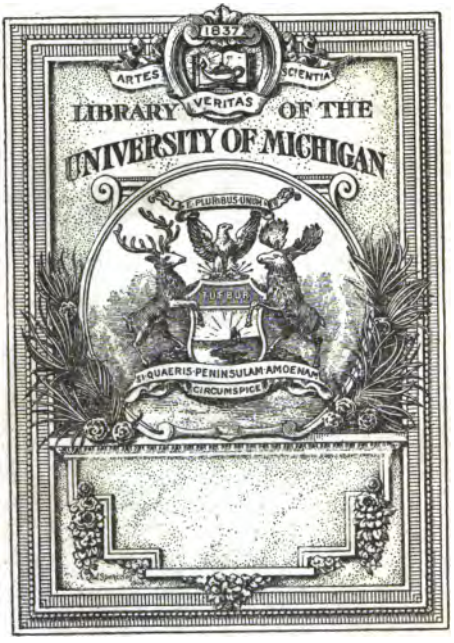
Todd

Comus: a mask,

by Milton



COMUS;

A MASK,

BY JOHN MILTON.

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634,

BEFORE JOHN, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

PRINTED FROM THE TEXT OF

THE REV. HENRY JOHN TODD, A. M. F. A. S.

WITH SELECTED AND ORIGINAL

ANECDOTES AND ANNOTATIONS,

Biographical, Explanatory, Critical and Dramatic.

With Splendid Embellishments.

LONDON:

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DEDICATION.[1]

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN LORD VISCOUNT BRACLY,[2]

Son and Heir Apparent to

THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, &c.

MY LORD,

THIS Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a finall dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the author,[3] yet it is a legitimate off-spring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my severall friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the publike view; and now to offer it up in all rightfull devotion to those fair hopes, and rare endowments of your much promising youth, which give a full assurance, to all that know you, of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name, and receive this as your own, from the hands of him, who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured parents, and as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*, so now in all reall expression,

Your faithfull and most humble Servant,

H. LAWES.

[1] This is the Dedication to Lawes's Edition of the Mask, 1637, to which the following motto was prefixed, from Virgil's second Eclogue,

"*Ehen! quid volui misero mihi! floribus austrum*
"*Perditus*——"

This motto is omitted by Milton himself in the editions of 1645, and 1673. WARTON.

This motto is delicately chosen, whether we consider it as being spoken by the author himself, or by the editor. If by the former, the meaning, I suppose, is this: *I have, by giving way to this publication, let in the breath of public censure on these early blossoms of my poetry, which were before secure in the hands of my friends, as in a private enclosure.* If we suppose it to come from the editor, the application is not very different; only to *floribus* we must then give an encomiastic sense. The choice of such a motto, so far from vulgar in itself, and in its application, was worthy Milton. HURD.

[2] The First Brother in the Mask.

[3] It never appeared under Milton's name till the year 1645. WARTON.

The Copy of a Letter written by Sir HENRY WOOTTON *to the Author, upon the following Poem.*

From the Colledge, this 13th of April, 1638.[4]

SIR.

IT was a special favour, when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly; and in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. *H.*[5] I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught, (for you left me with an extreme thirst,) and to have begged your conversation again, joyntly with your said learned friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together som good authors of the ancient time: among which I observed you to have been familiar.

Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kinde letter from you dated the sixth of this month, and for a dainty peece of entertainment which came therwith. Wherein I should much commend the Tragical part, if the Lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dòrique delicacy in your songs and odes; wherunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities.* But I must not omit to tell you, that I now onely owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed som good while before with singular delight, having received it from our common friend Mr. *R.*[6] in the very close of the

[4] *April,* 1638.] Milton had communicated to Sir Henry his design of seeing foreign countries, and had sent him his *Mask.* He set out on his travels soon after the receipt of this letter. TODD.

[5] *Mr. H.*] John Hales.

[6] *Mr. R.*] I believe "*Mr. R.*" to be *John Rouse,* Bodley's librarian. "*The late R.*" is unquestionably *Thomas Randolph,* the poet. WARTON.

late *R's Poems*, printed at Oxford, wherunto it is added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of stationers, and to leave the reader *Con lu bocca dolce.*

Now, Sir, concerning your travels wherin I may chalenge a little more priviledge of discours with you; I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way; therfore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. *M. B.*[7] whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord *S.*[8] as his governour; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into Italy, where he did reside by my choice som time for the king, after mine own recess from Venice.

I should think that your best line will be thorow the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa, whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge: I hasten, as you do, to Florence, or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story from the interest you have given me in your safety.

At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier, in dangerous times, having bin steward to the Duca de Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled, save this onely man that escaped by foresight of the tempest: with him I had often much chat of those affairs; into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and at my departure toward Rome (which had been the center of his experience,) I had wonn confidence enough to beg his advice, how I might carry myself securely there, without offence of others, or of mine own conscience. *Signor Arrigo mio*, (sayes he,) *I pensieri stretti, et il viso sciolto*, will go safely over the whole world; of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgement doth need no commentary; and therfore (Sir) I will commit you

[7] *Mr. M. B.*] Mr. Michael Branthwait, as I suppose; of whom Sir Henry thus speaks in one of his letters, *Relig. Wotton.* 3d edit. p. 546. "Mr Michael Branthwait, heretofore His Majestie's Agent in Venice, a gentleman of approved confidence and sincerity." TODD.

[8] *Lord S.*] *The son of Lord Viscount Scudamore*, then the English Ambassador at Paris, by whose notice Milton was honoured, and by whom he was introduced to Grotius, then residing at Paris also, as the minister of Sweden. TODD.

with it to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

your friend as much at command
as any of longer date,

HENRY WOOTTON.[9]

POSTSCRIPT.

Sir,

I have expressly sent this my foot-boy to prevent your departure without som acknowledgment from me of the receipt of your obliging letter, having myself through som business, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad and diligent, to entertain you with home-novelties; even for some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

SOME ACCOUNT OF LUDLOW CASTLE,

Where Comus was first represented.

THIS Castle was built by Roger de Montgomery, who was related to William the Conqueror. The date of its erection is fixed by Mr. Warton in the year 1112. By others it is said to have been erected before the Conquest, and its founder to have been Edric Sylvaticus, Earl of Shrewsbury, whom Roger de Montgomery was sent by the Conqueror into the Marches of Wales to subdue, and with whose estates in Salop he was afterwards rewarded. But the testimonies of various writers assign the foundation of this structure to Roger de Montgomery, soon after the Conquest.

The son of this nobleman did not long enjoy it, as he died in the prime of life. The grandson, Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, forfeited it to Henry I. by having joined the party of Robert Duke of Normandy against that king. It became now a princely residence, and was guarded by a numerous garrison. Soon after the accession of Stephen, however, the governor betrayed his trust, in joining the Empress Maud. Stephen besieged it; in which endeavour to regain possession of his fortress some writers assert that he

[9] This letter appeared first in the edition of 1645. I know not why it was suppressed, and by Milton himself, in that of 1673. WARTON.

succeeded, others that he failed. The most generally received opinion is, that the governor, repenting of his baseness, and wishing to obtain the king's forgiveness, proposed a capitulation advantageous to the garrison, to which Stephen, despairing of winning the castle by arms, readily acceded. Henry II. presented it to his favourite, Fulk Fitz-Warine, or de Dinan, to whom succeeded Joccas de Dinan; between whom and Hugh de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore, such dissentions arose, as at length occasioned the seizure of Mortimer, and his confinement in one of the towers of the castle, which to this day is called Mortimer's Tower; from which he was not liberated till he had paid an immense ransom. This tower is now inhabited, and used as a fives-court.

It was again belonging to the Crown in the 8th year of King John, who bestowed it on Philip de Albani, from whom it descended to the Lacies of Ireland, the last of which family, Walter de Lacey, dying without issue male, left the castle to his grand-daughter Maud, the wife of Peter de Geneva, or Jeneville, a Poictevin, of the House of Lorrain, from whose posterity it passed by a daughter to the Mortimers, and from them hereditarily to the Crown. In the reign of Henry III. it was taken by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the ambitious leader of the confederate barons, who, about the year 1263, are said to have taken possession of all the royal castles and fortresses. Of Ludlow Castle, in almost two succeeding centuries, nothing is recorded.

In the thirteenth year of Henry VI. it was in the possession of Richard Duke of York, who there drew up his declaration of affected allegiance to the king, pretending that the army of ten thousand men, which he had raised in the Marches of Wales, was "for the publick weale of the realme." The event of this commotion between the Royalists and Yorkists, the defeat of Richard's perfidious attempt, is well known. The castle of Ludlow, says Hall, "was spoyled." The king's troops seized on whatever was valuable in it; and, according to the same chronicler, hither "the king sent the Duchess of York, with her two younger sons, to be kept in ward, with the Duchess of Buckingham, her sister, where she continued a certain space."

The Castle was soon afterwards put into the possession of Edward, Duke of York, afterwards King Edward IV. who at that time resided in the neighbouring castle of Wigmore, and who, in order to revenge the death of his father, had collected some troops in the Marches, and had attached the garrison to his cause. On his accession to the throne, the castle was repaired by him, and a few years after was made *The Court* of his son, the Prince of Wales; who was sent hither by him, as Hall relates, "for justice to be doen in the Marches of Wales, to the end that by the authoritie of his presence, the wild Welshmenne and evill disposed personnes should refraine from their accustomed murthers, and outrages." Sir Henry Sidney some years afterwards, observed, that, since the establishment of the Lord President and Council, the whole country of Wales had been brought from their disobedient and barbarous incivility, to a civil and obedient condition; and the bordering English counties had been freed from those spoils and felonies, with which the Welch, before this institution, had annoyed them. See Sidney State-Papers, Vol. I. p. 1. On the death of Edward, his eldest son was here first proclaimed king by the name of Edward V

In the reign of Henry VII. his eldest son, Arthur, Prince of Wales, inhabited the castle; in which great festivity was observed upon his marriage with Catherine of Arragon; an event that was soon followed, within the same walls, by the untimely and lamented death of that accomplished prince.

The Castle had now long been the palace of the Prince of Wales, annexed to the principality, and was the habitation appointed for his deputies, the Lords Presidents of Wales, who held in it the court of the Marches. It would therefore hardly have been supposed, that its external splendour should have suffered neglect, if Powel, the Welch historian, had not related that "Sir Henry Sidney, who was made Lord President in 1564, repaired the castle of Ludlowe, which is the cheefest house within the Marches, *being in great decaie*, as the chapell, the court-house, and a faire fountaine." See Mr. Warton's second edit. p. 194, where he quotes D. Powell's Hist. of Cambria, edit. 1584. 4to. p. 401. Sir H. Sidney, however, was made Lord President in the second year of Elizabeth, which was in 1559. See Sidney State Papers, Vol. I. Memoirs prefixed, p. 86. Sir Henry's munificence to this stately fabric is more particularly recorded by T. Churchyard, in his poem called "The Worthines of Wales," 4to. Lond. 1578. The chapter is intitled "*The Castle of Ludlow*," in which it is related, that "Sir Harry built many things here worthie praise and memorie." From the same information we learn the following particulars:—"Over a chimney excellently wrought in the best chamber, is St. Andrewes Crosse joyned to Prince Arthurs Armes in the hall windowe." The poet also notices the "Chappell most trim and costly sure;" about which "are armes in colours of soudrie kings, but chiefly noblemen." He then specifies in prose, "that Sir Harry Sidney being Lord President, buylt twelve roumes in the sayd castle, which goodly buildings doth shewe a great beautie to the same. He made also a goodly wardrobe underneath the new parlor, and repayred an old tower, called Mortymer's Tower, to keepe the auncient records in the same; and he repayred a fayre rounme under the court house, to the same entent and purpose, and made a great wall about the woodyard, and built a most brave condit within the inner court: and all the newe buildings over the gate Sir Harry Sidney (in his daies and governement there) made and set out to the honour of the Queen, and glorie of the Castle. There are in a goodly or stately place set out my Lord Earle of Warwick's Armes, the Earl of Darbie, the Earle of Worcester, the Earle of Pembroke, and Sir Harry Sidney's Armes in like maner: all these stand on the left hand of the chamber. On the other side are the armes of Northwales and Southwales, two red Lyons and two golden Lyons, Prince Arthur's. At the end of the dyning chamber, there is a pretie device how the hedgehog brake the chayne, and came from Ireland to Ludlow." The device is probably an allusion to Sir Henry's armorial bearings, of which two *porcupines* were the crest. Sir Henry Sidney caused also many salutary regulations to be made in the court. See Sidney State Papers, vol. i. p. 143 and p. 170, in which are stated the great sums of money he had expended, and the indefatigable diligence he had exerted in the discharge of his office.

In 1616, the creation of Prince Charles (afterwards King Charles I.) to the principality of Wales, and earldom of Chester, was celebrated here with uncommon magnificence. It became next distin-

published by "one of the most memorable and honourable circumstances in the course of its history," THE REPRESENTATION OF COMUS, in 1634, when the Earl of Bridgewater was Lord President, and inhabited it. A scene in the Mask presented both the castle and the town of Ludlow. Afterwards, as I have been informed, Charles the First, going to pay a visit at Powis Castle, was here splendidly received and entertained on his journey. But "pomp, and feast, and revelry, with *mask*, and antique pageantry," were soon succeeded in Ludlow Castle by the din of arms. During the unhappy Civil War it was garrisoned for the king; who, in his flight from Wales, staid a night in it. The castle was at length delivered up to the Parliament in June, 1646.

A few years after this event, the goods of the castle were inventoried and sold. There is a priced catalogue of the furniture, with the names of the purchasers, in Harl. MSS. No. 4898, and No. 7359.

No other remarkable circumstances distinguish the history of this castle, till the court of the Marches was abolished, and the Lords Presidents were discontinued, in 1688. From that period its decay commenced. It has since been gradually stripped of its curious and valuable ornaments. No longer inhabited by its noble guardians, it has fallen into neglect; and neglect has encouraged plunder. "It will be no wonder that this noble castle is in the very perfection of decay, when we acquaint our readers, that the present inhabitants live upon the sale of the materials. All the fine courts, the royal apartments, halls, and rooms of state, lie open and abandoned, and some of them falling down." Tour through Great Britain, quoted by Grose, Art. *Ludlow Castle*. See also two remarkable instances related by Mr. Hodges in his *Account of the Castle*, p. 39. The appointment of a governor, or steward of the castle, is also at present discontinued. Butler enjoyed the stewardship, which was a lucrative as well as an honourable post, while the principality-court existed. And, in an apartment over the gateway of the castle, he is said to have written his inimitable Hudibras. The poet had been secretary to the Earl of Carbery, who was Lord President of Wales; and who, in the great rebellion, had afforded an asylum to the excellent Jeremy Taylor.

In the account of Ludlow Castle, prefixed to Buck's Antiquities, published in 1774, which must have been written many years before, it is said "Many of the royal apartments are yet entire; and the sword, with the velvet hangings, and some of the furniture are still preserved." And Grose, in his Antiquities, published about the same time, extracting from the Tour through Great Britain what he pronounces a very just and accurate account of this castle, represents the chapel having abundance of coats of arms upon the pannels, and the hall decorated with the same ornaments, together with lances, spears, firelocks, and old armour. Of these curious appendages to the grandeur of both, little perhaps is now known. Of the chapel, a circular building within the inner court is now all that remains. Over several of the stable-doors, however, are still the arms of Queen Elizabeth, and the Earl of Pembroke. Over the inner gate of the castle, are also some remains of the arms of the Sidney family, with an inscription denoting the date of the Queen's reign, and of Sir Henry Sidney's residence, in 1581, together with the following words, *Hominibus ingratis loquimini lapides*

No reason has been assigned for this remarkable address. Perhaps Sir Henry Sidney might intend it as an allusion to his predecessors, who had suffered the stately fabrick to decay; as a memorial also, which no successor might behold without determining to avoid its application: "Nonne IPSAM DOMUM *metuet*, ne quam VOCEM ELICIAT, nonne PARIETES CONSCIOS.?" *Cic. pro Cœlio.* Sect. 25.

Mr. Dovaston, of the Nursery, near Oswestry, who visited the castle in 1768, has acquainted me, that the floors of the great Council Chamber were then pretty entire, as was the stair-case. The covered steps leading to the chapel were remaining, but the covering of the chapel was fallen: yet the arms of some of the Lords Presidents, painted on the walls, were visible. In the great Council Chamber was inscribed on the wall a sentence from I. Sam. xii. 3. All of which are now wholly gone. The person, who showed this gentleman the castle, informed him that, by tradition, the *Mask of Comus* was performed in the Council Chamber.

The situation of the castle is delightful, and romantick. It is built in the north-west angle of the town upon a rock, commanding an extensive and beautiful prospect northward. On the west it is shaded by a lofty hill, and washed by the river. It is strongly environed by walls of immense height and thickness, and fortified with round and square towers at irregular distances. The walls are said by Grose to have formerly been a mile in compass; but Leland in that measure includes those of the town. The interior apartments were defended on one side by a deep ditch, cut out of the rock; on the other, by an almost inaccessible precipice overlooking the vale of Corve. The castle was divided into two separate parts: the castle, properly speaking, in which were the palace and lodgings; and the green, or outwork, which Dr. Stukely supposes to have been called the *Barbican*. See his Itinerary, Iter. iv. p. 70. The green takes in a large compass of ground, in which were the court of judicature and records, the stables, garden, bowling-green, and other offices. In the front of the castle, a spacious plain or lawn formerly extended two miles. In 1772, a publick walk round the castle was planted with trees, and laid out with much taste, by the munificence of the Countess of Powis. See Mr. Hodge's *Hist. Acc.* p. 54.

The exterior appearance of this ancient edifice bespeaks, in some degree, what it once has been. Its mutilated towers and walls still afford an idea of the strength and beauty, which so noble a specimen of Norman architecture formerly displayed. But at the same time, it is a melancholy monument, exhibiting the irreparable effects of pillage and dilapidation. TODD.

THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

AND HIS FAMILY.

JOHN EGERTON, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

Before whom *Comus* was presented, was the second son of that great lawyer and statesman, Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the great seal to Queen Elizabeth, and Lord High Chancellor of

England under King James I. who created him Baron of Ellesmere, and Viscount Brackley.

Some of his earlier days were spent, as were those of his elder brother Thomas, in the employment of a military life. In 1599, he served, with his brother, under the Earl of Essex, against the rebels in Ireland, when he was knighted, as his brother had been before, at the taking of Cales, under the same commander. Sir Thomas Egerton died at Dublin Castle in September 1599, leaving three daughters by Elizabeth his wife, daughter of Thomas Venables, of Kinderton, in the county of Chester, Esquire.

Sir John Egerton soon afterwards married Lady Frances Stanley, second daughter and co-heir of the Earl of Derby, whose widow the Lord Keeper Egerton, his father, married in October, 1600.

At the coronation of King James I. he was made one of the Knights of the Bath.

After the death of his father in March, 1617, he was almost immediately advanced to the earldom of Bridgewater; which the king had intended to bestow upon the chancellor himself, and which now, in reverence to his memory, he bestowed upon his son. In the same year he was nominated one "of His Majestie's Councellors" to William, Lord Compton, who was then promoted to the Presidentship of Wales and the Marches.

From 1625 to 1631 we find him nominated in various commissions of publick importance. And in 1631 he was promoted to the presidentship of Wales and the Marches. To his acquisition of this honourable post the Mask of *Comus* owes its foundation. He had probably been long acquainted with Milton, who had before written Arcades for the Countess of Derby. "I have been informed from a manuscript of Oldys," says Mr. Warton, "that Lord Bridgewater being appointed Lord President of Wales, entered upon his official residence at Ludlow Castle with great solemnity. On this occasion he was attended by a large concourse of the neighbouring nobility and gentry. Among the rest came his children; in particular, Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton, and Lady Alice,

"——to attend their father's state,
"And new-entrusted scepter."——

They had been on a visit at a house of their relations, the Egerton family, in Herefordshire; and in passing through Haywood Forest were benighted, and the Lady Alice was even lost for a short time. This accident, which in the end was attended with no bad consequences, furnished the subject of a *Mask* for a Michaelmas festivity, and produced *Comus*. Lord Bridgewater was appointed [rather, as I apprehend, installed] Lord President, May 12, 1633. When the perilous adventure in Haywood forest happened, if true, cannot now be told. It must have been soon after. The Mask was acted at Michaelmas 1634." Sir John Hawkins has also observed, that this elegant poem is founded on a real story; his account of which, though less particular, agrees with that of Oldys. Hist. of Musick, vol. iv. p. 52. Lawes, in his Dedication to *Lord Brackley*, perhaps alludes to the accident, in stating that the "poem received *its first occasion of birth from himself, and others of his noble family.*"

The Earl continued to be employed in performing the commands of his royal master, to whom he was a faithful and an active servant, till the Civil War had unhappily begun; and he lived to

soon afterwards, those dreadful evidences of a kingdom divided against itself, the murder of its king, and the overthrow of its constitution.

He died on the fourth of December, 1649. His offspring were four sons, and eleven daughters; but three of his sons, and also three of his daughters, as well as his countess, died before him. His character affords a most exemplary object of imitation to men of rank, wealth, and talents. "He was endowed † with incomparable parts, both natural and acquired, so that both art and nature did seem to strive which should contribute most towards the making him a most accomplished gentleman; he had an active body, and a vigorous soul; his deportment was graceful, his discourse excellent, whether extemporary or premeditated, serious or jocular, so that he seldom spake, but he did either instruct or delight those that heard him; he was a profound scholar, an able statesman, and a good christian; he was a dutiful son to his mother the church of England in her persecution, as well as in her great splendour; a loyal subject to his sovereign in those worst of times, when it was accounted treason not to be a traitor. As he lived 70 years a pattern of virtue, so he died an example of patience and piety." His learning has been considered by Mr. Warton as a fortunate circumstance, because it enabled at least one person of the audience, and him the chief, to understand the many learned allusions in *Comus*.

TODD.

JOHN, LORD VISCOUNT BRACKLEY,

Who performed the Part of the Elder Brother,

The third, but eldest surviving son of the nobleman above-mentioned, succeeded to the earldom of Bridgewater. He had been appointed Custos Rotulorum of the county of Salop, from which office he was displaced by Oliver Cromwell, and to which he was restored in May, 1660. In 1642 he married Elizabeth, daughter of William, then Earl, and afterwards Marquis and Duke of Newcastle. In the troublesome times which followed, he appears to have been in danger of imprisonment. For, in his Countess's Book of Meditations, p. 219, is "*A Prayer for her Husband*," written under such an apprehension. [Vide Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 62, p. 1163.]

After the restoration of King Charles II. the abilities of this Earl were particularly noticed. In 1662 he was appointed, with the Lord Chancellor and the Bishop of London, to manage the conference of the two Houses of Parliament upon the Bill for Uniformity.

On the 14th of May, 1663, he was chosen High Steward of the University of Oxford, having on the same day been previously created M. A. *Reg. Convoc. Univ. Oxon.* The gratification which this honourable appointment must have afforded him, was, however, suddenly interrupted. On the 19th of June, 1663, he had received a challenge from the Earl of Middlesex, which he accepted; the knowledge of which coming to the king, who endeavoured in vain (owing to the obstinacy of the Earl of Middlesex,)

† From the inscription on his monument, in the church of Little Ideaden in Hertfordshire, near Ashbridge, his family seat.

to accommodate the dispute, they were severally ordered into custody; the Earl of Middlesex to the Tower, and the Earl of Bridgewater to the care of the Black Rod. His affectionate Lady went with him, and died in child-bed, in the same house where he was confined, on the 14th. On the 15th, he was ordered to his own house in Barbican, still a prisoner. The two Lords were afterwards reprimanded, and the Earl of Middlesex was directed to make an apology to the Earl of Bridgewater.

He had six sons and three daughters by his lady, "in whom (as the inscription on her monument relates) all the accomplishments both of body and mind did concur to make her the glory of the present, and example of future ages."

He filled several other public and important offices after this event, and died in 1686. He was buried at Little-Gaddesden, and the inscription on his monument testifies his great affection for "his truly loving and intirely beloved wife, who was all his worldly bliss."

Sir Henry Chauncy, who was well acquainted with this Earl, relates the following particulars of him in his History of Hertfordshire: "He was a person of middling stature, somewhat corpulent, with black hair, a round visage, a modest and grave aspect, a sweet and pleasant countenance, and a comely presence. He was a learned man, delighted much in his library, and allowed free access to all who had any concerns with him. His piety, devotion in all acts of religion, and firmness to the established church of England, were very exemplary; and he had all other accomplishments of virtue and goodness. He was very temperate in eating and drinking; but remarkable for hospitality to his neighbours, charity to the poor, and liberality to strangers. He was complaisant in company, spoke sparingly, but always very pertinently; was true to his word, faithful to his friend, loyal to his prince, wary in council, strict in his justice, and punctual in all his actions." This amiable and tender-hearted nobleman particularly encouraged learning. From several works, to which he was a liberal patron, I must not omit to select that valuable treasury of sacred criticism, Pole's *Synopsis Criticorum*, &c. TODD.

THE HONOURABLE THOMAS EGERTON,

Who performed the Part of the Second Brother,

Was the fourth son, and died unmarried at the age of twenty-three. His portrait, which, together with that of the Lady Alice, is, by the great kindness of the Duke of Bridgewater, [deceased] now in my possession, seems to have been painted before he was twenty. He has a very engaging countenance, full of remarkable expression. His elder brother, Lord Brackley, of whom the picture is at Bridgewater-house, Cleveland Court, appears also to have possessed the comeliness which Chauncy so minutely has described. There is no flattery, therefore, in the poet's allusion to their figure and deportment—

> Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
> That likest thy Narcissus are? Comus, v. 236.
>
> *Com.* Their port was more than human as they stood:
> I took it for a fairy vision

Of some gay creatures of the element.
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i'the plighted clouds. I was aw-struck,
And, as I past, I worshipt——v. 298.

Neither is the beauty of the Lady in *Comus* over-rated; for perhaps a more pleasing face has rarely exercised the poet's skill. TODD.

THE LADY ALICE EGERTON,

Who performed the Part of the Lady,

Was the eleventh daughter, and at that time not more than thirteen years old. Lord Brackley was only twelve. †

About 1653 she became third countess of Richard, Earl of Carbery in Ireland, and Baron Vaughan in England, who lived at Golden Grove, in Caermarthenshire; a nobleman, who has endeared his name to all the wise and good, by his patronage of Jeremy Taylor, and of the poet Butler [see above p. 11.] The celebrated Mrs. Phillips (or, as she was called, *the matchless Orinda*,) addressed a Poem to Lady Alice, on her coming into Wales. In H. Lawes's "Select Ayres and Dialogues for the Theorbo," &c. published 1669, there is a Song addressed to her from her husband; the two last stanzas of which Mr. Warton cites as excellent, in the affected and witty style of the times.

"When first I view'd thee, I did spy
"Thy soul stand beckoning in thine eye;
"My heart knew what it meant,
"And at its first kiss went;
"Two balls of wax so run,
"When melted into one;
"Mix'd now with thine my heart now lies,
"As much Love's riddle as thy prize.

"For since I can't pretend to have
"That heart which I so freely gave,
"Yet now 'tis mine the more,
"Because 'tis thine, than 'twas before,
"*Death* will unriddle this;
"For, when thou'rt call'd to bliss,
"He need not throw at me his dart,
"'Cause piercing Thine he kills My heart."

She died without issue. TODD.

* The reader who seeks for minute information, may read a fine character of this lady, in a funeral sermon, among the sermons of that pious, learned, and loyal prelate, bishop Taylor, whom Lord Carbery generously harboured in his house at Golden Grove, during the rebellion. WARTON.

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†* His brother Thomas was still younger. Hence, in the dialogue between *Comus* and the Lady. v. 289.

Com. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe their unrazor'd lips. WARTON.

ACCOUNT OF HENRY LAWES,

The Composer of the Musick.

Henry Lawes, who performed the combined characters of the *Spirit* and the shepherd *Thyrsis*, was the son of Thomas Lawes, a vicar-choral of Salisbury Cathedral. He was perhaps at first a choir-boy of that church. With his brother William he was educated in musick under Giovanni Coperario, (supposed by Fenton in his notes on Waller to be an Italian, but really an Englishman under the plain name of John Cooper,) at the expence of Edward Earl of Hertford. In January, 1625, he was appointed Pistoler, or Epistoler, * of the royal chapel; in November following he became one of the gentlemen of the choir of that chapel; and soon afterwards, clerk of the cheque, and one of the court-musicians to King Charles the First.

Lawes, in the Attendant Spirit, sung the last air in Comus, or all the lyrical part to the end, from v. 958. He appears to have been well acquainted with the best poets, and the most respectable and popular of the nobility, of his time. To say nothing here of Milton, he set to musick all the Lyricks in Waller's Poems, first published in 1645, among which is an *Ode* addressed to Lawes, by Waller, full of high compliments. He composed also the *Songs* and a Masque, in the *Poems* of Thomas Carew—and various other pieces written by Cartwright, Lovelace, &c. He published "*Ayres* and *Dialogues* for one, two and three voyces, &c. Lond. 1653." fol. They are dedicated to Lady Vaughan and Carbery, who had acted the *Lady* in *Comus*, and to her sister Mary, Lady Herbert of Cherbury. Both had been his scholars in musick, and "excelled (as Lawes asserts in the Dedication) most ladies, especially in Vocall Musick, wherein you were so absolute, that you gave life and honour to all I set and taught you; and that with more Vnderstanding, than a new Generation pretending to Skil, (I dare say) are capable of." For a composition to one of the airs of Cartwright's *Ariadne*, which gained excessive and unusual applause, Lawes is said to be the first who introduced the Italian style of musick into England. In the preface he says, he had formerly composed airs to Italian and Spanish words: and, allowing the Italians to be the chief masters of the musical art, concludes that England has produced as able musicians as any country of Europe, and censures the prevailing fondness for Italian words. He composed likewise "Select *Ayres* and *Dialogues* to sing to the Theorbo-lute, or Bass-viol:"—Psalms, in conjunction with his brother William, to which Milton's *Thirteenth Sonnet* is prefixed: "*Harry, whose tuneful*," &c.:—And Tunes to Sandy's admirable *Paraphrase* of the Psalms, first published in 1638: With a variety of other works which cannot here be enumerated. His seventy-second psalm was once the tune of the chimes of St. Lawrence Jewry.

Cromwell's usurpation put an end to Masks and Music: and Lawes, being dispossessed of all his appointments, by men who despised and discouraged the elegancies and ornaments of life, chiefly employed that gloomy period in teaching a few young ladies to sing and play on the lute. Yet he was still greatly respected; for before the troubles began, his irreproachable life, ingenuous deportment,

* This officer, before the Reformation, was a Deacon; and it was his business to read the Epistle at the Altar. WARTON

engaging manners, and liberal connections, had not only established his character, but raised even the credit of his profession. Wood says, that his most beneficent friends, during his sufferings for the royal cause, in the rebellion and afterwards, were the ladies *Alice* and *Mary*, the Earl of Bridgewater's daughters before-mentioned. But in 1660 he was restored to his places and practice; and had the happiness to compose the coronation anthem for the exiled monarch. He died in 1662, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Of all the testimonies paid to his merit by his contemporaries, Milton's commendation, in the thirteenth *Sonnet*, and in some of the speeches in *Comus*, must be esteemed the most honourable. And Milton's praise is likely to be founded on truth. Milton was no specious or occasional flatterer; and, at the same time, was a skilful performer on the organ, and a judge of musick. And it appears probable, that, even throughout the rebellion, he had continued his friendship for Lawes; for long after the king was restored, he added the *Sonnet to Lawes* in the new edition of his poems, printed under his own direction, in 1673. Nor has our author only complimented Lawes's excellencies in musick. For in *Comus*, having said that Thyrsis with his *soft pipe*, and *smooth-dittied song*, could *still* the *roaring winds*, and hush the *waving woods*, he adds, v. 88. "nor of less *faith*." And he joins his *worth* with his *skill*, Sonn. xiii. v. 5.

In 1784, (says Mr. Warton,) in the house of Mr. Elderton, an attorney at Salisbury, I saw an original portrait of Henry Lawes on board, marked with his name, and "Ætat. suæ 26, 1626." This is now in the bishop's palace at Salisbury. It is not ill-painted; the face and ruff in tolerable preservation; the drapery, a cloak, much injured. Another in the musick-school at Oxford; undoubtedly placed there before the rebellion, and not long after the institution of that school, in 1626, by his friend Dr. William Heather, a gentleman of the royal chapel.

Henry's brother, *William*, a composer of considerable eminence, was killed in 1645, at the siege of Chester; and it is said that the king wore a private mourning for his death. There are two bulky manuscript volumes of his works in score, for various instruments, in the music-school at Oxford.

THE ORIGINAL MUSICK TO COMUS,

And the general Character of the Composition.

Peck asserts, that Milton wrote *Comus* at the request of Lawes, who promised to set it to musick. Most probably, this Mask, while in projection, was the occasion of their acquaintance, and first brought them together. Lawes was now a domestick, for a time at least, in Lord Bridgewater's family; for it is said of *Thyrsis*, in *Comus*, v. 85.

"That to the *service* of this house belongs," &c.

And, as we have seen, he taught the Earl's daughters to sing; to one of whom, the Lady *Alice*, the *Song to Echo* was allotted. And Milton was a neighbour of the family. It is well known, that Lawes's Musick to Comus was never printed. But by a manuscript in his own hand-writing it appears, that the three songs, *Sweet Echo*, *Sabrina Fair*, and *Back Shepherds Back*, with the lyrical Epilogue, "*To the Ocean now I fly*," were the whole of the original musical compo-

sitions for this drama. Sir John Hawkins has printed Lawes's Song of *Sweet Echo*, with the words, *Hist. Mus.* Vol. iv. p. 53. So has Dr. Burney. One is surprized that more musick was not introduced in this performance, especially as Lawes might have given further proofs of the vocal skill and proficiency of his fair scholar. As there is less musick, so there is less machinery, in Comus, than in any other mask. The intrinsick graces of its exquisite poetry disdained assistance.

Without a rigorous adherence to counterpoint, but with more taste and feeling than the pedantry of theoretick harmony could confer, Lawes communicated to verse an original and expressive melody. He exceeded his predecessors and contemporaries in a pathos and sentiment, a simplicity and propriety, an articulation and intelligibility, which so naturally adapt themselves to the words of the poet. Hence, says our author, *Sonn.* xiii. 7,

" To after age thou shalt be writ the man
" That with *smooth air* could *humour* best our tongue."

Which lines stand thus in the manuscript:

" To after age thou shalt be writ the man
" That didst *reform thy art*."

And, in *Comus*, Milton praises his " *soft* pipe, and *smooth-dittied* song." v. 86. One of his excellencies was an exact accommodation of the accents of the musick to the quantities of the verse. As in the *Sonnet* just quoted. v. 1. seq.

" Harry whose *tuneful* and *well-measured* song
" First taught our English musick how to *span*
" Words with just *note* and *accent*, not to scan,
" With Midas-ears, committing short and long."

Waller joins with Milton in saying, that other composers admit the poet's sense but *faintly* and *dimly*, like the rays through a church window of painted glass: while his favourite Lawes

——" could truly boast
" That not a *syllable is lost*.

And this is what Milton means, when he says in the *Sonnet* so often cited. " Thou honour'st *verse*" v. 9. In vocal execution he made his own subservient to the poet's art. In his tunes to Sandy's Psalms, his observance of the rythmus and syllabick accent, an essential requisite of vocal composition, is very striking and perceptible; and his strains are joyous, plaintive, or supplicatory, according to the sentiment of the stanza. These Psalms are for one singer. The solo was now coming into vogue; and Lawes's talent principally consisted in songs for a single voice; and here his excellencies above-mentioned might be applied with the best effect. The *Song to Echo* in *Comus* was for a single voice, where the composer was not only interested in exerting all his skill, but had at the same time the means of showing it to advantage; for he was the preceptor of the lady who sung it, and consequently must be well acquainted with her peculiar powers and characteristical genius. The poet says, that this song " rose like a steam of rich-distilled perfumes, and stole upon the air,' &c. v. 555. Here seems to be an allusion to Lawes's *new* manner; although the lady's voice is perhaps the more immediate object of the compliment. Perhaps this sor

wants embellishments, and has too much simplicity for modern criticks, and a modern audience. But it is the opinion of one whom I should be proud to name, and to which I agree, that were Mrs. Siddons to act the Lady in *Comus*, and sing this very simple air, when every word would be heard with a proper accent and pathetick intonation, the effect would be truly theatrical.* Dr. Burney is unwilling to allow that Lawes had much address in adapting the accents of the musick and the quantities of the verse. He observes that in this *Song to Echo*, a favourable opportunity was suggested to the musician for instrumental iterations, of which he made no use: and that, as the words have no accompaniment but a dry bass, the notes were but ill calculated to *awaken* Echo, however *courteous*, and to invite her to *give an answer*. *Hist. Mus.* It is certain, that the words and subject of this exquisite song, afford many tempting capabilities for the tricks of a modern composer. The bass of this song has been very skilfully altered or improved, and the melody modernized, by the late Mr. Mason, the poet, who also encouraged and patronised a republication of Lawes's Psalm tunes to Sandy's *Paraphrase*, with variations by the ingenious Mr. Matthew Camidge, of York Cathedral. From the judicious preface to that work, written by Mr. Mason, many of these criticisms on Lawes's musical style are adopted. WARTON.

Besides the musick for the *measure*, between verses 144 and 145, and the *soft musick* prescribed before verse 659, we are told after verse 889, that "Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and SINGS *By the rushy-fringed bank*, &c." And before verse 966 it is said "this *second song* presents them to their father and mother." So that though no more of the original musick is to be found, than that *said* to subsist in the composer's own hand-writing, yet more seems to have been produced, even by Milton's own direction. BURNEY. (*Hist. Mus.*)

Mr. Warton has not noticed the division of the *lyrical Epilogue* into *two* compositions. These compositions were originally unconnected; for the drama appears to have opened with the former, beginning "*From the Heavens*," instead of "*To the ocean*," as it closed with the latter, "*Now my task is smoothly done*." Having been informed by the Reverend Mr. Egerton, that Dr. Philip Hayes was in possession of the musick of *Comus* in Lawes's own hand-writing, I wrote to the Doctor, and was favoured with an answer, dated Feb. 8. 1797, from which I have extracted the following account, relating to the original manuscript:

"Henry Lawes has written before the Songs in Comus, *The 5 Songes followinge were sett for a Maske* presented at Ludlo Castle, before the Earle of Bridgewater, Lord President of the Marches. October 1634.

1*st Songe.*	*From the Heavens now I fly.* [which ends]
	Where many a Cherub softe reposes.
2d.	*Sweet Eccho.*
3d.	*Sabryna fayre.*
4*th.*	*Back Shepperds Back.*
2*d part.*	*Noble Lord and Lady bright.*

* Mrs. Siddons acted the Lady in Comus, for her benefit, on the 15th of May, 1786. L.

"5th Songe. *Now my taske is smoothly done,*
I can flye, or I can run.

"No such song appears, as *To the Ocean now I fly*. I fear none of the intermediate *instrumental strains* are recoverable. I have none of them in the manuscript before me." TODD.

ORIGIN OF COMUS.

In Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, an Arcadian comedy, recently published, Milton found many touches of pastoral and superstitious imagery, congenial with his own conceptions. Many of these, yet with the highest improvements, he has transferred into *Comus*; together with the general cast and colouring of the piece. He catched also from the lyrick rhymes of Fletcher, that *Dorique delicacy*, with which Sir Henry Wotton was so much delighted in the songs of Milton's drama. Fletcher's comedy was coldly received the first night of its performance. But it had ample revenge in this conspicuous and indisputable mark of Milton's approbation. It was afterwards represented as a mask at court, before the king and queen on twelfth-night, in 1633. I know not indeed, if this was any recommendation to Milton; who, in the *Paradise Lost*, speaks contemptuously of these interludes, which had been among the chief diversions of an elegant and liberal monarch. B. iv. 767.

——— "court-amours,"
"Mix'd dance, and wanton *mask*, or midnight ball, &c."

And in his *Ready and easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth*, written in 1660, on *the inconveniencies and dangers of readmitting kingship*, and with a view to counteract *the noxious humour of returning to Bondage*, he says, "a king must be adored as a demigod, with a dissolute and haughty court about him, of vast expence and luxury; *Masks* and *Revels*, to the debauching our prime gentry, both male and female, not in their *pastimes* only, &c." *Pr. W.* i. 590. I believe the whole compliment was paid to the genius of Fletcher. But in the mean time it should be remembered, that Milton had not yet contracted an aversion to courts and court-amusements; and that, in *L'Allegro*, *masks* are among his pleasures. Nor could he now disapprove of a species of entertainment, to which as a writer he was giving encouragement. The Royal Masks, however, did not, like *Comus*, always abound with Platonick recommendations of the doctrine of chastity.

The ingenious and accurate Mr. Reed has pointed out a rude outline, from which Milton seems partly to have sketched the plan of the fable of *Comus*. See *Biograph. Dramat.* ii. p. 441. It is an old play, with this title, "*The old Wives Tale*, a pleasant conceited comedie, plaied by the Queene's Majesties players. Written by G. P. [*i. e.* George Peele:] Printed at London by John Danter, and are to be sold by Ralph Hancocke and John Hardie, 1595." In quarto. This very scarce and curious piece exhibits, among other parallel incidents, two Brothers wandering in quest of their Sister, whom an enchanter had imprisoned. This magician had learned his art from his mother Meroe, as Comus had been instructed by his mother Circe. The brothers call out on the lady's name, and Echo replies. The enchanter had given her a potion which sure

pends the powers of reason, and superinduces oblivion of herself. The brothers afterwards meet with an old Man, who is also skilled in magick, and, by listening to his soothsayings, they recover their lost sister. But not 'till the enchanter's wreath had been torn from his head, his sword wrested from his hand, a glass broken and a light extinguished. The names of some of the characters, as Sacrapant, Chorebus, and others, are taken from the *Orlando Furioso*. The history of Meroe a witch, may be seen in "The xi Bookes of the Golden Asse, containing the Metamorphosie of Lucius Apulcius, interlaced with sundry pleasant and delectable Tales, &c. translated out of Latin into English by William Adlington, Lond. 1566." See Chap. iii. "How Socrates in his returne from Macedony to Larissa was spoyled and robbed, and how he fell acquainted with one Meroe a witch." And Chap. iv. "How Meroe the witch turned divers persons into miserable beasts" Of this book there were other editions, in 1571, 1596, 1600, and 1693. All in quarto, and the black letter. The translator was of University College. See also *Apuleius* in the original. A Meroe is mentioned by Ausonius, *Epig.* xix.

Peele's Play opens thus:

Anticke, Frolicke, and Fantasticke, three adventurers, are lost in a wood, in the night. They agree to sing the old song,

"Three merrie men, and three merrie men,
"And three merrie men be wee;
"I in the wood, and thou on the ground,
"And Jacke sleeps in the tree." †

They hear a dog, and fancy themselves to be near some village. A cottager appears, with a lantern: on which Frolicke says, "I perceive the glimryng of a gloworme, a candle, or a catseye, &c." They intreate him to shew the way: otherwise, they say, "wee are like to wander among the owlets and hobgoblins of the forest." He invites them to his cottage; and orders his wife to lay a crab in the fire, to roast for lambes-wool, &c." They sing

"When as the rie reach to the chin,
"And *chopcherrie, chopcherrie, ripe* within;
"Strawberries swimming in the creame,
"And schoole-boyes playing in the streame, &c."

At length, to pass the time *trimly*, it is proposed that the wife shall tell "a merry winters," or, "an old wiues winters tale," of which sort of stories she is not without a *score*. She begins, There was a king, or duke, who had a most beautiful daughter, and she was stolen away by a necromancer, who turning himself into a dragon, carried her in his mouth to his castle. The king sent out all his men to find his daughter; "at last, all the king's men went out so long, that hir Two Brothers went to seeke hir." Immediately the two Brothers, enter, and speake,

† This old Ballad is alluded to in *Twelfth Night*, A. ii. S. iii. Sir Toby says, "my Lady's a Catalan, we are politicians, Malvolio's a 'eg a Ramsey, and "*three merry men be we.*" WARTON.

" 1 *Br.* Vpon these chalkie cliffs of Albion,
" We are arriued now with tedious toile, &c.
" To seeke our Sister, &c."———

A soothsayer enters, with whom they converse about the lost lady.

" *Sooths.* Was she fayre? 2 *Br.* The fayrest for white and the purest for redde, as the blood of the deare or the driuen snowe, &c." In their search Echo replies to their call. They find too late that their sister is under the captivity of a wicked magician, and that she had tasted his cup of oblivion. In the close, after the wreath is torn from the magician's head, and he is disarmed and killed, by a Spirit in the shape and character of a beautiful page of fifteen years old, she still remains subject to the magician's enchantment. But in a subsequent scene the Spirit enters, and declares, that the Sister cannot be delivered but by a lady, who is neither maid, wife, nor widow. The Spirit blows a magical horn, and the Lady appears; she dissolves the charm, by breaking a glass, and extinguishing a light, as I have before recited. A curtain is withdrawn, and the Sister is seen seated and asleep. She is disenchanted and restored to her senses, having been spoken to *thrice*. She then rejoins her two brothers, with whom she returns home; and the Boy-Spirit vanishes under the earth. The magician is here called " inchanter vile," as in *Comus*, v. 907.

There is another circumstance in this play, taken from the old English *Apuleius*. It is where the *Old Man* every night is transformed by our magician into a bear, recovering in the day-time his natural shape.

Among the many feats of magic in this play, a bride newly married gains a marriage-portion by dipping a pitcher into a well. As she dips, there is a *voice:*

" Faire maiden, white and red,
" Combe me smoothe, and stroke my head,
" And thou shall haue some cockell bread!
" Gently dippe, but not too deepe,
" For feare thou make the golden beard to weepe!
" Faire maiden, white and redde,
" Combe me smoothe, and stroke my head:
" And every haire a sheaue shall be,
" And every sheaue a golden tree!"

With this stage-direction, " *A head comes up full of gold; she combs it into her lap.*"

I must not omit, that Shakspeare seems also to have had an eye on this play. It is in the scene where " *The Haruest-men enter with a Song.*" Again, " *Enter the Haruest-men singing with women in their handes.*" Frolicke says, " Who have we here, our amourous haruest-starres?" *They sing,*

" Loe, here we come a reaping, a reaping,
" To reape our harvest-fruite;
" And thus we passe the yeare so long,
" And never be we mute."

Compare the Mask in the *Tempest*, A. iv. S. i. where Iris says,

" You sun-burnt sicklemen, of August weary,
" Come hither from the furrow, and be merry;

" Make holy-day: your rye-straw hats put on,
" And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
" In country footing."

Where is this stage-direction, " *Enter certain reapers, properly habited: they join with the nymphs in a graceful dance.*" The *Tempest* probably did not appear before the year 1612.

That Milton had his eye on this ancient drama, which might have been the favourite of his early youth, perhaps it may at least be affirmed with as much credibility, as that he conceived the *Paradise Lost*, from seeing a mystery at Florence, written by Andreini a Florentine in 1617, entitled *Adamo*.

In the mean time it must be confessed, that Milton's magician, Comus, with his cup and wand, is ultimately founded on the fable of Circe. The effects of both characters are much the same. They are both to be opposed at first with force and violence. Circe is subdued by the virtues of the herb Moly, which Mercury gives to Ulysses, and Comus, by the plant Harmony, which the Spirit gives to the Two Brothers. About the year 1605, a Mask called the *Inner Temple Masque*, written by William Browne, author of *Britannia's Pastorals*, was presented by the students of the Inner Temple. It has been lately printed from a manuscript in the library of Emanuel College: but I have been informed, that a few copies were printed soon after the presentation. It was formed on the story of Circe, and perhaps might have suggested some few hints to Milton.

The genius of the best poets is often determined, if not directed, by circumstance and accident. It is natural, that even so original a writer as Milton should have been biassed by the reigning poetry of the day, by the composition most in fashion, and by subjects recently brought forward, but soon giving way to others, and almost as soon totally neglected and forgotten. WARTON.

Doctor Newton had also observed, that Milton formed the plan of *Comus* very much upon the episode of Circe in the Odyssey: And Dr Johnson, in his life of Milton, says, that the fiction is derived from Homer's Circe. But a learned and ingenious annotator on the *Lives of the Poets* is of opinion, notwithstanding the great biographer's assertion, that " it is rather taken from the *Comus* of *Erycius Puteanus*, in which, under the fiction of a dream, the characters of COMUS and his attendants are delineated, and the delights of sensualists exposed and reprobated. This little tract was published at Louvain in 1611, and afterwards at Oxford in 1634, the very year in which *Milton's Comus*, was written." Note signed H. in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 134, edit. 1790, and p. 123, edit. 1794.

In *Remarks on the Arabian Nights Entertainments* by RICHARD HOLE, L. L. B. Lond. 1797, this observation has been confirmed by various extracts from Puteanus's work.

" Milton certainly read this performance with such attention, as led, perhaps imperceptibly, to imitation.—His Comus

Offers to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a chrystal glass.

In Puteanus, one of his attendants discharges that office. *Hic* [in limine] *adolescens cum amphorâ et cyatho stabat et intrantibus propinabat vinum.* [p. 35, ed. 1611.] From the following passage, Milton seems to have derived his idea of the mode, in which he first in-

troduces the voluptuous enchanter. *Interea* COMVS, *luxu lasciviâque stipatus, ingreditur: et quid attinet pompam explicare? Horæ suavissimos Veris odores, omnemque florum purpuram spargebant. Amorem Gratiæ, Deliciæ, Lepores, ceteræque Hilaritatis illices sequebantur: Voluptatem Risus, Iocusque. Cum Saturitate soror Ebrietas erat, crine fluxo, rubentis Auroræ vultu: manu thyrsum quatiebat*; *ac breviter totum Bacchum expresserat.* [p. 30, ed. supr.] These figurative personages recal to our minds,

> Meanwhile welcome Joy, and Feast,
> Midnight Shout, and Revelry,
> Tipsy Dance, and Jollity.

In the same speech our poet evidently has in view a lively Anacreontic Ode, which the Comus of Puteanus likewise addresses to his dissipated votaries." Hole's *Remarks*, &c. pp. 233, 234.

The lines, which Mr. Hole has extracted from this Ode, are given as "resemblances which can hardly be considered accidental;" and he adds, "whoever chooses to compare farther the poetical address of Comus in each author, will find a similar spirit and congeniality of thought, though the Dutch Muse in point of chastity is very inferior to the British." *Remarks*, &c. p. 236.*

Milton, however, in his imitations of Puteanus, has interwoven many new allusions and refined sentiments. Puteanus, it must be acknowledged, is sprightly as well as poignant. But in *his Comus* we shall search in vain for the delicacy of expression and vigour of fancy, which we find in the *Comus* of Milton. From the indecencies also in Puteanus the reader will turn away with disgust; but to the jollities in Milton he can listen "unreproved," because, as Dr. Johnson has observed, his "invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The late ingenious Mr. Headley, in the Supplement to his *Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry*, 1787, directs the reader of Milton's Comus to the *Christ's Victorie* of Giles Fletcher; in which the story of Circe is introduced. Todd.

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* Other resemblances are pointed out by Mr. Todd in his edition of Milton's Poetical Works. L.

THE PERSONS.

The Attendant Spirit, *afterwards in the habit of* Thyrsis.
Comus, *with his Crew.*
The Lady.
First Brother.
Second Brother.
Sabrina, *the Nymph.*

The chief Persons, who presented, were

The Lord Brackley.
Mr. Thomas Egerton, *his Brother.*
The Lady Alice Egerton.

COMUS.

The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

The Attendant Spirit descends *or* enters.

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aërial spirits live inspher'd
In regions mild of calm and serene air
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call Earth; and, with low-thoughted care
Confin'd and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants,
Amongst the enthron'd gods on sainted seats.

Verse 7.—*pester'd*] Pester'd is *crowded*. Ital. *pesta*, a crowd or throng. TODD.

Ib.—*pin-fold*.] *Pin-fold* is now provincial, and signifies sometimes a *sheep-fold*, but most commonly a *pound*. WARTON.

V. 11.—*the enthron'd gods*.] *Fenton reads *th' enthroned*. Warton would prefer this tamer expression, "the gods enthron'd." Dr. Newton is with Fenton. Mr. Todd contends for the old reading. How an admirer of Milton could hesitate one moment is astonishing. Besides the collocation, which is very poetical, and quite Miltonic, the accent is designedly placed on the first syllable, *énthron'd*. Have we not had already *sérene?*—and, further on, there is *pérplex'd*, and other instances without end. It is one of the leading characteristics of his versification. L.

Milton's allusion in this line is scriptural. So, in G. Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie*, Part iii. st. 51.

"And ye glad *Spirits*, that now *sainted sit*
"*On your celestial thrones* in glory drest."

Yet some there be, that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key,
That opes the palace of Eternity:
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadorned bosom of the deep:
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents: but this Isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-hair'd deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nurs'd in princely lore,

See *Rev.* iv. 4. Hence the Faithful are denominated by ecclesiastical writers the ΣΥΝΘΡΟΝΟΙ of Christ. See Elsner *Obs. Sacræ*, vol. ii. 446. TODD.

V. 16.—*I would not soil, &c.*] But, in the *Paradise Lost*, an Angel eats with Adam, B. v. 433. This, however, was before the fall of our first parent: and, as the Angel Gabriel condescends to feast with Adam, while yet unpolluted, and in his primœval state of innocence; so our guardian Spirit would not have soiled the purity of his ambrosial robes with the noisome exhalations of this sin-corrupted earth, but to assist those distinguished mortals, who, by a due progress in virtue, aspire to reach the golden key which opens the palace of Eternity. WARTON.

V. 29.—*He quarters.*] That is, Neptune: with which name he hora the king, as sovereign of the four seas; for from the *British* une only, this noble peer derives his authority. WARTON.

Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-entrusted scepter: but their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horrour of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that by quick command from sovran Jove
I was dispatch'd for their defence and guard:
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape

V. 38.—*The nodding horrour*, &c.] Compare Tasso's Enchanted Forest, *Gier. Lib.* c. xiii. st. 2.

" Sorge non lunge à le christiane tende
" Tra solitarie valli alta foresta,
" Foltissima di *piante* antiche, *horrende*,
" *Che spargon d'ogni intorno ombra funesta.*"

And Petrarch's sonnet, composed as he passed through the forest of Ardennes, in his way to Avignon: *Son.* 143. Parte prima, edit. Lond. 1796, vol. i. p. 147.

" Raro un silenzio, un solitario *orrore*
" *D' ombrosa selva* mai tanto mi piacque." TODD.

V. 43.—*And listen why*; &c.] Horace, *Od.* III. i. 2.

" Favete linguis: carmina non prius
" Audita—
" Virginibus puerisque canto." RICHARDSON.

V. 44.—*What never yet*, &c.] The poet insinuates, that the story or fable of his Mask, was new and unborrowed: although distantly founded on ancient poetical history. The allusion is to the ancient mode of entertaining a splendid assembly, by singing or reciting tales. WARTON.

V. 45.—*hall or bower.*] That is, literally, in *hall* or *chamber*. The two words are often thus joined in the old metrical romances. And thus in Spenser's *Astrophel*,

" Merrily masking both in *bowre and hall*. WARTON.

V. 46.—*Bacchus*, &c.] Though Milton builds his fable on classic mythology, yet his materials of magick have more the air of enchantments in the Gothic romances. WARBURTON.

Crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell: (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a groveling swine?)
This Nymph, that gaz'd upon his clustering locks
With ivy-berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus nam'd:
Who, ripe and frolick of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtick and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood;
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd,
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Offering to every weary traveller

V. 48.—*After the Tuscan mariners transform'd*] This story is alluded to in Homer's fine hymn to Bacchus; the punishments he inflicted on the Tyrrhene pirates, by transforming them into various animals, are the subjects of that beautiful Frieze on the *Lantern* of Demosthenes, so accurately and elegantly described by Mr. Stuart in his *Antiquities of Athens*, vol. i. p. 33. DR. J. WARTON.

See the fable in Ovid, *Metam.* iii. 660, et seq. WARTON.

V. 50.—*On Circe's island fell: (Who knows not Circe? &c.*] It is the same form in Spenser, *Britain's Ida*, c. i. st. 1.

" In IDA'S VALE, (who knows not IDA'S VALE?) TODD.

Ib. *Circe.*] See Virgil, *Æn.* vii. ii. 17. Homer, *Odyss.* x. 135, 210. Horace, *Epist.* ii. lib. i. v. 23, et seq. TODD.

V. 58.—*Comus nam'd.*] *Comus* is the god of drunkenness, " deus temulentiæ," Gronov. *Thesaur.* vol. viii. 1408, and presides over revellings and nightly dances, " comessantium, nocturnarumque saltationum *Comum* fuisse præsidem," ibid. vol. ix. 174. And in the *Tableaux de Philostrate* par D'Embry 1615, his name is derived from κωμαζειν, which the annotator considers of the same import " comme *collationer, rire, danser* et *boire* d'autant." p. 10. TODD.

60.—*Celtick and Iberian fields.*] France and Spain. THYER.

His orient liquor in a chrystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which, as they taste,
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst,)
Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
The express resemblance of the Gods, is chang'd
Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before;
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual stye.
Therefore when any, favour'd of high Jove,
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do: But first I must put off

V. 67.—*(For most do taste,* &c.) Thus Ulysses, taking the charmed cup from Circe, Ov. *Met.* xiv. 276.

——" Accipimus sacrâ data pocula dextrâ,
" Quæ simul *avenli sitientes* hausimus *ore*." WARTON.

V. 75.—*But boast themselves,* &c.] He certainly alludes to that fine satire in a dialogue of Plutarch, *Opp.* Tom. ii. Francof. fol. 1620, p. 985, where some of Ulysses's companions, disgusted with the vices and vanities of human life, refuse to be restored by Circe into the shape of men. DR. J. WARTON.

V. 80.—*Swift as the sparkle,* &c.] There are few finer comparisons that lie in so small a compass. The angel Michael thus descends in Tasso, *Stella* cader, &c. ix. 69. Milton has repeated the thought in *Par. Lost*, B. iv. 555.

" Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
" On a sun-beam, *swift* as a *shooting star*
" In Autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fir'd
" Impress the air, &c."

Where the additional or consequential circumstances heighten and illustrate the shooting star, and therefore contribute to convey a stronger image of the descent of Uriel. But the poet there speaks: and, in this address of the Spirit, any adjunctive digressions of the kind, would have been improper and without effect. WARTON

These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering; they come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

COMUS.

The star, that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal

V. 84.—*likeness of a swain.*] Henry Lawes, the musician, who acted the part of the *Spirit*. See the *Preliminary Observations*, p. 17.

V. 96.—*glowing axle.*] The "*glowing axle*" resembles an expression of Petrarch, *Canz.* v, P. i.

"Come 'l *sol* volge *le infiammate ruote*,
"Per dar luogo alla notte." TODD.

V. 100.—*Pacing*, &c.] In allusion to the same metaphors employed by the Psalmist, *Ps.* xix. 5, "*The sun* as a bridegroom *cometh out of chamber*, and rejoiceth as a strong man *to run a race*." NEWTON.

Of his chamber in the East.
Meanwhile welcome Joy, and Feast,
Midnight Shout, and Revelry,
Tipsy Dance, and Jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed,
And Advice with scrupulous head.
Strict Age and sour Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire.
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
And, on the tawny sands and shelves,
Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
The Wood-Nymphs, deck'd with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep;
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rights begin;
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.—
Hail, Goddess of nocturnal sport,

V. 129.—*Dark-veil'd Cotytto!*] *The goddess of wantonness.* See Leland's Advant. and Necess. of Christian Revelation, vol. i. p. 173, 8vo. Dr. Newton observes, that, "she was originally a strumpet, and had midnight sacrifices at Athens, and is therefore very properly said to be *dark-veil'd*." Her rites were termed *Cotittia*, and her priests *Baptæ*. See Juvenal *Sat.* ii. v. 91. Milton makes her the companion of Hecate, the patroness of enchantments, to whom Comus and his crew, v. 535, "do abhorred rites:" her mysteries requiring *the veil of that darkness* over which Hecate presided.

Dark-veil'd Cotytto! to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,
That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air;
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice morn, on the Indian steep
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our conceal'd solemnity.—
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

THE MEASURE.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace

V. 132.—*Spets* for *spits*. It is so used by Spenser, Drayton, and other of the old writers.

V. 138.—*blabbing*.] Shakspeare *K. Hen. VII.* P. ii. A. iv. S. i.
" The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful *day*." TODD.

V. 139.—*Nice morn*.] A finely chosen epithet, expressing at once *curious* and *squeamish*. HURD.

Ib.—*Indian steep*.] Dante, *Purgatorio*, c. ix. 2. " Al balzo d'Oriente." TODD.

V. 143. The plate in D'Embry's *Tableaux de Philostrate*, 1615, represents part of *Comus's* crew with knit hands, dancing in a round. It is a midnight scene: at a table several are feasting: a band of music in a gallery. *Comus* is in the front, with a torch in one hand, and a spear in the other: he appears to be intoxicated. TODD.

V. 144. A *dance* is here begun, called the *Measure*; which the magician almost as soon breaks off, on perceiving the approach of *some chaste footing*, from a sagacity appropriated to his character. WARTON.

* So Hecate, in Macbeth, announces the approach of *something wicked* by the *pricking of her thumbs*, L.

Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright: Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains; I shall ere long
Be well-stock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spungy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course:
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

V. 147. *shrouds.*] Recesses, harbours, *hiding-places*, &c. WARTON.

V. 154. Milton availed himself of Shakspeare's epithet in *Cymbeline*, "The spungy South." STEEVENS.

"*Auster's spungie* thirst" occurs in Sylvester, *Du Bart.* 1621. p. 320. TODD.

V. 161.—*glozing.*] *Flattering, deceitful.* WARTON.

V. 165.—*magic dust.*] This refers to a previous line, "my *powder'd* spells," v. 154. But *powder'd* was afterwards altered into the present reading. When a poet corrects, he is apt to forget and destroy his original train of thought. WARTON.

V. 168.—*fairly.*] That is, *softly.* HURL

The Lady enters.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now: Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe,
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds;
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet O! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My Brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stept, as they said, to the next thicket side,
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,

" FAIR *and softly*." were two words which went together, signifying *gently*. The corpse of Richard the Second was conveyed in a litter through London, " FAIRE *and softly*." Froissart, P. ii. ch. 249. WARTON.

" Soft and FAIRE. *By little and little*." Barret's Alvearie, 1580. TODD.

V. 178.—*swill'd.*] " *Swill'd* insolence " is *inebriated* insolence.

V. 179.—*wassailers.*] *See the note on *Macbeth, Cabinet edition*, p. 73. L.

V. 184.—*spreading favour.*] This is like Virgil's " *Hospitiis* teneat *frondentibus* arbos," *Georg.* iv. 24. WARTON.

V. 189.—*Votarist.*] A *votarist* is one who had made a religious vow, here, perhaps, for a pilgrimage, being in *palmer's weeds*. Leland says, that Ela, Countess of Warwick, was buried in Oseney Abbey, her image in " the habite of a *vowes*, that is, a Nun, *Itin.* vol. ii. 19. WARTON.

Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts; 'tis likeliest
They had engag'd their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me: else, O thievish Night,
Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
That Nature hung in Heaven, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And aery tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desart wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound,
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.—
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering Angel, girt with golden wings,
And thou, unblemish'd form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.

The *palmer's weed* is explained in Drayton's *Polyolb.* S. xii. p. 198, ed. 1622.

"Himself, a *palmer* poore, in *homely russet* clad." TODD.

Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove:
I cannot halloo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enliven'd spirits
Prompt me; and they, perhaps, are not far off.

SONG.

SWEET Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy aery shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere,

V. 221.—*Was I deceiv'd, &c.*] These lines are turned like that verse of Ovid, *Fast.* lib. v. 545.

" Fallor? an arma sonant? non fallimur: arma sonabant."

HURD.

See also note on *Eleg.* v. 5. The repetition, arising from the conviction and confidence of an unaccusing conscience, is inimitably beautiful. When all succour seems to be lost, Heaven unexpectedly presents the silver lining of a sable cloud to the virtuous.

WARTON.

V. 231.—*aery shell.*] Some of the editors had written *cell.* But Dr. Hurd says, " the true reading is certainly *shell*; meaning, as Dr. Warburton observes, the *horizon*, which, in another place, he calls the *hollow round* of Cynthia's seat, *Ode Nativ.* st. 10. That is, the *hollow circumference* of the heavens."

V. 241. Milton has given her a much nobler and more poetical

So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns harmonies.

Enter Comus.

COMUS. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of Silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall, smoothing the raven-down
Of darkness, till it smil'd! I have oft heard
My mother, Circe, with the Syrens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,

original than any of the ancient mythologists. He supposes her to owe her first existence to the reverberation of the music of the spheres; in consequence of which he had just before called the horizon her *airy shell*. And from the gods (like other celestial beings of the classical order) she came down to men. WARBURTON.

The goddess Echo was of peculiar service in the machinery of a Mask, and therefore often introduced. Milton has here used her much more rationally than most of his brother mask-writers. She is invoked in a song, but not without the usual tricks of surprising the audience by strange and unexpected repetitions of sound, in Browne's *Inner Temple Masque*. She often appears in Jonson's masks. This frequent introduction, however, of Echo in the masks of his time, seems to be ridiculed even by Jonson himself in *Cynthia's Revels*, A. i. S. i.

V. 244.—*Can any mortal*, &c.] This was plainly personal. Here the poet availed himself of an opportunity of paying a just compliment to the voice and skill of a real songstress; just as the two boys are complimented for their beauty and elegance of figure. And afterwards, the strains that "*might create a soul under the ribs of death*," are brought home, and found to be the voice "*of my most honour'd lady*," v. 564, where the real and assumed characters of the speaker are blended. WARTON.

V. 253.—*My mother Circe*, &c.] Originally from Ovid, *Metam.* xiv. 264, of Circe.

V. 254.—*flowery-kirtled.*] *Flowery-mantled.*

Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs;
Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard 'till now.—I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan, or Sylvan; by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

Lad. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise,
That is address'd to unattending ears;
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift

V. 257.—*Scylla wept*, &c.] Silius Italicus, of a Sicilian shepherd tuning his reed, *Bell. Pun.* xiv. 467.

" Scyllæi tacuere canes, stetit atra Charybdis." WARTON.

V. 261.—*And in sweet madness*, &c.] Compare Shakspeare, *Winter's Tale*, A. and S. ult.

" ——————O sweet Paulina!
" Make me to think so twenty years together;
" No *settled senses* of the word can match
" *The pleasure of that madness.*

V. 270.—Comus's *Address* to the Lady, from v. 265, to the end of this line, is in a very fine high stile of classical gallantry. As Cicero says of Plato's language, that if Jupiter were to speak Greek, he would speak as Plato has written; so we may say of this language of Milton, that if Jupiter were to speak English, he would express himself in this manner. The passage is exceeding beautiful in every respect; but all readers of taste will acknowledge, that the style of it is much raised by the expression *Unless the goddess*, an elliptical expression, unusual in our language, though common enough in Greek and Latin. But if we were to fill it up and say, *Unless thou beest Goddess*; how flat and insipid would it make the composition, compared with what it is. LORD MONBODDO.

How to regain my sever'd company,
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Com. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lad. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.
Com. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lad. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Com. By falshood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lad. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Com. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lad. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.
Com. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.
Lad. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
Com. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lad. No less than if I should my Brothers lose.
Com. Were they of manly prime or youthful bloom?
Lad. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.
Com. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swink'd hedger at his supper sat;
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,

V. 276. &c.] Here is an imitation of those scenes in the Greek tragedies, where the dialogue proceeds by question and answer, a single verse being allotted to each. The Greeks, doubtless, found a grace in this sort of dialogue. As it was one of the characteristics of the Greek drama, it was natural enough for our young poet, passionately fond of the Greek tragedies, to affect this peculiarity But he judged better in his riper years; there being no instance of this dialogue, I think, in his *Samson Agonistes*. HURD.

V. 282.—*To seek i' the valley.*] Here Mr. Sympson observed with me, that this is a different reason from what she had assigned before, v. 186. "To bring me berries, &c." They might have left her on both accounts. NEWTON.

V. 293.—*swink'd hedger.*] The *swink'd hedger's supper* is from nature. And *hedger*, a word new in poetry, although of common use, has a good effect. *Swink'd*, is *tired, fatigued*, WARTON.

Swink is the language of Chaucer and Spenser. For

Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood;
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was aw-struck,
And, as I past, I worshipt; if those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to heaven,
To help you find them.
Lad. Gentle Villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Com. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lad. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would over-task the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet.
Com. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,

V. 299.—*the element.*] In the north of England this term is still made use of for the *sky*. THYER.

V. 301.—*plighted.*] The lustre of Milton's brilliant imagery is half obscured, while *plighted* remains unexplained. We are to understand the *braided* or embroider'd clouds: in which certain airy or elemental beings are most poetically supposed to sport, thus producing a variety of transient and dazzling colours, as our author says of the sun, *Par. Lost.* B. iv. 596.

> "Arraying with reflected purple and gold
> "The clouds that on his western throne attend."

V. 312.—*Dingle*, &c.] This word is still in use, and signifies a valley between two steep hills. A *bourn*, the sense of which in this passage has never been explained with precision, properly signifies here, a winding, deep and narrow valley, with a rivulet at the bottom. In the present instance, the declivities are interspersed with trees and bushes. This sort of valley Comus knew from *side to side*. He knew *both* the *opposite sides* or ridges, and had consequently traversed the intermediate space. Such situations have no other name in the West of England at this day. *Bosky* is *woody*, or rather *bushy*. As in the *Tempest*, A. iv. S. i.

> "My *bosky* acres, and my *unshrubb'd* down."

And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood,
And if your stray attendance be yet lodg'd,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatch'd pallet rouse; if otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.

Lad. Shepherd, I take thy word
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoaky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
In courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
And yet is most pretended: In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.—
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportion'd strength.—Shepherd, lead on.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter the Two Brothers.

El. Br. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite damm'd up,

Where *unshrubbed* is used in contrast. It is the same word in *First P. Henry IV.* A. v. S i.

"How bloodily the sun begins to peer
"Above yon *busky* hill!" Warton.

V. 334.—*disinherit Chaos.*] This expression should be animadverted upon, as hyperbolical and bombast, and a-kin to that in *Scriblerus*, "Mow my beard." Dr. J. Warton.

With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long-levell'd rule of streaming light;
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

Sec. Br. Or if our eyes
Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, O that hapless virgin, our lost Sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, among rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What, if in wild amazement and affright?
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

El. Br. Peace, brother; be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils:
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,

V. 341.—*Arcady—Tyrian Cynosure.*] Our greater or lesser bear-star. Calisto, the daughter of Lycaon king of *Arcadia*, was changed into the greater bear, called also *Helice*, and her son Arcas into the lesser, called also *Cynosura*, by observing of which the *Tyrians* and Sidonians steered their course, as the Grecian mariners did by the other. See Ovid, *Fast.* iii. 107, and Val. Flaccus, *Argon.* i. 17.
NEWTON.

V. 344.—*The folded flocks*, &c.] See Horace, *Epod.* ii. 45.
"Clandensque textis cratibus laetum pecus."
TODD.

And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my Sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in Virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not,)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude;
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all-to ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.
He, that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i' the center, and enjoy bright day:
But he, that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.
Sec. Br. 'Tis most true,
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desart cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?

V. 376.—*Oft seeks.*] For the same uncommon use of *seek*, Mr. Bowle cites Bale's *Examinacyon* of A. Askew, p. 24. "Hath not he mooche nede of helpe who *seketh to* soche a surgeon?" So also in *Jesiah*, ii. 10. "To it shall the Gentiles *seek*." WARTON.

V. 380.—*all-to.*] See *Judges* ix. 53. "And a certain woman cast a piece of a milstone upon Abimelech's head, and *all-to* brake his skull." TODD

But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye,
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
Of misers' treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned Sister.

El. Br. I do not, Brother,
Infer, as if I thought my Sister's state
Secure, without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.
My Sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Sec. Br. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

El. Br. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be term'd her own:
'Tis Chastity, my Brother, Chastity:
She, that has that, is clad in complete steel;
And, like a quiver'd Nymph with arrows keen,

V. 395.—*unenchanted eye.*] That is, which *cannot be enchanted*. Here is more flattery; but certainly such as was justly due, and which no poet in similar circumstances could resist the opportunity, or rather the temptation, of paying. WARTON.

V. 422.—*quiver'd Nymph.*] I make no doubt but Milton, in this

May trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of Chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity:
Yea there, where very Desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say, no evil thing that walks by night
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost

passage, had his eye upon Spenser's *Belphœbe*, whose character, arms, and manner of life, perfectly correspond with this description. What makes it the more certain is, that Spenser intended under that personage to represent the virtue of *Chastity*. THYER.

V. 424.—*Infamous hills.*] Horace, *Od.* L. iii. 20.

" *Infames scopulos*, Acroceraunia." NEWTON.

V. 430.—*unblench'd.*] Unblinded, unconfounded.

V. 432.—*no evil thing*, &c.] Milton here had his eye on the *Faithful Shepherdess*, A. i. He has borrowed the sentiment, but raised and improved the diction.

——" I have heard, (my mother told it me,
" And now I do believe it,) if I keep
" My virgin flower uncropt, pure, chaste, and fair,
" No goblin, wood-god, fairy, elfe, or fiend,
" Satyr, or other power that haunts the groves,
" Shall hurt my body, or by vain illusion
" Draw me to wander after idle fires;
" Or voices calling me, &c." NEWTON.

* The *Lady*, v. 207, makes mention of *calling Shapes*. L.

V. 434.—*stubborn unlaid ghost*
That breaks his magick chains at Curfew time.] An *unlaid ghost* was among the most vexatious plagues of the world of spirits. It is one of the evils deprecated at Fidele's grave, in *Cymbeline*, A. iv. S. ii.

" No exorciser harm thee,
" Nor no witchcraft charm thee,
" *Ghost unlaid* forbear thee!"

The metaphorical expression is beautiful, of *breaking his magic*

That breaks his magick chains at Curfeu time, 435
No goblin, or swart faery of the mine,

chains, for "being suffered to wander abroad:" and here, too, the superstition is from Shakspeare, *K. Lear*, A. iii. S. iv. "This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at *Curfew*, and walks 'till the first cock." Compare also Cartwright, in his play of the *Ordinary*, where Moth the antiquary sings an old song, A. ii. S. i. p. 36. edit. 1651. He wishes that the house may remain free from wicked spirits,

"From Curfew time
"To the next prime."

Prospero, in the *Tempest*, invokes those elves, among others, that rejoice to hear the solemn Curfew." A. v. S. i. That is, they rejoice at the sound of the Curfew, because at the close of day announced by the Curfew, they are permitted to leave their several confinements, and be at large 'till cock-crowing. See *Macbeth*, A. ii. S. iii.

"Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
"While night's *black agents* to their prey do rouse." WARTON.

V. 436.—*swart faery of the mine.*] In the Gothick system of pneumatology, mines were supposed to be inhabited by various sorts of spirits. See Olaus Magnus's Chapter *De Metallicis Dæmonibus*, *Hist. Gent. Septentrional*, vi. x. In an old translation of Lavaterus *De Spectris et Lemuribus*, is the following passage: "Pioners or diggers for metall do affirme, that in many mines there appeare straunge Shapes and Spirites, who are apparelled like vnto the laborers in the pit. These wander vp and downe in caues and underminings, and seeme to besturre themselves in all kinde of labor; as, to digge after the veine, to carrie together the oare, to put it into basketts, and to turn the winding wheele to draw it vp, when in very deed they do nothing lesse, &c."—"Of *Ghostes* and *Spirites* walking by night, &c." Lond. 1572. Bl. Lett. ch. xvi. p. 73. And hence we see why Milton gives this species of Fairy a swarthy or dark complexion. Georgius Agricola, in his tract *De Subterraneis Animantibus*, relates among other wonders of the same sort, that these Spirits sometimes assume the most terrible shapes; and that one of them, in a cave or pit in Germany, killed twelve miners with his pestilential breath. Ad calc. *De Re Metall.* p. 538. Basil. 1621, fol. Drayton personifies the peak in Derbyshire, which he makes a witch skilful in metallurgy. *Polyolb.* S. xxvii. vol. iii. p. 1176.

"The Sprites that haunt the mines she should correct and tame,
"And bind them as she list, &c." WARTON.

See also *Polyolb.* S. iii. ed. 1622, p. 63. Keysler, in his *Travels*, speaking of Idria in Germany, says, "As the inhabitants of all mine towns have their stories of goblins, so are the people here strongly possessed with a notion of such apparitions that haunt the mines." Vol. iii. p. 377. In certain silver and lead mines in Wales, nothing is more common, it is pretended, than these subterranean spirits, who are called *knockers*, and who goodnaturedly point out where there is a rich vein! They are represented as little statured, and

Hath hurtful power o'er true Virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of Chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tam'd the brinded lioness,
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield,
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace, that dash'd brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly Chastity,
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried Angels lackey her,

about half a yard long. See Grose's *Popular Superstitions*, 1787, p. 41. And the *Gent. Mag.* vol. 65, p. 559. The *goblin* is classed with the *faery of the mine* by an elaborate writer on the subject. See Wierus *De Præstigiis Dæmonum*, lib. i. cap. 22, edit. Basil. 1583.

V. 441. *Hence*, &c.] Milton, I fancy, took the hint of this beautiful mythological interpretation from a dialogue of Lucian betwixt Venus and Cupid, where the mother asking her son how, after having attacked all the other deities, he came to spare Minerva and Diana, Cupid replies, that THE FORMER *look'd so fiercely at him, and frighten'd him so with the Gorgon Head which she wore upon her breast, that he durst not meddle with her*—and that as to DIANA, *she was always so employed in hunting, that he could not catch her.* THYER.

V. 450.—*But rigid looks*, &c.] *Rigid looks* refer to the *snaky* locks, and *noble grace* to the beautiful face, as Gorgon is represented on ancient gems. WARBURTON.

V. 455.—*A thousand*, &c.] A passage in St. Ambrose, on *Virgins*, might have suggested this remark. "Neque mirum si *pro vobis Angeli militant* quæ Angelorum moribus militatis. *Meretur eorum præsidium* Castitas virginalis, quorum vitam meretur. Et quid pluribus exequar laudem Castitatis? *Castitas* enim *Angelos facit.*" Ambros. *Opp.* Tom. iv. p. 536, edit. Paris, 1586, fol. TODD.

Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And, in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal: But when Lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,

V. 458.—*Tell her of things*, &c.] So also in *Arcades*, v. 72:

After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould, with *gross unpurged ear*.

This dialogue between the Two Brothers, is an amicable contest between fact and philosophy. The younger draws his arguments from common apprehension, and the obvious appearance of things: the elder proceeds on a profounder knowledge, and argues from abstracted principles. Here the difference of their ages is properly made subservient to a contrast of character. But this slight variety must have been insufficient to keep so prolix and learned a disputation alive upon the stage. It must have languished, however adorned with the fairest flowers of eloquence. The whole dialogue, which indeed is little more than a solitary declamation in blank verse, much resembles the manner of our author's Latin Prolusions, whose philosophy is enforced by pagan fable, and poetical allusion.

WARTON.

V. 462.—*soul's essence*] This is agreeable to the system of the Materialists, of which Milton was one. WARBURTON.

The same notion of *body's working up to spirit* Milton afterwards introduced into his *Par. Lost*, B. v. 469, &c. which is there, I think, liable to some objection, as he was entirely at liberty to have chosen a more rational system, and as it is also put into the mouth of an Archangel. But in this place it falls in so well with the poet's design, gives such force and strength to this encomium on Chastity, and carries in it such a dignity of sentiment, that, however repugnant it may be to our philosophical ideas, it cannot miss striking and delighting every virtuous and intelligent reader. THYER.

V. 464.—*By unchaste looks*, &c.] "He [Christ] censures an *unchaste look* to be an adultery already committed: another time he passes over actual adultery with less reproof than for an *unchaste look*." Divorce. B. ii. c. i. Milton's *Pr. W.* i. 184. See also, p. 304. Milton therefore in the expression here noted, alludes to our Saviour, "πᾶς ὁ ΒΛΕΠΩΝ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ πρὸς τὸ ΕΠΙΘΥΜΗΣΑΙ αὐτῆς." v. λ. *S. Matth.* v. 28. WARTON.

Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
Lingering, and sitting by a new made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it lov'd,
And link'd itself by carnal sensuality
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Sec. Br. How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

El. Br. List, list; I hear
Some far-off halloo break the silent air.

Sec. Br. Methought so too; what should it be?

El. Br. For certain
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Sec. Br. Heaven keep my Sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

El. Br. I'll halloo:
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us.

[*Enter the* Attendant Spirit, *habited like a Shepherd.*]

That halloo I should know; what are you? speak;

V. 473.—*As loth to leave*, &c.] See Sir Kenelme Digby's *Observations* on Religio Medici, 4th edit. p. 327. "Souls that go out of their bodies with affection to those objects they leave behind them, (which usually is as long as they can relish them) do retain still, even in their separation, a byas and a languishing towards them: which is the reason why such terrene souls appeare oftenest in cœmeteries and charnel-houses." See also Dr. Henry More's *Immortality of the Soul.* B. ii. ch. xvi. And compare Homer's *Il.* xvii. 8.

Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

Spir. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.

Sec. Br. O Brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

El. Br. Thyrsis? Whose artful strains have oft delay'd
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale?
How cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram
Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

Spir. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth,
That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, O my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?

El. Br. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame,
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

V. 494.—*Thyrsis? Whose artful strains*, &c.] A compliment to Lawes, who personated the Spirit. We have just such another above, v. 86. But this being spoken by another, comes with better grace and propriety. WARTON.

The encomium here is classical: Compare Hor. *Od.* I. xii. 8.

——" Orphea——
" Arte maternâ *rapidos morantem*
" *Fluminum lapsus, celeresque ventos*;"

As above, at v. 87. Well knows *to still the wild winds*. TODD.

V. 495.—*madrigal.*] The *Madrigal* was a species of musical composition, now actually in practice, and in high vogue. Lawes, here intended, had composed madrigals. So had Milton's father. The word is not here thrown out at random. WARTON.

V. 509.—*badly*] Soberly, seriously, as the word is frequently used by our old authors. NEWTON.

Spir. I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain or fabulous,
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance,)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell:
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immur'd in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mix'd, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Character'd in the face: This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts,
That brow this bottom-glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl,
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,

V. 520.—*navel*] That is, in the midst; a phrase borrowed from the Greeks and Latins. NEWTON.

V. 526.—*With many murmurs mix'd*] That is, in preparing this enchanted cup, the *charm* of many barbarous unintelligible words was intermixed, to quicken and strengthen its operation. WARBURTON.

Perhaps from Statius, of the patroness of magicians, *Theb.* ix. 733:

——" Cantusque sacros, et conscia *miscet*
" *Murmura.*"

See also Tasso, of the enchanter, *Gier. Lib.* C. xiii. St. 6.

——" Nel cerchio accolto,
" *Mormoro* potentissime parole."

V. 533.—*heard to howl*, &c.] Such was the practice of Comus's mother, Circe. Ovid. *Met.* xiv.—405:

——" magicis Hecaten ululatibus orat."

V. 534.—*Like stabled wolves*, &c.] Perhaps from Virgil, *Æn.* vii. 15. of Circe's island. NEWTON.

Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot grass dew-besprent, and were infold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honey-suckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill; but, ere a close,
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy frighted steeds,
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd Sleep;

V. 542.—*dew-besprent.*] Dew-*besprinkled.*

V. 547.—*To meditate,* &c.] Virgil, *Bucol.* i. 2.

" *Sylvestrem* tenui *musam meditaris* avena." WARTON.

V. 549.—*drowsy frighted.*] Newton prefers " drowsy-*flighted*" according to the Cambridge manuscript. Mr. Bowle supposes the poet wrote *drowsie-freighted*, that is, charged or loaded with drowsiness. The latter reading is merely conjectural; and it is rather doubted, whether Milton preferred " drowsy-*frighted*," that is, the *drowsy* steeds of Night, who were *affrighted* on this occasion, at the *barbarous dissonance* of Comus's nocturnal revelry or " drowsy-*flighted*" as explained by this passage in *K. Henry VI.* P. ii. A. iv. S. I.

" And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades
" That drag the tragick melancholy Night,
" Who with their *drowsy, slow,* and *flagging* wings,
" Clip dead men's graves."

We admit with Warton that " drowsy-flighted" is a harsh combination, but it is intelligible, and much in the poet's stile; while the other reading is flat and prosaic. L.

V. 554.—*close-curtain'd Sleep.*] Perhaps from Shakspeare, *Macb.* A. ii.

At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death: but O! ere long,
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honour'd Lady, your dear Sister.
Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,
And, O poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place,
Where that damn'd wisard, hid in sly disguise,
(For so by certain signs I knew,) had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent Lady, his wish'd prey;
Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

———"and wicked dreams abuse
"The curtain'd sleep." THYER.

V. 562.—*Under the ribs*, &c.] The general image of creating a soul by harmony is again from Shakspeare, but the particular one of a *soul under the ribs of death*, which is extremely grotesque, is taken from a picture in Alciat's Emblems, where a soul in the figure of an infant is represented within the ribs of a skeleton, as in its prison. This curious picture is presented by Quarles. WARBURTON.

The picture alluded to, is not taken from Alciat's Emblems, but from Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria*; and is the viiith. *Suspirium animæ amantis*. The 24th verse of the viith. chap. of *Romans* is the motto to it. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me *from the body of this death?*" TODD.

Sec. Br. O night, and shades!
How are ye join'd with Hell in triple knot
Against the unarm'd weakness of one virgin,
Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, Brother?

El. Br. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me: Against the threats
Of malice, or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm,—
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,
Shall, in the happy trial, prove most glory;
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness; when at last
Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed, and self-consumed: If this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.—But come, let's on.
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
With all the grisly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,

V. 584.—*Yes, and keep it still,* &c.] This confidence of the *Elder Brother* in favour of the final efficacy of virtue, holds forth a very high strain of philosophy, delivered in as high strains of eloquence and poetry. WARTON.

It exhibits the sublimer sentiments of the Christian: Religion here gave energy to the poet's strains. TODD.

V. 597.—*Self-fed and self-consumed.*] This image is wonderfully fine. It is taken from the conjectures of astronomers concerning the dark spots, which from time to time appear on the surface of the sun's body, and after a while disappear again; which they suppose to be the scum of that fiery matter, which first breeds it, and then breaks through and consumes it. WARBURTON.

Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Curs'd as his life.

Spir. Alas! good venturous Youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead;
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those, that quell the might of hellish charms:
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.

El. Br. Why pr'ythee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care, and utmost shifts,
How to secure the lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
In every virtuous plant, and healing herb,
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray:
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties:
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;

V. 614.—*He with his bare wand*, &c.] So, in Prospero's commands to Ariel, *Tempest*, A. iv. S. ult.

" Go, charge my goblins, that they grind their *joints*
" With dry convulsions, shorten up their *sinews*
" With aged cramps." WARTON.

V. 620.—*see to.*] An old expression, as in Barret's *Alvearie*, 1580. " Faire to *see to*, i. e. goodlie to *behold*." See also *Ezek.* xxiii. 15, " All of them princes to *look to*." TODD.

The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon:
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly,
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
He call'd it Hæmony, and gave it me,

V. 633.] This line has been thought corrupt, or at least inaccurate, by Bishop Hurd, and he and others have proposed alterations, but without improvement or necessity. It has also called forth this strange and indefensible observation from Warton: "Milton, notwithstanding his singular skill in musick, appears to have had a very bad ear; and it is hard to say on what principle he modulated his lines!!" So Steevens often thought of Shakspeare, when the *want of ear* was the commentator's and not the poet's deficiency. It is clear beyond all disputation, that whenever the measure of Shakspeare or Milton appears "rough or redundant" such ruggedness or redundancy was intentional. These great masters of melody were aware of the advantage to be derived from occasional irregularities in their verses. L.

V. 634.—*Unknown and like esteem'd.*] Another contested passage, but sufficiently clear:—*un*known, and *un*esteemed.

V. 635.—*clouted shoon.*] To the passage alleged by Dr. Newton from Shakspeare, *K. Hen. VI.* P. ii. A. iv. S. iii. another should be added from *Cymbeline*, A. iv. S. ii. which not only exhibits, but contains a comment on, the phrase in question,

——"I thought he slept, and put
"My *clouted brogues* from off my feet, whose rudeness
"Answer'd my steps too loud."

Clouts are thin and narrow plates of iron affixed with hob-nails to the soles of the shoes of rusticks. These made too much noise. The word *brogues* is still used for *shoes* among the peasantry of Ireland. WARTON.

The expression occurs in the present version of our Bible: *Joshua*, ix. 5. So the Hertfordshire Proverb, in Drayton's *Polyolb.* S. xxiii. "The club and *clowted shoon.*" TODD.

V. 636.—*Moly.*] Drayton introduces a shepherd "his sundry simples sorting," who, among other rare plants, produces Moly, *Mus. Elys. Nymph.* v. vol. iv. p. 1489,

"Here is my *Moly* of much fame,
"In magicks often used."

It is not agreed, whether Milton's Hœmony is a real or poetical plant. WARTON.

And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly furies' apparition.
I purs'd it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd:
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter though disguis'd,
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off: If you have this about you,
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
And brandish'd blade, rush on him; break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
But seise his wand; though he and his curs'd crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

El. Br. Thyrsis, lead on apace, I'll follow thee;
And some good Angel bear a shield before us.

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft musick, tables spread with all dainties. Comus *appears with his rabble, and the* Lady *set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

V. 651. *And brandish'd blade, rush on him.*] Thus Ulysses assaults Circe, offering her a cup, with a drawn sword. Ovid, *Metam.* xiii. 993.

——————"Intrat
"Ille domum Circes, et, ad insidiosa vocatus
"Bocula, conantem virgâ mulcere capillos
"Reppulit, et *stricto* pavidam deterruit *ense*."

See Homer. *Odyss.* x. 294. 321. But Milton, in his allusions to Circe's story, has followed Ovid more than Homer. WARTON.

V. 655. *—vomit smoke.*] Alluding to Cacus. Virgil, *Æn.* viii. 252.

"Faucibus ingentem *fumum*, mirabile dictu,
"*Evomit*."

COMUS.

Nay, Lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or, as Daphne was,
Root-bound that fled Apollo.
Lad. Fool, do not boast;
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled, while Heaven sees good.
Com. Why are you vex'd, Lady? Why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far: See, here be all the pleasures,
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first, behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrops mix'd:
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,

V. 662.—*Root-bound*, &c.] The poet, instead of saying *root-bound, as Daphne was that fled Apollo*, throws *root-bound* into the middle betwixt the antecedent and the relative, a trajection altogether unusual in our language, but which must be allowed both to vary and raise the style; and, as the connection is not so remote as to make the language obscure, I think it may not only be tolerated but praised. This way of varying the stile is a figure very usual both in Greek and Latin. LORD MONBODDO.

V. 675.—*Nepenthes.*] The author of the lively and learned *Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*, has brought together many particulars of this celebrated drug, and concludes, p. 135. edit. 1. "It is true, they use opiates for pleasure all over the *Levant*; but by the best accounts of them, they had them originally from *Egypt*; but *this of Helen* appears plainly to be a production of the country, and a custom which can be traced from Homer to Augustus's reign, and thence to the age preceding our own." DR. J. WARTON.

And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you receiv'd on other terms;
Scorning the unexempt condition,
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted; but, fair Virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lad. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty,
That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode,
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falshood and base forgery?
And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that, which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

Com. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoick fur,

V. 696.—*brew'd enchantments*] Magical potions, brewed or compounded of incantatory herbs and poisonous drugs. Shakspeare's cauldron is a *brewed enchantment*, but of another kind. WARTON.

V. 703.] This noble sentiment Milton has borrowed from Euripides, *Medea*, v. 618.

Κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ' ὄνησιν οὐκ ἔχει. NEWTON.

V. 707.—*budge*] Those morose and rigid teachers of abstinence

And fetch their precepts from the Cynick tub,
Praising the lean and sallow abstinence.
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutch'd the all-worshipt ore, and precious gems,
To store her children with: If all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthank'd, would be unprais'd,
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth;
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharg'd with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility;
The earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords,
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds

and mortification, who wear the gown of the Stoick philosophy. *Budge* is *fur*, anciently an ornament of the scholastic habit.
WARTON.

719.—*hutch'd*] That is, *hoarded*. *Hutch* is an old word, still in use, for *coffer*.
WARTON.

V. 732.—*The sea*, &c.] Dr. Warburton, and Dr. Newton remark, that this and the four following lines are exceeding childish. Perhaps they are not inconsistent with the character of the "wily" speaker; and might be intended to expose that ostentatious sophistry, by which a bad cause is generally supported.
TODD.

Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cosen'd
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself;
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
It is for homely features to keep home,
They had their name thence; coarse complexions,
And cheeks of sorry grain, will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermil-tinctur'd lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the Morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advis'd; you are but young yet.
Lad. I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips
In this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,

V. 750.—*grain.*] *Grain* is technical, in the arts of dying and weaving, for *colour*. "Sky-tinctur'd grain." *Par. Lost.* B. v. 285. Again, the "*grain* of Sarra," B. xi. 242. In the same sense in *Il Pens.* v. 33. "In robe of darkest *grain*."

Tease also is technical, from the same art, to comb, unravel, and smooth the wool. WARTON.

The technical word *grain*, applied to *cheeks*, occurs in one of Drummond's *Sonnets*:

"Nor snow of *cheekes* with Tyrian *graine* enroll'd." TODD.

V. 753.—*tresses like the Morn.*] Homer, *Odyss.* v. 390. 'ΕΥΠΛΟΚΑΜΟΣ Ἠώς. TODD.

Obtruding false rules prank'd in reason's garb.
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.—
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance:
If every just man, that now pines with want,
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumber'd with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thank'd,
His praise due paid: For swinish Gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enough? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad Power of Chastity,
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery,

V. 759.—*prank'd.*] *Prank'd* is an old word used by Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspeare, for *affectedly decorated.* TODD.

V. 760.—*bolt.*] Dr. Newton defines the word *bolt* "to *shoot*;" as we had before "Cupid's *bolt*, and Junius derives it from Βαλλω *jacio*:" Dr. Johnson, "to *blurt out*, or *throw out precipitantly*." TODD.

V. 782.—*sun-clad.*] Petrarch's *Canzone*, addressed to the Virgin Mary, commences thus:

"*Vergine* bella, che *di sol vestita*, &c."

never, see *Rev.* xii. 1. TODD.

That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou should'st not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetorick,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd;
Yet, should I try, the uncontrolled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magick structures, rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.
Com. She fables not; I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superiour power;
And though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus,
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more;
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon-laws of our foundation;

V. 797.—*brute Earth*] The unfeeling Earth would sympathise and assist. It is Horace's *Bruta tellus*, Od. i. xxxiv. 9. WARTON.

V. 802.—*And though not mortal*, &c.] Her words are assisted by somewhat divine; and I, although *immortal*, and above the race of man, am so affected with their force, that a cold shuddering dew, &c. Here is the noblest panegyrick on the power of virtue, adorned with the sublimest imagery. It is extorted from the mouth of a magician and a preternatural being, who, although actually possessed of his prey, feels all the terrours of human nature at the bold rebuke of innocence, and shudders with a sudden cold sweat like a guilty man. WARTON.

V. 808.—*canon-laws*] *Canon-laws*, a joke! WARBURTON.

Here is a ridicule on establishments, and the canon-law now greatly encouraged by the Church. Perhaps, on the canons of the Church, now rigidly enforced, and at which Milton frequently glances in his prose tracts. WART-

I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but less
And settlings of a melancholy blood:
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.—

The Brothers *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* Attendant Spirit *comes in.*

SPIRIT.

What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
O ye mistook, ye should have snatch'd his wand,
And bound him fast; without his rod revers'd,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fix'd, and motionless:
Yet stay, be not disturb'd; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be us'd,

V. 815.—*O ye mistook*, &c.] They are directed before to seize Comus's wand, v. 653. And this was from the *Faerie Queene*, where Sir Guyon breaks the Charming Staffe of Pleasure's porter, as he likewise overthrows his bowl, ii. xii. 49. But from what particular process of disenchantment, ancient or modern, did Milton take the notion of reversing Comus's wand or rod? It was from a passage of Ovid, the great ritualist of classical sorcery, before cited, where the companions of Ulysses are restored to their human shapes, *Metam.* xiv. 300.

"Percutimusque caput *converso* verbere *virgæ*,
"Verbaque dicuntur dictis contraria verbis."

By *backward mutters*, the "verba *dictis contraria* verbis," we are to understand, that the charming words, or verses, at first used, were to be all repeated *backwards*, to destroy what had been done.

The circumstance in the text of the brothers forgetting to seize and reverse the magician's rod, while by contrast it heightens the superiour intelligence of the Attendant Spirit, affords the opportunity of introducing the fiction of raising Sabrina; which, exclusive of its poetical ornaments, is recommended by a local propriety, and was peculiarly interesting to the audience, as the Severn is the famous river of the neighbourhood. WARTON.

V. 821.] Dr. Johnson reprobates this *long narration*, as he styles

Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er pip'd on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the scepter from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdame Guandolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That staid her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The Water-Nymphs, that in the bottom play'd,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectar'd lavers, strew'd with asphodel;
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she reviv'd,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river: still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elfe delights to make,
Which she with precious vial'd liquours heals;

it, about Sabrina; which, he says, "is of no use because it is *false*, and therefore unsuitable to a *good* being." By the poetical reader, this fiction is considered as true. In common sense, the relator is not *true*: and why may not an imaginary being, even of a good character, deliver an imaginary tale? Where is the *moral* impropriety of an innocent invention, especially when introduced for a virtuous purpose? In poetry false narrations are often more useful than true. Something, and something preternatural, and consequently false, but therefore more poetical, was necessary for the present distress. WARTON.

V. 823.—*soothest.*] The *truest*, *faithfullest*. *Sooth* is *truth*. *In sooth* is *indeed*. And therefore what this soothest shepherd teaches may be depended upon. NEWTON.

For which the shepherds at their festivals
Carol her goodness loud in rustick lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell,
If she be right invok'd in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need; this will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lillies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,

V. 858.] Sabrina's fabulous history may be seen in the *Mirrour for Magistrates* under the Legend of the *Lady Sabrina*, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Albion's England, our Author's History of England, Hardyng's *Chronicle*, and in an old English ballad on the subject.

The part of the fable of *Comus*, which may be called the *Disenchantment*, is evidently founded on Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*. The moral of both dramas is the *triumph of chastity*. This in both is finally brought about by the same sort of machinery.

Sabrina, a virgin and a king's daughter, was converted into a river-nymph, that her honour might be preserved inviolate. Still she preserves her *maiden-gentleness*; and every evening visits the cattle among her twilight meadows, to heal the mischiefs inflicted by elfish magick. For this she was praised by the shepherds. She protects virgins in distress. She is now solemnly called, to deliver a virgin imprisoned in the spell of a detestable sorcerer. She rises at the invocation, and leaving her car on an osiered rushy bank, hastens to *help ensnared chastity*. She sprinkles, on the breast of a captive maid, precious drops selected from her pure fountain. She touches thrice the tip of the lady's finger, and thrice her ruby lip, with chaste palms *moist and cold*; as also the envenomed chair, smeared with tenacious gums. The charm is dissolved: and the Nymph departs to the bower of Amphitrite. WARTON.

Listen, and save.
Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus;
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestick pace,
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wisard's hook,
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old sooth-saying Glaucus' spell,
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands,

V. 869.—*great Oceanus.*] In the reading of the Spirit's adjuration by the sea-deities, it will be curious to observe how the poet has distinguished them by the epithets and attributes, which are assigned to each of them in the best classick authors. *Great Oceanus*, as in Hesiod, *Theog.* 20. Ὠκεανόν τε μέγαν. NEWTON.

V. 869.] Neptune is usually called *earth-shaking* in Greek. Ἐνοσίγαιος, Il. xii. 27, and Ἐνοσίχθων, Il xx. 13. NEWTON.

V. 870.] *Tethys*, the wife of Oceanus, and mother of the Gods, may well be supposed to have *a grave majestic pace:* Hesiod calls her πότνια Τηθύς, *the venerable Tethys*, Theog. 368. NEWTON.

V. 872.] *The Carpathian wisard* is *Proteus*, who had a cave at *Carpathus*, an island in the Mediterranean, and was a *wisard* or prophet, as also Neptune's shepherd; and as such bore a *hook*. See Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 387. NEWTON.

And Ovid, *Met.* xi. 249. "*Carpathius vates.*" TODD.

V. 873.] *Triton* was Neptune's trumpeter, and was *scaly*, as all these sorts of creatures are; "squamis modo hispido corpore, etiam qua humanam effigiem habent." Plin. lib. ix. sect. iv. His *winding shell* is particularly described in Ovid, *Met.* i. 333. NEWTON.

V. 874.] *Glaucus* was an excellent fisher or diver, and so was feigned to be a sea-god. Aristotle writes that he *prophesied* to the gods; and Nicander says that Apollo himself learned *the art of prediction* from *Glaucus*. See Athenæus lib. vii. cap. 12. And Euripides, *Orest.* 363, calls him the seaman's *prophet*, and interpreter of Nereus; and Apollon. Rhodius, *Argonaut.* 1310, gives him the same appellation. NEWTON.

V. 875.] *Ino*, flying from the rage of her husband Athamas, who was furiously mad, threw herself from the top of a rock into the sea, with her son *Melicerta* in her arms. Neptune, at the intercession of

By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,
And the songs of Syrens sweet,
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligeia's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance,
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head,
From thy coral-paven bed,

Venus, changed them into sea-deities, and gave them new names, *Leucothea* to her, and to him *Palæmon*. See Ovid. *Met*. iv. 538. She, being *Leucothea*, or the *white goddess*, may well be supposed to have *lovely hands*, which I presume the poet mentions in opposition to Thetis' *feet*: and her son *rules the strands*, having the command of the ports, and therefore called in Latin *Portumnus*. See Ovid, *Fast*. vi. 545. NEWTON.

V. 877.—*tinsel-slipper'd feet*.] The poet meant this as a paraphrase of ἀργυρόπεζα or *silver-footed*, the usual epithet of *Thetis* in Homer. NEWTON.

V. 878.] The *Syrens* are introduced here, as being Sea Nymphs, and singing upon the coast. NEWTON.

Sandys says, that the fabulous melody of the Syrens has a topographical allusion. "For Archippus tells of a certaine Bay, contracted within winding streights and broken cliffes, which, by the singing of the windes and beating of the billowes, report a delightfull harmony, alluring those who sail by to approach; when forthwith, throwne against the rocks by the waues, and swallowed in violent eddyes, &c." Sandys's *Ovid's Metam*. B. V. p. 197. edit. 1637. I do not at present recollect any Archippus, except the old comick Greek poet, who has a few fragments in Stobæus. Whoever he be, Spenser has exactly described the seat and allegory of the *Syrens* in the same manner. See *Faer. Qu*. ii. xii. 30. WARTON.

V. 879.] *Parthenope* and *Ligea* were two of the Syrens. Parthenope's *tomb* was at Naples, which was therefore called *Parthenope*. Plin. lib. iii. Sect. ix. Silius Ital. xii. 33. *Ligea* is also the name of a Sea-Nymph in Virgil, *Georg*. iv. 336; and the poet draws her in the attitude in which mermaids are represented. See Ovid. *Met*. iv. 310, of Salmacis. NEWTON.

One of the employments of the Nymph Salmacis in Ovid, is to comb her hair. But that fiction is here heightened with the brilliancy of romance. Ligea's comb is of gold, and she sits on diamond rocks. These were new allurements for the unwary. WARTON.

And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answer'd have.
Listen, and save.

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-Nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow, and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle Swain, at thy request,
I am here.

Sp. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distrest,
Through the force, and through the wile,
Of unblest enchanter vile.

Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity:
Brightest Lady, look on me;
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast

V. 889.—*Listen, and save.*] The repetition of the prayer, v. 866 and 889, in the invocation of Sabrina, is similar to that of Æschylus's Chorus in the invocation of Darius's shade, *Persæ*, v. 666 and 674. THYER.

V. 897.—*printless feet.*] So Prospero to his elves, but in a style of much higher and wilder fiction, *Temp.* A. v. S. i.

"And ye that on the sands with *printless foot*
"Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
"When he comes back." WARTON.

Drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venom'd seat,
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:—
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste, ere morning hour,
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

Sabrina *descends, and the* Lady *rises out of her seat.*

Sp. Virgin, daughter of Locrine
Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss

V. 912.—*Drops*, &c.] This ceremony is from the ancient practice of lustration by drops of water. Virg. *Æn.* xi. 230. "He thrice moistened his companion with pure water."

"Spargens *rore* levi."

And Ovid, *Met.* iv. 479.

"*Roratis* lustravit aquis Thaumantias Iris." WARTON.

V. 914.—*Thrice*, &c.] Compare Shakspeare, *Mids. N. Dr.* A. ii. S. vi.

——"Upon thine eyes I throw
"All the power this charm doth owe, &c."

But Milton, in most of the circumstances of dissolving this charm, is apparently to be traced in various passages in the *Faithful Shepherdess*. WARTON.

V. 923.—*old Anchises' line.*] For Locrine was the son of Brutus, who was the son of Silvius, Silvius of Ascanius, Ascanius of Æneas, Æneas of Anchises. See Milton's *History of England*, B. i. NEWTON.

V. 925.] The torrents from the Welch mountains sometimes raise the Severn on a sudden to a prodigious height. But at the same time they *fill her molten crystal with mud*. Her stream, which of itself is clear, is then discoloured and muddy. The poet adverts to the known natural properties of the river. Here is an echo to a couplet in Jonson's Mask at Highgate, 1604. *Works*, edit. 1616, p. 889.

"Of sweete and seuerall sliding rills,
"That streame from tops of those lesse hills, &c." WARTON.

From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth, or singed air,
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

V. 932.—*May thy billows*, &c.] This is reasonable as a wish. But jewels were surely out of place among the decorations of Sabrina's chariot, on the supposition that they were the natural productions of her stream. The wish is equally ideal and imaginary, that her banks should be covered with groves of myrrh and cinnamon. A wish, conformable to the real state of things, to English seasons and English fertility, would have been more pleasing, as less unnatural. Yet we must not too severely try poetry by truth and reality. WARTON.

V. 934.—*May thy lofty head*, &c.] So, of the imperial palace of Rome, *Par. Reg.* B. iv. 54.

"..... conspicuous far
"*Turrets* and *terraces*."

Milton was impressed with this idea from his vicinity to Windsor-Castle.

This votive address of gratitude to Sabrina, was suggested to our author by that of Amoret to the river-god in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, A. iii. S. i. vol. iii. p. 147. But the form and subject, rather than the imagery, is copied. Milton is more sublime and learned, Fletcher more natural and easy. WARTON.

V. 936.] The construction of these two lines is a little difficult; to crown her head with towers is true imagery; but to crown her head upon her banks, will scarcely be allowed to be so. I would therefore put a colon instead of a comma, at v. 935, and then read

"And here and there thy banks upon
"*Be* groves of myrrh and cinnamon." SEWARD.

In v. 936, *banks* is the nominative case, as *head* was in the last verse but one. The sense and syntax of the whole is, May thy *head* be *crown'd round about* with towers and terraces, and here and there [may] thy *banks* [be *crown'd*] *upon* with groves, &c. Ἐπιστέφοντο σοι αἱ ὄχθαι. The phrase is Greek. CALTON.

Come, Lady, while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound,
Till we come to holier ground;
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide,
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wish'd presence; and beside
All the swains, that there abide,
With jigs and rural dance resort;
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and chere;
Come, let us haste, the stars grow high,
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle; then come in Country Dancers, after them the Attendant Spirit, *with the Two* Brothers, *and the* Lady.

SONG.

Sp. Back, Shepherds, back; enough your play,
Till next sun-shine holiday:
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod

V. 960.—*duck or nod.*] By *duck* or *nod*, we are to understand the affectation of obeisance. So, in *King Richard III.* A. i. S. iii.

"*Duck* with French *nods* and apish courtesy."

Again, in *Lear*, A. ii. S. ii.

"Than twenty silly *ducking* observants,
"That stretch their duties nicely."

Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise,
With the mincing Dryades,
On the lawns, and on the leas.

This second song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight;
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own;
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,

Compare *Mids. N. Dr.* A. iii. S. j.

" *Nod* to him, elves, and do him courtesies." WARTON.

By *ducks* and *nods*, our author alludes to the country people's awkward way of dancing. And, the two Brothers and the Lady being now to dance, he describes their elegant way of moving by *trippings*, *lighter toes*, *court guise*, &c. He follows Shakspeare, who makes Ariel tell Prospero, that his Maskers,

" Before you can say, come and go,
" And breathe twice, and cry so, so,
" Each one, *tripping on his toe*,
" Will be here with mop and mow."

And Oberon commands his Fairies,

" Every elf, and fairy sprite,
" Hop as *light* as bird from briar,
" And this ditty after me
" Sing, and dance it *trippingly*."

The Dryads were Wood-Nymphs. But here the Ladies, who appeared on this occasion at the court of the lord president of the marches, are very elegantly termed *Dryades*. Indeed the prophet complains of the Jewish women for *mincing* as they go, *Isaiah* iii. 16. But our author uses that word, only to express the neatness of their gait. PECK.

Tripping and *trod*, as Mr. Warton observes, are technical terms. See *L'Allegro*, v. 33. And Chaucer, *Miller's Tale*, v. 220.

" In twenty manir couth he *trip* and *daunce*."

To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual Folly and Intemperance.

The Dances [*being*] *ended, the* Spirit *epiloguizes.*

Sp. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky:
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree:

V. 976.—*To the ocean*, &c.] This speech is evidently a paraphrase on Ariel's Song in the *Tempest*, A. v. S. i.

" *Where the bee sucks, there suck I.*" WARBURTON.

Pindar in his second Olympick, and Homer in his fourth Odyssey, describe a happy island at the extremity of the ocean, or rather earth, where the sun has his abode, the sky is perpetually serene and bright, the west wind always blows, and the flowers are of gold. This luxuriant imagery Milton has dressed anew, from the classical gardens of antiquity, from Spenser's gardens of Adonis " fraught with pleasures manifold," from the same gardens in Marino's *L'Adone*, Ariosto's garden of Paradise, Tasso's garden of Armida, and Spenser's bower of Blisse. The garden of Eden is absolutely Milton's own creation. WARTON.

V. 979.—*broad-fields.*] It may be doubted whether from Virgil, " Aeris in campis *latis*," *Æn.* vi. 888. For at first he had written *plain* fields, with another idea: A *level* extent of verdure. WARTON.

V. 981.] The daughters of Hesperus the brother of Atlas, first mentioned in Milton's manuscript as their father, had gardens or orchards which produced apples of gold. Spenser makes them the daughters of Atlas, *Faer. Qu.* ii. vii. 54. See Ovid, *Metam.* ix. 636. And Apollodor. *Bibl.* L. ii. §. 11. But what ancient fabler celebrates these damsels for their skill in singing? Appollonius Rhodius, an author whom Milton taught to his scholars, *Argon.* iv. 1396.

Euripides, Milton's favourite tragick poet, as Mr. Dunster has observed, celebrates the daughters of Hesperus under the title of 'ΥΜΝΩΔΕΣ ΚΟΡΑΙ, *Herc. Fur.* v. 393. See also Hippolytus, v. 750. TODD.

V. 983.—*golden tree.*] Many say that the *apples* of Atlas's garden were of gold: Ovid is the only ancient writer that says the *trees* were of gold, *Metam.* iv. 636. WARTON.

Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring;
There eternal Summer dwells
And West-Winds, with musky wing,
About the cedar'n alleys fling
Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hew
Than her purfled scarf can shew;
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true,)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,

V. 993.] *Blow* is here actively used, as in B. and Fletcher's *Lover's Propess*, A. ii. S. i. vol. v. p. 380.

"The wind that *blows* the April-*flowers* not softer."

That is, "makes the flowers blow." So, in Jonson's Mask at Highgate, 1604.

"For these, Favonius here shall *blow*
"New *flowers*, which you shall see to grow." WARTON.

V. 995.] *Purfled* is fringed, or embroidered. Fr. *Pourfile*.

Thus in *Piers Plowman*. P. ii.

"I was ware of a woman worthlyich clothed,
"*Purfiled* with pelure the finest upon erthe."

And in Chaucer, *Monk's Prologue*.

"I see his sleves *purfilid* at the hande
"With grys, and that the finest in the lande."

See also Spenser, *Faer. Qu.* i. ii. 13. and ii. iii. 26. TODD.

V. 997.—*if your ears be true.*] Intimating that this *Song*, which follows, of Adonis, and Cupid and Psyche, is not for the profane, but only for *well purged ears*. See Upton's *Spenser*, Notes on B. iii. C. vi. HURD.

So the Enchanter, above, at v. 784, has "neither *ear* nor *soul* to apprehend" sublime mysteries. His *ear* no less than his *soul*, was impure, unpurged, and unprepared. WARTON.

Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen:
But far above in spangled sheen
Celestial Cupid, her fam'd son, advanc'd,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranc'd,
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the Gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend;

V. 1002.—*Assyrian queen.*] Venus is called the *Assyrian* Queen, because she was first worshipped by the Assyrians. See Pausanias, *Attic.* lib. i. cap. xiv. NEWTON.

V. 1010.] Undoubtedly Milton's allusion at large, is here to Spenser's allegorical garden of Adonis, *Faer. Qu.* iii. vi. 46. seq. But at the same time, his mythology has a reference to Spenser's *Hymne of Love*, where *Love* is feigned to dwell "in a paradise of all delight," with Hebe, or Youth, and the rest of the darlings of Venus, who sport with his daughter Pleasure. For the fable and allegory of Cupid and Psyche, see Fulgentius, iii. 6. And Apuleius for Psyche's *wandering labours long*. WARTON.

V. 1012.—*But now my task is smoothly done.*] So Shakspeare's Prospero, in the Epilogue to the *Tempest*,

"Now my charms are all o'erthrown, &c."

And thus the Satyr, in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, who bears the character of our Attendant Spirit, when his office or commission is finished, displays his power and activity, promising any further services, S. ult. p. 195. WARTON.

V. 1014.—*The green earth's end.*] Cape de Verd Isles. SYMPSON.

V. 1015.—*Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend.*] A curve which bends, or descends *slowly*, from its great sweep. *Bending* has the same sense, of Dover cliff, in *K. Lear*, A. iv. S. i.

"There is a cliff whose high and *bending* head
"Looks fearfully on the confined deep."

And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to clime
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

And, in the *Faithful Shepherdess*, "*bending* plain," p. 106. Jonson has "*bending* vale," vii. 39. WARTON.

Sylvester, as Mr. Dunster observes, has the "heaven's *bow'd arches*." The phrase may have originated from *Psalm* cxliv. 5, "*Bow* thy *heavens*, O Lord;" which Sandys thus paraphrases:

"Great God, steope from the *bending* skies."

V. 1021.—*The sphery chime.*] *Chime*, Ital. Cima. Yet he uses *chime* in the common sense, *Ode Nativ.* v. 128. He may do so here, but then the expression is licentious, I suppose for the sake of the rhyme. HURD.

The *sphery chime* is the *musick of the spheres*. As in Machin's *Dumbe Knight*, 1608, Reed's *Old Plays*, vol. iv. 447.

"It was as silver as the *chime* of *spheres*." WARTON.

V. 1022.] The *Moral* of this poem is very finely summed up in the six concluding lines. The thought, contained in the *two last*, might probably be suggested to our author by a passage in the *Table of Cebes*, where Patience and Perseverance are represented stooping and stretching out their hands to help up those who are endeavouring to climb the craggy hill of Virtue, and yet are too feeble to ascend of themselves. THYER.

Had this learned and ingenious Critick duly reflected on the lofty mind of Milton 'smit with the love of sacred song,' and so often and so sublimely employed on topicks of religion, he might readily have found a subject, to which the Poet obviously and divinely alludes in these concluding lines, without fetching the thought from the *Table of Cebes*.

In the preceding remark, I am convinced Mr. Thyer had no ill intention: but, by overlooking so clear and pointed an allusion to a subject, calculated to kindle that lively glow in the bosom of every Christian which the Poet intended to excite, and by referring it to an image in a profane author, he may, beside stifling the sublime effect so happily produced, afford a handle to some, in these 'evil days,' who are willing to make the religion of Socrates and Cebes (or that of Nature) supersede the religion of Christ.

The Moral of the poem is, indeed, *very finely summed up in the six concluding lines*; in which, to wind up one of the most elegant produc-

tions of his genius, 'the Poet's eye, in a fine phrenzy rolling,' threw up its last glance to Heaven, in rapt contemplation of that stupendous Mystery, whereby *He*, the lofty theme of *Paradise Regained*, stooping from above all height, 'bowed the Heavens, and came down on Earth, to atone as Man for the Sins of Men, to strengthen feeble Virtue by the influence of his Grace, and to teach her to ascend his throne. EGERTON.

The last line had been written thus by Milton:

"Heaven itself would *bow* to *her*."

He altered *bow* to *stoop*, because the latter word expresses greater condescension. So, in his *Ode on the Passion*, he applies, to the Son of God when he took our nature upon him, the phrase "*stooping* his regal head." Thus Crashaw says, *Poems*, ed. Paris, 1652, p. 15, that Christ's

"all-embracing birth
"Lifts earth to heaven, STOOPES *heaven* to earth."

The Attendant Spirit, it may be added, opens the poem with a description of the rewards which Virtue promises, "after this mortal life, to her true servants:" The poem, therefore, may be considered more perfect, in closing, as it commenced, with the solemn and impressive sentiments of *Scripture*. TODD.

THE BEAUTIES AND THE FAULTS

OF

COMUS.

IN the peculiar disposition of the story, the sweetness of the numbers, the justness of the expression, and the moral it teaches, there is nothing extant in any language like the Mask of Comus.

TOLAND.

Milton's Juvenile Poems are so no otherwise, than as they were written in his younger years; for their dignity and excellence they are sufficient to have set him among the most celebrated of the poets, even of the ancients themselves: his Mask and Lycidas are perhaps superior to all in their several kinds. RICHARDSON.

Comus is written very much in imitation of Shakspeare's Tempest, and the faithful Shepherdess of Fletcher; and though one of the first, is yet one of the most beautiful of Milton's compositions.

NEWTON.

Milton seems in this poem to have imitated Shakspeare's manner more than in any other of his works; and it was very natural for a young author, preparing a piece for the stage, to propose to himself for a pattern the most celebrated master of English dramatic poetry.

THYER.

Milton has here more professedly imitated the manner of Shakspeare in his fairy scenes, than in any other of his works: and his poem is much the better for it, not only for the beauty, variety, and novelty of his images, but for a brighter vein of poetry, and an ease and delicacy of expression very superior for his natural manner.

WARBURTON.

If this Mask had been revised by Milton, when his ear and judgment were perfectly formed, it had been the most exquisite of all his poems. As it is, there are some puerilities in it, and many inaccuracies of expression and versification. The two editions of his Poems are of 1645 and 1673. In 1645 he was, as he would think, better employed. In 1673 he would condemn himself for having written such a thing as a Mask, especially for a great lord, and a sort of viceroy. HURD.

The greatest of Milton's juvenile performances is the Mask of Comus, in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of Paradise Lost. Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgment approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does Comus afford only a specimen of his language; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A masque, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination; but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two brothers, who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the Attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience; a mode of communication so contrary to the nature of dramatic representation, that no precedents can support it.

The discourse of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches; they have not the sprightliness of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question. The auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety.

The song of Comus has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's moral as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter, with too much tranquillity; and when they have feared lest their sister should be in danger, and hoped that she is not in danger, the elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher.

Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and inquires his business in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the Brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralizes again; and the Spirit makes a long narration of no use, because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good being.

In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention.

The dispute between the Lady and Comus is the most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies to invite attention, and detain it.

The songs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers.

Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the lan-

guage too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive. JOHNSON.

Milton's Comus is, I think, one of the finest productions of modern times; and I don't know whether to admire most the poetry of it, or the philosophy, which is of the noblest kind. The subject of it I like better than that of the Paradise Lost, which, I think, is not human enough to touch the common feelings of humanity, as poetry ought to do; the Divine Personages he has introduced are of too high a kind to act any part in poetry, and the scene of the action is, for the greater part, quite out of nature. But the subject of the Comus is a fine mythological tale, marvellous enough, as all poetical subjects should be, but at the same time human. He begins his piece in the manner of Euripides, and the descending Spirit that prologuises, makes the finest and grandest opening of any theatrical piece that I know, ancient or modern. The conduct of the piece is answerable to the beginning, and the versification of it is finely varied by short and long verses, blank and rhyming, and the sweetest songs that ever were composed; nor do I know any thing in English poetry comparable to it in this respect, except Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia, which, for the length of the piece, has all the variety of versification that can well be imagined. As to the style of Comus, it is more elevated, I think, than that of any of his writings, and so much above what is written at present, that I am inclined to make the same distinction in the English language, that Homer made of the Greek in his time; and to say, that Milton's language is the language of the gods; whereas we of this age speak and write the language of mere mortal men.

If the Comus was to be properly represented, with all the decorations which it requires, of machinery, scenery, dress, music, and dancing, it would be the finest exhibition that ever was seen upon any modern stage. But I am afraid, with all these, the principal part would be still wanting; I mean players that could wield the language of Milton, and pronounce those fine periods of his, by which he has contrived to give his poetry the beauty of the finest prose composition, and without which there can be nothing great or noble in composition of any kind. Or if we could find players who had breath and organs (for these, as well as other things, begin to fail in this generation), and sense and taste enough, properly to pronounce such periods, I doubt it would not be easy to find an audience that could relish them, or perhaps they would not have attention and comprehension sufficient to connect the sense of them, being accustomed to that trim, spruce, short cut of a style, which Tacitus, and his modern imitators, French and English, have made fashionable. LORD MONBODDO.

If I might venture to place Milton's works according to their degrees of poetic excellence, it should be perhaps in the following order: Paradise Lost, Comus, Samson Agonistes, Lycidas, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso. Dr. J. WARTON.

We must not read Comus with an eye to the stage, or with the expectation of dramatic propriety. Under this restriction the absurdity of the Spirit speaking to an audience in a solitary forest at midnight, and the want of reciprocation in the dialogue, are overlooked. Comus is a suite of speeches, not interesting by discrimi-

nation of character; not conveying a variety of incidents, nor gradually exciting curiosity; but perpetually attracting attention by sublime sentiment, by fanciful imagery of the richest vein, by an exuberance of picturesque description, poetical allusion, and ornamental expression. While it widely departs from the grotesque anomalies of the Mask now in fashion, it does not nearly approach to the natural constitution of a regular play. There is a chastity in the application and conduct of the machinery; and Sabrina is introduced with much address, after the Brothers had imprudently suffered the enchantment of Comus to take effect. This is the first time the old English Mask was in some degree reduced to the principles and form of a rational composition; yet still it could not but retain some of its arbitrary peculiarities. The poet had here properly no more to do with the pathos of tragedy, than the character of comedy: nor do I know that he was confined to the usual modes of theatrical interlocution. A great critic observes, that the dispute between the Lady and Comus is the most animated and affecting scene of the piece. Perhaps some other scenes, either consisting only of a soliloquy, or of three or four speeches only, have afforded more true pleasure. The same critic thinks, that in all the moral dialogue, although the language is poetical, and the sentiments generous, something is still wanting to allure attention. But surely, in such passages, sentiments so generous, and language so poetical, are sufficient to rouse all our feelings. For this reason I cannot admit his position, that Comus is a drama tediously instructive. And if, as he says, to these ethical discussions the auditor listens, as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety, yet he listens with elevation and delight. The action is said to be improbable, because the Brothers, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries, too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. But here is no desertion, or neglect of the lady. The Brothers leave their sister under a spreading pine in the forest, fainting for refreshment: they go to procure berries or some other fruit for her immediate relief, and, with great probability, lose their way in going or returning. To say nothing of the poet's art, in making this very natural and simple accident to be productive of the distress which forms the future business and complication of the fable. It is certainly a fault, that the Brothers, although with some indications of anxiety, should enter with so much tranquillity, when their sister is lost, and at leisure pronounce philosophical panegyrics on the mysteries of virginity. But we must not too scrupulously attend to the exigencies of situation, nor suffer ourselves to suppose that we are reading a play, which Milton did not mean to write. These splendid insertions will please, independently of the story, from which however they result; and their elegance and sublimity will overbalance their want of place. In a Greek tragedy, such sentimental harrangues, arising from the subject, would have been given to a chorus.

On the whole, whether Comus be, or be not deficient as a drama, whether it is considered as an epic drama, a series of lines, a mask, or a poem, I am of opinion, that our author is here only inferior to his own Paradise Lost. WARTON.

Milton's Comus is, in my judgment, the most beautiful and perfect poem of that sublime genius. WAKEFIELD.

Perhaps the conduct and conversation of the Brothers may not be altogether indefensible. They have lost their way in a forest at night, and are in "the want of light and noise." It would now be dangerous for them to run about an unknown wilderness; and, if they should separate, in order to seek their sister, they might lose each other. In the uncertainty of what was their best plan, they therefore naturally wait, expecting to hear perhaps the cry of their lost sister, or some noise to which they would have directed their steps. The younger Brother anxiously expresses his apprehensions for his sister. The Elder, in reply, trusts that she is not in danger, and, instead of giving way to those fears, which the Younger repeats, expatiates on the strength of chastity; by the illustration of which argument he confidently maintains the hope of their sister's safety, while he beguiles the perplexity of their own situation.

It has been observed, that Comus is not calculated to shine in theatric exhibition for those very reasons which constitute its essential and specific merit. The Pastor Fido of Guarini, which also ravishes the reader, could not succeed upon the stage. It is sufficient, that Comus displays the true sources of poetical delight and moral instruction, in its charming imagery, in its original conceptions, in its sublime diction, in its virtuous sentiments. Its few inaccuracies weigh but as dust in the balance against its general merit. And, in short (if I may be allowed respectfully to differ from the high authority of a preceding note), I am of opinion, that this pastoral drama is both gracefully splendid, and delightfully instructive. TODD.

AMONG the compositions of our own country, COMUS certainly stands unrivalled for its affluence in poetic imagery and diction; and as an effort of the creative power, it can be paralleled only by the muse of SHAKSPEARE, by whom, in this respect, it is possibly exceeded.

With Shakspeare the whole, with exception to some rude outlines or suggestions of the story, is the immediate emanation of his own mind: but Milton's erudition prohibited him from this extreme originality, and was perpetually supplying him with thoughts, which would sometimes obtain the preference from his judgment, and would sometimes be mistaken for her own property by his invention. Original, however, he is; and of all the sons of song inferior in this requisite of genius only to Shakspeare. Neither of these wonderful men was so far privileged above his species as to possess other means of acquiring knowledge than through the inlets of the senses, and the subsequent operations of the mind on this first mass of ideas. The most exalted of human intelligences cannot form one mental phantasm uncompounded of this visible world. Neither Shakspeare nor Milton could conceive a sixth corporal sense, or a creature absolutely distinct from the inhabiters of this world. A Caliban, or an Ariel; a devil, or an angel, are only several compositions and modifications of our animal creation; and heaven and hell can be built with nothing more than our terrestrial elements newly arranged and variously combined. The distinction, therefore, between one human intelligence and another must be occasioned solely by the different degrees of clearness, force, and quickness, with which it perceives, retains, and combines. On the superiority in these mental faculties it would

be difficult to decide between those extraordinary men, who are the immediate subjects of our remark: for, if we are astonished at that power, which, from a single spot, as it were, could collect sufficient materials for the construction of a world of his own, we cannot gaze without wonder at that proud magnificence of intellect, which rushing, like some mighty river, through extended lakes, and receiving into its bosom the contributory waters of a thousand regions, preserves its course, its name, and its character, entire. With Milton, from whatever mine the ore may originally be derived, the coin issues from his own mint with his own image and superscription, and passes into currency with a value peculiar to itself. To speak accurately, the mind of Shakspeare could not create; and that of Milton invented with equal, or nearly equal, power and effect. If we admit, in the Tempest, or the Midsummer's Night's Dream, a higher flight of the inventive faculty, we must allow a less interrupted stretch of it in the Comus: in this poem there may be something, which might have been corrected by the revising judgment of its author; but its errors in thought and language, are so few and trivial that they must be regarded as the inequality of the plumage, and not as the depression or the unsteadiness of the wing. The most splendid results of Shakspeare's poetry are still urged, and separated by some interposing defect: but the poetry of the Comus may be contemplated as a series of gems strung on golden wire, where the sparkle shoots along the line with scarcely the intervention of one opake spot.

SYMMONS.

The admirable commentary of Mr. Warton upon Comus had displayed its excellencies with so much power, and unfolded its obscure allusions with so sure a penetration, that but little remained to succeeding annotators, except indeed, as they extended their own reading, to fancy or find that the amazing industry of Milton had anticipated their studies. The great mistake of these gentlemen, who, with M. Fuseli, seem to imagine that to invent is only to find, is that they treat Comus as though the great poet had not conceived it on a *particular* occasion, as though it had not been written upon the *spur* of that occasion, but that on the contrary all antiquity, and all modern latinity, every old wife's tale, and every pastoral drama had been elaborately plundered for plot, incident, character, sentiment and expression, and that this exuberant production of genius in its prime, was a pedantic compilation of cold, deliberate plagiarisms. It is high time to assure our minute critics, that when a hero is conceived to be the son of Bacchus and of Circe, "Joy and feast, tipsy dance and jollity" will attend him without the suggestion of a Dutch trifler, and that dancers are apt to "knit hands and beat the ground," untaught by Puteanus. Let us desist from such comments as lead the reader to undervalue the power of genius, and sink the ardour of his reverence into a foolish wonder at the extent of a poet's reading and memory.

Comus has been rendered popular upon our stage by music of great sweetness, and sometimes by recitation of great beauty. But so little did the powers of Milton bend to the exigencies of the stage, that he has thrown the sublimest passages of the drama into speeches too long for utterance, or dialogues too heavy to be endured.—The philosopher and the poet are equally ambitious to display all the reveries of visionary beatitude, and all the amplifications of gor-

geous imagery—the poem is the triumph of thought and language;—passion has but little scope in such a design. Something to be sure may be caught from even a hurried delivery of such matter, and something may be added by the art of the actor, and the dexterity of the machinist, and (that ridiculous topic of eulogy) the *liberality* of the Manager; but the closet is the proper seat of its influence. Comus, to be really enchanting, must like the Muse be "strictly meditated." When an actor rises capable of such study, and carries the fruits of it to the stage-representation, he leaves, like HENDERSON, an impression of voluptuous hilarity, persuasive blandishment, keen raillery and masterly sophistry, which but for his judgment the public would never have received from the theatre, and which only the few could fully discover in the poem. B.

THE REPRESENTATION.

It does not appear that the masque of Comus was ever acted, except at Ludlow Castle, till 1738, more than a century after its original performance. It was then brought on the Drury Lane stage by Dr. Dalton, who rendered it much more fit for the stage by the introduction of many additional songs, most of them Milton's own, of part of the Allegro of the same author, and other passages from his different works, so that he rather restored Milton to himself, than altered him. The music was supplied by Dr. Arne, who established his reputation as a lyric and dramatic composer, by the admirable manner in which he set this masque. He introduced in it a light, airy, original, and pleasing melody, wholly different from that of Purcell or Handel, whom all English composers had hitherto either pillaged or imitated.

Who was the original actor of Comus has not been ascertained; probably a domestic of the Bridgewater family. The first known performer of this character was

Mr. QUIN

who obtained very great reputation in it. One of the critics of his time, gives this character of him:—"The very language of Milton seemed contrived for the voice of Mr. Quin, and the voice of Mr. Quin, while he is speaking it, seems formed on purpose for the language of Milton. In Comus, through the whole part, he is something more than man; the *deity* he represents, dwells about him in every attitude, and in the pronouncing every period; with what a superior greatness does he introduce himself to us by his manner of delivering the glorious lines that open his part!

> The star that bids the shepherd fold,
> Now the top of heaven doth hold,
> And the gilded car of day
> His glowing axle doth allay
> In the steep Atlantic stream,
> While the slope sun his upward beam
> Shoots against the dusky pole,
> Pacing tow'rd the other goal
> Of his chamber in the east;
> Mean-time welcome joy and feast.

And with what dignity, after the song that is performed here, does he go on,

> We that are of purer fire
> Imitate the starry choir,
> Who in their nightly watchful spheres
> Lead in swift dance the months and years.
> The sounds, the seas, and all their finny drove,
> Now to the moon in wav'ring morrice move;
> While on the tawney sands and shelves
> Trip the pert fairies, and the dapper elves.

His invocation to *Cotytto*, which succeeds this, is delivered with equal judgment with the rest. When men invoke the *Divinity*, they are to do it with the utmost humility and awe; but the player, here, remembers that he is only addressing an equal; himself a *deity*, and the imaginary being he addresses, no more. 'Tis therefore a peculiar mark of his judgment, as we have observed, not a blemish in his playing, as some have supposed, that he here keeps up all the dignity he had set out with, and in the same spirit in which he had before spoke, continues,

> Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
> Dark-veil'd *Cotytto*, t' whom the secret flame
> Of midnight torches burns, mysterious dame,
> Who ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
> Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,
> And makes one blot of all the air,
> Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
> Wherein thou rid'st with *Hecate*, and befriend
> Us, thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
> Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
> Ere the babbling eastern scout,
> The nice morn on the Indian steep,
> From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
> And to the tell-tale sun descry
> Our conceal'd solemnity.

The manner in which he makes love to the lady, is of a piece with the rest. He is passionately fond of her; but then he courts her not with supplications, but with promises; he gives her reasons for complying with him, rather than intreaties to do so; and this in a tone and manner becoming a superior, not an inferior: in short, he makes love in a very moving and almost compulsive way; but that rather as a *deity* than a *mortal*.

To sum up the praise of this quality in the performer we are mentioning in this part, we shall not scruple to affirm, that if any thing claims the title of being the greatest sentence, and most nobly pronounced of any on the English theatre, it is that threat of *Comus* to the lady, where, on her offering to get up to leave him, he tells her,

> Nay, lady, sit—if I but wave this wand,
> Your nerves are all bound up in alabaster,
> And you a statue: or, as *Daphne* was,
> Root-bound, who fled *Apollo*.

The majesty of this menace will perhaps always lose half its power, when spoken by any body but the person we are celebrating for it.

"No man ever did, or probably ever will, play the part of *Comus* with the success that Mr. *Quin* has done: notwithstanding that his person and age are very improper for the representation of a gay, young, and wanton god of revels; the majesty of his voice, and the pomp and dignity which he has been able to give to the declarations of that deity, charm and astonish us, and help in a great measure to keep up the illusion. The poet intended representing the character Mr. *Quin* plays in this masque, not as a man but something greater."

Henderson we have already spoken of. After him, the late JOHN PALMER was unquestionably the best Comus of our time. The language of Milton sometimes required a master of elocution.---but he looked the character admirably, and the crayon of Russel very lately placed him again fully before us. Comus, like Macbeth, is overloaded with the stage rabble, and singers; the most unmeaning of our dramatic properties, and to be stunned with their discord would be an insufferable calamity, were it not that a beautiful face and form sometimes excuses the unstudied carelessness of the one sex, and attones for the illiterate and awkward brutality of the other.

The Lady was performed in 1738 by Mrs. Cibber. The Brothers by Mr. Milward and Mr. Cibber; First Spirit by Mr. Mills; Second Spirit by Mr. Hill; Euphrosyne by Mrs. Clive; Sabrina by Mrs. Arne. Attendant Spirits, Mr. Beard, &c.

Euphrosyne, a character introduced by Dr. Dalton, has several fine songs to execute, and is, therefore, generally assigned to a capital singer.

MISS CATLEY.

Of whom a portrait in this character accompanies our edition of the Masque, was extremely popular in the part, and is supposed to be the best representative of Euphrosyne which the stage has furnished.

Comus was also altered by the elder Mr. Colman, and produced at Covent Garden in 1772.