibly on a young reader of this predicament.—Such, I cannot but persuade myself, was the effect of Sylvester's *Du Bartas* on Milton; whose "early acquaintance with it, and predilection for it," it has been my object to shew. It contains, indeed, more material *PRIMA STAMINA* of the *PARADISE LOST*, than, as I believe, any other book whatever: and *my hypothesis* is, that it positively laid the first stone of that "monumentum ære perrennius."—That *ARTHUR* for a time predominated in Milton's mind over his, at length preferred, sacred subject, was probably owing to the advice of Manso*, and the track of reading into which he had then got. How far the *ADAMO* of *Andreini*, or the *SCENA TRAGICA D'ADAMO ED EVA* of *Troilus Lancetta*, as pointed out by Mr. Hayley,—or any of

* See Mr. Hayley's highly judicious, and well-supported, *CONJECTURES ON THE ORIGIN OF THE PARADISE LOST*, p. 254.

the Italian Poems on such subjects, noticed by Mr. Walker *,—contributed to revive his predilection for Sacred Poesy, it is beside my purpose to enquire. If he was materially *caught* by any of these, it served, I conceive, only to renew a *primary impression* made on his mind by Sylvester's Du Bartas: although the Italian dramas might induce him then to *meditate* his divine poem in a *dramatic* form. It is, indeed, justly observed by Mr. Warton, on the very fine passage, ver. 33, of the VACATION EXERCISE, written when Milton was only *nineteen*, “that it contains strong indications of a young mind anticipating the subject of Paradise Lost.”—Cowley found himself to be a poet, or, as he himself tells us, “was made one †,” by the delight he took in Spenser's Fairy Queen, “which

* In his very interesting and spirited HISTORICAL MEMOIR ON ITALIAN TRAGEDY.—See p. 172; and Appendix, xxxii.

† Essay xi. OF MYSELF.

“ was wont to lay in his mother’s apartment ;” and which he had read all over, before he was twelve years old. That Dryden was, in some degree, similarly indebted to Cowley, we may collect from his denominating him “ the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley *.” Pope, at a little more than eight years of age, was initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogilby’s Homer, and Sandys’s Ovid ; and to the latter he has himself intimated obligations, where he declares, in his notes to the Iliad, “ that English poetry owes much of its present beauty to the translations of Sandys.”——The *rudimenta poetica* of our great poet I suppose similarly to have been SYLVESTER’S DU BARTAS ; which, I conceive, not only elicited the first sparks of poetic fire from the pubescent genius of Milton, but induced him, from that time, to devote

* Dedication of his TRANSLATIONS from JUVENAL.

himself principally to Sacred Poesy, and to select URANIA for his immediate Muse,

— magno percussus amore.

Such was the idea that flashed on my mind from the *internal evidence* of my worm-eaten folio, combined with the æra of its publication. When I afterwards found that it was printed on *Bread-street-bill*, and that I had to place the *incunabula* of SYLVESTER'S DU BARTAS, and of MILTON, almost on the same spot, my *hypothesis* began to assume a degree of plausibility, which emboldened me to lay it before you. In proceeding so to do, when I had reason further to trace Milton, on good conjectural grounds, to Lownes's press, on another occasion *, I felt myself advancing beyond the region of *mere probability*.

I wished still more to have established my ground; by ascertaining the relative

* See page 51, *supra*.

situation of Milton's house, the Spread Eagle in Bread-street, and the house of the printer, the Star on Bread-street-hill. Here, however, all local investigation was completely precluded by the fire of London; in which, it is particularly mentioned by Wood, that Milton's house was burned: and, not knowing where to go for any recorded information respecting its particular site, I could only resort to conjectures highly imaginary *, for pla-

* I have sometimes felt an inclination to conjecture, that Milton's house stood in a part of Bread-street, so near the brow of the hill, that from the upper rooms he had a good view of the river.—In his *first* ELEGY, written to his friend Deodate, on this very spot, he particularly describes the Thames (when the tide is flowing in, and near the full height) washing the houses on the Bankside;

Me tenet urbs, REFLUÀ quam Thameſis ALLUIT UNDÀ.

What if we suppose the Thames actually in his view, when he wrote this? In this case, he must have been a very near neighbour to Lownes; as Bread-street-hill is a very short street.

cing

cing the *Spread Eagle* as near as might be to *Bread-street-hill*.

But a material circumstance still remains to be considered ; which may either completely demolish the drift of this part of my argument, or preclude the necessity of laying any material stress upon it.

In the time of Milton's childhood, proximity of situation was by no means certain to produce neighbourly intercourse. The spirit of Party, which was engendered in the preceding century, was now rapidly advancing to its height ; and an irreconcilable rigidity of opinion began to prevail on each side. Where persons agreed in their principles and tenets, this served to approximate the distant, and *fraternise* the unrelated : where their fundamental doctrines were adverse, this was sufficient to estrange the nearest, and to dissolve all

the charities

Of Father, Son, and Brother.—

Congruity of sentiment has at all times formed a principal chain of connection ; and a contrariety of it has frequently been an insurmountable barrier of separation. —In arguing, therefore, on the probability of *neighbourly intercourse*, it will be right to ascertain a *congruity of principles*, before we build much on absolute contiguity of situation.—If I can shew this union of opinions in the present instance ; and if I can extend it beyond the printer of the work in question, and the family and connections of my supposed reader of it, both to its original author and its translator ; —I shall consider my point established, in as high a degree as the distance of time, and the circumstance of the case, will admit.

It

It appears, from Wood's account of Joshua Sylvester *, that he underwent persecution

* Wood's account of Sylvester is annexed to that of George Chapman, and is as follows :—“ Contemporary with this worthy poet, was another, *Joshua Sylvester* ; usually called by the poets of his time *Silver-tongued Sylvester*. Whether he received any academical education, (having had his muse kindly fostered by his uncle, William Plumb, Esq.) I cannot say. In his manly years, he is reported to have been a merchant-adventurer. Queen Elizabeth had a great respect for him ; King James I. had a greater ; and Prince Henry greatest of all ; who valued him so much, that he made him his first poet pensioner. He was much renowned by his virtuous fame ; and, by those of his profession, and such as admired poetry, esteemed a Saint on earth, a true Nathaniel, a Christian Israelite. They tell us farther, that he was very pious and sober ; religious in himself and family ; and courageous to withstand adversity : also that he was adorned with the gift of tongues, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, and Latin. But this must be known, that he, taking too much liberty upon him to correct the vices of the times, as George Wither and Jo. Vicars, poets, afterwards did, suffered several times some trouble ; and thereupon it was, as I presume, that *his Step-dame country did ungratefully*

persecution for the rigidity of his opinions; and at last was driven to expatriate. Wood, indeed, classes him with the poets George Wither and Jo. Vicars.

The
gratefully cast him off, and became most unkind to him.
 He hath translated from *French* into *English* the *Divine Weeks and Works*, with a complete *Collection* of all the other most delightful *Works* of Will. de Salluste *Sieur du Bartas*. At length this eminent poet, Joshua Sylvester (a name worthily dear to the age he lived in) died at *Middleburgh*, in *Zealand*, on the 28th of *September*, 1618, aged 55."—*ATHEN. OXON.* vol. I. p. 594.

We may farther collect, from his poems, that he was a native of Kent; and was educated under the learned Hadrianus Saravia, at Southampton school, from the age of nine to twelve; and that this was all the education he had. In one of his poems, he acknowledges his obligations to Dr. Saravia, with all the affection of Milton for his first preceptor, Thomas Young: and he regrets much that he neither went to Oxford nor Cambridge, nor followed his respected master to Leyden; where Saravia was invited, a few years after, to fill the divinity chair. From the following verses, it might be supposed that his master had recommended Du Bartas's poems

The latter, one of the most violent Puritans of the time, was his most zealous admirer; and wrote an highly encomiastic elegy on his death, with all the ardour of enthusiastic affection.

Sylvester had also complimented Vicars in a copy of encomiastic verses, prefixed to his translation of Dr. Herringe's Latin Poem, on the *Powder Plot*, entitled, *Mis-*

to his studious perusal: though what is said may only mean, that his instructions qualified him to translate them.

— MY SARAVIA, to whose rev'rend name

Mine owes the honour of DU BARTAS's fame.

From th' ample cisterns of his sea of skill

Suck'd I my succor, and slight shallow rill;

The little all I can, and all I could,

In three poor years, at three times three years old.

His love and labours apted so my wit,

That, when URANIA after rapted it,

Through Heaven's strong working, weakness did produce

Leaves of delight and fruit of sacred use;

Which, had my muse t' our either Athens flown,

Or follow'd him, had been much more mine own.

P. 1168. FUNERAL ELEGY ON MARGARET HILL.

CHIEF'S MYSTERY, or TREASON'S MASTERPIECE; published in 1617. He likewise wrote a poem addressed, with many symptoms of zealous attachment, to Archbishop Abbot, who, Neale says, "was at the head of the doctrinal Puritans:" and he has erected to the same prelate *, in the manner of the *axes*, *winges*, and *eggs*, of some of the Greek minor poets, a *poetical pillar*, in which he celebrates him "for constant standing on right's weak side, against the tide of wrong †." Joshua Sylvester, it appears then, was a zealous Puritan ‡: and hence we might account for

* P. 388. Ed. 1621.

† Another patron and particular friend of Jos. Sylvester was Anthony Bacon, (elder brother to the Lord Chancellor,) who, in his travels, had resided some time at Geneva, in the house of the celebrated Theodore Beza, the colleague of Calvin.—Beza had the greatest esteem for Mr. Bacon; and dedicated his *Meditations* to Lady Bacon, his mother.

‡ The Court of Prince Henry, it may be observed, was Puritanic. His favourite chaplain was Joseph Hall, in the next reign Bishop of Exeter;

for his devoting himself to translating the poems of Du Bartas*, who was a rigid Calvinist.

who, though he wrote afterwards strongly in defence of Episcopacy, was at this time a favourer of Puritanism. See the Character of P. Henry, in Neale's *History of the Puritans*.

* Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas descended from a noble family of Gascony; his father was Treasurer of France. He quitted the Roman Catholic Religion; and attached himself to Henry IV. then king of Navarre; by whom he was employed at the courts of Denmark, England, and Scotland. To the latter he was sent with a view of bringing about a marriage between Henry's sister and our James I. His manners and talents seem to have recommended him to the particular favour of James, who wished to have detained him in his service; but he was too strongly attached to his own master. He was no less famous as a soldier, than as a poet. He was with Henry at the battle of Ivry, which he has celebrated; but did not live to see him on the throne of France, as he died the same year, aged 45.—The famous French poet Ronfard, on reading his *First Week*, or the CREATION, was so much charmed with it, that he sent him a gold pen, with a complimentary message, that “he had done more in one week, than Ronfard himself in his

Calvinist.—The two editions of Sylvester's *Du Bartas* were, I believe, the greatest works that issued from the Bread-street-hill press: and they are edited so perfectly *con amore**, that we can scarcely doubt the principles of Humfrey Lownes, the printer and publisher. At the very time when the folio edition of 1621 was published, the domestic preceptor of young Milton was the Rev. Thomas Young; from whose known principles † (for which he was obliged two years after to leave England) Mr. Warton has justly inferred the puritanism of his employer, the father of Milton ‡.—Here then we cannot but sup-

his whole life."—*Du Bartas* was, as he tells us, in the preface to his *Judith*, "the first person
" in France, who, in a just poem, had treated in
" his tongue of sacred things." Sylvest. *Du Bart.*
Ed. 1621. p. 683.

* See the printer's address, p. 8, *supra*.

† Milton describes him,

———— ANTIQUE CLARUS PIETATIS HONORE.

EL. iv. 17.

‡ See Warton's *Milton*; note on EL. iv. ver. 1.

pose, that congruity of principles, proximity of situation; and a literary disposition, in each party, combined to produce not merely *acquaintance*, but most probably *much intimacy*, between old Milton and Humfrey Lownes. This might have led to the preceptorship of Young: or that circumstance might have primarily caused the acquaintance of the two neighbours, or ultimately have strengthened the confraternity between them. It is possible, that Young himself superintended the publication of the folio edition of Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, in 1621, and that he corrected the proofs *; and thus the sheets from the press might find their way to Milton's house. The book itself also was very likely, on its publication, to have been much read in Milton's family; where it might retain a place in the parlour window, as the *Fairy Queen*

* It is well edited; particularly in point of punctuation.

did in that of Cowley's mother, and, being similarly always in the way, might be frequently in the hands of the young reader of the family. But it seems to me highly probable, that Young himself put the book into the hands of his pupil; and perhaps, in the course of his lectures, pointed out to him the eminent beauties of the greater poem. And to this we might refer (and not to "a first acquaintance with the classics only *"). Milton's grateful acknowledgement of his beloved and respected preceptor's primary instruction and initiation of him in the divine mysteries of sacred poesy:

PRIMUS EGO AONIUS, ILLO PRÆEUNTE, recessus
 Lustrabam, et bifidi SACRA VIRETA jugi;
 Pieriosque hausi latices, Clioque favente,
 Castalio sparsi lacta ter ora mero. El. iv.

HE taught me first th' Aonian shades to tread,
 And roam Parnassus' hallow'd height; 'twas HE,
 My youthful steps with guiding hand who led
 To the pure strains of SACRED POESY.

* As suggested by Mr. Warton; note on EL. iv. ver. 1.

Upon the whole, from the internal evidence of the book itself, combined with all the additional circumstances which I have been enabled to lay before you, I think you will admit "MILTON'S early acquaintance with SYLVESTER'S DU BARTAS, and his predilection for it:"—let me add, "his obligations to it."—By *obligations*, as I have already intimated, I certainly do not mean such, as in any respect detract from his genius and talents; but such as render them more conspicuous, by marking the fineness of his penetration, and the accuracy of his judgement. Neither do I merely point to its immediately suggesting (which I have no doubt it did) the "argumentum in-gens" of his sublime poem; but I look to obligations of a higher and more general kind. I cannot but consider Sylvester's Du Bartas as having primarily taught Milton, (what he was exquisitely framed to learn, and what was, at that time, very little understood,) that "SACRED

POETRY was capable of assuming the most elevated *tone*; and that, while neither CALLIOPE, nor CLIO, could aspire to the *divine sublimity* of URANIA, the Heavenly Muse in reality united, with her own *natiÿe dignity*, the *sweetness* of the ONE, and the *powers* of the OTHER."

In submitting these *considerations* to your better judgement, I cannot omit the opportunity, which it affords me, thus publicly to assure you of the very sincere respect, and truly grateful regard, with which I have the pleasure to be,

Dear SIR,

Your obliged and faithful friend,

CHARLES DUNSTER.

POSTSCRIPT.

I BELIEVE we might trace strong marks of a congenial disposition in Milton and Du Bartas: at least we cannot but observe much resemblance in their peculiar devotion of themselves to SACRED POETRY. The latter has a very pleasing poem on this subject; which reads with a high spirit of originality in the language of Joshua Sylvester. I cannot resist the inclination I feel to lay the greater part of it before you; as it breathes so exactly the sentiments, which Milton felt himself*. What I shall present to you, is

* We may compare Milton's account of his own Literary Projects as they seem similarly to have pressed in competition on his mind; and there to have

is about three-fourths of the poem in my folio. I have, in a few instances, made some

have submitted to the pre-eminence of Sacred Poetry. " Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse, to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope, and hardest attempting; *whether* that Epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a *diffuse*, and the book of Job a *brief* model; or *whether* the rules of Aristotle are herein to be strictly kept, or Nature to be followed;—or *whether* those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation;—or, if occasion shall lead, to imitate those magnificent odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy. But those frequent songs, throughout the Law and Prophets, beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. These abilities are the inspired gift of God,—and are of power, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate

for e immaterial alterations : but these are merely for the purpose of covering a few highly obsolete expressions ; or to form a connection, where I have omitted some stanzas. Where I expect you principally to admire, I have been an *exact transcriber*.

celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's Almightyness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church ; to sing victorious agonies of Martyrs and of Saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly, through faith, against the enemies of Christ ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship : lastly, whatsoever in Religion is holy and sublime, in Virtue amiable or grave, all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to point out and describe ; teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue through all the instances of example, with such delight, that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed." *Introduction to the Second Book of THE REASON OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.*

U R A N I A,

OR

THE HEAVENLY MUSE.

SCARCE had the April of mine age begun,
When brave desire, t' immortalize my name,
Did make me oft rest and repast to shun,
In curious project of some learned frame :

But, (as a pilgrim, at th' approach of night,
If chance cross-ways diverging meet his view,
Arrests his course studious to find the right,
And doubts and ponders which he shall pursue,)

Among the many flow'ry paths that lead
Up to the mount, where, with green bays

APOLLO

Crowns happy numbers with immortal meed,
I stood confus'd and doubtful which to follow ;

One while I sought the *Grecian* scene to dress
 In French disguise; in loftier style anon *
 T' inbrue our stage with tyrants' bloody gestures
 Of *Thebes*, *Mycenæ*, and proud *Iliou* †;

Anon to consecrate my country's story,
 I woo'd the aid of the Aonian band;
 Studious to sing triumphant Gallia's glory,
 Extending wide the limits of her land;

Anon I thought the frolic son to sing
 Of wanton Venus; and the bitter sweet,
 That too much love to the best wits doth bring:
 Theme for my nature, and mine age, too meet!

* I wished to have cited this and the two following stanzas, as instances of Sylvester's use of the word *anon* in transitions of description, (see p. 66); but I reserved them for this place.—Perhaps this immediate passage was in Milton's mind, when he leads his cheerful man *all at once* to the theatre,

Then to the well-trod stage ANON,—

† As I have just supposed this stanza to have been in Milton's mind in speaking of representations of comedy; it may be supposed also to have contributed to his division of the subjects of Grecian Tragedy on two occasions.

Seu mœret Pelopeia domus, seu nobilis Ili,

Seu luit incestos aula Creontis avos.

EL. i. 45.

Presenting Thebes or Pelops line,

Or the tale of Troy divine.

PENSEROSO, 99.

While

While to and fro thus tossed by ambition,
 Yet unresolv'd of my course, I rove,
 Lo suddenly a sacred apparition!
 Some daughter, think I, of supernal Jove:

Angelical her gesture and her gait,
 Divinely sweet her speech and countenance;
 Her nine-fold voice did choicely imitate
 Th' harmonious music of Heaven's nimble dance.

Upon her head a glorious diadem,
 Seven-double folded, moving diversly;
 And on each fold sparkled a precious gem,
 Obliquely turning o'er her head on high.

An azure mantle on her back she wore,
 With artless art, in orderly disorder;
 Flourish'd, and fill'd with thousand lamps, and
 more,
 Her sacred beauty to illustrate further.

Here flames the *harp*, there shine the tender *twins*,
 Here *Charles's wain*, there twinkling *Pleiades*;
 Here the bright *balance*, there the silver *sins*,
 With radiant stars in number numberless.

"I am URANIA," then aloud said she,
 "Who human-kind above the poles transport,
 In that blest region giving them to see
 The intercourse of the Celestial Court.

I quintessence the soul, and make the poet;
 Himself surpassing in divine discourse,
 To draw the deafest by the ears unto it,
 To quicken stones, and stop the ocean's course.

I grant, my learned sisters warble fine,
 And ravish millions with their madrigals;
 But all no less inferior unto mine,
 Than geese to syrens, pies to nightingales.

Then take me, *BARTAS*, to conduct thy pen!
 Soar up to Heaven! there sing th' Almighty's
 praise!

And, tuning now the *Jessean* harp again,
 Gain thee the garland of eternal bays.

I cannot griefless see my sisters' wrongs,
 Aiding base lovers in deceitful feignings,
 Prompting forg'd sighs, false tears, and filthy songs,
 Lascivious shews and counterfeit complaining.

Alas! I cannot with dry eyes behold
 Our holy songs sold and profaned thus
 To grace the graceless; praising, all too bold,
Nero, Caligula, and Commodus.

But most I mourn to see rare verse applied
 Against the author of sweet composition;
 I cannot brook to see Heaven's King defied
 By his own soldiers, with his own munition.

Man's eyes are in *Cimmerian* darkness seal'd,
 And if aught precious in this life he reach,
 'Tis Heaven's high bounty does the blessing yield,
 And God himself the *Delphian* songs doth teach.

Each art is learn'd by art : but POESY
 Is a mere heavenly gift ; and none can taste
 The dews that drop from *Pindus* plenteously,
 If SACRED FIRE have not his breast embras'd *.

Thence 'tis, that many great philosophers,
 Deep-learned clerks, in prose most eloquent,
 Labour in vain to make a graceful verse,
 Which the young novice frames most excellent.

Thence 'tis, that erst the poor *Mæonian* bard,
 Though master, means, and his own eyes he
 misses,
 By old and new is for his verse prefer'd,
 Chanting *Achilles* stout and wise *Ulysses*.

Thence 'tis, that *Ovid* cannot speak in prose ;
 Thence 'tis, that *David*, shepherd turned poet,
 So soon doth learn my songs ; and youths compose
 After our art, before indeed they know it.

Dive day and night in the *Castalian* fount ;
 Dwell upon *Homer* and the *Mantuan* muse ;
 Climb day and night the double-topped mount,
 Where the *Picrian* learned maidens use.

* From the French *embraser*, to set on fire.

Take time enough! choose feat and season fit,
 To make good verse! at best advantage place thee!
 Yet worthy fruit thou shalt not reap of it,
 For all thy toil, unless *Urania* grace thee.

For out of man man must himself advance,
 That in blest poetry aspires to shine,
 And, ecstasied as in a holy trance,
 Into our hands his *sensitive part* resign.

As human fury oft degrades a man
 Below a man, so *divine fury* makes him
 More than himself; and sacred phrenzy then
 Above the heaven's bright flaming arches takes him.

And thence it is, divinest poets bring
 So sweet, so learned, and so lasting numbers,
 Where Heaven's and Nature's secret works they
 sing,
 Scorning the power of Fate's eternal slumbers.

Since therefore verses have from Heaven their
 spring,
 O rarest spirits! why, ever prone to scorning,
 Profanely wrest you 'gainst Heaven's glorious King
 These sacred gifts, giv'n for your life's adorning?

Shall your ungrateful pens be always waiting,
 As servants to the flesh, and slaves to sin?
 Will you your volumes ever more be freighting
 With dreams and fables, idle fame to win?

Still will you comment on each common story,
 And, spider-like, weave idle webs of folly?
 O shall I never hear you sing the glory
 Of God, the Great, the Good, the Just, the Holy?

Wife, *Plato* did from his republic banish
 Base poetasters that, with vitious verse,
 Corrupted manners, making virtue vanish;
 The wicked worse; and even the good perverse:

Not those that consecrate their graceful phrases
 To grave-sweet matters; singing now the praise
 Of justest *Jove*; anon from error's mazes
 Warning the thoughtless, calling back the strays.

The chain of verse was at the first invented
 To handle only sacred mysteries
 With more respect; and nothing else was
 chanted,
 For ages after, in such poesies.

So did my *David* to the trembling strings
 Of his high harp resound the only *God*;
 So meek-soul'd *Moses* to *Jehovah* sings
Jacob's deliv'rance from th' *Egyptian* rod.

So *Deborah* and *Judith* in the camp,
 So *Job* and *Jeremy*, with cares oppress'd,
 In tuneful verses, of a various stamp,
 Their joys and G^{ods} divinely-sweet express'd.

So th' antient voice in *Dodon* worshiped,
 So *Esculapius*, *Ammon*, and the fair
 And famous *Sibyls* spake and prophesied
 In verse: in verse the priest preferr'd his prayer.

So *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and *Hesiodus*,
 (Of whom the first charm'd stocks and stones, 'tis
 said,)

In sacred numbers erst, to profit us,
 Secrets divine of deepest skill convey'd.

You that aspire to wear the laurel crown?
 Is't possible a loftier strain to take,
 Than his high praise who makes the Heavens go
 round,

The mountains tremble, and dark Hell to quake?

Base argument a base style ever yields,
 While strains sublime a lofty subject raises;
 Prompting grave stately words, itself it gilds,
 And crowns the author's pen with worthiest praises.

If then you would survive yourselves so gladly,
 Follow not him who burn'd, to purchase fame,
 Diana's temple; neither him that madly,
 To get renown, the brazen bull did frame.

Great works, 'tis true, preserve the memory
 Of those that make them; the *Mausolean* tomb
 Makes *Artemisia*, *Scopas*, *Timothy*,
 Live to this day, and still to time to come.

Then since these great and goodly monuments
 Can make their makers after death abide,
 Altho' themselves have vanished long since,
 By the consuming power of time destroy'd :

O think, I pray you, how much greater glory
 Shall you attain, when your sublimer strains
 Shall rise to celebrate th' Almighty's story ;
 And hymn th' Eternal Lord, on high that reigns.

I know you'll answer that the antient fictions
 Are your song's *essence* ; and that ev'ry fable,
 Ay breeding others, makes by their commixtions
 To vulgar ears your verse more admirable.

But what may be more admirable found
 Than faith's effects ? Or what doth more controll
 Wit's curious pride ? Or with more force con-
 found

The proud presumptions of the human soul ?

I'd rather sing the Tow'r of *Babylon*
 Than those three mountains, that in frantic mood
 The giants pil'd to pull Jove from his throne ;
 And *Noah's* rather than *Deucalion's* flood.

I'd rather sing the sudden shape-depriving
 Of *Affur's* monarch, than th' *Arcadian* lord ;
 And the *Bethanian Lazarus'* reviving,
 Than valiant *Thefeus'* son to life restor'd.

One vainly doth delight their ears who hear it,
 The other profits in abundant measure;
 And only he the laurel'd crown doth merit,
 Who wisely mingles profit with his pleasure.

Abandon then these old wives' tales and toys,
 Leave the young wanton who the blind abuses,
 Who only vacant, idle hearts annoys:
 Henceforth no more profane the sacred muses.

But all in vain, in vain, alas! I plain me:
 Some subtle adders, to escape my charming,
 Stop their dull ears; some epicures disdain me,
 Mock my reproofs, and scorn my zealous warning.

Altho' this age of happy wits have store,
 Scarce one I see but wantonly profanes
 His native pow'rs, and, scorning Heaven's blest
 lore,
 To *Venus*' praise devotes his shameless strains.

But thou, my darling, whom, before thy birth,
 The sacred NINE, that sip th' immortal spring
 Of *Pegasus*, predestin'd to set forth
 Th' Almighty's glory, and his praise to sing!

Altho' these subjects seem a barren soil,
 Which finest wits have left for fallow fields,
 Yet do thou never from this talk recoil;
 For what is rarest greatest glory yields.

Faint not, my SALLUST, though fell envy bark
At the bright rising of thy fair renown ;
Fear not her malice ; for thy living work,
In spite of her, shall not be trodden down.

With constant step that sacred path pursue,
Which Heaven-blest spirits alone are form'd to
trace ;

And thine shall be the mede to merit due,
Among best wits to have the worthiest place."

With these sweet accents, grac'd in utterance,
URANIA, holding in her maiden hand
A glorious crown, rapt up in sacred transe
My soul devoted to her high command.

Since when, that love alone my heart hath fir'd,
Since when, that wind alone my sails hath spread ;
O happy ! might I touch that crown desir'd !
Thrice happy ! might it deck my honor'd head !



E R R A T A.

- P. 34. l. 8. *for ear read ear.*
71. 10. *for come read comes.*
81. 3. *dele comma after queen.*
118. 10. *for DU BARTAS'S read THE.*
216. 12. *for fastiduous read fastidious.*

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