ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

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PARADISE LOST

(BOOKS I. AND II.)

BY

JOHN MILTON

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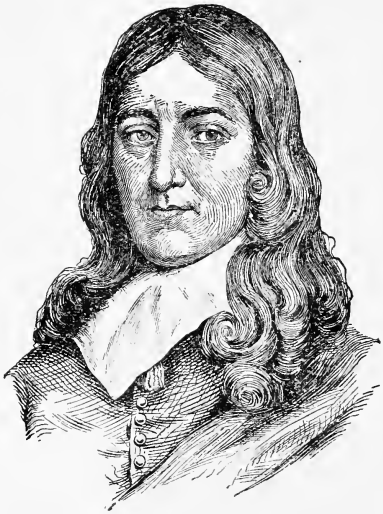

John Milton

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PARADISE LOST.
M. I

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN MILTON was born in Bread Street, London, on the 9th of December, 1608. He was the third child of John and Sarah Milton. His father, who had been disinherited for turning Protestant, had left the family home in Oxfordshire, and settled in London as a scrivener.[1] He was a musician, and a composer of such worth that his songs were published along with those of Byrd, Dowland, and others of first rank of that time. We find little about the poet's mother. Her grandson, Edward Phillips, says she was "a woman of incomparable virtue and goodness."

"John, our author," wrote Phillips in a sketch of his uncle's life, "who was destined to be the ornament and glory of his country, was sent, together with his brother, to Paul's School, whereof Dr. Gill, the elder, was then chief master. . . . He entered into the first rudiments of learning, and advanced therein with that admirable success, not more by the discipline of the school and good instructions of his masters . . . than by his own happy genius, prompt wit and apprehension, and insuperable industry; for he generally sat up half the night, as well in voluntary improvements of his own choice as the exact perfecting of his school exercises. . . . At the age of fifteen he was full ripe for

[1] Similar in functions to our notary public.

academic learning, and accordingly was sent to the University of Cambridge."

"My father," wrote Milton, "destined me while yet a little boy for the study of humane letters, which I seized with such eagerness, that from the twelfth year of my age I scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight; which, indeed, was the first cause of injury to my eyes, to whose natural weakness there were also added frequent headaches. At which, not retarding my impetuosity in learning, he caused me to be daily instructed, both at the grammar school and under other masters at home; and then, when I had acquired various tongues and also not some insignificant taste for the sweetness of philosophy, he sent me to Cambridge."

Milton became a member of Christ's College in the Easter term of 1625, and chose the tutorship of William Chappell, who was afterwards Bishop of Cork. In his second year occurred the rustication of which much has been said and little known. It is supposed that he was sent away because of a quarrel with his tutor, Chappell. In a Latin elegy to his friend Diodati in the spring of 1626 he wrote: "At present I do not care to revisit the reedy Cam, nor does regret for my forbidden rooms grieve me. Nor am I yet in the humor to bear the threats of a harsh master, and other things intolerable to my disposition. If this be exile . . . then I refuse neither the name nor the lot of a runaway, and gladly I enjoy my state of banishment." He returned, and took up work under a new tutor.

It was during this interval that Milton wrote his first poem in English, "On the Death of a Fair Infant," the daughter of his sister, Mrs. Phillips. After this he composed Latin elegies and letters, and in English the beautiful ode "On the Morning of

Christ's Nativity." "It is a gift," he said, in writing to Diodati, "I have presented to Christ's natal day. On that very morning at daybreak it was first conceived."

Afterwards he wrote the "Epitaph upon the Marchioness of Winchester," and the sonnet "On Attaining the Age of Twenty-three." With this latter poem, which Milton sent to a friend, went a remarkable letter, saying that "the very fear of the punishment denounced against him who hid the talent restrains him, so that he takes no thought of being late so it gave advantage to be more fit; for those that were latest lost nothing when the Master of the vineyard came to give every man his hire."

"Soon after he had taken his master's degree (1632) he thought fit to leave the university; not upon any disgust or discontent for want of preferment, as some ill-willers have reported; nor upon any cause whatsoever forced to fly, as his detractors maliciously feign." The rooms he occupied while a student are still pointed out. "His father, having got an estate to his content [at Horton, near Colebrook, in Berkshire], and left off all business, was retired from the cares and fatigues of the world." Thither Milton went, and for more than five years "spent there a complete holiday in turning over the Greek and Latin writers," varying his life by journeys to London for "something new in mathematics or music, in which sciences he delighted." Amid the quiet and peace of Horton and its woods and fields, he wrote poems which reflect such life,—the sonnet "To the Nightingale," "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," the "Arcades" and "Comus," and, perhaps a little later, the exquisite "Lycidas," the last of his English lyrics.

"After the said term of five years," continues his nephew Phillips, "his mother then dying, he was willing to add to his

acquired learning the observation of foreign customs, manners, and institutions, and thereupon took a resolution to travel, more especially designing for Italy; and accordingly, with his father's consent and assistance, he put himself into an equipage suitable to such a design. . . . At Paris . . . he went first to wait upon my Lord Scudamore, then ambassador in France from King Charles I. My lord received him with wonderful civility, and, understanding he had a desire to make a visit to the great Hugo Grotius, he sent several of his attendants to wait upon him, and to present him in his name to that renowned doctor and statesman, who was at that time ambassador from Christina, Queen of Sweden, to the French King. . Grotius took the visit kindly, and gave him entertainment suitable to his worth and the high commendations he had heard of him. After a few days, not intending to make the usual tour of France, he took his leave of my lord, who at his departure from Paris gave him letters to the English merchants residing in any part through which he was to travel, in which they were requested to show him all the kindness, and to do him all the good offices, that lay in their power.

"From Paris he hastened on his journey to Nice, where he took shipping, and in a short space arrived at Genoa, from whence he went to Leghorn, thence to Pisa, and so to Florence. In this city he met with many charming objects, which invited him to stay a longer time than he intended,—the pleasant situation of the place, the nobleness of the structures, the exact humanity and civility of the inhabitants, the more polite and refined sort of language there than elsewhere. During the time of his stay here, which was about two months, he visited all the private academies of the city, which are places established for the improvement of wit and learning. . . . Visiting these places, he was soon taken

notice of by the most learned and ingenious of the nobility and the grand wits of Florence, who caressed him with all the honors and civilities imaginable. . . .

"From Florence he took his journey to Sienna; from thence to Rome, where he was detained much about the same time he had been at Florence, as well by his desire of seeing all the rarities and antiquities of that most glorious and renowned city as by the conversation of Lucas Holstenius and other learned and ingenious men, who highly valued his acquaintance, and treated him with all possible respect.

"From Rome he traveled to Naples, where he was introduced by a certain hermit, who accompanied him in his journey from Rome thither, into the knowledge of Giovanni Baptista Manso, Marquis of Villa, a Neapolitan by birth, a person of high nobility, virtue, and honor," who "received him with extraordinary respect and civility, and went with him himself to give him a sight of all that was of note and remark in the city, particularly the viceroy's palace, and was often in person to visit him at his lodgings."

Milton "had entertained some thoughts of passing over into Sicily and Greece, but was diverted by the news he received from England, that affairs there were tending towards a civil war, thinking it a thing unworthy in him to be taking his pleasure in foreign parts while his countrymen at home were fighting for their liberty. . . . To Rome the second time he went, determining with himself not industriously to begin to fall into any discourse about religion, but, being asked, not to deny, or endeavor to conceal, his own sentiments. Two months he staid at Rome, and in all that time never flinched; . . . and so, returning through France by the same way he had passed it going to Italy, he, after a

peregrination of one complete year and about three months, arrived safe in England." This was in July, 1639.

"Soon after his return, and visits paid to his father and other friends, he took him a lodging in St. Bride's Churchyard at the house of Russell, a tailor, where he first undertook the education and instruction of his sister's two sons." He soon after removed to "a pretty garden house," and there received for instruction "the sons of gentlemen who were his intimate friends."

From this time on for twenty years, Milton produced in poetry only a few sonnets. He gave himself, siding first with the Presbyterians and later with the Puritans, to the controversy with episcopacy and the incipient struggle of the Commonwealth. He resolved, he said, "to transfer into this struggle all his genius and all the strength of his industry." In 1641 he published his pamphlet "Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England," and afterwards his fierce "Apology for Smectymnuus." Other pamphlets, maintaining the controversy in a coarse and virulent spirit, followed from his pen.

In 1643 he married. His wife's refusal for a time to live with him led him to publish "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," the first of four tracts he wrote in advocacy of divorce. In 1644 appeared also his "Tractate on Education," to the consideration of which subject the training of his pupils had led him. The "Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," appeared too in this year. "On the subject of the liberation of the press," wrote Milton, "so that the judgment of the true and the false, what should be punished and what suppressed, should not be in the hands of a few men . . . on this subject, in the form of an express oration, I wrote my 'Areopagitica.'" In 1645 he edited the first collection of his poems.

From this time until the death of Charles I., Milton's prose works reflected his quieter home life, and were in the main of the milder doctrinal and historical form. Two weeks after the execution of the King, he published "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," in which he claimed that men are born free; they band together for mutual aid and preservation; they choose a ruler or king; they may depose him at their will. The writing of the tract was voluntary. His reward was the Secretaryship of Foreign Tongues, or Latin Secretaryship to the new Council of State. The office involved upon its face the writing of letters to foreign governments. Not so plainly, it included the duties of political pamphleteer. In using his pen to support the dominant party, the government, he foreran Swift and Defoe and other of the wits of Anne's day.

Shortly after the death of the King appeared "Eikon Basilike," or "Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Suffering." It was at that time commonly supposed to be written by Charles. Milton, in duty to the Council, answered in "Eikonoklastes." He sketched the King's character in a bold and abusive manner, and confuted the arguments of the first book. His next work, "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano," was in retort to "Defensio Regia pro Carolo I.," which Salmasius, a famous professor at Leyden, had written at the wish of Charles II. in exile. The writing of the "Defensio" cost him his sight. His left eye was already blind. But the State was in greatest need of his service. "In such a case," he wrote, "I could not listen to a physician, not if Æsculapius himself had spoken from his sanctuary: I could not but obey that inward monitor, I know not what, that spoke to me from heaven. . . . I concluded to employ the little remaining eyesight I was to enjoy in doing this,

the greatest service to the commonweal it was in my power to render." Referring to his eyes again in 1655, he answered Cyriac Skinner: —

> "What supports me, dost thou ask?
> The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overplied
> In liberty's defense, my noble task,
> Of which all Europe rings from side to side."

In the years that passed to the breaking up of the Puritan administration and the return of the Stuarts, Milton wrote much else in prose. Nearly all was controversial, and nearly all scurrile in personalities and recrimination. He did after the manner of his times. But on nearly every page we find the strong preservative of Milton's intellect,—his intense love of liberty, and the stroke of the pen weighted with vast stores of learning. His second wife, whom he married in 1656, died in the following year. It is of her he speaks in his sonnet: —

> "Methought I saw my late espousèd saint."

The end of the Commonwealth brought an end to the duties of Latin secretary, and for a time to the fame and dignity which he had enjoyed. During Cromwell's protectorate "he was mightily importuned," says an old writer, "to go into France and Italy. Foreigners much admired him, and offered him great preferments to come over to them, and chiefly came to England to see O. Protector and Mr. J. Milton, and would see the house and chamber where he was born."

But after the Restoration he lived in a narrower way, with his three daughters. The two youngest, wrote his nephew, were "condemned to the performance of reading and exactly pronouncing

of all the languages of whatever book he should think fit to peruse: the Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French,—a trial of patience beyond endurance. It was endured by both for a time; yet the irksomeness of this employment could not always be concealed, but broke out more and more into expressions of uneasiness, so that at length they were all, even the eldest also, sent out to learn embroideries in gold and silver." During these trials he married a third wife, who survived him.

He was now absorbed in the composition of "Paradise Lost." It was finished in 1665, and published in 1667. For it he received ten pounds from the publisher; and after his death his widow was given eight pounds. When his friend Ellwood, who had read the manuscript, returned it to him, he said, "Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost; but what hast thou to say of *Paradise found?*" This remark may have led Milton to the composition of the smaller epic of "Paradise Regained," which he published, together with his tragedy of "Samson Agonistes," in 1671.

Of his appearance at this time, Dr. Wright, a clergyman, wrote, that he found "John Milton, then growing old, in a small chamber hung with rusty green, sitting in an elbowchair, and dressed neatly in black; pale, but not cadaverous; his hands and fingers gouty, and with chalkstones. He used to sit in a gray coarse cloth coat at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, in warm, sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air. And so, as well as in his room, he received the visits of people of distinguished parts, as well as quality." His appearance earlier in life is described as pleasing, his manners affable, his "gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness," his complexion a "delicate white

and red," his hair a light brown. He was called the "Lady" of his college at Cambridge.

He had long suffered from gout, and from this he died on the 8th of November, 1674. He had, wrote his nephew, "a very decent interment, according to his quality, in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, being attended from his house to the church by several gentlemen then in town, his principal wellwishers and admirers."

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the heart; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death."

"In the private academies of Italy," wrote Milton in 1641, "whither I was favored to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabouts . . . met with acceptance above what was looked for; and other things which I had shifted, in scarcity of books and conveniences, to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps; I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labor and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after times, as they should not willingly let die."

In this passage we have doubtless an expression of the ambition which led to the composition of "Paradise Lost." In his earlier

years Milton thought a "king or knight before the Conquest might be chosen on whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero." He at one time had determined to treat the legends which center about Arthur and his court; but later on, with the growth of an intense Puritanism, and the ideas which lay back of it,—an exalted idea of duty, of excellence, of liberty,—his purpose changed to the singing the Hebraic story of the fall of man.

To this material from the Bible he brought the learning and traditions of the great literature of the Greeks and their Latin imitators. In other words, Milton used the methods of the masters of epic poetry—Homer, Virgil, and Dante—and the story of the origin of evil in the world as told in the Hebrew Scripture. Out of this, with magnificent power and supreme artistic motive, he constructed a mythology of persons and episodes which, during the whole reign of Puritanism, and among many for some time after, was accepted as the orthodox creed of Christianity. The force of the poem on the religious imagination of men is now nearly gone; but in theological lines it has been one of the most potent forces of the old Puritanism. By many it was looked upon as a sacred book. Its infallibility was asserted, and the connection of its subject with Christian theology made it popular.

His times made it possible for Milton to compose it. A heroic poem can only be written in, or out of the memory of, heroic times. It was born of the stirring times of the Commonwealth, out of the days of Charles I. and the moral vigor of the men who gathered their strength, and rose up against his tyranny.

The verse is blank verse, the unrhymed meter containing ten syllables and five accents. Milton's preface, "The Verse" (p. 18), explains the reasons of its use. At rare intervals his accents de-

mand the change from common usage. In such instances we must remember that he wrote with the liberties of a great master, and in a style so sublime and so sustained that we may lightly pass over trivial variations.

In these first two of the twelve books of "Paradise Lost" the poem refers to heaven, or the empyrean, chaos, hell, and our earth and its stellar system. The poetic conception is this: heaven is above, of infinite extent, but walled with crystal on the side of chaos: in the wall is a great gate. At the depths of chaos, nine days' fall from heaven, is hell. It is circular, and at its center is a lake of fire. To this four rivers run. About the lake is a burning continent, and ringing this dry land a belt of moist earth which can bring no ease. Still more remote is a frozen circle. Our system hangs in chaos with a golden chain from heaven. About the earth move the sun and our planets.

"Milton," says a late critic, Edmond Scherer, "has always the strong, sure touch of the master. His power of diction and of rhythm is unsurpassable, and it is characterized by being always present, not depending on an access of emotion, not intermittent. . . .

"Shakespeare himself, divine as are his gifts, has not, of the marks of the master, this one,—perfect sureness of style. Alone of English poets, alone in English art, Milton has it: he is our great artist in style, our one first-rate master in the grand style. He is as truly a master in this style as the great Greeks are, or Virgil, or Dante. The number of such masters is so limited, that a man acquires a world rank in poetry and art, instead of a mere local rank, by being counted to them. . . .

"For the English artist in any branch, if he is a true artist, the study of Milton may well have an indescribable attraction. It

gives him lessons which nowhere else from an Englishman's work can he obtain, and feeds a sense which English literature in general seems too much bent on disappointing and baffling. And this sense is yet so deep-seated in human nature, this sense of style, that probably not for artists alone, but for all intelligent Englishmen who read him, its gratification by Milton's poetry is a large, though often not fully recognized, part of his charm."

"Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next, in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go;
To make a third, she joined the former two."

DRYDEN: *Under Milton's Picture.*

THE VERSE.[1]

THE measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek and of Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame meter; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings,—a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect, then, of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect,—though it may seem so, perhaps, to vulgar readers,—that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

[1] In the first issue of the first edition of Paradise Lost (1667), The Verse and The Argument, or epitome, did not precede the text. Later on, after a new title-page, appeared the following address by the printer:—

COURTEOUS READER, There was no Argument at first intended to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procur'd it, and withall a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the Poem Rimes not.—S. SIMMONS.

PARADISE LOST.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject,— man's disobedience and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall,— the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent, who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was by the command of God driven out of heaven, with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan, with his angels, now fallen into hell, described here, not in the center (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan with his angels, lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him. They confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers: array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,[1]
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

[1] The poem opens with a reference to the old Hebraic explanation of the origin of evil, the presence of sin in the world, which is found in Gen. ii. 17: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "In Adam's fall, we sinned all," in the phrase of the New England Primer.

Restore us,[1] and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse,[2] that, on the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai,[3] didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed[4]
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos:[5] or, if Sion[6] hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook[7] that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount,[8] while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer

[1] See Rom. v. 19–21.

[2] In his opening of the Iliad and the Odyssey, Homer, the father of epic poetry, invokes the aid of the goddess of poetry. Epic singers since his time have followed his appeal for inspiration. But Milton was a Puritan, and he could not, from the religious nature of his song, call upon a Pagan divinity. He therefore begs the aid of the divine inspiration which moved Moses and other prophets.

[3] Horeb and Sinai are two peaks of the same mountain, upon which Moses "kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. . . . And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." To Moses has been ascribed the first five books of the Bible (see Exod. xviii. 20).

[4] The chosen people of God were the Israelites (see Deut. iv. 37, x. 15; 1 Chron. xvi. 13).

[5] The confused condition of the universe before order and law prevailed.

[6] Sion was one of the hills upon which Jerusalem was built. Here David lived, and composed poems under the inspiration, Milton supposes, of his heavenly Muse.

[7] Between Sion and Mount Moriah, and almost beneath the temple, "fast by the oracle of God," flowed, and still flows, "Siloa's brook." Its fountain is the pool Siloam, which ebbs and rises. Isaiah identifies it with himself: "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly" (Isa. viii. 6); and Milton here means a poetic reference to him.

[8] Mount Helicon, a haunt of the Muses, was in Bœotia, a part of which was sometimes called Aonia. Milton means that his song shall not be mean or middling, but even above those of the Greek poets.

Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me,[1] for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,[2]
And mad'st it pregnant:[3] what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the highth[4] of this great argument,[5]
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of hell—say first what cause
Moved our grand[6] parents, in that happy state,
Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal serpent;[7] he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time[8] his pride
Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim

[1] The poet's appeal for inspiration recalls the testimony of his widow many years after his death. "Being asked whether he did not often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation upon him for stealing from those authors, and answered with eagerness, that he stole from nobody but the Muse who inspired him; and, being asked by a lady present who the Muse was, replied it was God's grace, and the Holy Spirit that visited him nightly."

[2] See Gen. i. 2.

[3] "Mad'st it pregnant." The allusion is to the formation of the earth out of void, and also to the formation of living things.

[4] Milton's spelling of "height." [5] Subject. [6] Great.

[7] See Gen. iii.; Rev. xii. 9. [8] "What time," i.e., at the time when.

Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin [1] and combustion,[2] down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night [3]
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed [4] huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as angel's ken,[5] he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover [6] sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,[7]
That comes to all, but torture without end

[1] Downfall, the sense of the Latin word *ruina*, from which it comes.

[2] Fierce burning.

[3] In these nine days was the creation of the world, according to Milton's cosmogony. They succeeded the nine days in which Satan fell (Paradise Lost, Book VI. 871).

[4] Bore witness to.

[5] "As far as angel's ken," i.e., as far as an angel can see.

[6] Show; reveal.

[7] "All hope abandon, ye who enter here," was the inscription over the gate of Dante's hell.

Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter[1] darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and light of heaven
As from the center thrice to the utmost pole.[2]
Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
BEËLZEBUB.[3] To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in heaven called SATAN,[4] with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—
"If thou beest he—but oh, how fallen! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright!—if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,

[1] Outer.

[2] As from the center of the earth (according to Milton's system) three times to the utmost vault of heaven.

[3] A god worshiped at Ekron, a city of Palestine (see 2 Kings i. 2). Milton would represent him as a devil. In Matt. xii. 24, Beëlzebub is called "prince of devils."

[4] "Satan" means "adversary" in Hebrew.

Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost,—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire: that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since by fate[1] the strength of gods
And this empyreal[2] substance cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny[3] of heaven."
So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain

[1] It was an old Greek conception that the gods were subject to an unbending fate.

[2] The substance of the angels Satan calls "empyreal;" that is, formed from pure fire or light.

[3] "Tyranny" has here its Greek meaning,— supreme power, of which one might possess himself by persuasion, force, or deceit.

Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:—
"O Prince, O chief of many thronèd powers[1]
That led the embattled[2] seraphim[3] to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate!
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
Hath lost us heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish; for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up[4] in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force[5] believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"

[1] See line 360; see also Rom. viii. 38; Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16.

[2] Drawn up in battle array. [3] The Hebrew plural of seraph.

[4] "Though all," etc., i.e., though all our glory be extinct, and all our happy state be swallowed up.

[5] "Of force," i.e., perforce; of necessity.

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied:—
"Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of heaven: the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid[1]
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his[2] shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip[3] the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbor there;
And reassembling our afflicted powers,

[1] Stilled; calmed.

[2] "His" for "its" is a survival of the genitive neuter of the Anglo-Saxon personal pronoun.

[3] Lose by oversight.

Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reënforcement we may gain from hope,
If not, what resolution from despair."
Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian,[1] or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos,[2] or Typhon,[3] whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea beast
Leviathan,[4] which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered[5] skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.[6]

[1] In Greek fable the Titans were sons of Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Gaia), who maimed and deposed Uranus. Zeus defeated and drove them down to Tartarus.

[2] A giant with a hundred hands, who, Virgil says, warred against Zeus.

[3] A monster with a hundred heads, the father of the evil winds, who wished to gain rule over men and gods. His den was said to be in Cilicia, of which Tarsus was the capital.

[4] A sea monster referred to in the Bible. It may mean the whale or crocodile, or possibly enormous sea dwellers, which, some scientists claim, were left over from a former geologic age.

[5] Lost in the darkness of night.

[6] Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsal in the sixteenth century, told such fables in his History of the Northern Nations, a book translated into English in 1658. The English Hakluyt also has such an account in his Voyages. We find it again in the Eastern tale of Sindbad the Sailor.

So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.
  Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
He lights, if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire;
And such appeared in hue as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus,[1] or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fueled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian[2] flood

[1] The northeast point of Sicily. In the Æneid, Virgil refers to the severing of Italy and Sicily, and tells how with vast ruin the sea rushed in between.

[2] Of the Styx, a river of hell.

As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance[1] of supernal power.
"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for heaven? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
Who now is sovran[2] can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equaled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor,—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and copartners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished[3] on the oblivious pool,[4]
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in heaven, or what more lost in hell?"

[1] Consent; allowance.

[2] The form in which Milton spelled "sovereign." The word is from the Latin *supremus*, through the old French *sovrain, souverain.*

[3] Bewildered; confounded.

[4] Causing forgetfulness.

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered: "Leader of those armies bright
Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled!
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers,—heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge [1]
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal,—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth!"
He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving towards the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist [2] views
At evening from the top of Fesolè,[3]
Or in Valdarno,[4] to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral,[5] were but a wand—
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marl,[6] not like those steps
On heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.

1 Front of battle, as the Latin *acies;* or it may mean perilous crisis.

2 In his continental journey in 1638–39, Milton visited Galileo, the Tuscan artist or astronomer, who had improved the telescope, and discovered the unevenness of the moon's surface, Jupiter's satellites, the composition of the Milky Way, etc.

3 A hill near Florence. 4 The vale or valley of the Arno.

5 Admiral, the most considerable ship of a fleet. 6 A soft clay.

Nathless[1] he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa,[2] where the Etrurian shades
High overarched embower; or scattered sedge[3]
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion[4] armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris[5] and his Memphian[6] chivalry,[7]
While with perfidious[8] hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen,[9] who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot wheels. So thick bestrown,
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of hell resounded: "Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose

[1] A contraction in early English of "no-the-less," not the less.

[2] A shady valley some eighteen miles from Florence, which Milton doubtless visited. Late travelers say that autumnal leaves from the chestnut forests cover and conceal the waters of the brooks.

[3] The Hebrew name of the Red Sea is Sea of Sedge.

[4] A mighty hunter, who, according to Greek legend, was at his death placed among the stars. Storms were supposed to attend the rising and setting of his constellation.

[5] An Egyptian king, who, in Greek story, was said to sacrifice all strangers who came to Egypt. Hercules was his slayer. (See Exod. xiv.)

[6] Memphis, ten miles above the Pyramids, was the capital of Egypt in the first period of its history.

[7] Cavalry; French, *chevalerie*, *cheval* ("horse").

[8] Because, after letting the people go, the king pursued them.

[9] "In the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were" (Exod. ix. 26).

Your wearied virtue,[1] for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from heaven gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be forever fallen!"
They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping[2] on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile;[3]
So numberless were those bad angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope[4] of hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:

[1] Valor, like the Latin *virtus*.
[2] Flying with a twisting to this side and that.
[3] See Exod. x. 15.
[4] Dome, or vault. To it "coping" and "cap" are allied.

A multitude [1] like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhene [2] or the Danaw,[3] when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan [4] sands.
Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,
The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
Their great Commander,—godlike shapes, and forms
Excelling human; princely dignities;
And powers that erst [5] in heaven sat on thrones,
Though of their names in heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and rased [6]
By their rebellion from the books of life.[7]
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities: [8]
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth

[1] The Goths, Vandals, and Huns in the fifth century moved upon Greece, Italy, and Spain. In 429 Genseric led his Vandals from Spain to Africa.

[2] Latin *Rhenus*, Rhine.

[3] German *Donau*, Danube.

[4] African.

[5] Once; formerly.

[6] Erased; canceled.

[7] See Ps. ix. 5; Rev. iii. 5.

[8] See Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 17; 2 Chron. xi. 15; Ps. cvi. 37; 1 Cor. x. 20, 21.

Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those who, from the pit of hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods adored
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the cherubim;[1] yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,[2]
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First, *Moloch*,[3] horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshiped in Rabba[4] and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan,[5] to the stream
Of utmost Arnon.[6] Nor content with such
Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build

[1] "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim" (2 Kings xix. 15). The making of the figures is described in the building of Solomon's temple (see 1 Kings vi. 23–29).

[2] Manasseh "set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God" (2 Chron. xxxiii. 7).

[3] Moloch was the fire god of the Ammonites. Tradition says the image was of brass. "The face was that of a calf, and his hands stretched forth like a man who opens his hands to receive something of his neighbor. And they kindled it with fire, and the priests took the babe, and put it in the hands of Moloch, and the babe gave up the ghost" (SMITH'S Dictionary of the Bible).

[4] The chief city of the Ammonites.

[5] Argob and Basan, countries lying east of the Jordan.

[6] A river running west, and falling into the Dead Sea.

His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill,[1] and made his grove,
The pleasant valley of Hinnom,[2] Tophet[3] thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of hell.
Next *Chemos*,[4] the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer[5] to Nebo[6] and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Elealè to the Asphaltic Pool:[7]
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim,[8] on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies[9] he enlarged
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove

[1] See 2 Kings xxiii. 13. "The licentious and cruel rites with which these divinities were worshiped gave a name of infamy to the whole mountain. In part, or in whole, it received from these shrines the name of the Mount of Offense, which it retained, together with the more innocent name of Olivet" (STANLEY'S Jewish Church).

[2] A ravine to the south and west of Jerusalem. After Josiah's zeal (see 2 Kings xxiii.) it became a receptacle for the filth of the city, Gehenna, and a burning place for the bodies of malefactors.

[3] From the Hebrew *toph*, a drum, which was used, it is supposed, to drown the cries of the children.

[4] A divinity essentially the same with the Moloch of the Ammonites.

[5] On the Arnon.

[6] One of the peaks of the Abarim range, twenty miles east of Jerusalem.

[7] Hesebon, Sibma, and Elealè are supposed to be east of Abarim. "Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab. . . . For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah" (Isa. xvi. 7, 8). The site of Horonaim is not known. Seon was a king of the Ammonites. Asphaltic Pool, i.e., the Dead Sea, called "asphaltic" because of the asphalt or bitumen which is in its waters.

[8] "And Israel abode in Shittim, and . . . joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. . . . And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand" (Num. xxv. 1, 3, 9).

[9] Revelries; drunken sports.

Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them thence to hell.
With these came they who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to that brook[1] that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth;*[2] those male,
These feminine. For spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aëry purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfill.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads, as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;[3]
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious[4] king whose heart, though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell

[1] The Besor.

[2] "Baalim" and "Ashtaroth" are plurals. Baalim, the sun gods of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, were worshiped with such rites as Moloch (see Jer. xix. 5). Ashtaroth were chief female divinities, reflections of the sun god, and therefore the moon.

[3] See Jer. vii. 18.

[4] Doting on his wives.

To idols foul. *Thammuz* [1] came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,[2]
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,[3]
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshipers: [4]
Dagon his name, sea monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.[5]

[1] A Syrian god, who was supposed to be slain by a wild boar in Lebanon, and to revive every year. He is identified with the Greek Adonis, beloved of Aphrodite. "We came to a fair, large river," wrote the English traveler Maundrell, "doubtless the ancient river Adonis, which at certain seasons of the year, especially about the feast of Adonis, is of a bloody color, which the heathens looked upon as proceeding from a kind of sympathy in the river for the death of Adonis, who was killed by a wild boar in the mountains out of which this stream issues. Something like this we saw actually come to pass; for the water was stained to a surprising redness, and, as we observed in traveling, had discolored the sea a great way into a reddish hue, occasioned, doubtless, by a sort of minium, or red earth, washed into the river by the violence of the rain."

[2] See Ezek. viii. 14.

[3] Threshold; groundsill.

[4] See 1 Sam. v. 4.

[5] Milton names the five chief cities of the Philistines. "Azotus" is the Greek form of Ashdod; "Ascalon," Ashkelon; "Accaron," Ekron.

Him followed *Rimmon*,[1] whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper[2] once he lost, and gained a king,
Ahaz,[3] his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown,—
Osiris, *Isis*, *Orus*,[4] and their train,—
With monstrous shapes and sorceries[5] abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wandering gods[6] disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb;[7] and the rebel[8] king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox,—
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equaled with one stroke
Both her firstborn and all her bleating gods.[9]

[1] A sun god worshiped at Damascus.

[2] See 2 Kings v. 12–15. [3] See 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.

[4] Osiris and Isis were the chief god and goddess of the Egyptians, and were, perhaps, personifications of the sun and moon. Horus was their son. It was the custom of the Egyptians to paint or to represent their gods with the heads of beast or bird, in order to come in closer influence with the bond people, who held to animal worship.

[5] Magic art; witchcraft.

[6] A Greek tradition says that the gods, to escape from their enemies the giants, wandered in the form of animals.

[7] See Exod. xii. 35; Ps. cvi. 19.

[8] Jeroboam rebelled against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon (see 1 Kings xii. 28, 29).

[9] See Exod. xii. 29.

Belial[1] came last; than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
With lust and violence the house of God?[2]
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage; and, when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.[3]
These were the prime in order and in might:
The rest were long to tell; though far renowned
The Ionian[4] gods, of Javan's[5] issue held
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
Their boasted parents; *Titan*, Heaven's firstborn,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger *Saturn;* he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So *Jove* usurping reigned.[6] These, first in Crete[7]

[1] A Hebrew word meaning "worthless, lawless." It is used here, as in 2 Cor. vi. 15, as a personification of evil and wickedness.

[2] See 1 Sam. ii. 12.

[3] Milton refers to the stories of Lot and the angels in Gen. xix., and the concubine in Gibeah in Judg. xix.

[4] Used here for "Greek," a part of which people were Ionians.

[5] A son of Japheth, and grandson of Noah.

[6] Of the twelve Titans, children of Heaven and Earth, Oceanus the eldest would have succeeded his father; but his youngest brother, Saturn, obtained the sovereignty. He, in turn, was dethroned by Zeus or Jupiter.

[7] Candia.

And Ida[1] known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus[2] ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,[3]
Or in Dodona,[4] and through all the bounds
Of Doric land;[5] or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic[6] roamed the utmost isles.[7]

All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears;
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions,[8] be upreared
His mighty standard. That proud honor claimed
Azazel[9] as his right, a cherub tall;
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled

[1] A mountain of Crete, the birthplace of Jupiter, and sacred to him.

[2] A mountain of Thessaly, the top of which was above cloud line. Its inaccessibility touched the imagination of the early Greeks, and they made it the home of their gods.

[3] The famous oracle of Apollo was on a steep declivity of Parnassus in Phocis. The site of the temple is rich in archæological remains; and the French Government is now engaged in excavations there.

[4] An oracle of Zeus or Jupiter, in a grove of sacred oaks in Epirus.

[5] "Doric land," i.e., Greece. The Dorians and Ionians were the chief Greek people in historic times. Saturn fled over the Adriatic (Adria) to Italy (Hesperian, i.e., western fields) before the power of Zeus.

[6] "Celtic" fields, i.e., France.

[7] "Utmost isles," i.e., British Isles, *ultima Thule.*

[8] A clarion is a small, high-pitched trumpet.

[9] This word is interpreted variously; as, "brave in retreat," "powerful against God," and "scapegoat."

The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden luster rich emblazed,[1]
Seraphic arms[2] and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host upsent
A shout that tore hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient[3] colors waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx[4] to the Dorian mood[5]
Of flutes and soft recorders;[6] such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valor breathed,[7] firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage[8]
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force[9] with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed

1 Emblazoned. 2 Heraldic devices borne on a shield.

3 Bright; the color of the dawning sun.

4 A body of heavy armed troops arranged in a solid block. The arrangement was devised and named by the Greeks.

5 "Dorian mood," i.e., the severe, grave style of music of the Greeks. The Spartans went to battle "slowly, to the music of many flute players."

6 Flageolets. 7 Inspired. 8 Soothe; make quiet.

9 "Breathing united force," an Homeric phrase, suggesting that the host showed their valor and strength, and fixedness of purpose, by their manner of breathing.

Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now
Advanced in view they stand, a horrid [1] front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose. He through the armèd files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views,—their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories: for never, since created man,
Met such embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes;[2] though all the giant brood[3]
Of Phlegra with the heroic race[4] were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods;[5] and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,[6]
Begirt with British and Armoric[7] knights;

[1] Bristling; Latin, *horridus*.

[2] The legend of the warring of cranes and pygmies every springtime is referred to by Homer in the Iliad, III. 3–6. The Greek word *πυγμή* measures the length from the elbow to the knuckles.

[3] The giants who warred with Zeus fought at Phlegra, Macedonia.

[4] "Heroic race," i.e., the warriors of whom Homer tells, who fought the ten-years' war about Troy or Ilium; those whom Sophocles celebrates in his plays, Œdipus Rex, Antigone, Electra, and Æschylus in the Seven against Thebes.

[5] "Auxiliar gods," i.e., the gods who took sides and fought with their favorites in the war about Troy.

[6] "Uther's son," i.e., King Arthur, whose deeds are told in the Morte d'Arthur of Sir Thomas Malory and in Tennyson's Idylls of the King. For many years Milton himself purposed to make them the subject of an epic, but finally laid them aside to sing of "man's first disobedience."

[7] Breton. Arthur was represented as in alliance with the knights of Brittany, and holding them at his Round Table.

And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted[1] in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,[2]
Or whom Biserta[3] sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain[4] with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form[5] had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous[6] twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched,[7] and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride

[1] Engaged in a military contest, tilt, or tournament. From this word comes our word "jostle."

[2] Milton suggests that the tournaments or wars between Christian (baptized) and Mohammedan (infidel) were held in Aspramont in the Netherlands, Montalban on the borders of Languedoc, Damascus in Syria, Morocco in northern Africa, Trebisond on the Black Sea.

[3] Ancient Utica, near Carthage, from which the Saracens set sail for Spain.

[4] Charlemagne's army was defeated at Roncesvalles, near Fontarabbia, in 778; but he himself survived.

[5] "Form" is treated as if it were a feminine noun, like the Latin *forma*.

[6] It was the old faith that eclipses foretold calamities. The word is from *dis* ("evil") and *astrum* ("star"), ill-starred.

[7] Furrowed; cut deep.

Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion,[1] to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
Forever now to have their lot in pain,—
Millions of spirits for his fault amerced[2]
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendors flung
For his revolt,—yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
Hath scathed[3] the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half inclose him round[4]
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,[5]
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove[6] with sighs found out their way:—
"O myriads of immortal spirits! O powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty! and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile

[1] Suffering.
[2] Punished by the penalty of loss.
[3] Hurt; blighted.
[4] From the phalanx they formed a semicircle.
[5] "In spite of scorn," i.e., in spite of his scorning to weep.
[6] Another form of the past participle "interwoven."

Hath emptied [1] heaven, shall fail to reascend,
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of heaven,
If counsels different,[2] or dangers shunned
By me have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in heaven till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent, or custom, and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
Which tempted our attempt,[3] and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked: our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame [4] in heaven, that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favor equal to the sons of heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption,[5] thither, or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;

[1] A purposed exaggeration. The belief that a third of the angels fell is founded on the sentence in Rev. xii. 4: "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth."

[2] "Counsels different," i.e., divided counsels.

[3] "Tempted our attempt." Such jingles have been looked upon as defects in Milton's style.

[4] A current rumor.

[5] Breaking out.

For who can think submission? War, then war
Open or understood,[1] must be resolved."
He spake; and to confirm his words out flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim: the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with graspèd arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,[2]
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke: the rest entire[3]
Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
That in his womb[4] was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigade hastened; as when bands
Of pioneers,[5] with spade and pickax armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon[6] led them on,
Mammon, the least erected[7] spirit that fell
From heaven; for even in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific.[8] By him first

[1] Secret; not openly declared.

[2] In this manner the Roman soldiers applauded the speeches of their generals, and showed their ardor for battle.

[3] "The rest entire," i.e., all the rest.

[4] Interior. It was believed in Milton's time that metals were composed of mercury as a metallic base, and sulphur as a cement.

[5] Foot soldiers who march before an army, and prepare the way.

[6] A Syriac word for "wealth," which is personified in Matt. vi. 24: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

[7] "Least erected," i.e., least upright; least high-minded.

[8] "Vision beatific," i.e., the direct sight of the glory of God, which blessed and filled with joy the heavenly hosts. The phrase was used by the

Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the center,[1] and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire[2]
That riches grow in hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel[3] and the works of Memphian kings,[4]
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded[5] the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion dross.[6]
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various[7] mold, and from the boiling cells

schoolmen; and the sight was said to have been enjoyed by such saints as Francis d'Assisi and Catherine of Siena while in the flesh.

[1] Of the world, the earth, according to Milton's system.

[2] In the old sense of "wonder."

[3] Babylon, which contained the Temple of Belus, hanging gardens, and vast pools and walls.

[4] In the making of the Great Pyramid, near Memphis, a hundred thousand men are said to have been employed twenty years. The stones of which it is built were brought from the Arabian mountains, and no one is less than thirty feet long. It covers an area of thirteen acres. (See lines 699 and 718.)

[5] Melted, as in a foundry.

[6] "Bullion dross," i.e., the dross that rose to the surface in the boiling (bullion, French, *bouillir*, "to boil") fluid of the crucible.

[7] Wrought in different and many forms.

By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board [1] breathes.
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound [2]
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, where pilasters [3] round
Were set, and Doric [4] pillars overlaid
With golden architrave;[5] nor did there want
Cornice [6] or frieze, with bossy [7] sculptures graven:
The roof was fretted [8] gold. Not Babylon
Nor great Alcairo [9] such magnificence
Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis,[10] their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row

[1] The upper part of the wind chest, which conveys the wind to the rows of pipes through grooves. Playing the organ was one of the delights which Milton did not scorn in his laborious days.

[2] At a mask acted at Whitehall in 1637, "In the further part of the scene, the earth opened; and there rose up a richly adorned palace, seeming all of goldsmith's work." One of Milton's editors supposes the hint of the rising of Pandemonium to have been taken from this scene.

[3] Square pillars, projecting from a wall a third or a quarter of their breadth, were set round the temple.

[4] The Doric was the plainest of the Greek orders of architecture.

[5] The main beam resting on the pillars.

[6] The ledge or projection above the frieze, which is, in turn, a flat surface above the architrave.

[7] Boldly prominent; projecting. [8] Interlacing in ornament.

[9] The Cairo; *al* being the Arabic definite article.

[10] An Egyptian god personifying the Nile and its fertility.

Of starry lamps and blazing cressets,[1] fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
And some the architect. His hand was known
In heaven by many a towered structure high,
Where sceptered angels held their residence,
And sat as princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Geece; and in Ausonian[2] land
Men called him Mulciber;[3] and how he fell
From heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove[4]
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,[5]
On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle. Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in heaven high towers; nor did he scape
By all his engines,[6] but was headlong sent,
With his industrious crew, to build in hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd haralds,[7] by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim

[1] Iron cups or baskets in which such substances as tarred ropes are burned for beacons. [2] Italian.

[3] The softener of hard metals; from the Latin, *mulcere*. The Latins also called him Vulcan; the Greeks, Hephaistos.

[4] "Angry Jove," because Hephaistos, or Vulcan, had taken the part of Hera, his mother, in her quarrel with Zeus.

[5] "He seized me by my foot, and cast me from the heavenly threshold: all day I fell, and with the set of sun lighted on Lemnos" (Iliad, I. 592).

[6] Contrivances. [7] Milton's spelling for "heralds."

A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium,[1] the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment[2]
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field,[3] where champions bold
Wont[4] ride in armed, and at the Soldan's[5] chair
Defied the best of Panim[6] chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance[7])
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In springtime, when the Sun with Taurus rides,[8]
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate,[9] and confer[10]
Their state affairs: so thick the aëry[11] crowd
Swarmed and were straitened;[12] till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room

[1] From the Greek, *πᾶν* ("all") and *δαίμων* ("demon"). Milton formed the word on the model of Pantheon, the temple in Rome built to all gods.

[2] "Squarèd regiment," i.e., squadron.

[3] "Like a covered field," i.e., like some covered field.

[4] Were wont: accustomed. [5] Sultan's. [6] Pagan.

[7] Two sorts of jousting are meant; the second merely a measuring of lances.

[8] Taurus is one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The sun was supposed to drive his chariot through that constellation, beginning a little after the vernal equinox.

[9] Walk out; move at large. [10] Confer of; discuss.

[11] Phantom. [12] Narrowed; confined.

Throng numberless, like that pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount;[1] or faëry elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon
Sits arbitress,[2] and nearer to the earth[3]
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,
The great seraphic lords and cherubim
In close recess[4] and secret conclave[5] sat,
A thousand demigods on golden seats,
Frequent[6] and full.[7] After short silence then,
And summons[8] read, the great consult[9] began.

1 Milton supposes the home of the pygmies to be the Himalayas.

2 Spectator; witness.

3 "Nearer to the earth," because attracted by enchantments. It is an old superstition that fairies and witches can change the course of the moon.

4 Retirement.

5 Private meeting. The word is especially used to mean the assembly or meeting of the cardinals for the election of a pope.

6 Numerous. 7 Filled.

8 At the opening of each session of the English Parliament, the speech from the throne declares the causes for which the members are summoned. This usage Milton doubtless had in mind.

9 Consultation.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, — to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to hell gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between hell and heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus [1] and of Ind,[2]
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,[3]
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high,[4] insatiate to pursue

[1] Ormus, or Hormuz, a city, upon an island of the same name, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, which during the fifteenth century was the mart of the commerce between India and Persia. Its wealth and splendor excited the cupidity of the Portuguese, who after a long siege razed it.

[2] The accretion of the labor of the people in the hands of a few rulers, and the output of the diamond mines and gold washings of India, made it formerly a favorite simile of wealth. It was not a rich country in reality, for the mass of the people were miserably poor and oppressed.

[3] It is said that a part of the coronation ceremony among the Persians was the scattering of gold and precious stones over the head of the king.

[4] "Beyond thus high," i.e., beyond this height.

Vain war with heaven; and, by success[1] untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed:—
"Powers and Dominions, Deities of heaven,
For since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me[2] though just right, and the fixed laws of heaven,
Did first create your leader—next, free choice,
With what besides in council or in fight
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction: for none sure will claim in hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage, then,
To union and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and by what best way,

[1] "Success" means here event, result. In modern English we use the word only for good event.

[2] "Me" is placed first for emphasis.

Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."[1]
He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptered king,[2]
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest spirit
That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or hell, or worse,
He recked[3] not, and these words thereafter spake:—
"My sentence[4] is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling place
Accept this dark, opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Armed with hell flames and fury, all at once
O'er heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures[5] into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine,[6] he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see

[1] "There is a decided, manly tone in the arguments and sentiments, an eloquent dogmatism, as if each person spoke from thorough conviction; an excellence which Milton probably borrowed from his spirit of partisanship, or else his partisanship from the natural firmness and vigor of his mind" (HAZLITT).

[2] "Scepter-bearing king" is an Homeric expression.

[3] Cared; reckoned.

[4] Opinion; decision.

[5] Named in Book I., line 61, also in lines 67 and 69.

[6] Any instrumentality to effect a purpose: here it may be artillery.

Black[1] fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his angels, and his throne itself
Mixed[2] with Tartarean[3] sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing[4] against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench[5]
Of that forgetful[6] lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;
The event is feared. Should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction, if there be in hell
Fear to be worse destroyed. What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
In this abhorrèd deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise[7] us without hope of end,
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,
We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we, then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,

[1] Smoky; sooty; not glowing. [2] Filled with; enveloped in.
[3] Tartarus, in classical mythology, was the place of punishment and torment.
[4] "Upright wing," i.e., upward-striving wing. [5] A large draught.
[6] Causing forgetfulness. Like "oblivious," Book I. 266.
[7] Discipline; torment.

Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential[1]—happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being!
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst[2]
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal[3] throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."
He ended frowning, and his look denounced[4]
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seemed
For dignity composed, and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
Dropt manna,[5] and could make the worse appear
The better reason,[6] to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:—
"I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,[7]

[1] Essence. Milton frequently used the adjective for the noun.

[2] We are on this side nothing at worst.

[3] Upheld by fate. [4] Declared; proclaimed.

[5] "The taste of it was like wafers made with honey" (Exod. xvi. 31).

[6] "The worse appear the better reason." The phrase Socrates used in describing the reasoning of the sophists (see Plato's Apology).

[7] "In fact of arms," i.e., in feat of arms; in warlike strength.

In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope [1]
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of heaven are filled
With armèd watch, that render all access
Impregnable: oft on the bordering deep [2]
Encamp their legions, or with obscure [3] wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all hell should rise
With blackest insurrection to confound
Heaven's purest light, yet our great enemy,
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mold,[4]
Incapable of stain, would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
And that must end us; that must be our cure,—
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion? [5] And who knows,

[1] End; purpose; intention. [2] Chaos.

[3] The wings would become obscure through the darkness of the realm of night.

[4] Form; shape; cast; character.

[5] This feeling passage upon the joys of thought and speculation may have been induced by Milton's blindness. In his youth he confessed the charms of divine philosophy; but in his later years, after he had embraced the austerities of the Puritanic faith, he looked upon the study of abstruse questions as inimical to and subversive of what he deemed divine truth.

Let this be good, whether our angry foe
Can give it, or will ever? How he can
Is doubtful: that he never will is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike [1] through impotence [2] or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger whom his anger saves
To punish endless? [3] 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst,—
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when we fled amain, [4] pursued and strook [5]
With heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us? This hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? [6] That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames; or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firmament
Of hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent [7] horrors, threatening hideous fall
One day upon our heads; while we, perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,

[1] Perhaps; probably; maybe. [2] Lack of self-control.
[3] Eternally, an adjective used as an adverb. [4] With our might.
[5] An old form of "struck."
[6] "For Tophet is ordained of old; . . . the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. xxx. 33).
[7] Impending; threatening.

Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking[1] whirlwinds, or forever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited,[2] unpitied, unreprieved,[3]
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides,[4]
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we, then, live, thus vile — the race of heaven
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The victor's will. To suffer, as to do,[5]
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow, — to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our supreme foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,

[1] Rushing; driving.
[2] Admitting no pause. [3] Admitting no postponement of sentence.
[4] "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. ii. 4). [5] See Book I. 158.

Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished;[1] whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapor;[2] or, inured, not feel;
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting[3]—since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,[4]
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counseled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:—
"Either to disenthrone the King of heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us
Within heaven's bound, unless heaven's Lord Supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne

[1] "With what is punished," i.e., with the punishment which is already inflicted.

[2] Heat; like the Latin *vapor*.

[3] "Worth waiting," i.e., worth waiting for.

[4] "Our present lot appears," etc., i.e., for an ill lot, it is not the worst.

With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced halleluiahs,[1] while he lordly sits
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings ? This must be our task
In heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate ! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained
Unacceptable, though in heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own[2]
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labor and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread ? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
Mustering their rage, and heaven resembles hell?
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please ?[3] This desert soil
Wants not her hidden luster, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise

[1] Hallelujahs; Hebrew, *halelu* ("praise ye") and *jah* ("Jehovah").

[2] "From our own," i.e., depending on our own conditions or resources, live as we wish.

[3] See 1 Kings viii. 12; Ps. xviii. 11, 13, xcvii. 2.

Magnificence; and what can heaven show more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper[1] changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible[2] of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose[3] our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence[4] lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched,[5] whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace,[6] anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than hell; so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël[7]
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to heaven.
Which when Beëlzebub perceived — than[8] whom,

[1] Constitution.
[2] Sense; feeling.
[3] Settle; adjust; reconcile.
[4] A falling or sinking of sound.
[5] Weary with too much watching.
[6] A small two-masted vessel which is also fitted with oars.
[7] An archangel, and a leader of the celestial army against the revolting angels.
[8] Used as a preposition.

Satan except, none higher sat — with grave
Aspect[1] he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven[2]
Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,
With Atlantean[3] shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchs; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide[4] air, while thus he spake: —
"Thrones and imperial Powers, offspring of heaven,
Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
Princes of hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream,
And know not that the King of heaven hath doomed
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude. For he, be sure,
In highth or depth,[5] still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over hell extend

[1] Milton always so accents this word. "Process," line 297, also has the accent changed by the verse.

[2] "Deep on his front engraven," i.e., deeply engraved on his forehead.

[3] Like those of Atlas, who bore the weight of heaven on his shoulders.

[4] The hush and stillness of the noon hour of summer was explained by a Greek legend, that then Pan slept.

[5] "In highth or depth," i.e., in the height of heaven, or in the depth of hell.

His empire, and with iron scepter[1] rule
Us here, as with his golden those in heaven.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined us[2] and foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return
But, to our power,[3] hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance,[4] and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want,[5] nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame[6] in heaven
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this time
To be created like to us,[7] though less
In power and excellence, but favored more
Of Him who rules above; so was his will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook heaven's whole circumference confirmed.[8]

[1] "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron" (Ps. ii. 9).

[2] "Determined us," i.e., settled us definitely to this line of conduct.

[3] "To our power," i.e., to the extent of our power; so far as we are able.

[4] In the original Latin sense of "resistance."

[5] "Occasion want," i.e., opportunity be wanting.

[6] Rumor, as in Book I. 651.

[7] See Ps. viii. 4, 5.

[8] "Wherein God . . . confirmed it by an oath" (Heb. vi. 17). This passage recalls Homer's description in the Iliad (Book I. 530) of the nod of Zeus, which shook Olympus.

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mold
Or substance, how endued, and what their power
And where their weakness; how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though heaven be shut,
And heaven's high Arbitrator [1] sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defense who hold it: here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset, either with hell fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,
The puny [2] habitants; [3] or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. [4] This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original [5] and faded bliss,
Faded so soon! Advise [6] if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised [7]
By Satan, and in part proposed; for whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race

[1] Ruler; governor.

[2] Later born, this being the original meaning of the word from the French *puis né*. In this meaning, Milton uses it in the Areopagitica: "He . . . must appear in print like a punie with his guardian."

[3] Inhabitants. [4] See Gen. vi. 7. [5] Originator; author.

[6] Consider; take counsel. [7] See Book I. 650–656.

Of mankind in one root,[1] and earth with hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal states,[2] and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—
"Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod[3] of gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighboring arms[4]
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Reënter heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of heaven's fair light,
Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft, delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure[5] find out
His uncouth[6] way, or spread his aëry flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings

[1] "One root," i.e., the first made of mankind.

[2] Estates; the orders or classes into which a population is divided for political powers; as, in Great Britain, the three estates are lords, temporal and spiritual, and commons.

[3] Meeting; assembly.

[4] "Neighboring arms," i.e., our army near by.

[5] "Palpable obscure," i.e., the darkness which may be felt by the touch (see Exod. x. 21). The adjective "obscure" is used as a noun.

[6] Unknown. "Couth" is a past participle of *cunnan* ("to know"), and is allied to "can," "ken," "unco," "knew," etc.

Over the vast abrupt,[1] ere he arrive[2]
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries[3] and stations thick
Of angels watching round? Here he had need[4]
All circumspection, and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for, on whom we send,
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared[5]
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,[6]
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished. None among the choice and prime
Of those heaven-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—
"O Progeny of heaven! empyreal Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
And hard, that out of hell leads up to light.
Our prison strong, this huge convex[7] of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round

[1] Vast gulf: an adjective used as a noun.

[2] To come to; arrive at.

[3] Sentinels; guards.

[4] "Had need," i.e., would have need of.

[5] He waited expectant and in doubt, looking over the assembly.

[6] Commentators have supposed, that in this passage Milton had in mind the Roman senate, who sat mute, after the death of the Scipios, before their choice of a commander for the army in Spain.

[7] Satan supposes himself without the vault.

Ninefold;[1] and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential[2] night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive[3] gulf.
If thence he scape, into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains[4] him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorned
With splendor, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing[5] to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honor, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more as he above the rest
High honored sits?[6] Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of heaven, though fallen! intend[7] at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion:[8] intermit no watch

[1] See lines 645–648.

[2] Without essence or substance.

[3] Coming to naught; producing nothing. See lines 624, 625.

[4] Awaits. [5] If I refuse.

[6] In the passage beginning with line 445, Satan finely expresses the feeling of *noblesse oblige* ("nobility obliges," "noble birth or rank compels to noble acts").

[7] Turn the mind; attend to (Latin, *intendere animus*).

[8] Tarrying place.

Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The monarch, and prevented [1] all reply;
Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,
And, so refused, might in opinion [2] stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone, and as a god
Extol him equal to the highest in heaven.
Nor failed they to express how much they praised
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither [3] do the spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest [4] bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close [5] ambition varnished o'er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:
As, when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element [6]
Scowls o'er the darkened landskip [7] snow, or shower;

[1] Forestalled; hindered by going before (from *præ* and *venire*).
[2] Public opinion.
[3] Not even.
[4] Before "lest" may be supplied, for the sake of clearness, "I say this."
[5] Concealed.
[6] "Louring element," i.e., scowling, threatening sky or air.
[7] Archaic form for "landscape."

If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.[1]
O shame to men! devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy[2] cruel wars
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow[3] besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait![4]
The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
In order came the grand infernal Peers:
Midst came their mighty paramount,[5] and seemed
Alone[6] the antagonist of heaven, nor less
Than hell's dread emperor, with pomp supreme,
And godlike imitated state: him round
A globe[7] of fiery seraphim inclosed
With bright emblazonry,[8] and horrent[9] arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
Towards the four winds four speedy cherubim

[1] The subject of two names would require the plural verb. Perhaps Milton thought the subjects so connected as to form but one idea; or he may have followed the older English usage, common in Shakespeare, which is founded on Greek and Latin construction.

[2] Raise; excite; set in motion. [3] An old form of "enough."

[4] Milton turns from his subject to consider men, and especially refers to his own stirring and disputatious times.

[5] Chief; superior; the highest in rank or importance.

[6] Fitted alone.

[7] Like the Latin *globus* ("compact circle or bodyguard").

[8] See Book I. 538. [9] Bristling.

Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,[1]
By harald's voice explained;[2] the hollow abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd powers
Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain[3]
The irksome hours, till his great chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,[4]
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;[5]
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal[6]
With rapid wheels, or fronted[7] brigads form:
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds;[8] before each van
Prick[9] forth the aëry knights, and couch[10] their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms

[1] The science of transmuting metals, especially the finer from the baser. It here refers to the trumpet of skillfully mixed metal.

[2] The council had been secret (see Book I. 795). The herald explained the reason of the blast.

[3] While away; employ. [4] High up.

[5] "Olympian games or Pythian fields," i.e., two of the great national games of Greece, celebrated every four years at Olympia in Elis, and near the temple of the Pythian Apollo at Delphi. There were foot races, horse races, wrestling, boxing, leaping, contests in music, in poetry, exhibition of sculpture, etc.

[6] "Shun the goal," i.e., avoid touching the goal or post round which the charioteers drove close to shorten their course.

[7] Standing opposed or opposite.

[8] Commentators suppose Milton to refer to the aurora borealis.

[9] Spur on the horse with prick; ride fast.

[10] Rest against the breast armor.

From either end of heaven the welkin[1] burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan[2] rage, more fell,[3]
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; hell scarce holds the wild uproar:
As when Alcides,[4] from Œchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated[5] in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that fate
Free virtue should inthrall to force or chance.[6]
Their song was partial;[7] but the harmony
(What could it less when spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience.[8] In discourse more sweet
(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense[9])

[1] Sky; allied to the German *wolken* ("clouds").

[2] Typhœus, who is identified with Typhon (see Book I. 199), hurled rocks against heaven. [3] Cruel; fierce.

[4] Hercules, the grandson of Alcæus, coming back from the conquest of Eurytus in Œchalia, put on the robe which his wife Deianeira gave him. It was smeared with the blood of the centaur Nessus, and she supposed it a charm by which she might regain his affections. The poison worked such suffering, that Hercules threw the bearer, Lichas, into the sea.

[5] Retired.

[6] These lines may refer to the distich of Euripides, which Brutus is said to have quoted when he took his own life: "Virtue, thou wert, after all, an idle tale. I practised thee as a reality, but thou wast, after all, the thrall of force."

[7] "Their song was partial," i.e., one-sided; for instance, in giving virtue to themselves.

[8] Milton may have had in mind the effect of the music of Orpheus told by Virgil in Georgic IV. 481: the Eumenides were spellbound, Cerberus held his three mouths agape, and Ixion stayed his wheel.

[9] Milton's Puritanic distinction would hardly be admitted at the present

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate,[1] and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering[2] mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy,[3] and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all and false philosophy!
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd[4] breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.[5]
Another part, in squadrons and gross[6] bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams,—
Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,[7]

day. The appeal of eloquence may be to the senses; and song may touch only the higher elements of the soul.

[1] More elevated in thoughts. Milton speaks from a Puritan's point of view, and makes the first metaphysicians devils (see lines 146–151, note).

[2] Causing to wander.

[3] Freedom from the feeling of pleasure and pain, which was an ideal sought by the Stoics.

[4] Hardened.

[5] Milton again reverts to the pleasures he had had in philosophy.

[6] Large.

[7] The names of the four rivers of hell are from the Greek mythology: Styx, the river of hate (*στυχέω*, "I hate"); Acheron, the river of pain (*ἄχος*, "ache," *δέω*, "I flow"); Cocytus, the river of wailing (*κωκυτός*, "wailing"); Phlegethon, the river of fire (*φλέγω*, "I burn").

Whose waves of torrent [1] fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth,[2] whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent [3]
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap,[4] and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog [5]
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore,[6] and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed [7] Furies [8] haled,[9]
At certain revolutions [10] all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve [11] in ice
Their soft ethereal [12] warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.

1 Burning or rushing.

2 "Labyrinth" would indicate intricate turnings and windings of the river.

3 Dante also finds frozen regions in his hell. 4 Bulk.

5 Lake Serbonis was between Mount Casius and the city of Damiata, near one of the mouths of the Nile. It was surrounded by hills of sand, which were carried into the water by high winds. "Many of those," says Diodorus Siculus, "who were ignorant of the peculiarity of the place lost their way, and disappeared with whole armies."

6 An old form of the participle "frozen."

7 With crooked talons, such as Virgil describes the Harpies in the Æneid.

8 The Greek Furies were personifications of a guilty conscience.

9 Hauled. 10 Explained in the lines to 604. 11 Suffer; waste.

12 The warmth of bodies made of such essence.

They ferry over this Lethean sound [1]
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,
Medusa [2] with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight,[3] as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus.[4] Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,[5]
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras,[6] and Chimæras [7] dire.

[1] A strait or arm of the sea.

[2] In Greek story, one of the three Gorgons. They had brazen claws, enormous teeth, and hair of snakes, and to look on them turned one to stone.

[3] Creature.

[4] In Greek mythology, a king, who was placed to the chin in water for his wrongdoing. As often as he stooped to drink, the water flowed back. From the name comes our English "tantalize."

[5] Mountain.

[6] Monsters with many heads. The one at Lake Lerna, which Hercules destroyed, was said to have nine.

[7] Fire-breathing monsters with heads of lions, bodies of goats, and tails of serpents.

Meanwhile the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves [1] with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds,[2] by equinoctial winds [3]
Close [4] sailing from Bengala,[5] or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore,[6] whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,[7]
Through the wide Ethiopian [8] to the Cape,[9]
Ply stemming nightly [10] toward the pole: [11] so seemed
Far off the flying fiend. At last appear
Hell bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled [12] with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round

1 Comes very near touching or grazing.

2 Ships when seen far off at sea seem to hang in the clouds.

3 "Equinoctial winds," i.e., winds blowing along the equator.

4 In compact group. 5 Bengal.

6 "Ternate and Tidore," i.e., two of the Moluccas, or Spice Islands.

7 "Trading flood," i.e., the part of the ocean upon which the trade ships sail.

8 Indian Ocean. 9 Cape of Good Hope.

10 Used instead of "daily" to bear out the simile of the darkness of Satan's way.

11 The south pole. 12 Inclosed; surrounded.

A cry [1] of hell hounds never ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean [2] mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list,[3] would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her side,
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla,[4] bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria [5] from the hoarse Trinacrian [6] shore;
Nor uglier follow the night hag,[7] when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the laboring [8] moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape,—
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either,—black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat

1 Pack.

2 Like those of Cerberus, the three-headed dog of hell.

3 Willed.

4 A maiden whose body the enchantress Circe changed below the waist into frightful monsters always barking. The old Greek story is, that Circe was jealous of Scylla, and so deformed her by pouring the juice of poisonous herbs into the water in which she bathed. This sudden metamorphosis so terrified Scylla, that she threw herself into the sea, and became the rocks which bear her name. (See the Odysseus, XII. 89.)

5 Southern Italy.

6 Sicilian. Sicily is the land of the three promontories (*τρεῖς ἄκραι*) at the three corners of the triangle.

7 The allusion is to the old Scandinavian legend of the need of children's blood in the incantation of witches, their frequenting Lapland, and their power to cause eclipses.

8 Eclipses are called "the labors" by Latin poets.

The monster moving onward came as fast
With horrid strides; hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired[1]—
Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,[2]
Created thing naught valued he, nor shunned),
And with disdainful look thus first began:—
"Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated[3] front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave asked of thee.
Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven."
To whom the goblin,[4] full of wrath, replied:—
"Art thou that traitor angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in heaven and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of heaven's sons,
Conjured[5] against the Highest; for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with spirits of heaven,
Hell-doomed,[6] and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions[7] I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

[1] As in Book I. 690.
[2] Being excepted.
[3] Misshapen; deformed.
[4] An underground demon.
[5] Conspiring; sworn together in conspiracy.
[6] "Hell-doomed" is the retort to "hell-born" in line 687.
[7] A biblical name for a severe scourge. "I will chastise you with scorpions" (2 Chron. x. 14).

So spake the grisly terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform.[1] On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus[2] huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair[3]
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Leveled his deadly aim: their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,
With heaven's artillery fraught,[4] come rattling on
Over the Caspian;[5] then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air.
So frowned the mighty combatants that hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe.[6] And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by hell gate and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

[1] The Latin *de* ("away from") and *forma* ("form or shape") explain the word.

[2] The northern constellation Serpentarius, or the Serpent, which is about forty degrees long. The name (from two Greek words meaning "serpent," and "to hold") may refer to the fable of the infant Hercules squeezing to death two serpents.

[3] In reference to the tail. "Comet" is derived from the Greek κόμη ("flowing hair"). Comets were supposed to foretell disasters.

[4] Laden or charged with lightning, and rattling with thunder.

[5] Noted for its storms.

[6] Christ. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. xv. 26). "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14; compare also Isa. xxv. 8).

"O father, what intends thy hand," she cried,
"Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? and know'st for whom?
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids,—
His wrath which one day will destroy ye both."
She spake, and at her words the hellish pest
Forebore: then these to her Satan returned:—
"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden[1] hand,
Prevented, spares[2] to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than[3] him and thee."
To whom thus the portress of hell gate replied:—
"Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul? once deemed so fair
In heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung.[4] Amazement seized

[1] Hasty; rash. [2] Forbears. [3] See line 299, note.

[4] The old classic myth of the birth of Athene, goddess of wisdom, from the head of Zeus, is here used to explain the origin of sin from Satan.

All the host of heaven; back they recoiled afraid
At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who, full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
Becam'st enamored. . . . Meanwhile war arose,
And fields [1] were fought in heaven: wherein remained
(For what could else?) to our almighty foe
Clear victory; to our part loss and rout
Through all the empyrean.[2] Down they fell,
Driven headlong from the pitch [3] of heaven, down
Into this deep; and in the general fall
I also: at which time this powerful key
Into my hands was given, with charge to keep
These gates forever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat.

. . . . . .

At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,

. . . . . .

Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed.

. . . . . .

These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite

[1] Battles. [2] The remote heavens. [3] Height.

To me . . . with conscious[1] terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved,[2] and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,[3]
Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,[4]
Save He who reigns above, none can resist."
She finished; and the subtle fiend his lore[5]
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth: —
"Dear daughter, since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me . . . know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
Of spirits that, in our just pretenses[6] armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth[7] errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded[8] deep, and through the void immense
To search with wandering quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round, a place of bliss

[1] Known or perceived as existing in one's self.
[2] "His end with mine involved," i.e., death dying after sin.
[3] Ruin; destruction; from the Anglo-Saxon *bana* ("slayer").
[4] Stroke.
[5] His lesson, — that it was advisable to gain the good will of Sin.
[6] Claims: its original meaning. [7] See line 407, note. [8] Bottomless.

In the purlieus [1] of heaven; and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
Lest heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom [2] air, embalmed
With odors. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey." [3]
He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw [4]
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad; and thus bespake her sire: —
"The key of this infernal pit, by due
And by command of heaven's all-powerful King,
I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
But what owe I to his commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of heaven, and heavenly-born,
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamors compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?

[1] Outskirts. [2] Yielding; unresisting.
[3] "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them" (Ps. xlix. 14).
[4] "Blessed his maw," i.e., his stomach blessed with plenty.

Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,[1]
Forthwith the huge portcullis[2] high updrew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian powers
Could once have moved;[3] then in the keyhole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus.[4] She opened; but to shut
Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings[5] a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;[6]
So wide they stood, and like a furnace mouth
Cast forth redounding[7] smoke and ruddy flame.

[1] "Bestial train," i.e., the lower snaky coils of her body.

[2] A strong grating suspended over a gate or doorway. It is made to move up and down in grooves in order to be dropped when danger threatens.

[3] Commentators find here the allegory, that, if a man abstain from sin, all the powers of hell cannot prevail with him.

[4] The realm of darkness.

[5] "Extended wings," i.e., without drawing in the wings to the main army.

[6] "Loose array," i.e., not in close compact order.

[7] Overflowing, like waves.

Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep,[1] a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms.[2] They around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's[3] torrid soil,
Levied[4] to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most[5] adhere
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,[6]
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds,—
Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of hell, and looked awhile,

1 See Job x. 22, xli. 32.

2 "Embryon atoms," i.e., the atoms out of which the beginnings of things were made.

3 Barca and Cyrene were Greek colonies in the north of Africa.

4 Raised. 5 "These most," i.e., most of these.

6 Milton suggests in this line that the world may again return to chaos.

Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed[1]
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona[2] storms
With all her battering engines, bent to raze
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements[3]
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans[4]
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity. All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons[5] vain, plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and niter, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed,—
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis,[6] neither sea,
Nor good dry land,—nigh foundered,[7] on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behooves him now[8] both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon[9] through the wilderness

[1] Stirred; agitated.
[2] The Roman goddess of war.
[3] The elements about us.
[4] Fans; wings.
[5] Pinions. The fluttering was vain; for in the vacuity there was nothing to offer resistance.
[6] Quicksand. The name of an African quicksand in ancient times.
[7] Ingulfed.
[8] "Behooves him now," i.e., he now has need.
[9] The gryphon, or griffin, was represented as eagle in the upper half, and lion in the lower half, of the body. The Greek historian Herodotus said that gold came in greatest abundance from the north of Europe, where it was stolen from the griffins by the Arimaspi, a one-eyed race of men.

With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold: so eagerly the fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever power
Or spirit of the nethermost abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful[1] deep! With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades,[2] and the dreaded name[3]
Of Demogorgon; Rumor next, and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: — "Ye powers
And spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
With purpose to explore or to disturb

[1] Empty.

[2] "Orcus," i.e., the god of the underworld and death. While "Orcus" is Latin, "Ades," or "Hades" (which means "unseen"), is a Greek name for the unseen nether world and its god.

[3] "The dreaded name." This roundabout way of expressing the name of the mysterious divinity is in keeping with the old terror which the pronunciation of his name excited.

The secrets [1] of your realm; but, by constraint
Wandering [2] this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
Confine with [3] heaven; or, if some other place,
From your dominion won, the ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound.[4] Direct my course:
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey [5]), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!"
Thus Satan; and him thus the anarch [6] old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,[7]
Answered: — "I know thee, stranger, who thou art,
That mighty leading angel, who of late
Made head against [8] heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; [9] and heaven gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve

1 Secret places. 2 Wandering in or through.
3 "Confine with," i.e., border on.
4 Abyss. 5 Quest or object of my journey.
6 Formed after the analogy of "monarch," and first used in print by Milton.
7 Disturbed; disordered.
8 "Made head against," i.e., opposed; offered resistance to.
9 Force is gained by this pleonasm and the alliteration in this and the foregoing line. It is like Shakespeare's "make assurance doubly sure."

That little which is left so to defend,[1]
Encroached on still through our intestine broils
Weakening the scepter of old Night: first, Hell,[2]
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately heaven and earth, another world
Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain[3]
To that side heaven from whence your legions fell.
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger.[4] Go, and speed;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."
He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo[5] passed
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis,[6] and by the other whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labor hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labor he;
But, he once passed, soon after, when man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,
Following his track (such was the will of Heaven),
Paved after him a broad and beaten way

[1] If all I can do will serve to defend that little which is left.

[2] "Hell" is the subject of "encroached," to be supplied.

[3] "Golden chain" may be here an allegorical reference to love, or order, or existence.

[4] "Nearer danger," i.e., nearer your dangerous goal.

[5] In Greek story, the ship that carried Jason through the "justling rocks," Symplegades, to Colchis, in his quest of the golden fleece.

[6] Ulysses shunned Charybdis on the Sicilian side, and the other whirlpool, Scylla, on the Italian side, when sailing down the strait.

Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge[1] of wondrous length,
From hell continued, reaching the utmost orb[2]
Of this frail world; by which the spirits perverse
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence[3]
Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her outmost works,[4] a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din;
That[5] Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts[6] on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port,[7] though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs[8] his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living[9] sapphire, once his native seat,
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world,[10] in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accurst, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

1 The making of this bridge is told in Book X. 282–323.

2 The extreme circumference. 3 Inflowing.

4 "Outmost works," used with a military meaning; i.e., works without the main wall. 5 So that. 6 Wafts himself.

7 "Holds gladly the port," a classic phrase; i.e., keeps in harbor.

8 Poises; balances. 9 Vivid; intense; bright.

10 Not our earth, but our universe.

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