NADB

New

CURSORY REMARKS ON SOME OF THE ANCIENT ENGLISH POETS, PARTICULARLY MILTON.

Veritatis ſtudium, ut ſolus ſtimulus, ita et ſcopus unicus.
Minutula tamen ſunt, quæ ſi non hunc, alium ſcire juvet.

CAMDENI in Annal. Præfat.

LONDON.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.

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CHAUCER.

CHAUCER, who was born in 1328, from the long age that intervened between him and any other poet of reputation, ſeems entitled to a great ſhare of that fame, as father of the *Engliſh* muſe, which *Homer* enjoys, as father of the *Grecian*. The one had (as is generally believed) his contemporary, *Heſiod*; and the other, *Gower*: and, though the uncertain date of *Gower*'s birth be, by ſome, placed ſeven or eight years before that of *Chaucer*, and he had written his great work, the *Confeſſio Amantis*, before *Chaucer* had publiſhed his *Canterbury Tales*, yet the general voice of every claſs of readers has conſented to give *Chaucer*, among the

writers of that age, the firſt place in his own *Houſe of Fame*.

Of the ſeniority of *Homer*, or *Heſiod*, though it be a matter quite extraneous to the ſubject of Engliſh Poets, it may not be improper to point out, that the text of Heſiod's *Theogony* ſeems to afford ſufficient proof, that he had at leaſt ſeen *Homer*'s writings, before he compoſed that work: for, in enumerating there twenty-five rivers, the offspring of *Oceanus* and *Tethys*, thoſe two of them only, which waſh the *Trojan* plain, are called, Θειοι, divine. Now, the *Iſther*, the *Eridanus*, and the *Nile* being among them, and, of courſe, of the ſame origin as the *Simoïs* and *Scamander*, it would be very remarkable, that theſe two latter only ſhould be divine, and yet not receive their divinity from the *Ilias*.

The *general Prologue* is juſtly the moſt celebrated part of *Chaucer*'s works. The acuteneſs of his obſervation, his judgment, and diſcrimination of character are there alike conſpicuous. Nor is it wonderful, that a mind

mind, poſſeſſing much native humour, and enriched by long experience and extenſive information, ſhould exhibit characters, ſuch as are there found, with ſtriking reſemblance to nature and living manners.

Chaucer, for the time when he wrote, was a very learned, and a very powerful maſter in his art. When he began his *Canterbury Tales*, Engliſh could ſcarcely be called the predominant language of the country. French was yet uſed in all publick proceedings; and alſo in ſchools, as the language, into which the *Claſſics* were conſtrued. To enrich his Engliſh ſtyle, therefore, he conſulted the beſt foreign ſources. With the graces of the *Provençal* poetry all *Europe* was then in admiration: and he not only adopted words and phraſeology from that dialect; but, from a cloſe ſtudy of *Dante*'s ſublimity, the elegance of *Petrarca*, and the ſtyle and manners of *Boccaccio*, he gained copiouſneſs, harmony, and whatever was formed to give poetical expreſſion.

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method, acumen, and perſpicuity, no where exceeded, among all the commentators on books. In this edition, the text is publiſhed in its original purity; and a reader, to go through with it, has only to conſult his faithful guide, the editor; who will equally amuſe and inſtruct him, on the pilgrimage. Of corruptions in the text of *Chaucer*, every page, ſentence, almoſt every line would afford example, before the publication of this edition. To take the inſtance, which offers itſelf moſt readily to thoſe, who have not at hand the different editions of *Chaucer* to compare; that couplet of *Pope*, in his Epiſtle of *Eloiſa to Abelard*,

> Love, free as air, at ſight of human ties,
> Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies—

is taken from Chaucer's *Frankeleines Tale*,

> Love wol not be *conſtreined* by maiſtrie.
> Whan maiſtrie cometh, the *God* of Love anon
> *Beteth* his winges, and, *farewel*, he is gon.

Biſhop *Warburton*, in his notes on *Pope*, has quoted theſe lines of *Chaucer*, from that vile edition,

edition, published by Mr. Urry; and they ſtand,

Love will not be *confin'd* by maiſterie:
When maiſterie comes, the *Lord* of Love anon
Flutters his wings, and *forthwith* is he gone.—

by which it is ſeen, that, in three lines, are four words, which do not belong to *Chaucer*.

If in any one paſſage, or even couplet, the harmony and flow of this antient poet's lines will ſtand in compare with thoſe, from the poliſhed pen of *Dryden*, he is not ſurely to be called "obſolete." In the *Knightes Tale*, he deſcribes the morning,

The beſy larke, the meſſager of day,
Saleweth in hire ſong the morwe gray;
And firy Phebus riſeth up ſo bright,
That all the orient laugheth of the ſight,
And with his ſtrēmēs drieth in the greves
The ſilver drōpēs, hanging on the leves.

which lines *Dryden* renders,

The *morning* lark, the meſſenger of day,
Saluteth in her ſong the *morning* gray;

And ſoon the ſun aroſe with beams ſo bright,
That all th' horizon laugh'd to ſee the joyous ſight;
He with his tepid *r*ays the *r*oſe *r*enews,
And licks the *d*rooping leaves, and *d*ries the *d*ews.

In *Dryden*'s verſes, the double uſe of "*morning*," in the firſt couplet; the ragged alexandrine, in the ſecond; and the *Pierce-Plowman*-like alliteration, in both the verſes of the third, ſeem to leave the point of harmony (to any one who will ſo far accuſtom himſelf to *Chaucer*'s words, as not to heſitate in pronouncing them) entirely in favor of the old poet. In the *Oxenforde Clerkes Prologue*, he writes,

Souning in moral vertue was his ſpeche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

As to the moral purity of *Chaucer*'s writings; if, in an age when we live in all the refinements of poliſhed life, and are accuſtomed to expect a general chaſtity of manners, we can form to ourſelves a true picture of the manners of the reigns of *Edward* III. and *Richard* II.; if we ſhall find, the year only before

edition, published by Mr. Urry; and they ſtand,

Love will not be *confin'd* by maiſterie:
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That all the or[illegible] la[illegible] f the ſight,
And with hi[illegible] the greves
The [illegible]he leves.

[illegible]ger of day,
[illegible]ning gray;

And

SKELTON.

JOHN SKELTON, a rude and ſcurrilous rhymer of the reign of *Henry* VIII. is mentioned here, only as his groſs ſtyle and meaſures reflect back ſome honor to *Chaucer*, by a compariſon: and he ſeems further remarkable, as he had ſufficient confidence to ſatirize *Wolſey*, in the plenitude of his power. *Puttenham*, whoſe valuable book contains a treaſure of poetical and hiſtorical anecdotes, calls him "a rude rayling rhymer, "and all his doings ridiculous." Yet he was this for want of taſte, not learning; as his ſcholarſhip excited a high encomium from *Eraſmus*.

Though neither the manner, nor verſification of *Skelton*, could recommend his poems, the juſtneſs of his ſatire rendered them popular. *Wolſey*'s profligacy, arrogance, and oppreſſions

preſſions were ſo exceſſive, that it required a very ingenious poet to invent a charge againſt him, that would not have application: and the generality of the court, conſtrained, through fear, to flatter a man they ſecretly deteſted, were gratified in the boldneſs of one, who, without heſitation or reſerve, dared utter their common ſentiment. His humorous picture of *Wolſey* at a council-board, in the poem, *Why come ye not to Court*,

Then in the chambre of ſtars
All matters there he mars.
Clapping his rod on the borde,
No man dare ſpeak a word;
For he hath all the ſaying,
Without any renaying.
He rolleth in his recordes;
He ſaith—"How ſay ye, my Lordes,
"Is not my reaſon good?"
Good, even good, Robin Hood.
Some ſay, yes; and ſome
Sit ſtill as they were dome—

had

had probably much truth in it; as the 15th article of the charges, preferred againſt *Wolſey* in the parliament of 1529, ſets forth, "That the ſaid Lord *Cardinal*, ſitting among "the Lords, and other of your Majeſty's "moſt honorable Council, uſed himſelf, that "*if any man would ſhew his mind according* "*to his duty, contrary to the opinion of the* "*ſaid* Cardinal, *he would ſo take him up with* "*his accuſtomable words, that they were bet-* "*ter to hold their peace than to ſpeak; ſo* "*that he would hear no man ſpeak, but one or* "*two great perſonages; ſo that he would have* "*all the words himſelf*, and conſumed much "time with a fair tale."

EARL OF SURREY'S POEMS.

IN the laſt year of Queen *Mary*, ten years after the death of *Henry Howard*, Earl of *Surrey*, was publiſhed a volume of miſcellaneous poems, by that Earl, Sir *Thomas Wyat* the elder, and others.

The Earl of *Surrey* is uſually celebrated, as the firſt introducer of blank verſe into our language, by his tranſlation of two books of the *Æneis*; and the teſtimony of *Aſcham* ſeems to confirm the opinion. At the end of this Miſcellany, however, are found two pieces, of conſiderable length and force, on the deaths of *Zoroaſter* and *Cicero*, alſo in blank verſe, by *N. G.*; who was at leaſt contemporary with *Surrey*. The cauſe of polite letters, doubtleſs, ſuffered much, in the untimely death of this learned and accompliſhed Earl; who little thought he was writing

The republication of theſe Poems, in 1717, is perhaps the moſt incorrect book in the language: but of this information few will be able to avail themſelves; as the original editions are among the ſcarceſt books in Engliſh literature.

SPENSER.

OF *Spenſer*, who was born about 1555, it ſeems to be the fate now, as it was in his life-time, to be at once admired and neglected. A life, carefully drawn out from the moſt authentic memorials, though theſe be but ſcanty, together with a minute inveſtigation of the common-places of his reading and ſtudy, is the great deſideratum of poetical hiſtory. To thoſe, who are acquainted with the *Remarks* of the late learned Dr. *Jortin*, and the *Obſervations* of the ingenious author of the *Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry*, this opinion might appear reprehenſible, if it were not eaſy, at once, to point out ſeventy-eight lines in the ſecond book of the *Faery Queen*, and twenty-two lines in the ſixth book, immediately copied from *Taſſo*, and of which no notice is taken by either of thoſe commen-

tators. In *Hughes*'s edition, the only general collection of *Spenſer*'s works, the partial and deficient publication of the Letters is well known. But this is a work, from which all biographers, capable of the taſk, have ſhrunk; whether diſcouraged by the large field of romance to be explored; the extent of reſearch among the Italian poets; or the few certain facts, to be now aſcertained, about the author perſonally.

In all *Spenſer*'s writings learning and genius are conſpicuous: but he ſubmitted, with too much ſervility, to the faſhion of his age, in the prevailing love and deference for all that was Italian. Exactly in that proportion, in which the Engliſh have been approximating to, and forming themſelves upon *French* manners, ſince the return of *Charles* II. were they inclining to, and copying thoſe of *Italy*, in the days of *Elizabeth*: and ſo epidemical was this infection, that the greateſt powers of mind, ſtrengthened by the beſt inſtitution of academical education, did not,

in

in *Spenſer*, afford a ſufficient antidote againſt it. From *Arioſto* chiefly; from *Taſſo*, Bruno's *Spaccio della beſtia trionfante*, the *Ceiris* (attributed to Virgil), the *Apocalypſe*; and the faſhionable romances of his time (the offspring of thoſe univerſal ſources of the marvellous, *Turpin* and *Geoffrey* of *Monmouth*) *Spenſer* conſtructed his *Faery-Queen*.

The rule, by which *Arioſto* wrote, is found in his own text,

> Come raccende il guſto il mutar eſca,
> Così mi par che la mia Iſtoria, quanto
> Or quà, or là più variata ſia,
> Meno a chi l'udirà nojoſa ſia.
>
> *C.* 13. *St.* 80.

a rule, of which *Spenſer* ſeems, in ſome ſort, to have availed himſelf, in the inſtitution, as alſo in the conduct of his poem; for in the latter he has not purſued the ſcheme, laid down in his Letter to Sir Walter *Raleigh*. Nor are the opinions of *Dryden* and *Hughes* to be regarded, by readers of the

Faery-Queen; the firſt being untrue, according to the action, exhibited in the ſeveral books; and the latter ſhewing only, that the author varied from his own deſign.

Of ſome poets, by following the traces of others, the genius is obſcured; as is the caſe with *Spenſer*. Of others it is, by the ſame means, illuſtrated; as is the caſe with *Milton*. *Spenſer* obſcures himſelf by imitations, becauſe he is ſatisfied with what he finds: *Milton* riſes by compariſons, becauſe he will always exceed his original. This poſition is obvious every where, in the works of the latter poet: and, if it be enquired how what is ſaid of *Spenſer* can be proved; his works, where they are original, ſhew, that he poſſeſſed energy, copiouſneſs, and ſublimity ſufficient, had he taken no model to follow, to have produced a poem, that would rank him with *Homer*, *Taſſo*, and *Milton*; for his greateſt excellence is in thoſe images, which are the immediate foundation

tion of the ſublime. Fear, confuſion, and aſtoniſhment, are delineated by him, with a moſt maſterly pen.

Of his ſmaller poems, thoſe ſeveral *Sonnets*, which accompanied the different preſentation-copies of his *Faery-Queen*, to the nobility and ladies, his patrons in the Queen *Elizabeth*'s court, are very diſtinguiſhable, in a mode of writing, not of the eaſieſt ſort; as it requires great delicacy, both of ſentiment and expreſſion. *Muiopotmos*, though the ſubject be a butterfly, holds a high rank among the beauties of *Spenſer*. The *Epithalamium*, made on his own marriage, which he (having but a poet's wealth) prettily calls,

Song made in lieu of many ornaments,
With which my love ſhould duly have been deckt,

is replete with genius, and refined ſentiments; and the great beauties of deſcription, which it exhibits, might well ſupply the place of a thouſand baubles and trinkets on

the occaſion. The *Britain's Ida*, it ſeems agreed, was not written by *Spenſer*. It appears to have been ſuggeſted by Taſſo's *Aminta*; and is compoſed with great eaſe and elegance. The ſong of the enchanting voice, *Enjoy, while yet thou may'ſt, thy life's ſweet treaſure, &c.* ſeems taken from that beautiful ſtanza of the Italian poet, in the deſcription of *Armida*'s garden, *Deh mira! &c.*: and, if there were any other arguments for this poem being *Spenſer*'s, this circumſtance would greatly corroborate them; as, in the 2d book of the *Faery-Queen*, the tranſlation from *Taſſo*, in the above deſcription of the garden, is the moſt labored of all his copies from the Italian poets.

Spenſer was a profeſſed follower of *Chaucer*'s phraſeology: but he ſeems to have taken more liberty with the language, than any of his contemporary poets; or even than Chaucer did, with the language of his time. This obſervation regards *Spenſer* more particularly,

larly, as to his uſage in the production, or abbreviation of known words, and his introduction of factitious ones, than as to his adoption of claſſic, or foreign terms, or idioms: though, of theſe latter, inſtances enough might readily be found. *Crumenal, ſingults, concrew, 'ſdeign'd, &c. &c.* ſhew at once their origin.

His Faery-mythology, and antient Britiſh genealogy, both neceſſary to be underſtood by thoſe, who intereſt themſelves in the ſtories of early Britiſh times, have been followed by all his ſucceſſors. And *Milton*, no incurious ſearcher into the moſt fabulous antiquity of Britiſh ſtory, has paid all deference to his deductions.

Three original pieces of *Spenſer* yet remain, uncollected in the edition of his works.

An *Iambicke Elegie*, called "Love's Embaſſie;" in "*Daviſon*'s Poems, or Poetical

OVERBURY.

SIR *Thomas Overbury* was the ſon of *Nicholas Overbury*, Eſquire, of *Burton*, in *Gloſterſhire*. In 1595, his 14th year, he became Gent. Com. of Queen's, *Oxford*; and, in 1598, A. B. For ſome time he reſided in the *Middle Temple*; and then went abroad. On his return, he became intimate with K. *James's* favorite, Sir Robert *Carre*, (afterwads Earl of *Somerſet*); and, when *Carre* informed him of his deſign to marry the Counteſs of *Eſſex*, diſſuaded him from it, with ſome imputations on the Counteſs' chaſtity. When *Carre* communicated to her *Overbury*'s intelligence, ſhe, with a refinement of malice, procured *Overbury* to be appointed to a foreign embaſſy; at the ſame time prompting *Carre* to diſſuade him from accepting it, to the intent that he might offend the King.

Overbury,

Overbury, rejecting the appointment, was, 21ſt April 1613, committed to the *Tower*; and there, by a confederacy of *Carre* and the Counteſs, Sir Gervas *Yelvis* (Lieutenant of the Tower), *Anne Turner*, *Franklin*, *Weſton*, and an apothecary, poiſoned, the October following.

In *Overbury*'s poem, *The Wife*, the ſentiments, maxims, and obſervations, with which it abounds, are ſuch as a conſiderable experience, and a correct judgment on mankind alone could furniſh. The topics of jealouſy, and of the credit, and behaviour of women are treated with great truth, delicacy, and perſpicuity. The nice diſtinctions of moral character, and the pattern of female excellence here drawn, contraſted, as they were, with the heinous and flagrant enormities of the Counteſs of *Eſſex*, rendered this poem extremely popular, when its ingenious author was no more. From the firſt year of its publication, in 1614, to the year 1622, it went through eleven impreſſions; and is, in that

No general deſcription of *Shakſpeare*'s dramatic powers has yet appeared, more ſtriking or illuſtrative, than that by Dr. *Johnſon*, in his celebrated Preface: "His characters "are ſo truly in nature, and his ſcenes ſuch "perfect pictures of real life, that from "them an hermit might eſtimate the man-"ners of the world, or a confeſſor predict "the progreſs of the paſſions."

His other remark, that "Perhaps not one "of *Shakſpeare*'s Plays, could it now be pro-"duced as a new work, and of a contem-"porary writer, would be heard to the con-"cluſion," may be anſwered by *Longinus*: ἀι ὑπερμεγεθεις φυσεις ἡκιςα καθαραι· εν δε τοις μεγεθεσιν, ὡσπερ εν τοις αγαν πλυτοις, ειναι τι χρη και παρολιγωρεμενον. De Sublim. Sect. 33.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

FROM a ſurvey of the whole dramatic works of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, it would be difficult to draw any general concluſion, concerning their merit. So unequal are their pieces, that they admit of every degree of eſtimation, from excellent to bad. Their ſchemes are taken rather from tales, than hiſtory; though it is not always eaſy to diſcover the ſources, that have ſupplied them. Their plots are, in general, better than either their conduct of them, or their writing: many of their chief characters are individuals: yet, among fifty-four dramas, may be found partial excellences of all ſorts. What plays were written by theſe authors conjointly, or what by either ſeverally, it is now impoſſible, beyond a very ſmall number, to diſtinguiſh; but it cannot be ſuppoſed,

poſed, that many were written by *Beaumont*, who died (in 1615) at the age of twenty-nine, when *Fletcher* was both born ten years before him, and ſurvived him as long.

Of all their dramas, the comedy of *Rule a Wife and have a Wife* is that, which has moſt deeply, and moſt deſervedly fixed the public attention. Obſerving, throughout theſe authors, particularly *Fletcher*, to whom ſolely this play is attributed, a continual diſpoſition to treat female errors with ſeverity, it is not wonderful, that he could not reſiſt the temptation of devoting a whole piece to the picture of a character of entire libertiniſm. By the words, in the ſecond act, reported by *Eſtifania*, as from *Perez*,

——he is an aſs not worth acquaintance,
That cannot mould a devil to obedience—

the author ſeems to intend a contraſt between the characters of *Perez* and *Leon*, as well in their inſtitution, as their progreſs in the action of the drama; whereas *Leon* is, in truth,

truth, rather an inſtance that the diſſimulation of one ſex can exceed the penetration of the other, than that an aſs can rule a vixen. The two actions of this play are conducted with very happy coincidence. It is replete with comic incidents; all of which fall out very naturally, and juſtly entitle it to the high applauſe it has always received on the ſtage. In the conduct of *Margarita*'s character, it is obſervable, at the opening of the third act, that ſhe expreſſes her doubts of *Leon*'s "being really maſter of the ignorance he "outwardly profeſſes;" whereas nothing, but an entire confidence in ſuch ignorance, could introduce, with great effect, her aſtoniſhment at his breaking out, a page or two afterwards. And here may be noted the difference of the maſterly pen of *Shakſpeare*; who, ſo far from weakening his characters by injudicious anticipations, often prefaces them, as it were, to their own greatneſs. In the fifth act, *Leon*, after the repeated experience of *Margarita*'s treachery, is perhaps

Thomas Heywood his play in 1612; and in 1613 was publiſhed this comedy, which is not without much humour; particularly in the relief of the priſoners from the barber-ſurgeon's,- and the march of the knight's company through *Whitechapel.*

The Propheteſs, a tragical hiſtory, ſeems a compoſition peculiarly happy in itſelf, and was well adapted to an age, in which the intervention of ſpirits in all the common occurrences of life was fully believed, from the king to the peaſant. *Delphia* is, like *Medea*, the ſublime of magick. Her power, as it were, produces the ſtory; and the poet has managed his machinery with ſuch excellent art, that it is no where forgotten, and no where fails to forward the plot. The images are equal to any thing to be found on the ſubject. The concluſion of the ſecond act ſets at work all the powers, that ſuſtain the fable, without giving room to gueſs at the effects of any of their operations. *Delphia*'s magic-law, "that the ſame affection

" *Diocles* ſhews to *Druſilla*, ſhall be ſhewn " to him by *Aurelia*," is productive of great variety, in the progreſs of that part of the ſtory; which is conducted very regularly to the end of the third act. But, like all things of great oſtentation upon a falſe baſis, which muſt fail ſomewhere, here the piece falls off, and the two laſt acts can ſcarcely be thought to have proceeded from the ſame pen, which produced the former.

Theſe four pieces ſeem as different as any that can be ſelected from the volumes of theſe authors; to the advantage of whom many others might be pointed out, if a reader could be ſuppoſed to be intereſted in partial ſketches of plays, not thoroughly good. Among the beauties of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, however, muſt not be omitted the ſcenes with *Ordella*, in the fourth act of the tragedy of *Thierry* and *Theodoret*. One paſſage alſo, in the *Humorous Lieutenant*, claims every attention. The chief characters of the play are *Antigonus*, *Seleucus*,

Lyſimachus, and *Ptolemy*, the ſucceſſors of *Alexander*. The three laſt, in arms, and in oppoſition to *Antigonus*, are ſurrounded by his troops, and in imminent danger. Upon ſome night-alarm, that the enemy are advancing upon them, *Seleucus*, ſword in hand, and diſdaining to yield, breaks forth to his aſſociates;

> Let no man fear to die: we love to ſleep all;
> And death is but the ſounder ſleep. All ages,
> And all hours call us; 'tis ſo common, eaſy,
> That little children tread thoſe paths before us.
> We are not ſick, nor our ſouls preſs'd with ſorrow;
> Nor go we out, like tedious tales, forgotten:
> High, high we go, and hearty to our funerals;
> And, as the ſun that ſets, in blood we'll fall.

Had *Alexander*, before he joined his laſt battle at *Gaugamela*, ſpoken theſe words, the dignity of the perſonage and the occaſion, ſuiting to the grandeur of the image in the the laſt line, had perhaps rendered it one of the moſt ſublime paſſages poetry can furniſh.

JONSON.

OF *Ben Jonſon*, who died in 1637, though juſtly allowed a great ſcholar and perfect maſter of dramatic rule, there are not many pieces, among all the volumes he has left, that can be pointed out to a reader of taſte, for his amuſement, or approbation. As a dramatiſt, it ſeems to have been his fault, that he ſtudied books, where he ſhould have ſtudied men. *Every Man in his Humour*, a comedy, in which Shakſpeare uſed to act; the deſcription of the battle, at the concluſion of *Catiline*; the imperfect drama of *the Sad Shepherd*, or, *Tale of Robinhood*; and *the Alchymiſt*, ſeem to form the chief maſs of his poetic beauties. In the firſt act of the *Sad Shepherd*, the death of *Earine* is related with a fancy and aſſemblage of poetical images, ſcarcely any where equalled:

nor is this the only beauty of the piece. Yet ſo fatally did books aſſociate with all combinations in *Jonſon*'s mind, that he has, two pages afterwards, made his ſhepherds read *Heliodorus*, *Achilles Tatius*, *Longus*, and other Greek romances.

Of the *Alchymiſt* the fame is indeed deſervedly eſtabliſhed. The courſe of human events affords few juſter ſubjects for the drama, than the cenſure of ſuperſtitious practices and opinions, and the ridicule of popular errors. As ſuch follies tend to the ſubverſion of true philoſophy, a pen that, like *Jonſon*'s, holds them up to deriſion, is very commendably employed in the cauſe of truth. Chaucer's *Chanones Yemannes Tale* had, long before, ſtruck a hard blow at the pretenders to the philoſopher's ſtone: which tale, it appears in *Jonſon*'s text, he had conſulted in forming his drama. That the opinion of tranſmuting and multiplying metals was fixed in the general belief, at the time when *Jonſon* wrote this play, is commonly known: but

but it has its merit not from that circumſtance only, and as a ſatire of temporary application alone; it is, and will be, a ſatire of diſtinguiſhed excellence, as long as this deep and rooted perſuaſion of a philoſopher's ſtone ſhall any where exiſt. Whilſt reaſon ſhall be inſufficient for all the purpoſes of conviction to the human mind, it will perhaps be quite hopeleſs that ſuperſtition and vain opinions ſhould be wholly eradicated: and, as long as the paſſions ſhall prevail againſt any of the cardinal conſtituents of virtue, avarice will follow them, or rather a greedy thirſt after a ſource to ſupply their enormities. This fondneſs therefore for the opinion of tranſmutation is not likely to be the laſt folly, that will die; and, as long as it ſhall exiſt, the application of the *Alchymiſt* will remain. Of the characters, Sir *Epicure Mammon* is excellently choſen: a glutton and debauchee, whoſe judgment is weakened by his paſſions, and who thereby becomes a fit ſubject to be the dupe of

Subtle,

Subtle, and, his helpmate, *Face*. *Jonſon's* play was firſt acted in the year 1610; and, four years afterwards, was performed by the ſcholars of *Trinity*-College, *Cambridge*, before the King, a comedy, entitled *Albumazar* (an aſtrologer): a play, of which the plot is excellently contrived, conducted with a variety of entertaining incidents, and brought to a juſt and perfect concluſion. The reſtitution of *Antonio's* goods by *Albumazar* impeaching the thieves, renders the concluſion of this piece much more perfect, than that of Jonſon's *Alchymiſt*, where *Face* keeps his gains. It may be further obſerved on this play, *Albumazar*, that *Trincalo's* being put into the cellar, and, when drunk, reveſted with his own clothes, ſeems to have been taken from the *Tinker*, in Shakſpeare's *Taming of the Shrew*; and to have ſupplied to Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and have a Wife* the incident of *Cacafogo's* being ſhut in the cellar. In other parts of this play, the author diſcovers the ſtudy of *Shakſpeare*; particularly of *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

When

When *Albumazar* was revived at *Oxford*, *Dryden* wrote an occaſional prologue to it, in which he ſays,

> *Subtle* was got by our *Albumazar*;
> That Alchymiſt by this Aſtrologer.

Whereas he might have ſeen, by the title-pages of the firſt editions of theſe plays, if he had no otherwiſe known it, that *Albumazar* was not acted till 1614, and that *the Alchymiſt* had been acted in 1610.

DRUMMOND.

AMONG all the writers, at the beginning of the laſt century, who floriſhed after the death of *Shakſpeare*, there is not one, whom a general reader of the Engliſh poetry of that age will regard, with ſo much, and ſo deſerved attention, as *William Drummond*. He was born at *Hawthornden* in *Scotland*, in 1585, and was the ſon of Sir *John Drummoud*, who, for ten or twelve years, was uſher, and afterwards knight of the black-rod, to *James* VI.

His family became firſt diſtinguiſhed by the marriage of *Robert* III. whoſe queen was ſiſter to William *Drummond* of *Carnock*, their anceſtor; as appears by the patents of that king and James I.; the one calling him "our brother," the other, "our uncle."

Drummond

Drummond was educated at *Edinburgh*, where he took the degree of A. M. In 1606, he was ſent by his father to ſtudy civil law, at *Bourges* in *France*; but, having no taſte for the profeſſion of a lawyer, he returned to *Hawthornden*, and there applied himſelf with great aſſiduity to claſſical learning and poetry.

Having propoſed to marry a lady, to whom retirement and her own accompliſhments had entirely attached him, and who died after the day of marriage was appointed, he again quitted his native country, and reſided eight years on the Continent, chiefly at *Rome* and *Paris*.

In 1620, he married *Margaret Logan*, a grand-daughter of Sir *Robert Logan*, by whom he had ſeveral children; the eldeſt of whom, *William*, was knighted by *Charles* II.

He ſpent very little time in *England*; though he correſponded frequently with *Drayton* and *Ben Jonſon*; the latter of whom had ſo great reſpect for his abilities, and ſo ardent

ardent a deſire to ſee him, that, at the age of forty-five, he walked to *Hawthornden* to viſit him.

Having been grafted, as it were, on the royal family of *Scotland*, and upheld by them, he was a ſteady royaliſt in the troubles of *Charles* I.; but does not appear ever to have armed for him. As he had always been a laborious ſtudent, and had applied himſelf equally to hiſtory and politics as to claſſical learning, his ſervices were better rendered by occaſional publications; in which he ſeveral times diſtinguiſhed himſelf.

His attachment to that king and his cauſe was ſo ſtrong, that, when he heard of the ſentence being executed on him, he was overwhelmed with grief, and lifted his head no more.

He died in 1649.

In a ſurvey of *Drummond*'s poetry, two conſiderations muſt be had, viz.—The nation, of which he was; and the time, when he wrote. Yet will theſe be found, not offered

fered to extenuate faults; but to encreaſe admiration. His thoughts are often, nay generally, bold and highly poetical; he follows nature; and his verſes are delicately harmonious. As his poems are not eaſily met with, and have perhaps by many readers never been heard of, a few extracts may be excuſed.

On the death of *Henry* Prince of *Wales*, in 1612, *Drummond* wrote an elegy, entitled, *Tears on the Death of* "*Moeliades*;" a name, which that prince had uſed in all his challenges of martial ſport, as the anagram of "*Miles a Deo.*" In this poem are lines, according to *Denham*'s terms, as ſtrong, as deep, as gentle, and as full, as any of his, or *Waller*'s. The poet laments the fate of the prince, that he died not in ſome glorious cauſe of war: "Againſt the Turk, he ſays, "thou had'ſt ended thy life and the Chriſ-"tian war together;

Or, as brave *Bourbon*, thou had'ſt made old *Rome*,
Queen of the world, thy triumph and thy tombe.

Of

Drummond, therefore, at a time when thoſe, who are uſually called the firſt introducers of a ſmooth and poliſhed verſification, had not yet begun to write, is an honor to him, that ſhould never be forgotten. Nor is his excellence half enough praiſed, or acknowledged.

Drummond and *Petrarca* had this in common, that each lamented, firſt the cruelty, and then the loſs of his miſtreſs: ſo that their *Sonnets* are alike naturally divided into two parts; thoſe before, and thoſe after their ſeveral miſtreſſes deaths. It may juſtly be doubted that, among all the ſonneteers in the Engliſh language, any one is to be preferred to *Drummond*. He has ſhewn, in ſome of theſe compoſitions, nearly the ſpirit of *Petrarca* himſelf. Of each period, one is here inſerted.

From

From part 1ſt, before the death of *Drummond*'s miſtreſs.

Sonn. 4.

Aye me, and am I now the man, whoſe muſe
In happier times was wont to laugh at love,
And thoſe, who ſuffer'd that blind boy abuſe
The noble gifts were giv'n them from above.
What metamorphoſe ſtrange is this I prove?
My ſelf I ſcarce now find myſelf to be:
And think no fable *Circe*'s tyrannie,
And all the tales are told of changed *Jove*.
Virtue hath taught, with her philoſophy,
My mind unto a better courſe to move;
Reaſon may chide her full, and oft reprove
Affection's power; but what is that to me,
Who ever think, and never think on ought
But that bright cherubim, which thralls my thought?

From part 2d, after her death.

Sonn. 1.

Of mortal glory O ſoon darkned ray!
O winged joys of man, more ſwift than wind!
O fond deſires, which in our fancies ſtray!
O traitrous hopes, which do our judgments blind!

Lo, in a flaſh that light is gone away,
Which dazzle did each eye, delight each mind;
And with that ſun, from whence it came, combin'd,
Now makes more radiant heavn's eternal day.
Let beauty now bedew her cheeks with tears;
Let widow'd muſic only roar and groan:
Poor virtue, get thee wings and mount the ſphears,
For dwelling place on earth for thee is none:
Death hath thy temple raz'd, love's empire foil'd,
The world, of honor, worth, and ſweetneſs ſpoil'd.

The ſeventh ſonnet, of the firſt part, has much reſemblance to Sir Henry *Wotton*'s elegant little poem, on the Queen of Bohemia, *Ye meaner Beauties, &c.* Among Drummond's *Flowers of Sion*, the poem, which begins, *Amidſt the azure clear—Of Jordan's ſacred ſtreams*, eminently diſtinguiſhes him, whether he be conſidered as a philoſopher, or a poet.

DENHAM.

SIR *John Denham* was ſon of one of the Barons of the Exchequer, in the reign of *James* I. He was born in 1615; took the degree of A. B. at *Oxford*; and entered of *Lincoln's Inn*, in 1634. In his youth he was much addicted to gaming; and, ſoon after the death of his father, in 1638, diſſipated and loſt nearly his whole patrimony. In the troubles of *Charles* I. he took an active part; and, when that King was in the hands of the army, was employed, firſt in meſſages and intelligence between him and the Queen, and then in managing all his domeſtic and foreign correſpondences; the latter of which reſted chiefly upon him and *Cowley*, who had retired to *France* juſt before the ſurrender of *Oxford* to the Parliament, in 1646. When the King's fate was decided, he went abroad,

and returned not till 1652. At the Reſtoration he was made Surveyor of the King's Buildings; and, at the enſuing coronation, Knight of the Bath.

Of the ſeveral claims of Sir *John Denham* to the regard of poſterity, that of having improved our verſification is the moſt popular. Though his title on this head be undiſputed, he enjoys it in common with *Waller*, and in ſome meaſure with *Fairfax:* and *Drummond*, almoſt before *Denham*'s birth, had written in numbers, that ſtand nearly in parallel with the moſt harmonious lines of *Pope*. But *Denham*'s fame reſts not here; he gave, in the ſhort *Preface* to his ſecond Book of *Virgil*, the beſt rules for tranſlation, that had then appeared, or that will perhaps ever appear. His *Cooper's Hill* is univerſally admired. The ſpecies was new: and here he ſtands as an original. In it the apoſtrophe to the *Thames* has never received too great an encomium; and is not, perhaps, at this day, any where equalled.

Theſe

Theſe celebrated verſes however,

O could I flow like thee, and make thy ſtream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full.
Heav'n her *Eridanus* no more ſhall boaſt;
Her fame in thine, like leſſer currents, loſt;
Thy nobler ſtreams ſhall viſit *Jove*'s abodes,
To ſhine among the ſtars, and bathe the gods—

were not in the firſt printed edition of the poem; though the general ſentiment is there. The paſſage was,

O, could my verſe freely and ſmoothly flow
As thy pure flood, heav'n ſhould no longer know
Her old *Eridanus*; thy purer ſtream
Should bathe the gods, and be the poet's theme!

Among his other poems, the "verſes on "*Cowley*;" "on Lord *Strafford*;" and "on "*Fletcher*;" exhibit inſtances of the ſame force of ſenſe and harmony united. He has tranſlated from *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Martial*, and *Mancini*; but his verſions are without the

WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER was born in 1605, and died in 1687. He wrote, through this long life, with nearly equal aſſiduity. He began in 1625, and celebrated *James* II. on the throne: a period of full ſixty years. Nor do his works afford any more juſt cauſe of admiration, than the proportion of excellence, which his earlieſt pieces bear to thoſe of his later ſtudies. So perfect indeed is his verſification, in his very firſt productions (even at the age of twenty), that it is by their dates only, they can be diſtinguiſhed from any of his future compoſitions. In an age, when graceful poetry was, at beſt, but in its infancy; ſo rare, indeed, that an inſtance of it is not readily pointed out, unleſs in the pages of *Drummond*, or in thoſe perhaps of *Davis*;

Davis; it is worth while to enquire, whence aroſe this perfect and uniform verſification in *Waller*. And *Dryden* (whoſe Prefaces are a body of good criticiſm, judgment, and information) has, in the Preface to his *Fables*, left us this evidence. "Many, beſides myſelf, have heard our famous *Waller* own, "that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the *Godfrey of Boulogne*, which "was turned into Engliſh by Mr. *Fairfax*." *Taſſo* died, at *Rome*, in 1595: in 1594 had been tranſlated into Engliſh, and publiſhed, his five firſt Cantos, by *R. C.* Eſq. and Mr. *Fairfax*'s tranſlation of the whole work was printed, in folio, in 1600. Of this tranſlation it is ſufficient to ſay here, that it diſcovers great art of verſification, being in the Italian octave, the ſame ſtanza as the original poem; and that a paſſage, extracted from it, will rarely be met with, in which ſome harmony is not to be admired.

To exemplify what *Dryden* has ſaid, we need not go deep into the works of *Waller*; for the

the very firſt line in his book, in the poem, *To the King on his Navy*, affords an inſtance of his ſtudy of *Fairfax*—

Where'er thy navy *ſpreads her canvas wings*—
Waller.

Thy ſhip, Columbus, ſhall *her canvas wing*
Spread o'er that world—— Fairfax.

Again, in the poem, *On his Majeſty's Danger (when Prince) in the Road of St. Anderes*,

With painted oars the youths begin to *ſweep*
Neptune's ſmooth face, and cleave the yielding deep.
Waller.

——*with bended oars ſome ſweep*
The waters ſmooth, and bruſh the buxom wave;
Their breaſts in ſunder *cleave the yielding deep*;
Fairfax.

Theſe paſſages, however, are here produced, rather as a ſpecimen of *Fairfax*'s verſification, than to ſhew that it was a guide to *Waller*; for, when we have his own confeſſion of the general ſtudy of this book, it is uſeleſs to look for proofs of it in particular inſtances.

It

It may yet be remarked, that the poems of *Waller*, from which the above extracts are made, are his two earlieſt pieces.

Waller was a courtly poet; his pen always ready to celebrate, congratulate, or condole, as events happened, or occaſions required; and, where intereſt or affection directed him, he has beſtowed ample panegyric. In his circumſtances, not at eaſe only, but poſſeſſed of an abundant fortune, by education a ſcholar, a poet by profeſſion, and entire maſter of his time, he had both ability and leiſure to read, commend, and patronize the poets, his contemporaries. But it cannot eſcape remark, that ſuch was not his inclination. His general ſilence ſtrongly implies, that no admiration of their excellence, no gratitude for their praiſes could excite him to encomium, where he ſuſpected his readers might oppoſe a rivalſhip. To begin above his own time: Of *Chaucer* his judgment is general and erroneous, and not like that of a man, who had read and ſtudied

well was living, theſe were the notes he ſung to him, in return for the favor of recalling him from baniſhment,

Let the rich ore forthwith be melted down,
And the ſtate fix'd, by making him a crown:
With ermine clad and purple, let him hold
A royal ſcepter, made of Spaniſh gold—

For ſo the poem, *Upon a War with Spain*, concluded, in the original copy. In the verſes on *Cromwell*'s death,

—— his laſt breath ſhakes our iſle.
* * * * * * * * * *
—— ſo *Romulus* was loſt.
* * * * * * * * * *
On *Oeta*'s top thus *Hercules* lay dead.

Waller ſeems to have wiſhed for the praiſe of excellence, without ſubmitting any where to the labor of reviſion, whereby it was to be obtained. Even in the *Panegyric on Cromwell*, by much the moſt ſtudied and elaborate of all his pieces, are evident ſigns of this neglect. That the obſervation is true,

in

in both its applications, ſix verſes from the poem, *On the Second Ducheſs of York*, may evince:

Your matchleſs beauty gives our fancy wing;
Your judgment *makes us careful* how we ſing.
Lines *not compos'd, as heretofore, in haſte,*
Poliſh'd like marble, ſhall, like marble, laſt.

Yet, a few lines further, we find,

So the bright ſun *burns all our graſs away,*
Whilſt *it means nothing but to give us day—*

than which there is not perhaps a meaner couplet in his volume. Of this neglect indolence was the foundation; and of this indolence other proof is afforded by his frequent copies of himſelf: nor did he always copy with the beſt judgment; for he has taken two complete verſes from the poem, *To the King on his Navy* (and thoſe of no trifling import, the third couplet in his book), and applied them to *Oliver*, in the poem, *On the War with Spain.*

To a peculiar phraſeology, as far as a ſingle inſtance, perhaps no poet ever was ſo addicted.

—— the glad morning, which her beams does throw
Upon their ſmiling leaves, and *gilds them ſo.*

Of this mode of expreſſion he has examples almoſt without number. *Waller*'s favorite and predominating poetical word is, *thundering*; as *Pope*'s is, *murmuring*.

Of his pieces many are occaſional, and declare their own dates. Of many others neither is the time eaſily ſettled, nor is it eaſy to account for the order, in which they ſtand, even in thoſe editions publiſhed in his lifetime. Of one only, among the doubtful ones, would it be material to aſcertain the date; becauſe that date, whatever it may be, forms the epoch of *Waller*'s poetical æra. The general opinion is, that the poem, *To the King on his Navy*, was written to King *James*; and the firſt lines appear indeed

indeed to bear ſome alluſion to "The Peace-maker"; but the concluſion, compared with *Waller*'s other pieces, ſeems to afford reaſon to believe, that it was addreſſed to *Charles* I. The laſt couplet celebrates the King for piety:

> To thee, his choſen, more indulgent, he
> Dares truſt *ſuch pow'r, with ſo much piety.*

The poem to *Charles* I. *On receiving at Chapel the News of the D. of Buckingham's Death,* opens,

> *So earneſt with thy God,* can no new care,
> No ſenſe of danger, interrupt thy pray'r?

In the verſes to *Charles* I. *On the Storming of the Port of Sallée,* Morocco's monarch ſends preſents,

> To the *renown'd for piety and force.*

The analogy between theſe paſſages would perhaps at once decide the queſtion, if we did not elſewhere find the like qualities predicated of *Cromwell*—

The only cure, which could from heav'n come down,
Was *ſo much pow'r and piety in one:*

for ſo the text of *The Panegyric* ſtood, in the original editions. It would however be almoſt abſurd to ſuppoſe the ſame line given to *James*, *Charles*, and *Oliver*. There ſeems yet ſome further reaſon for believing the poem written to *Charles*; for, why was *James*'s navy to be celebrated? The laſt tranſaction of his reign was a feeble effort to recover the *Palatinate*; in which ſome miſerable tranſports indeed were engaged, but no navy concerned. In the firſt year of *Charles*'s reign, ſix ſhips were lent to *Louis* XIII.; a fleet fitted out againſt *Spain*; and a particular account of the navy required by the Parliament, and delivered by the Duke of *Buckingham*. It is obvious how much it was then a poet's buſineſs to aggrandize the naval-eſtabliſhment.

As to the poem, *On the Danger his Majeſty (when Prince) eſcaped in the Road at St. Anderes*

Anderes, it appears to have been written after *Charles* was King; and the whole intent, as well as burthen of it, a compliment to the Queen, in celebrating, by retroſpect, the King's early paſſion for her. They were not married till after *Charles* became King; and the poem ſeems to have other ſtrong internal evidence of not having been written, till the crown was ſecure on his head.

To *Waller*'s indolence in reviſing and correcting his pieces may be attributed, that of the five editions of his poems, printed in his lifetime, not one appears to have been publiſhed by himſelf. The firſt was publiſhed ſurreptitiouſly, whilſt he was abroad, in 1645. The ſecond, in 1664, has a bookſeller's preface. And in the fifth and laſt, in 1686, is continued the bookſeller's preface of 1664. In this mode of publication it generally happens, that an author has no choice of what ſhall go forth, and what be withheld: but *Waller* ſeems not wholly to have given up this right. In the year 1690

was publiſhed a ſmall octavo volume, entitled, *A Second Part of Mr. Waller's Poems*; conſiſting wholly of pieces, never before printed, or not collected in his lifetime. As every line from *Waller*'s pen muſt be intereſting to ſome readers, ſubjoined is a ſmall poem, which ſeems to have eſcaped as well the publiſhers of his days, as his admirers ſince. It is printed from a MS. made in the middle of the reign of *Charles* I. and before the firſt edition of *Waller*'s poems. The MS. contains many of the original poems of Lord *Herbert* of *Cherbury*, Sir *John Suckling*, *Thomas Carew*, and *Waller*; and each piece is carefully diſtinguiſhed by the name of its author.

Mr. Waller,
when he was
at Sea.

Whilſt I was free I wrote with high conceit,
And love and beauty rais'd above their height;
Love, that bereaves us both of brain and heart,
Sorrow and ſilence doth at once impart.

What

What hand at once can wield a ſword and write?
Or battle paint, engaged in the fight?
Who will deſcribe a ſtorm muſt not be there:
Paſſion writes well, neither in love, nor fear.
Why on the naked boy have poets then
Feathers and wings beſtow'd, that wants a pen?

From the laſt couplet, any reader of *Waller* would probably gueſs the author of the poem, without any further evidence. Of the aſſertion, in the eighth line, that "paſſion writes not well in love," his poem, *To Amoret*, may ſerve as a commentary: though his many paſſionate addreſſes to *Sacchariſſa* ſeem to prove the contrary. In this MS., the verſes, *In Anſwer to one, who wrote againſt a fair Lady*, have, after the line, *Or is thy Miſtreſs not content with one?* the following ſtanza, which concludes the poem—

Though *Ceres'* child could not avoid the rape
Of the grim god, that hurried her to hell;
Yet there her beauty did from ſlander 'ſcape:
When thou art there, ſhe ſhall not ſpeed ſo well.
The ſpitefull owl, whoſe tale detains her there,
Is not ſo blind to ſay ſhe is not fair.

No ſtanza in *Waller*'s volume ſeems, more than this, characteriſtic of his ſtyle; which is a perpetual endeavour to veil his meaning with ſome mythological conceit. In the MS., the poem, *To Ameret*, ends at the line, *All that's not Idolatry*, juſt before the couplet, in which the metre changes: and ſome of the other poems have remarkable, though but verbal differences from the printed copies.

Upon the whole review of *Waller*, the elegance of his diction, the equality and force of his writings, and, above all, the harmony of his numbers, rank him among the fathers of our modern and improved verſification. Againſt the example of *Cowley*, who was a better poet, though a worſe verſifier, the harmonious turns of *Waller* and *Denham* firſt ſtrongly operated, and their practice *Dryden* confirmed and eſtabliſhed.

HUDIBRAS.

OF *Hudibras*, the poem of *Samuel Butler*, it cannot be denied that the firſt and general idea is to be found in *Don Quixote*. It is the topic, there employed to ridicule a generally prevailing folly, adapted here to deride the particular politics and conduct of one party, in a local and temporary commotion. Perhaps, ſince the publication of *Don Quixote*, that ingenious work has not been peruſed by any one, in whom ſuch activity of mind and a turn of humour, ſo highly ſatirical, have been combined, as in *Butler:* nor is it likely, that *Cervantes* ever was, like *Butler*, witneſs to ſcenes, which afforded ſuch abundant matter for their exertion. To a genius, therefore, naturally formed to receive from it a laſting impreſſion, ſuch a book could not fail of giving ſome

ſome ſort of direction, in the projection of a work, for which a ludicrous ſubject ſpontaneouſly offered itſelf; and which would probably, in ſome form, have appeared, had no model been produced for imitation.

Of *Butler*'s plan, imperfect as we have it, no judgment can be made: he either formed none, or he deſerted it. The action of the poem, as it ſtands, and interrupted as it is, occupies but three days: and it is certain, from the opening line,

When civil dudgeon *firſt* grew high,

that it was meant to bear date with the Civil-Wars. Yet, after two days and nights compleated, he ſkips at once, in the third part, to *Oliver*'s death; a ſpace of at leaſt fifteen years; and then returns, to retrieve his hero, and conduct him through the laſt Canto. Perhaps the circumſtances, under which *Butler* wrote, may in ſome meaſure account for, though not excuſe this incongruity. The *firſt Part*, in 1663, was the reſult of long meditation

meditation on tranſactions, that had crowded his mind with ludicrous images; to which his own extenſive learning, wit, and obſervation had, at leiſure, added whatever could embelliſh and recommend them. The *ſecond Part*, in 1664, was precipitated, probably, by the appearance of a ſpurious ſecond part, in the ſame year, in which *Butler* had publiſhed his firſt, and by the impatience, which muſt have been neceſſarily diſcovered in all his readers, to have a ſtory, that was told with ſuch abundant wit, continued. Before the *third Part* appeared, in 1678, fifteen years had elapſed, from the firſt publication. The ſubject was then grown ſtale: *Charles* had been many years aſleep on the throne: and the ſectaries had been long treated with all the indignities and deriſion the preſs could convey. Of *Butler*'s perception that the "Si tempus erit" was now paſt, both for himſelf and his ſubject, evidence ſeems not only to be afforded by his not continuing his poem, according to the inſtitution of the

firſt

firſt and ſecond Parts; but by his introducing into it a ſubject, equally obnoxious to ridicule, and ſo recent as to be then before every body's eyes; viz. The King's entire ſubjection to, and dotage on his miſtreſſes; which ſeems clearly intended in a part of the widow's anſwer to *Hudibras*.

The hero of the piece, Sir *Hudibras*, is no where to be compared. He ſprung from times, that have no parallel in hiſtory, or the memory of man: and therefore it is only by conſulting the ſpirit of thoſe times, that his pedantry and knight errantry, his martial and civil character can be reconciled: and this character too is not a little exaggerated from the pages of romance.

The author had good topics for ridicule in the principles, the opinions, the ſentiments, and the knowledge of the ſectaries. Their ſwords had evinced both too ſharp an edge, and too extenſive a direction, to have their full power doubted. Yet probably he truſted, that, ſince they were at length ſheathed or broken,

broken, the impropriety of ridiculing them would be willingly overlooked by thoſe, who now feared them no longer; and who would be glad to retaliate, by a hearty laugh, for all the inconveniences of ſequeſtration and exile.

The principal actions of the piece are four; viz. "*Hudibras*' firſt victory, over *Crowdero*;" "*Trulla*'s over *Hudibras*;" "his ſecond victory, over *Sidrophel*;" and "the widow's antimaſquerade." The reſt is made up of "the Adventure of the Skimmington;" and the two parallels, of "*Hudibras*' conſultations with *Sidrophel* and the lawyer," and "long diſputations with *Ralpho* and the widow."

In a work ſo long, and in which are ſo many groteſque aſſemblages, it cannot be expected that all attempts ſhould eſcape error. Few objections, however, are to be made. He has not been always entirely exact in his chronology; nor every where attentive to what has preceded.

In

In the firſt publication, 1663, *Butler* ſeems to have been careleſs how he diſpenſed his ridicule; beſtowing it ſomewhat too indiſcriminately, wherever a ſubject offered. In his amendments, in 1674, he recollected himſelf; and we find many ſarcaſms mitigated. Though the intricate webs of the theological doctors are not more intelligible than the gifted-lights of the fanatic-brethren; yet both, if they met in a common point of obſcurity, were not therefore with propriety to be derided by a perſon, whoſe aim was, by expoſing one eſtabliſhment, to give the other advantage. This, though *Butler* appears not to have ſeen it at firſt, was doubtleſs pointed out to him by thoſe, who, if not the immediate diſciples of the theological-ſchools, were yet more nearly allied to them and their inſtitutions, than to the innovators. And *Butler*, in many other inſtances, corrected, in the ſecond impreſſion, for the grace and decencies of his poem, as well as for conſiſtency.

By

By his aſſerting of *Rinaldo*, that he "bang'd his bride into amorous fancies," and gained her "by courting her back and ſides," it appears that he was not acquainted with the Italian poets. If not with *Arioſto*, probably not with any other. Of *Ruggiero* he might, with truth, have aſſerted what he has falſely told of *Rinaldo*.

In the firſt part, 1663, he has imitated, by excellent paraphraſe, thoſe fine lines, which ſtand at the beginning of *Lucan*, *Quis furor, O cives &c ?* and given them application to the memorable defeat of Sir *W. Waller*, at the *Devizes:* which elegant and correct adaptation of ancient ſentiments to a modern topic, is certainly, though ſhort, among the beſt imitations in our language; and it is too the firſt; for it was, doubtleſs, written before the famous *Imitation of Horace's Satire on Lucilius*; Lord *Rocheſter* being but fifteen years old, when *Hudibras* was publiſhed: nor was Mr. *Oldham*, who with Lord *Rocheſter* is ſaid to have invented, with

with us, this mode of writing, born till 1653.

Butler's applications of irony ſhew the utmoſt force of the figure. Τα ὑψηλα ταπεινοι, or, τα ταπεινα ὑψοι, as opportunities happen, and occaſions offer. The heroes of the Ilias are, in ſplendor of anceſtry, below the bearward of *Paris-Garden*. The ruſt, which prevents the firing of a piſtol, is *Pallas* perched on the ſpring of the lock. To elevate mean ſubjects, by debaſing, in compariſon, ſuch as are really grand, ſeems the ſtrongeſt character of irony.

Of beauties, of natural and proper excellence, of which ſeveral, very ſtriking, might be produced, none ſeems to claim more attention than what he calls the ſun, relatively to the moon;

> Myſterious veil, of brightneſs made,
> That's both her luſtre and her ſhade.

Of this poem, the ſubject admitting almoſt every thing, the language is ſometimes not decent,

decent, and the meaſure not at all exact: but it is far from probable, as has been aſſerted, that the author purpoſely diſregarded the latter; for, wherever the metre requires the production of a word to more than its uſual number of ſyllables, he has always altered the orthography to aſcertain it—*Houer, Fier, Fouer, Sarcaſmes, &c. &c.* And it is peculiar to him to write every rhyming word univerſally, as it is to be pronounced correſpondently with the word he has coupled with it. With reſpect to his rhymes, he ſtipulates for all advantages. In his introduction he chriſtens *Ralph*, by that name, *Ralpho*, and *Raph*; and the ſecond Part he introduces, by declaring,

> One line for ſenſe, and one for rhyme,
> I think 's ſufficient at one time.

a rule, of which he takes advantage, three pages afterwards, in a couplet, which has probably been paſſed in honeſt wonder by many a gentle reader; wherein, enumerating prodigies, he ſays,

Of hail ſtones, big as pullets eggs,
And *puppies whelp'd with twice two legs.*

In wit, which is liberally beſtowed every where, the firſt part greatly exceeds the others; as it does alſo in the continuity of the action, and the multiplicity of incidents. In the two other parts, the long diſcourſes and diſputations interrupt the action, and fatigue attention: but, in theſe parts, the author's conduct ſeems to have failed, more than his powers to animate or embelliſh; for partial beauties are found throughout; alluſions, that ſtrike; images, that enliven; illuſtrations from the beſt treaſures of literature.

To the copiouſneſs of his invention, the fertility of his ſubject, and his failure to inſtitute, adhere to, and complete one action, in this poem, may be attributed all thoſe poſthumous pieces and ſketches of *Butler*, which have lately come to light, on nearly the like ſubject. But, whatever may be ſaid of the want of unity and connection; of the groſs

groſs familiarity of the language; of fading alluſions; the power of time againſt the fictions of opinion; or the diſproportion of the parts, of which burleſque is compoſed; the firſt part, at leaſt, of *Hudibras* will be coëval with the language, to the memory and honor of its author. And (to adopt the thought of the late great writer of *Butler*'s life) as a century ago he was in the higheſt fame with thoſe, who allowed the juſtneſs of his picture, from their own compariſon with the original, ſo it will be both the buſineſs of, and a profitable ſtudy to poſterity, to gain a juſt idea of the ſame original, from his repreſentation of it.

WYCHERLEY.

OF the four comedies of *William Wycherley*, much celebrated during the reigns of *Charles* II. and the two following kings, all the ſtories are domeſtic; the ſcenes, *London:* and to judge them by any other rule than that, by which they were written, would be an abuſe of criticiſm.

Like the ſovereign, under whom *Wycherley* (conſidering the variety of his fortune) may be ſaid to have floriſhed, he appears to have yielded himſelf without reſerve to all the eaſe, gallantry, and luxury of the times. Nor has he gone out of his own walk of life, or ſought for other ſcenes, or characters, than thoſe which his daily experience and obſervation might furniſh. The actions of his ſcenes are all of the hour. His rule was that, which he has introduced in the third act of the *Country Wife,*

Wife, in excuſe for the other poets, his contemporaries;

Blame 'em not; they muſt follow their copy, the age.

It muſt then be remembered that *Wycherley* wrote only to the times. All his plots have the ſame foundation, viz. the miſtaking of one perſon for another: ſchemes, naturally induced by the then prevailing ſpirit of maſquerading. It ſhould likewiſe be remembered, that to thoſe times the ton was given (particularly at the theatres) by the King's miſtreſſes; libertine miſtreſſes; who were probably happy in an opportunity of viewing thoſe ſcenes at a theatre, which the reſtraint of their ſituation prevented their partaking, or being witneſſes to elſewhere. And *Wycherley* had too, very particular reaſons for following the taſte both of the King and the Ducheſs of *Cleveland*; to the latter of whom his firſt comedy, *Love in a Wood*, not the leaſt licentious of the four, was, at her own

requeſt, dedicated. The lines, which came upon the ſtage from the pen of *Dryden*, in 1700, when it was a time to ſpeak without reſerve of the reign and manners of *Charles* II. may ſtand as the common and perpetual motto to all the looſe and indecent productions of that age:

> But ſure a baniſh'd court, with lewdneſs fraught,
> The ſeeds of open vice, returning, brought.

And here let it be aſked; is it not enough to diſtaſte courts for ever with poetical adulation, to read from the pen of the ſame *Dryden*, addreſſed before to *Charles* II. perſonally,

> Virtues unknown to theſe rough northern climes,
> From milder heav'ns you bring, without their crimes?

Through *Wycherley*'s dramas, ſentiment and aphoriſms are very thinly ſcattered; for which we may take a reaſon from his own text, in the *Country Wife*,

Good

Good precepts are loſt, when bad examples are ſtill before us.

His dialogues in general are very eaſy, and his obſervations on common life juſt. Of his characters, Mr. and Mrs. *Pinchwife* are correct copies of nature; and *Varniſh* and *Olivia* will always be found among the hypocrites of virtue, and the baſeſt of mankind.

Of the *poems*, which he publiſhed in folio, in 1704, no character can well be given; they are even below criticiſm; as may eaſily be believed, when it is known that *Pope*, whoſe friendſhip and patience had beſtowed ſome months on correcting and altering them, adviſed the author, as the beſt meaſure that could be adopted, to turn them into maxims, like *Rochefoucaut*'s. The preface, prefixed to them, may ſerve as an example of the worſt proſe-ſtyle to be found perhaps in the Engliſh language; and the worſt in ſuch a way, as will not be believed, but upon inſpection; for, throughout the

whole, though it conſiſt of thirty pages, only five periods, including the final one, are to be obſerved. The greateſt charity, that can now be ſhewn to the whole volume together, is to be ſilent, as to what it further contains, and to hope it obtained the object, for which the author publiſhed it; particularly as he is candid enough himſelf ſomewhere to call it, "My damn'd Miſcellany."

OTWAY.

OF *Thomas Otway*, whoſe works are now ſought with avidity, and who, with *Shakſpeare* and *Rowe*, will ſurvive in the annals of Engliſh poetry, as long as juſt reſemblances of nature, and accurate delineations of the paſſions ſhall influence the human heart, ſo few particulars, towards a hiſtory of his life, are known, that what can now be collected amounts but to ſome trifling anecdotes, and thoſe related upon no very certain authority. From the *Complaint of his Muſe* may be gathered, that his father died, whilſt he was at the univerſity; and that he came from thence to *London*, where he ſpent two years in an idle and unprofitable courſe. In 1672, he commenced actor; but did not ſucceed. His earlieſt piece was printed in 1675, his 24th year; but, whether it

ſo as to determine them to a certain end, without any bias from prejudice or paſſion, error would ceaſe, and the diſtinction of merit be loſt. But the directions of genius are determined by other, and more accidental cauſes; and principally by three: by *tempers*; by *ſtudies*; and by *habits*. Of the particular and decided influence of theſe, inſtances, amongſt our own writers, readily occur. *Ben Jonſon* was determined entirely by the *firſt* and *ſecond*; *Dryden* entirely by the *ſecond* and *third*; *Wycherly* by the *third*; and *Otway* by the *firſt* only. That *Otway*'s temper governed him throughout; that it raiſed his genius, though it depreſſed his fortune, no other proof ſeems required, than an attention to the ſpirit of his letters, and to that of thoſe characters, from which alone his celebrity, as an author, has ariſen. In his *Letters*, his *Complaint*, and his *Plays*, the ſame man appears: and, upon the whole review, we find the *Lover*, the *Swain*, *Polydore*, *Jaffier*, and *Otway*, to be the ſame perſon:

ſon: nor has *Don Carlos*, in the great outline of his character, a trait of difference from theſe.

That men have appeared with genius and abilities, conſpicuous enough for the higheſt fame, and powerful enough for their advancement to any point of proſperity, yet with tempers, that have perpetually oppoſed every effort of fortune, towards their elevation, *Otway* ſeems an inſtance in his age, as *Savage* has been in a later. *Otway* appears never to have experienced the teſt of "diffi- "ciliùs temperare felicitati, quâ te non pu- "tes diù uſurum" any otherwiſe, than by failing under the trial. He caught at the preſent good with avidity; enjoyed to exceſs, becauſe (though by his own choice) his happineſs was of ſhort duration; and, when no other hope remained, he enſlaved his mind with a rooted, frantic paſſion, that added enthuſiaſm to his genius, when he wrote on a ſubject, that bore analogy with his own feelings; but which ſet at defiance all

all his better reſolves and efforts to extricate himſelf from the contempt and miſery, in which he paſſed his lateſt days.

Though this be the moſt diſadvantageous view, in which we can regard him as a man, and a philoſopher; as an author, it is the only juſt conſideration, whereby to meaſure his works. *Don Carlos*, The *Orphan*, *Venice Preſerved*, were not more the works of his head than his heart.

Of his other dramas, *Titus and Berenice* and *Scapin* are tranſlated from the French. *Caius Marius*, taken from *Shakſpeare*. *Alcibiades*, a play not only without a moral, but which he ridiculed himſelf in his next preface. *Friendſhip in Faſhion*, a comedy, which, though its licentiouſneſs pleaſed in *Charles* the Second's days, was hiſſed off the ſtage in 1749. The *Soldier's Fortune*, a compilation from four other tales and plays: And its ſequel, the *Atheiſt*, a mere play of adventures, without deſign or character.

As

As a dramatic writer, no author, ſince *Shakſpeare*, has copied from him ſo much as *Otway*; nor has any one written nearer to *Shakſpeare*'s ſtyle.

As an occaſional writer, he has left us little, whereby to judge of him. Of his three *Prologues*, two are entire flattery to the Duke and Ducheſs of *York*; and the *Paſtoral-Elegy*, which he had begun on the death of *Charles* II. and carried only as far as thirty lines, wants the firſt principles of that mode of writing.

L E E.

Ευφυες ἡ Ποιητικη εςιν, η μανικε.
Ariſtot. *de Poet.*

THE plays of *Lee* are in general rather hiſtories, than tragedies: and the character of them is ſo diſtinguiſhed, that there is no Engliſh author, to whom he can bear any degree of compariſon. He is the moſt original dramatic writer ſince *Shakſpeare*. His mind, ſublime in its ideas, and extenſive and powerful in its combinations, may be called, not great only, but majeſtic; for of the thirteen plays, which he wrote, or in which he was concerned, the ſtories of eleven are the revolutions of great ſtates or empires; and the perſonages of the whole, royal, or of the higheſt ſtation. *Nero, Maſſiniſſa* and *Scipio, Auguſtus, Alexander, Mithridates,*

thridates, *Œdipus*, *Theodoſius*, *Borgia*, *Brutus*, *Conſtantine*, Duke of *Guiſe*, Dukes of *Nemours* and *Cleve*, and *Charles IX.* and *Coligny*, are the heroes of his ſcenes. His dramas are what *Milton* calls "tragedies of ſtateſieſt "and moſt regal argument." Yet it may be doubted that, with theſe great powers of mind, and this large view of mankind, he had much ſtudied, or underſtood the true uſe of dramatic poetry. To the private and familiar ſcenes of life he has never deſcended: of action he neglects the unity: and, amongſt all the great ſubjects, of which he has treated, it is perhaps true, that terror, or pity, will not be ſtrongly impreſſed by any of his dramas, except *Borgia*, and the *Maſſacre of Paris*. His characters are faithful and ſtriking; but the tyrants of mankind, or the champions of liberty, univerſally execrated, or extolled by hiſtorians, what pen cannot trace with ſtrong lines of reſemblance?

Of place he was a much ſtricter obſerver,

than either of time, or action; having never broken his ſcenes during an act, except in the third and fifth acts of *Mithridates*, and then not without notice, and by ſcenes only, that may be diſpenſed with. Of time the tranſgreſſions are more and bolder. He has introduced to the ſame piece the deaths of *Agrippina* and *Nero*, which were at nine years diſtance. In *Sophoniſba*, he has produced the overthrow of *Hannibal*, and the death of *Maſſiniſſa*; between which intervened fifty-two years. And in *Borgia*, as well his death as that of *Alexander* VI.; whereas the ſon died not, till four years after his father had been poiſoned.

From *Shakſpeare* he has borrowed very little; from *Otway*, though his contemporary, ſometimes; yet he has himſelf ſupplied much to future writers: nor has Mr. *Addiſon* diſdained to borrow from him the thought, with which he has opened his great tragedy, *Cato*. *Lee*'s lines are,

The morning riſes black, the low'ring ſun,
As if the dreadful bus'neſs he foreknew,
Drives heavily his ſable chariot on.

Addiſon's,

The dawn is overcaſt, the morning lours,
And heavily in clouds brings on the day.

in which compariſon it is ſeen, that *Lee's* images are moſt ſtriking; *Addiſon's* moſt correct.

Lee's earlieſt plays, perhaps from the prevalence of his connection with *Dryden*, are written in heroics: but rhyme was certainly not eaſy to him; as the frequent breaks and half-lines in his verſes demonſtrate: nor did he long continue the practice of it. Like all other poets, whoſe "daily buſineſs muſt be "their daily bread," *Lee* ſeems to have offered his firſt thoughts, without retroſpect or reviſion, to the public. To the claims of want the proſpect of a reward is a ſtrong impellent to haſten a concluſion: and that *Lee's* was a neceſſitous ſituation, if general

tradition did not bear teſtimony, we have it from the pen of *Wycherley*, his contemporary and friend. *Lee* was, during four years, (from 1684 to 1688) mad, and confined in *Bedlam*; to which ſtate it was ſuppoſed the diſtreſs of his circumſtances had chiefly given cauſe. Among the wretched ſtuff, publiſhed by *Wycherley*, in his folio, in 1704, is found an epigram, written to *Lee*, while he was in *Bedlam*; and which deſerves at leaſt to ſtand in a better place, than that volume. *Wycherley* had himſelf, probably, a fellow-feeling with *Lee*, in the purport of the lines; for his wit did not long continue a ſource of great plenty to him. He ſays,

> You, but becauſe you ſtarv'd, went mad before;
> Now ſtarving does to you your wits reſtore:
> So your life is, like others, much at one
> Whether you now have any ſenſe, or none.

Though, from this cauſe of poverty and haſte, *Lee* have produced frequently *fumum ex fulgore*, and have much hyperbole,

bole, the mere unprojected matter of a refining mind; yet in his pages as many ſublime thoughts and images may be found, as perhaps in thoſe of any author whatever. And, however little advantage the theatre may now derive from his compoſitions, the mind of a reader will ever peruſe them with admiration, dwell on their beauties, and, while he contemplates the powers of a genius ſo extraordinary, will lament, that they ſhould neither be to their poſſeſſor a ſource of immediate independence and happineſs, nor applied to thoſe labors, in which they were exerted, with the beſt rules for the perpetual benefit of mankind.

n its higheſt character, can be but an imitation. It muſtimitate the truth of nature, in morals and phyſiology equally: and to pretend to exceed, or ſupplant that, is hyperbolical. If authority were wanting to confirm ſo evident a truth, *Ariſtotle*, having enumerated the different ſpecies of poetical compoſition, concludes, πασαι τυγχανουσιν ουσαι μιμησεις το συνολον. Yet *Dryden*, in his famous *Dramatic Eſſay*, tells us, "A poet in the deſcription of a beautiful garden, or a meadow, will pleaſe our imagination more than the place itſelf can our ſight:" As if that, which has its excellence only from a near reſemblance, could exceed its archetype. The imitative arts may indeed pleaſe us merely by a faithful repreſentation of thoſe objects, of which the ſight would diſguſt us. The repreſentation of the ſhambles, on the painter's canvas, may be admired; or that of the field of battle, as deſcribed by the poet, give us ſatisfaction: and here "the deſcription will pleaſe our

"ima-

" imagination more than the object itſelf " can our ſight." But what words ſhall deſcribe the beauties of nature, above their own power to pleaſe us? Of the ſubject *Dryden* has choſen, the poet cannot produce even the neareſt reſemblance; for the painter, or engraver, comes in between nature and him, to delight us with beauties of imitation, which certainly no words can convey. But, becauſe he had written this in an early eſſay, it is not therefore to be concluded, that he always believed it. To principles, when they are erroneous, he is not uniformly conſtant, either in his practice, or opinion, becauſe he has once entertained them. He has, in his latter writings, honeſtly and avowedly given up many of his earlier opinions, as inconſiſtent and untenable. Others he has virtually renounced, upon better conſideration. He firſt tells us " that " the words of a good writer, which deſcribe " it livelily, will make a deeper impreſſion " of belief on us, than all the actor can in-

" ſinuate

" ſinuate into us, when he ſeems to fall dead " before us." Yet, a few years afterwards, he ſays, " One advantage the drama has " above an heroic poem, that it repreſents " to view, what the poem does but re- " late." He forgot, in the firſt inſtance, Horace's *Segnius irritant animos, &c.* which he produces, in the laſt, with the fatality of quoting againſt himſelf. But many of *Dryden*'s errors, in his pages, are found there, only becauſe he always thought with a pen in his hand. His firſt thoughts were committed to paper, and at once to the preſs; for he had neither time to reviſe, compare, nor refer. To keep him a little in countenance in this particular, and to ſhew how difficult it is, even to other great geniuſes, to be always right, without reference or compariſon, an inadvertency (for it is no more) may be obſerved, reſpecting *Dryden* himſelf, in the life, written of him by the late learned *Biographer of the Poets*; and which had eaſily been detected, with common care of reviſion.

viſion. He tells us very gravely; "To the "cenſure of *Collier*, whoſe remarks may be "rather termed admonitions than criti-"ciſms, he made little reply; being at the "age of ſixty-eight, attentive to *better things* "than the claps of a playhouſe." Now, exactly in that year, in which *Dryden* was ſixty-eight—viz. in 1699—he wrote the *Preface* to his *Fables*; and he therein tells us, "If it ſhall pleaſe God to give me longer "life, and moderate health, my intentions "are *to tranſlate the whole Ilias.*" Such were the *better things* in *Dryden*'s contemplation.

His learning, upon a fair eſtimation, will perhaps be found not to have been very extenſive. In the firſt edition of his *Dramatic Eſſay*, a work wherein he certainly diſplayed all the learning he was then maſter of, he has twice uſed, δεσις, for the cataſtrophe of a drama; firſt tranſlating it, *denouement*; and then, *the untying of the plot.* And in the *Preface* to his *Fables* he has

has ſhewn, that, even after he had tranſlated the firſt book of the *Ilias*, he knew not the contents of the ſecond. But to thoſe, who are acquainted with the poetical beauties of this author, even the mention of errors will be thought to be dwelling too long on them. He is the writer, from whom the greateſt maſters in his art have ſince taken example. And, though a partial reader may find him (from the hurry and diſtraction of a neceſſitous ſituation) now and then obnoxious even to vulgar cenſure, the great extent of his knowledge, his unbounded fertility, his careful induſtry in improving and eſtabliſhing verſification and poetical diction, his ability and will to teach, and, the crown of all, as a poet, the firſt example the language boaſts, in the ſublimeſt ſtyle of compoſition, will make every lover of Engliſh poetry, upon thorough knowledge and intimate acquaintance, end in admiring and honoring him.

MILTON.

ARCADES.

THE proper place to rank this early production of *Milton*'s pen ſeems, as a kind of prologue to *Comus*. *Milton* went to live with his father at *Horton*, Bucks, in 1632. At *Hareſield*, in the neighbourhood of *Horton*, reſided the Counteſs Dowager of *Derby*, at whoſe houſe this piece was firſt performed; and *Comus* was acted, in 1634, at *Ludlow Caſtle*, before the Earl of *Bridgewater*, who had married a daughter of the Counteſs of *Derby*. This piece was "preſented by ſome noble perſons of the "Counteſs's family;" probably the children of

of the Earl of *Bridgewater*, who were by it, as a kind of dramatic exerciſe, initiated to the ſtage, and brought to perform, the next year, in *Comus*, in characters, that required greater confidence and exertion.

It has been obſerved, that *Milton* not only inſtituted this piece upon Ben Jonſon's *Entertainment of the Queen and Prince at Althorpe*, but that he has ſervilely copied ſome of his words.

JONSON.

Look, ſee;
What may all this wonder be?
* * * * * * * *
That is *Cypariſſus'* face,
And the dame hath *Syrinx'* grace;
Sure they are of heav'nly race!
* * * * * * * *
This is ſhe,
This is ſhe, &c.

MILTON.

Look nymphs, and ſhepherds look;
What ſudden blaze of majeſty

Is that, which we from hence deſcry;
Too divine to be miſtook?
This, this is ſhe—
* * * * * * *
Syrinx well might wait on her.

Perhaps, upon thorough inveſtigation, what is called ſervility, may be found good judgment in *Milton*. This Counteſs of *Derby* was daughter of the Lord *Spenſer* of *Althorpe*, who had there received the Queen and Prince. She was Dowager at *Hareſield*, in 1633; and *Ben Jonſon*'s entertainment had been performed at *Althorpe*, as the occaſion of it had been given, but thirty years before. It ſeems therefore a very delicate compliment in *Milton*, to apply to her the words, that had, upon a former occaſion, been applied to the Queen; and to remind her, by ſuch repetition, of ſcenes, very flattering to her family, in receiving the Queen and Prince on their firſt arrival in the kingdom; and at which ſcenes ſhe had herſelf probably been preſent.

LYCIDAS.

THIS poem appears to have been formed between *Spenſer* and the early Italians. *Dryden* ſays, in the *Preface* to his *Fables*, "*Milton* was the *poetical* ſon of *Spenſer*. He "has acknowledged to me, that *Spenſer* was "his original." *Aſtrophel* therefore probably gave riſe to *Lycidas*. And, as *Dante* has made *Cato* of *Utica* keeper of the gates of Purgatorio, *Milton* has here, in return, placed St. *Peter* in company with *Apollo*, *Triton*, *Æolus*, *&c.* For the intruſion of what follows, reſpecting the clergy of his time, the earlieſt Italians have, in pieces of every ſort, ſet plentiful example. Perhaps no better reaſon can be given for *Milton*'s conduct here, than what ſome commentator gives for *Dante*'s above mentioned: "Per verità è un gran "capriccio, ma in ciò ſegue ſuo ſtile."

Whoever

Whoever compares this poem, towards the end, *i. e.* twenty lines from " Weep no " more, woful ſhepherds, weep no more," with the concluſion of the *Epitaphium Damonis*, from " Nec te Lethæo fas quæſiviſſe " ſub Orco," will find them much alike.

A late writer's inference, " that no man " could ever have read *Lycidas* with plea- " ſure, independently of the knowledge of its " author," has ſomewhat of the ſame foun- dation as one of *Lauder*'s replies, " that " thoſe, who inveigh againſt his interpola- " tions, would themſelves not ſcruple to " commit real forgeries, did not the fear of " the laws reſtrain them;" for neither writer could know of whom he was judging.

IN Milton's *Latin Poems* pure diction and harmonious verſification are every where obſervable. The *Elegies* have a perfectly claſſical elegance. Perhaps no ſcholar could ſucceed in forming a happy elegiac ſtile, without the ſtudy of *Ovid*. Of ſuch ſtudy theſe poems afford much proof.

Nunc ego *Triptolemi* cuperem conſcendere currus,
Miſit in ignotam qui rude ſemen humum:
Nunc ego *Medeæ* vellem frænare dracones,
Quos habuit fugiens arce, *Corinthe*, tuâ.
Ov. Triſt. l. iii. el. 8.

At tu, ſi poteris, celeres tibi ſume jugales,
Vecta quibus *Colchis* fugit ab ore viri;
Aut queis *Triptolemus* Scythicas devenit in oras,
Gratus Eleuſinâ miſſus ab urbe puer.
Milt. el. 4.

Preſſerat occiduus Tarteſſia littora *Phœbus*.
Ov. Met. l. xiv.

Et Tarteſſiaco ſubmerſerat æquore currum
Phœbus—— *Milt.* el. 3.

Semi-

Semicaperque Deus, ſemideuſque caper,
Milt. el. 5,

is from well-known lines of *Ovid*, Art. Am. l. ii. 24; and Faſt. l. iv. 752. Many other like paſſages might be pointed out. Nor are theſe favors received, without grateful return to the Roman poet.

Non ego vel profugi nomen, ſortemve recuſo;
Lætus et exilii conditione fruor.
O utinam vates nunquam graviora tuliſſet
Ille Tomitano flebilis exul agro!
Non tunc Ionio quicquam ceſſiſſet *Homero*,
Neve foret victo laus tibi prima, *Maro*.
El. 1.

No part of *Milton*'s writings contain ſo full account of himſelf, as his Latin poems: nor are any where found ſo many embryo-paſſages of his greater works.

MILTON's ſix *Italian Poems* ſhew a very extenſive ſkill in that language; and highly deſerve the elaborate praiſe *Francini* has beſtowed on them in his *Ode*, where he ſays, with much grace,

Dammi tua dolce cetra
Se vuoi ch' io dica del tuo dolce canto.

The ſecond *Sonnet*,

Qual in colle aſpro al imbrunir di ſera,
&c.

has great delicacy, both of ſentiment and expreſſion. It is without weakneſs, and without hyperbole: a medium, which ſeems Italian perfection. In the *Canzone* is one of the moſt elegant forms, uſed in the language;

Dinne, ſe la tua ſpeme ſia mai vana,
E de penſieri lo miglior *t'arrivi*;

a mode uſed by the earlieſt, and the beſt Italians;

Se la voſtra memoria *non s' imboli*
Ditemi. Dante, Inf. c. 29.

Hor *dimmi, ſe* colui in pace *vi guide,*
Petrarca, del Tr. d'Am. c. 2.

and is one of the many beauties, they have borrowed from the Latins. As *Horace*, l. i. od. 3,

Sic te, Diva potens Cypri,
* * * *
Ventorumque *regat* pater
* * * *
Navis, * * *
* Virgilium * *
Reddas incolumem, &c.

Even in ſuch trifles as Italian *Sonnets*, it is eaſy to diſcover the man, and the ſcale of mind, that was compoſing them. It is not here, as with *Petrarca*,

Regnano i ſenſi, e la ragion è morta;

but

Ne treccie d' oro, ne guancia vermiglia
M' abbaglian sì, ma . .

Portamenti alti honeſti——
Parole adorne di lingua più d'una,
E 'l cantar, che di mezzo l' hemiſpero
Traviar ben puo la faticoſa luna.

Son. 3.

MILTON's language, both in proſe and verſe, is ſo peculiarly his own, that the ſtyle of no former, or contemporary writer bears any reſemblance to it. From his phraſeology the idiom of no learned, or foreign language is excluded. To a reader, unacquainted with the foreign and ancient-Engliſh languages, and incapable of tracing words to their parent root in the learned, the ſenſe and ſpirit of *Milton*'s phraſe muſt be often unattainable. To oſtentation, to a deſire of frequently diſplaying the acquirements of ſtudy, has this copiouſneſs of learning been by ſome attributed. Perhaps a more liberal and more juſt cauſe may be aſſigned. *Milton* was, till his thirtieth year, a laborious and uninterrupted ſtudent. When he engaged himſelf in the buſineſs of the world, ſtill his occupation was learning. His familiarity with all languages is generally known: and nothing is ſo common an effect

effect of perfection in, and intimate uſe of a language, as thinking in, and expreſſing the thoughts by the idiom of that language. In *Dryden*'s Engliſh we find Latiniſms allowed and admired; and, if *Milton* was a better ſcholar in all languages, than *Dryden* in Latin, the idioms of all were in common to him. Biſhop *Atterbury*, an excellent judge in every part of polite literature, cenſures *Waller* for his total want of Greciſms, and for his few Latiniſms, and infers from thence very ſlender ſcholarſhip. If *Atterbury*'s rule be juſt, judge all your poets by the ſame rule; and let not *Milton*, who abounds with learned alluſions; whoſe text perpetually reminds us of the Greek writers, and who has epithets and phraſes without end from *Horace* and *Virgil*, and almoſt all the poetical turns either language could afford to his own; let not him, thus qualified and thus excelling, be blamed for what would have been praiſed in *Waller*, or any other poet.

The great extent of poetical imagery, alluſion,

luſion, and deſcription in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, neceſſarily led its author to extenſive dealings with the Greek and Roman epics, and tranſferred much of their readings and idiom from thoſe languages to his own: but, of all modern languages, the peculiar favorite of *Milton*'s ſtudy was *Italian*. No part of his works is exempt from notices of this predilection. Wherever he has a choice, the Italian derivation is preferred. He has *ſovran*, *ammiral*, *harald*, *perfet*, *tempeſt*, *v. &c. &c. &c.* And it is, perhaps, not difficult to account for this preference. Whoever is acquainted with the Italian and Greek languages, will find a ſtrong analogy between them; and ſuch a force in many of the Italian words, as brings the reſemblance neareſt, even in thoſe very parts, where the greateſt ſtrength of the Greek lies. If the Greeks have *αποδημος*, the Italians have *fuoruſcito*. When the Greek indeed riſes to *φιλαποδημος*, the Italian is left; and at ſome point muſt every language be left by it; for with it, to

the

the full extent of the compoſite words, none other can compare. The force of a Greek compoſite can never be better ſhewn, than by the text of *Milton*, who in his *Maſque* has taken a full line and half to render one word, uſed by *Homer*:

——what time the labor'd ox
In his looſe traces from the furrow came—

is all expreſſed by βελυτος. But the Italians, though far ſhort of this force, have ſtill compoſite words of ſufficient power to make every lover of Greek love Italian. And, that *Milton*'s attachment to it aroſe from this affinity, ſeems probable, becauſe his taſte for it was greatly antecedent to his viſiting *Italy*; and the kind and flattering reception, he met with there, was the conſequence, not the cauſe of his great proficiency in it. His fondneſs for muſic too might have ſome influence in favour of a language, ſo well adapted to muſical expreſſion.

It

It has been obſerved of *Milton*, " that he " very often imitates *Scripture*, where he is " thought moſt to follow a claſſic original." A like obſervation may be made on his Italian Imitations; for he has often followed the poets of that language, where claſſic authors are referred to. In the note on *Par. Reg.* b. iii. l. 310, varior. edit.

He look'd, and ſaw *what numbers numberleſs*
The city gates outpour'd, light-armed troops;

Æſchylus is referred to: whereas *Milton* took both the expreſſion and much of the ſentiment from *Taſſo*, La Ger. c. xix. ſt. 121:

Ma non aſpettar già che di quell' oſte
L' innumerabil numero ti conti.

Several other inſtances of this ſort might be pointed out. Another note, or two, may here be added. In the *Allegro*,

Warble his native *woodnotes wild*,

is Taſſo's

boſcarecce

boſcarecce inculte avene.
La Ger. c. vii. ſt. 6.

In *Par. Loſt*, var. edit. b. ii. at l. 124.

When he, who moſt excels *in fact of arms*;

a change is propoſed to, *facts*, or *feats*. The text is a ſimple Galliciſm; *en fait d' armes*; as, maitre *en fait d' armes*. Same book, l. 185,

Unreſpited, unpitied, unrepriev'd,

is from *Shakſpeare*'s

Unhouſel'd, unappointed, unaneal'd,
Ghoſt, in *Hamlet*.

This ſeems the moſt obvious alluſion poſſible. No line, or paſſage in *Shakſpeare* appears to have made ſo deep impreſſion on *Milton*'s imagination, as this: he has fourteen or fifteen imitations of it. Yet, the notes refer only to the Greek tragedies in general. —The paſſage in *Par. Loſt*, b. x. l. 296,

——the reſt his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigor not to move,

And

And with Aſphaltic ſlime; broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of hell the gather'd beach
They faſten'd——

has no ſmall difficulty. This is the punctuation of both *Milton*'s editions. About ſuch ſubſtances and ſuch operations it is vain to reaſon too phyſically. Perhaps ſome help towards an interpretation may be gained from the phraſeology of *Tacitus*; who frequently couples, under the ſame verb, a moral ſubject and a material;

Comitabantur exercitum, præter alia aſſueta bello, magna vis camelorum, onuſta frumento, *ut ſimul hoſtem famemque depelleret.* Ann. l. xv.

Germania omnis a Sarmatis Daciſque mutuo *metu aut montibus ſeparatur.* De Mor. Germ.

——*prædâ famâque onuſti.* Ann. l. xii.

and in many other like inſtances. The modern editions alter the punctuation, by placing the ſemicolon at *move*; and only a comma

Serpit odoriferas per opes levis *aura* Favoni,
Aura ſub innumeris humida nata roſis.
Eleg. 3.

With theſe both his Engliſh and Latin poems abound. The 114th *Pſalm*, which he has rendered both into Engliſh and Greek paraphraſe, (of which the Engliſh was done by him at fifteen years old) appears to have attracted his notice, by a particularly beautiful turn of lines found in it. Yet *Dryden* ſays, in his *Dedication of Juvenal*, "Had I "time I could enlarge on the beautiful turns "of words and thoughts, which are as re- "quiſite in ſatire, as in heroïc poetry. With "theſe beautiful turns I confeſs myſelf to "have been unacquainted, till in a con- "verſation, which I had with Sir George "*Mackenzy*, he aſked me why I did not "imitate, in my verſes, the turns of Mr. "*Waller* and Sir John *Denham*; of which "he repeated to me many. This hint, thus "ſeaſonably given me, firſt made me ſen- "ſible of my own wants, and brought me "after-

" afterwards to ſeek for the ſupply of them " in other Engliſh authors. I looked over " firſt the darling of my youth, the famous " *Cowley*; there I found, inſtead of them, " points of wit and quirks of epigram, even " in the *Davideis*. Then I conſulted a " greater genius, I mean *Milton*; but I " found not there neither, that for which I " looked." And, to aſcertain his meaning, he concludes with examples from *Ovid:*

Heu quantum ſcelus eſt in *viſcera viſcera* condi!

and from *Catullus:*

Tum jam *nulla* viro juranti fœmina credat;
Nulla viri ſperet ſermones eſſe fideles:
Nam, ſimul ac cupidæ mentis ſatiata libido eſt,
Dicta *nihil* metuere, *nihil* perjuria curant.

Dryden uſed occaſionally to viſit *Milton*, who had expreſſed an opinion, not very favorable to him, as a poet; though he allowed him to be a rhymiſt. *Dryden* might be piqued at this opinion: he, more probably, believed what he wrote. With his uſual haſte he

took up *Milton*'s book, looked over a page or two, and, not finding there any turn of words, formed a general concluſion. His cenſure, however, ſeems to demonſtrate, that he was, at leaſt when he wrote this, in 1693, but a caſual reader of *Milton*. And ſo erroneous is his opinion, that it may be doubted, even after all his ſtudy for examples, whether the ten thouſand verſes, which he delivered to *Tonſon*, during the ſeveral ſucceeding years, contain as many turns of words, as the *Paradiſe Loſt* alone, which conſiſts of very few more lines.

OF *Milton*'s fame with poſterity the meaſure is not yet full. That learning, ſcience, and truth are impeded by the neceſſary diſtractions of life, and by the errors and variety of opinions, which the different limitations in the progreſs of our ſearch and ſtudies occaſion, will not be more readily allowed, than that conſummate knowledge itſelf is not alone ſufficient for the eſtabliſhment of truth; and that prejudice and malignity, with the higheſt talents, may render interpretations doubtful, or obſcure facts, as certainly as ignorance, or the clouds of error.

It has been *Milton*'s fate, after a long interval of neglect and ſilence to his writings, to be at length brought forth and expounded by commentators of excellent taſte, judgment, and erudition; by *Hume*, by *Addiſon*, *Thyer*, *Richardſon*, and *Newton*: and, after the example of ſuch

men, illuſtrious ſome by their ſtation, and all by their learning, a juſt life, at leaſt a juſt hiſtory of the poetical character of *Milton*, had come with ſome grace from the late author of the *Lives of the Poets*. Yet, when to honor the greateſt poet our annals can boaſt, theſe wreaths are gathered, the hymns compoſed, the altar prepared, and but the torch wanting for his apotheoſis, like his own *Belial*,

> ——whoſe tongue
> Dropt manna, and could make the worſe appear
> The better reaſon, to perplex and daſh
> Matureſt counſels——

comes this avowed enemy, to forbid the rites, and oppoſe the claim.—Of *Johnſon*, from his great abilities, and his peculiar talent in biography, it will probably be the fate, for many years, to be the laſt writer of a life of *Milton*: yet let every reader in the mean time remember, that prejudice, envy, nay malignity, have, throughout this work, even extinguiſhed the candor of its author: in

all

all caſes determined his will againſt his ſubject, and in ſome miſled his judgment. He charges *Milton* with vanity, in having prefixed to his juvenile Latin poems, the age, at which they were ſeverally written. That *Milton* did ſo, is certainly in itſelf a proof of his modeſty; "take my poems and their "apology with them." To conſtrue ſuch addition of his age a boaſt, you muſt at leaſt allow them to have (what is true) extraordinary excellence; and then Envy's conſtruction will be, "at ſuch an age I could make "ſuch poems." But, how illiberal it is to turn merit againſt itſelf, or make virtue in any way ſhadow its own fame, may be judged of, without that great writer's abilities; and will be allowed, without his prejudices. In the review of the Italian Poems, his conduct is ſcarcely ſecure from ridicule. "Of *Milton*'s Italian Poems he cannot pre-"tend to ſpeak as a critic;" yet of every ſtanza of *Francini*'s Italian *Ode*, in commendation of them, he judges. The truth is,

that, finding in *Milton*'s Italian Poems nothing to diſpraiſe, he would ſtill forbear to commend them, elegant as they are in themſelves, and the ſingle inſtance of an Engliſh poet's exerciſe in that language. When their perfection ſtood the teſt of his own examination, ſtill they were to be envied the juſt praiſe, they had received from others; and he has fallen upon thoſe very Italians themſelves, who have celebrated them. But with how much taſte and judgment he has done this, may eaſily be ſeen. His chief criticiſms on *Francini*'s Ode are, "that the firſt "ſtanza is only empty noiſe," and "that "the laſt is natural and beautiful." With reſpect to the firſt remark; whoever has paſſed, without admiring it, *Taſſo*'s invocation, in his ſecond ſtanza, (of which this firſt ſtanza of *Francini* is a very elegant paraphraſe), has probably found no one beauty to admire, throughout the whole *Geruſalemme*. With reſpect to the ſecond remark; if *Carlo Dati* may be allowed a judge of juſt ſentiment,

ſentiment, and poetical expreſſion in Italian, the laſt ſtanza of *Francini*'s Ode is not "natural and beautiful;" he having himſelf ridiculed it, in his Latin *Encomiaſtic-Inſcription*, ſubjoined to that *ode:* for, where he ſays, "Illi, in cujus virtutibus evulgandis "ora famæ non ſufficiant; *nec hominum ſtupor in laudandis ſatis eſt*," he can only allude to *Francini*'s concluſion,

Freno dunque la lingua, e aſcolto il core,
Che ti prende a lodar con lo ſtupore.

It is alſo called pride in *Milton* to have printed, before his poems, the Italian teſtimonies in his favor. At the head of them is found a diſtich of *Manſo*, Marcheſe di *Villa*, a man by birth, by letters, by military fame, fortune, and his patronage of ſcholars, among the moſt illuſtrious of his country, or his age. Could *Milton* then, who had received every civility and kindneſs from this man at *Naples*, conſiſtently with humanity, good breeding, or any right of

of ſociety, omit to print his diſtich, in a work publiſhed even in his lifetime, and which contained a long poem, purpoſely compoſed and preſented perſonally to him by *Milton*, on his leaving *Naples*, in gratitude for the favors received there? If it were neceſſary that *Manſo*'s teſtimony ſhould appear, of courſe the others were required: and they are put forth with as much modeſty, as could well be expreſſed concerning them, by a declaration, " non tam de ſe " quam ſupra ſe eſſe dicta." *Milton*'s biographer has in theſe, and various other inſtances, forgotten (though he have elſewhere praiſed it) the beſt rule in Pope's *Eſſay on Criticiſm*,

> Learn then what morals critics ought to ſhow;
> For 'tis but half a judge's taſk to know.
> 'Tis not enough, wit, art, and learning join;
> In all you ſpeak let truth and candor ſhine.

Of this Marcheſe *Manſo* it was the ſingular fate to be the common patron of both *Taſſo* and

and *Milton*, though at the diſtance of forty-three years; for *Taſſo* died in 1595, and *Milton* was not in *Italy* till 1638. The former poet celebrates his ſplendor and liberality:

Fra 'cavalier magnanimi, e corteſi,
Riſplende il *Manſo*; e doni, e raggi ei verſa.
La Ger. Conq. c. xx. ed. 1593.

the latter his taſte and patronage of the Muſes:

Dicetur tum ſponte tuos habitâſſe penates
Cynthius, et famulas veniſſe ad limina muſas.
Carm. ad *Manſum*.

a couplet, which may, not unaptly, be applied to *Pope*.

Of the ſeveral commentators on *Milton*, Mr. *Richardſon* and Mr. *Thyer* are the moſt conſpicuous for the alluſions: the former for the claſſical; the latter for the Italian. For the deſign of the poem, the conduct, and the manners, Mr. *Addiſon*; who points out, with great propriety, the conſiſtency in the

the characters: a conſiſtency, which is much and juſtly admired in *Taſſo*; for which he is praiſed by every diſcerning reader, and celebrated by that fine judge of epic and dramatic excellence, *Metaſtaſio*; who calls him " dipintore fideliſſimo de' caratteri veri " e coſtanti." This propriety in the Italian could not eſcape the obſervation of *Milton*, who had ſtudied every line of *Taſſo*, and whoſe poem has much in common with the *Geruſalemme*. The commendation of *Taſſo*, however, in this particular, muſt not detract from *Milton*. The utmoſt he could derive from the example before him, was a notice, that the beſt critics would admire him, if he ſhould adhere to the ſame conſiſtency: and well rewarded has his care been in ſo good a judge of the decorum of character, as Mr. *Addiſon*, to point out his beauties.

Θεοπεμπ]α τινα δωρημα]α (ʋ γαρ ειπειν θεμι]ον ανθρωπινα) αθροα ες ἑαυ]ον εσπασε· δια τυτο ὁις εχει καλοις ἀπαν]ας αει νικα.

Longinus de Sublim. ſect. 34.

THE genius of *Milton*, the contemplations, the powers of intellect in invention and combination, are above example, or compariſon. In proportion to the terror excited by the ſublimity of his deſign, is the delight received by his wonderful execution. His ſubject, and his conduct of it, exalt him to a ſupreme rank; to a rank, with which all other poets compare but as a ſecond claſs. *Homer*'s intercourſe with the gods is when they deſcend, as *Satan* entered *Paradiſe*, in miſts and clouds to the earth. *Shakſpeare*, though the firſt ſcholar in the volume of mankind, riſes "above the wheeling poles," but in glances and flaſhes of ſublimity. *Taſſo* up to the heavens "preſumes;"

ſumes;" but *Milton* "into the heaven of heavens," and dwells there. He inhabits, as it were, the court of the Deity: and leaves on the mind a ſtability and a permanent character of divine inhabitation and divine preſence, of which no other poet affords a thought. Others riſe to ſublimity, when they exceed; *Milton*'s inſtitution, his quality, his element is ſublimity: from his height he deſcends to meet the greatneſs of others.

Mr. *Addiſon* has remarked, that "perhaps never was a genius ſo ſtrengthened "by learning, as *Milton*'s." So true is this, that years might be ſpent in the examination of the *Paradiſe Loſt*, without exhauſting all its topics of alluſion to ancient and modern learning. Yet the conſtitution of *Milton*'s genius; his creative powers; the excurſions of his imagination to regions, untraced by human pen, unexplored by human thought, were gifts of nature, not effects of learning. Had his ſtudies, by any fatality, been confined to an Engliſh verſion of the ſacred Books,

Books, *Paradiſe Loſt* had equally come forth, though with leſs ornament.

By this view of the genius of *Milton* may be decided the queſtion, Whether *Shakſpeare*'s powers would have been enlarged, or altered by learning? *Shakſpeare*, as *Dryden* happily expreſſes himſelf, "was naturally "learned." His learning was above the ſtudy of books; and by them he might, like *Milton*, have illuſtrated nature; have given variety to narration, or energy to alluſion; but never have improved, through the knowledge of others, that firſt knowledge, which was peculiarly his own.

But the learning of *Milton*, though not the firſt ſubject of our admiration, is not to be paſſed over, without a degree of praiſe, to which perhaps no other ſcholar is entitled. To both the dialects of *Hebrew* he added the *Greek*, *Latin*, *Italian*, *French*, and *Spaniſh*; and theſe he poſſeſſed, not with ſtudy only, but commanded them in ordinary and familiar uſe. With theſe, aiding his own natural

natural genius, he aſſumed a vigor of intellect, to which difficulties were temptations; that courted all that is arduous: that ſoared to divine counſels, without unworthineſs; and met the majeſty of heaven, without amazement or confuſion.

The energy of his mind, upon all occaſions, ſhews itſelf ſuch, that we make no allowances (becauſe we find none neceſſary) for his ſituation. Yet the greateſt work of human genius, his *Paradiſe Loſt*, was not begun till he was blind. Had any one, poſſeſſing all the faculties of man without impair, executed this work, who would not ſay he had written with all nature preſent to his mind; that is, within the power of his mind, by help of that reference or reviſion, which connects ſcience and retrieves learning? But of *Milton*,

——from the chearful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Preſented with an univerſal blank
Of nature's works, to him expung'd and raz'd,
And wiſdom at one entrance quite ſhut out—

more

more muſt be ſaid: he wrote with all nature preſent to his memory.

That the praiſe of *Milton* is, like that of *Cowley*, to have no thought in common with any author, his predeceſſor, cannot be urged. Though he thought for himſelf, he had a juſt deference for the thoughts of others; and, though his genius enabled him without helps to execute, he diſdained not to conſult and direct himſelf by the moſt approved examples. In his Latin elegies, *Ovid* was his maſter: in his firſt eſſay in maſque, *Ben Jonſon:* in his Italian poems, *Dante*, *Petrarca*, and *Fulvio Teſti*. It was his peculiar ſtudy to explore the traces of genius, in whatever authors had gone with eminence before him. He read them all. He took the golden ornaments from the hands of the beſt artiſts; he conſidered their faſhion, their workmanſhip, their weight, their alloy; and, ſtoring and arranging them for occaſion, he adapted them, as he ſaw fit, to the chalice, or the pixis, formed from

the ſublime patterns of his own mind. Works of exquiſite and wonderful invention; which the moſt learned and the moſt ingenious are the firſt to admire; but which themſelves can never be imitated! To form the *Paradiſe Loſt*, what learning have the *ſacred*, or the *claſſic* books, that has not been explored? And what are the beauties, or the excellences of either, that he has not there aſſembled and combined? 'Tis a temple, conſtructed to his own immortal fame, of the cedar of *Lebanon*, the gold of *Ophir*, and the marble of *Paros*.