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THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF
JOHN MILTON,

FROM THE TEXT OF

THE REV. HENRY JOHN TODD, M.A.

WITH
A CRITICAL ESSAY,

By J. AIKIN, M.D.

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THE
FIRST BOOK
OF
PARADISE REGAIN'D.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK I.

[Who ere while the happy garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Spirit, who ledst this glorious eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire, 11
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,
And bear, through highth or depth of Nature's bounds,
With prosperous wing full summ'd, to tell of deeds
Above heroick, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age ;

Worthy to have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand 20
To all baptis'd : to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan ; came, as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown ; but him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heavenly office ; nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd : on him baptis'd
Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a dove 30
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heaven pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who, roving still
About the world, at that assembly fam'd
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted Man, to whom
Such high attest was given, a while survey'd
With wonder ; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air

To counsel summons all his mighty peers, 40
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory ; and them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake.

O ancient Powers of air, and this wide world,
(For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation ;) well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd,
In manner at our will, the affairs of earth, 50
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceiv'd by me ; though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head : Long the decrees of Heaven
Delay, for longest time to him is short ;
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd wound,
(At least if so we can, and by the head 60
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being,

In this fair empire won of earth and air ;
 For this ill news I bring, the Woman's Seed,
 Destin'd to this, is late of Woman born :
 His birth to our just fear gave no small cause ;
 But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
 All virtue, grace, and wisdom to achieve
 Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
 Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim 70
 His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
 Invites, and in the consecrated stream
 Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them, so
 Purified, to receive him pure, or rather
 To do him honour as their king ; all come,
 And he himself among them was baptiz'd ;
 Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
 The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
 Thenceforth the nations may not doubt ; I saw
 The prophet do him reverence ; on him, rising 80
 Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
 Unfold her crystal doors ; thence on his head
 A perfect dove descend, what-e'er it meant,
 And out of Heaven the sovran voice I heard,
 " This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd."

His mother then is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven,
And what will he not do to advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep : 90
Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
(Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven snares,)
Ere in the head of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook 100
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam ; and the exploit perform'd
Successfully : a calmer voyage now
Will waft me ; and the way, found prosperous once
Induces best to hope of like success.

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted and surpris'd with deep dismay

At these sad tidings ; but no time was then
 For long indulgence to their fears or grief : 110
 Unanimous they all commit the care
 And management of this main enterprize
 To him, their great dictator, whose attempt
 At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
 In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
 From Hell's deep vaulted den to dwell in light,
 Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea Gods
 Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
 So to the coast of Jordan he directs
 His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles, 120
 Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
 This Man of men, attested Son of God,
 Temptation and all guile on him to try ;
 So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
 To end his reign on earth, so long enjoy'd :
 But, contrary, unweeting he fulfill'd
 The purpos'd counsel, pre-ordain'd and fix'd,
 Of the Most High, who in full frequence bright
 Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.

Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold, 130
 Thou and all Angels conversant on earth

With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message, late
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God;
Then toldst her doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O'er-shadow her: this Man, born and now up-grown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine 141
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt, and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy: he might have learnt
Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man 150
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell;
Winning, by conquest, what the first man lost,

By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean
 To exercise him in the wilderness ;
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
 To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
 By humiliation and strong sufferance : 160
 His weakness shall o'ercome Satanick strength,
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh ;
 That all the Angels and ethereal Powers,
 They now, and Men hereafter, may discern,
 From what consummate virtue I have chose
 This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
 To earn salvation for the sons of men.

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
 Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
 Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd, 170
 Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and triumph to the Son of God
 Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
 But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles !
 The Father knows the Son ; therefore secure
 Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,

Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.

Be frustrate all ye stratagems of Hell, 180
And, devilish machinations, come to nought.

So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tun'd :
Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodg'd in Bethabara, where John baptiz'd,
Musing, and much revolving in his breast,
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his God-like office now mature,
One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse 190
With solitude, till, far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He enter'd now the bordering desert wild,
And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
His holy meditations thus pursu'd.

O, what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd ! 200

When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be publick good ; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things : therefore above my years,
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, that ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast 210
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge of their own ;
And was admir'd by all: yet this not all
To which my spirit aspir'd ; victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroick acts ; one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannick power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd : 220
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear ;



At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully mis-doing, but unware
Mised; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoic'd,
And said to me apart, " High are thy thoughts
O Son, but nourish them, and let them soar 230
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire,
For know, thou art no son of mortal man;
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy father is the Eternal King who rules
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men;
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceiv'd in me a virgin; he foretold
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end. 241
At thy nativity, a glorious quire
Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him, and to thee they came,

Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,
 For in the inn was left no better room;
 A star, not seen before, in Heaven appearing
 Guided the wise men thither from the east, 250
 To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold;
 By whose bright course led on they found the place,
 Affirming it thy star, new graven in Heaven,
 By which they knew the King of Israel born.
 Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warn'd
 By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake
 Before the altar and the vested priest,
 Like things of thee to all that present stood."—
 This having heard, straight I again revolv'd
 The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
 Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes 261
 Known partly, and soon found, of whom they spake
 I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
 Through many a hard assay, even to the death,
 Ere I the promis'd kingdom can attain,
 Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
 Full weight must be transfer'd upon my head.
 Yet, neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
 The time prefix'd I waited: when behold

The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard, 270
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare !
I, as all others, to his baptism came,
Which I believ'd was from above ; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven)
Me him, whose harbinger he was ; and first
Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won :
But, as I rose out of the laving stream, 280
Heaven open'd her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove,
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heaven, pronounc'd me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleas'd ; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
The authority which I derived from Heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led 290
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet ; perhaps I need not know ;

For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our Morning Star, then in his rise,
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades ;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod ;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come 300
Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak,
Or cedar to defend him from the dew,
Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd ;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
Till those days ended ; hunger'd then at last
Among wild beasts : they at his sight grew mild, 310
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd ; his walk
The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,

Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye 319
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcass, pin'd with hunger and with drouth.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the Man, whom late
Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes, 330
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
To town or village nigh, (nighest is far)
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new; fame also finds us out.

To whom the Son of God. Who brought me hither,
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.

By miracle he may, replied the swain;
What other way I see not; for we here

Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
 More than the camel, and to drink go far, 340
 Men to much misery and hardship born :
 But, if thou be the Son of God, command
 That out of these hard stones be made thee bread,
 So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
 With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

He ended, and the Son of God replied.

Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
 (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
 Man lives not by bread only, but each word
 Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed 350
 Our fathers here with manna? In the mount
 Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank :
 And forty days Elijah, without food,
 Wander'd this barren waste ; the same I now :
 Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
 Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art ?

Whom thus answer'd the Arch-Fiend, now undis-
 guis'd.

'Tis true I am that Spirit unfortunate,
 Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
 Kept not my happy station, but was driven 360

With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in the air; nor from the Heaven of Heavens
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth; 370
And, when to all his Angels he propos'd
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge;
For what he bids I do. Though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire, 380
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense:
What can be then less in me than desire

To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
 Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy Godlike deeds?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind: why should I? they to me
 Never did wrong or violence; by them
 I lost not what I lost, rather by them 390
 I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell,
 Copartner in these regions of the world,
 If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
 Oft my advice by presages and signs,
 And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
 Whereby they may direct their future life.
 Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
 Companions of my misery and woe.
 At first it may be; but long since with wee
 Nearer acquainted, now I feel, by proof, 400
 That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
 Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load,
 Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd:
 This wounds me most, (what can it less?) that Man,
 Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour sternly thus repl'd.

Deservedly

Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heaven of Heavens: thou com'st indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall 411
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendour, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of Heaven: the happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment; representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
So never more in Hell than when in Heaven. 420
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King!
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.

Yet thou pretend'st to truth ; all oracles 430
By thee are given, and what confess'd more true
Among the nations ? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And, not well understood, as good not known ?
Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct,
To fly or follow what concern'd him most, 440
And run not sooner to his fatal snare ?
For God hath justly given the nations up
To thy delusions ; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous : but, when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him, or his Angels president
In every province ? who, themselves disdaining
To approach thy temples, give thee in command
What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say 450
To thy adorers ? thou, with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st :

Then

Then to thyself ascrib' st the truth foretold,
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
 The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceas'd,
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
 Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos, or elsewhere;
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 God hath now sent his living oracle 460
 Into the world to teach his final will,
 And sends his Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
 In pious hearts, an inward oracle
 To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
 Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
 But misery hath wrested from me: where 470
 Easily canst thou find one miserable,
 And not enforc'd oft-times to part from truth,
 If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
 Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
 But thou art plac'd above me, thou art Lord;

From thee I can, and must, submit, endure
 Check or reproof, and glad to 'scape so quit.
 Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk ;
 Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to the ear,
 And tuneable as sylvan pipe or song ; 480
 What wonder then if I delight to hear
 Her dictates from thy mouth ? Most men admire
 Virtue, who follow not her lore : permit me
 To hear thee when I come, (since no man comes)
 And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
 Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
 Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
 To tread his sacred courts, and minister
 About his altar, handling holy things,
 Praying or vow'ing, and vouchsaf'd his voice 490
 To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
 Inspir'd : disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour, with unalter'd brow :
 Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
 I bid not, or forbid ; do as thou find'st
 Permission from above : thou canst not more.

He add'd not : and Satan, bowing low
 His gray dissimulation, disappear'd

Into thin air diffus'd : for now began
Night with her sullen wings to double-shade 500
The desert ; fowls in their clay nests were couch'd ;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF
PARADISE REGAIN'D.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK II.

MEAN while the new-baptiz'd, who yet remain'd
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah, Son of God declar'd,
And on that high authority had believ'd,
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd; I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others though in Holy Writ not nam'd;
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
(So lately found, and so abruptly gone,) 10
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt:
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount, and missing long;
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels

Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.
 Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
 Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
 Nigh to Bethabara, in Jericho 20
 The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
 Machærus, and each town or city wall'd
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
 Or in Peræa; but return'd in vain.
 Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
 Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
 Plain fishermen, (no greater men them call)
 Close in a cottage low together got,
 Their unexpected loss and complaints out breath'd.

Alas, from what high hope to what relapse 30
 Unlook'd for are we fall'n! our eyes beheld
 Messiah certainly now come, so long
 Expected of our fathers; we have heard
 His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth;
 Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
 The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:
 Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
 Into perplexity and new amaze:
 For whither is he gone, what accident

Hath rapt him from us ? will he now retire 40

After appearance, and again prolong

Our expectation ? God of Israël,

Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come ;

Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress

Thy chosen ; to what highth their power unjust

They have exalted, and behind them cast

All fear of thee ; arise, and vindicate

Thy glory ; free thy people from their yoke.

But let us wait ; thus far he hath perform'd,

Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him, 50

By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown

In publick, and with him we have convers'd ;

Let us be glad of this, and all our fears

Lay on his Providence ; he will not fail,

Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,

Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence ;

Soon we shall see our Hope, our Joy, return.

Thus they, out of their plaints, new hope resume

To find whom at the first they found unsought :

But, to his mother Mary, when she saw 60

Others return'd from Baptism, not her son,

Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none,

Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

O, what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,
“ Hail highly favour'd, among women blest!”
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot 70
Of other women, by the birth I bore ;
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air ; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his ; yet soon enforc'd to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem ;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years ; his life 80
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king ; but now,
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in publick shown,
Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice ;

I look'd for some great change ; to honour ? no,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israël, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul 90
A sword shall pierce ; this is my favour'd lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high ;
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest ;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now ? some great intent
Conceals him : when twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself ; but went about
His Father's business ; what he meant I mus'd,
Since understand ; much more his absence now 100
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inur'd ;
My heart hath been a store-house long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.
Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
Since first her salutation heard with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling :

The while her son, tracing the desert wild,
 Sole, but with holiest meditations fed, 110
 Into himself descended, and at once
 All his great work to come before him set;
 How to begin, how to accomplish best
 His end of being on earth, and mission high :
 For Satan, with sly preface to return,
 Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
 Up to the middle region of thick air,
 Where all his potentates in council sat ;
 There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
 Solicitous and blank, he thus began. 120

Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, ethereal Thrones,
 Demonian Spirits now, from the element
 Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
 Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,
 (So may we hold our place and these mild seats
 Without new trouble,) such an enemy
 Is risen to invade us, who no less
 Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell ;
 I, as I undertook, and with the vote
 Consenting in full frequence was impower'd, 130
 Have found him, view'd him, tasted him ; but find
 Far



Fig. 1. 1st.

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the whole business, concerning the discovery of
 the truth, and the meditation, and at once
 into himself descended, and at once
 All has quite well to come before him, as
 there to begin how a complete but
 the end of being a truth, and my own hope

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Far other labour to be undergone
 Than when I dealt with Adam, first of Men,
 Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
 However to this Man inferiour far ;
 If he be Man by mother's side, at least
 With more than human gifts from Heaven adorn'd,
 Perfections absolute, graces divine,
 And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
 Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence 140
 Of my success with Eve in Paradise
 Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
 Of like succeeding here ; I summon all
 Rather to be in readiness, with hand
 Or council to assist ; lest I who erst
 Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.
 So spake the old Serpent, doubting ; and from all
 With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid
 At his command ; when from amidst them rose
 Belial, the dissolutes Spirit that fell, 150
 The sensuallest, and, after Asmodai,
 The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advis'd.
 Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
 Among daughters of men the fairest found :

Many are in each region passing fair
 As the noon sky ; more like to Goddesses
 Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
 Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
 Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
 And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach, 160
 Skill'd to retire, and, in retiring, draw
 Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
 Such object hath the power to soften and tame
 Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
 Eneve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
 Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
 At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
 As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
 Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
 Of wisest Solomon, and made him build, 170
 And made him bow to the Gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd,
 Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
 All others by thyself ; because of old
 Thou thyself dou'd'st on womankind, admiring
 Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
 None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.

Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God, roaming the earth
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men, 180
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side,
In valley or green meadow, to way-lay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan, 190
Satyr, or Faun, or Sylvan? But these haunts
Delight not all; among the sons of men,
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the east
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd;
How he, surnam'd of Africa, dismiss'd,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid. 200

For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state ;
Thence to the bait of women lay expos'd :
But he, whom we attempt, is wiser far
Than Solomon, of mere exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things ; what woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye 210
Of fond desire ? or should she, confident,
As sitting queen ador'd on Beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell ;
How would one look from his majestick brow,
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
Discountenance her despis'd, and put to rout
All her array : her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe ! for beauty stands 220
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive ; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,

At every sudden slighting quite abash'd,
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy; with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond; 230
And now I know he hungers, where no food
Is to be found, in the wide wilderness;
The rest commit to me; I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits, likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part; 240
Then to the desert takes with these his flight;
Where, still from shade to shade, the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungry first, and to himself thus said.

Where will this end? four times ten days I've pass'd

Wandering this woody maze, and human food
 Not tasted, nor had appetite; that fast
 To virtue I impute not, or count part
 Of what I suffer here: if nature need not,
 Or God support nature without repast 250
 Though needing, what praise is it to endure:
 But now I feel I hunger, which declares
 Nature hath need of what she asks: yet God
 Can satisfy that need some other way,
 Though hunger still remain: so it remain
 Without this body's wasting, I content me,
 And from the sting of famine fear no harm,
 Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts: that need
 Me hungering more to do my Father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Sun 260
 Command'd in silent walk, then led him down
 Under the hospitable covert nigh
 Of trees thick interwoven: there he slept,
 And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
 Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet;
 Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
 And saw the ravens with their horny beaks

Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they
brought :

He saw the prophet also, how he fled 270

Into the desert, and how there he slept

Under a juniper ; then how awak'd

He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,

And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,

And eat the second time after repose,

The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days ;

Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,

Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Thus wore out night ; and now the herald lark

Left his ground-nest, high towering to desery 280

The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song :

As lightly from his grassy couch up rose

Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream ;

Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.

Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,

From whose high top to ken the prospect round,

If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd ;

But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw,

Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,

With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud : 290

Thither he bent his way, determin'd there

To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade

High roof'd, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,

That open'd in the midst a woody scene ;

Nature's own work it seem'd, Nature taught Art,

And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt

Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs : he view'd it
round,

When suddenly a man before him stood ;

Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,

As one in city, or court, or palace bred, 300

And with fair speech these words to him address'd.

With granted leave officious I return,

But much more wonder that the Son of God

In this wild solitude so long should bide

Of all things destitute, and well I know,

Not without hunger. Others of some note,

As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;

The fugitive bond-woman, with her son

Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief

By a providing Angel ; all the race 310

Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God

Rain'd from Heaven Manna; and that Prophet bold,
Native of Thebez, wandering here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat :
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.

To whom thus Jesus. What conclud'st thou hence ?
They all had need ; I, as thou seest, have none.

How hast thou hunger then ? Satan replied.
Tell me, if food were now before thee set, 320
Would'st thou not eat ?—Thereafter as I like
The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
Cause thy refusal ? said the subtle Fiend.
Hast thou not right to all created things ?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, not to stay till bid,
But tender all their power ? Nor mention I
Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd first
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse ;
Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who 330
Would scruple that, with want oppress'd ? Behold,
Nature asham'd, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the elements her choicest store

To treat thee, as beseems, and, as her Lord,
With honour : only deign to sit and eat.

He spake no dream ; for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade
A table richly spread, in regal mode, 340
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And savour ; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris-amber-steam'd ; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet, or purling brook, of shell or tin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
(Alas, how simple, to these cates compar'd,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve !)
And at a stately side-board, by the wine 350
That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas ; distant more
Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood,
Nymphs of Dian's train, and Naiades

With

344 "Gris-amber-steam'd"—Scented with ambergris; the perfume

With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since
Of faery damsels, met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones, 360
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.

And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
Such was the splendour; and the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure; 370
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord:
What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temperately replied.

Said'st

Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my power that right to use? 380
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant
Array'd in glory on my cup to attend:
Why should'st thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I conternn, 390
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles.

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent,
That I have also power to give, thou seest;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why should'st thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect:
Of these things others quickly will dispose, 400
Whose pains have earn'd the far-fet spoil. With that

Both table and provision vanish'd quite
 With sound of harpies wings, and talons heard;
 Only the impórtune Tempter still remain'd,
 And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other creature tames,
 Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
 Thy temperance, invincible besides,
 For no allurements yields to appetite,
 And all thy heart is set on high designs, 410
 High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?
 Great acts require great means of enterprize;
 Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
 A carpenter thy father known, thyself
 Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
 Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit:
 Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
 To greatness? whence authority deriv'st?
 What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
 Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude, 420
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
 Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms:
 What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
 And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,

(Thy

(Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant friends?
 Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,
 Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,
 Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:

Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
 They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain, 430
 While virtue, valour, wisdom sit in want.

To whom thus Jesus patiently replied,
 Yet wealth, without these three, is impotent
 To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
 Witness these ancient empires of the earth,
 In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd:
 But men endued with these have oft attain'd
 In lowest poverty to highest deeds:
 Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
 Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat 440
 So many ages, and shall yet regain

That seat, and reign in Israel without end,
 Among the Heathen, of it throughout the world
 To me is not unknown what hath been done
 Worthy of memorial: canst thou not remember
 Quintus, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?
 For I esteem these names of men's no poor

Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches though offer'd from the hand of kings,
And what in me seems wanting, but that I 450
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more ?
Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare ; more apt
To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do ought may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms ? yet not, for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights
To him who wears the regal diadem, 461
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies ;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the publick all this weight he bears.
Yet he, who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king ;
Which every wise and virtuous man attains :
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes, 470

Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which, to a generous mind,
So reigning, can be no sincere delight. 480
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a scepter, ofttest better miss'd.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF
PARADISE REGAIN'D.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK III.

SO spake the Son of God ; and Satan stood
A while, as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted, and convinced
Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift ;
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do ;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart 10
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast ; or tongue of seers old
Infallible : or wert thou sought to deeds

That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms. 20
These God-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spirits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest? 30
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quell'd
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgement mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,

The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd 40
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious : but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied.
Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd ?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol 50
'Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the
praise ?

They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other ;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise ?
His lot who dares be singularly good.

The intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.
This is true glory and renown, when God 60
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks

The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises: thus he did to Job,
When, to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,
He ask'd thee, "Hast thou seen my servant Job?"
Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known;
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame. 70
They err, who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring, or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy: 80
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipt with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;

Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory ought of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war, or violence ; 90
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance : I mention still
Him, whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a land and times obscure ;
Who names not now with honour patient Job ?
Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable ?)
By what he taught, and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death, unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done 100
Aught suffer'd ; if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punic rage ;
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
Oft not deserv'd ? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me ; and thereby witness whence I am.

To whom the Tempter murmuring thus replied.
 Think not so slight of glory; therein least
 Resembling thy great Father: He seeks glory, 110
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs: nor content in Heaven
 By all his Angels glorified, requires
 Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
 Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift,
 Glory he requires, and glory he receives
 Promiscuous from all nations. Jew, or Greek,
 Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd:
 From us, his foes pronounc'd, glory he exacts. 120

To whom our Saviour fervently replied.
 And reason: since his Word all things produc'd.
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
 But to show forth his goodness, and impart
 His good communicable to every soul
 Freely: of whom what could he less expect
 Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,
 The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence
 From them who could return him nothing else.
 And, not returning that, would likeliest render 130



Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy ?
Hard recompence, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence !
But why should Man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs,
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame ?
Who, for so many benefits receiv'd,
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs :
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.

140

So spake the Son of God ; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin ; for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all,
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass :
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne ;

150

By mother's side thy father ; though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms :
Judæa now and all the Promis'd Land,
Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius ; nor is always rul'd
With temperate sway ; oft have they violated 160
The temple, oft the law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus : and think'st thou to regain
Thy right, by sitting still, or thus retiring ?
So did not Maccabeus : he indeed
Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms ;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
That by strong hand his family obtain'd,
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurp'd,
With Modin and her suburbs once content. 170
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty ; zeal and duty are not slow,
But on occasion's forelock watchful wait :
They themselves rather are occasion best ;
Zeal of thy father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her Heathen servitude ;

So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign ;
The happier reign, the sooner it begins : 179
Reign then ; what canst thou better do the while ?

To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
All things are best fulfil'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.
If of my reign prophetic Writ hath told,
That it shall never end, so, when begin,
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injurious, insults, 190
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey ? Who best
Can suffer, best can do ; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd ; just trial, ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee, when I begin
My everlasting kingdom ? Why art thou

Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition? 200

Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?

To whom the Tempter, inly rack'd, replied.

Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace: what worse?

For where no hope is left, is left no fear:

If there be worse, the expectation more

Of worse torments me than the feeling can.

I would be at the worst: worst is my port,

My harbour, and my ultimate repose; 210

The end I would attain, my final good.

My error was my error, and my crime

My crime; whatever, for itself condemn'd;

And will alike be punish'd, whether thou

Reign, or reign not; though to that gentle brow

Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,

From that placid aspect and meek regard,

Rather than aggravate my evil state,

Would stand between me and thy Father's ire,

(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell) 220

A shelter, and a kind of shading cool

Interposition, as a summer's cloud.

If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,
That thou, who worthiest art, should'st be their king?
Perhaps thou linger'st, in deep thoughts detain'd
Of the enterprize so hazardous and high;
No wonder; for, though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found, 230
Or human nature can receive, consider,
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
Short sojourn; and what thence could'st thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever 240
Timorous and loth, with novice modesty,
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous:
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes

The monarchies of the earth, their pomp and state;
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand. 250

With that (such power was given him then) he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, out stretch'd in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champain with less rivers intervein'd,
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea:
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine; 259
With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high tower'd, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desart, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,

Cut shorter many a league ; here thou behold'st
 Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds, 270
 Araxes and the Caspian lake ; thence on
 As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
 And oft beyond : to south the Persian bay,
 And, inaccessible, the Arabian drouth :
 Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
 Several days journey, built by Ninus old,
 Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
 And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
 Israel in long captivity still mourns ;
 There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues, 280
 As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
 Judah and all thy father David's house
 Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
 Till Cyrus set them free ; Persepolis,
 His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there ;
 Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
 And Hecatompylos her hundred gates ;
 There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
 The drink of none but kings ; of later fame
 Built by Emathian, or by Parthian hands, 290
 The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there

Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian, (now some ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That empire,) under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host 300
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.
He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-pour'd, light armed troops 311
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Framing their riders bore, the flower and choice

Of many provinces from bound to bound ;
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south 320
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.

He saw them in their forms of battle rang'd,
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight ;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown :
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indors'd with towers
Of archers ; nor of labouring pioneers 330
A multitude, with spades and axes arm'd
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke ;
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons, fraught with útensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,

When Agrican with all his northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
 The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win 340
 The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
 His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
 Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
 Such and so numerous was their chivalry :
 At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presum'd,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
 Thy virtue, and not every way secure
 On no slight grounds thy safety ; hear, and mark,
 To what end I have brought thee hither, and shown
 All this fair sight : Thy kingdom, though foretold 351
 By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
 Endeavour, as thy father David did,
 Thou never shalt obtain ; prediction still
 In all things, and all men, supposes means,
 Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
 But, say thou wert possess'd of David's throne,
 By free consent of all, none opposite,
 Samaritan or Jew ; how could'st thou hope
 Long to enjoy it, quiet and secure, 360

Between two such enclosing enemies
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own; the Parthian first
By my advice, as nearer, and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus, bound,
Maugre the Roman: It shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose, 369
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league.
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor,
Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten tribes,
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd;
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
This offer sets before thee to deliver. 380
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,

From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear.

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus, unmov'd.
Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
And fragil arms, much instrument of war
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear 390
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth nought.
Means I must use, thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne :
My time, I told thee, (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come ;
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politick maxims, or that cumbersome 400
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full scepter sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons ;

But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives 410
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days pestilence ? such was thy zeal
To Israel then ; the same that now to me !
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all the idolatries of Heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heath'nish crimes ;
Nor in the land of their captivity 420
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers ; but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain ;
And God with idols in their worship join'd.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,

Headlong would follow ; and to their Gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan ? No ; let them serve 431
Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length, (time to himself best known,)
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste ;
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the Promis'd Land their fathers pass'd :
To his due time and providence I leave them. 440

So spake Israel's true king, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it, when with truth falsehood contends.

THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF
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PARADISE REGAIN'D.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK IV.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetorick
That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve;
This far his over-match, who, self-deceiv'd
And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man, who had been matchless held 10
In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,

Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound ;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash'd, the assault renew,
(Vain battery !) and in froth or bubbles end ; 20

So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and, on the north,
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills, 29
That screen'd the fruits of the earth, and seats of men,
From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
Porches, and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues, and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens, and groves, presented to his eyes,
Above the highth of mountains interpos'd :

(By what strange parallax, or optick skill
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire :)

And now the Tempter thus his silence broke,

The city, which thou seest, no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth,
So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations ; there the Capitol thou seest
Above the rest lifting his stately head

On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel

Impregnable ; and there mount Palatine, 50

The imperial palace, compass huge, and high

The structure, skill of noblest architects,

With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,

Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires :

Many a fair edifice besides, more like

Houses of Gods, (so well I have dispos'd

My aery microscope) thou may'st behold

Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,

Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers,

In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold. 60

Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see

What conflux issuing forth, or entering in,

Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
 Hasting, or on return, in robes of state,
 Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
 Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings :
 Or embassies from regions far remote,
 In various habits, on the Appian road,
 Or on the Emilian, some from farthest south,
 Syene, and where the shadow both way falls, 70
 Meroe, Nilotic isle, and, more to west,
 The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea ;
 From the Asian kings, and Parthian among these ;
 From India and the golden Chersonese,
 And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
 Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreath'd ;
 From Gallia, Gades, and the British west ;
 Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
 Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
 All nations now to Rome obedience pay, 80
 To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain,
 In ample territory, wealth, and power,
 Civility of manners, arts and arms,
 And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
 Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,

The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd ;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emperor hath no son, and now is old, 90
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
To Capreæ, an island small, but strong
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy ;
Committing to a wicked favourite
All publick cares, and yet of him suspicious ;
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues, as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds, 99
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a stye, and, in his place ascending,
A victor people free from servile yoke !
And with my help thou may'st ; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no less than all the world ;
Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will.

To whom the Son of God, unmov'd, replied.
 Nor doth this grandeur and majestick show 110
 Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
 More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
 Much less my mind; though thou should'st add to tell
 Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
 On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
 (For I have also heard, perhaps have read,)
 Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
 Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
 Crystal, and myrrhine cups, emboss'd with gems
 And studs of pearl; to me should'st tell, who thirst
 And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st 121
 From nations far and nigh: what honour that,
 But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
 So many hollow compliments and lies,
 Outlandish flatteries? Then proceed'st to talk
 Of the emperor, how easily subdued,
 How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
 A brutish monster: what if I withal
 Expel a Devil who first made him such?
 Let his tormenter conscience find him out; 130
 For him I was not sent; nor yet to free

That people, victor once, now vile and base ;
Deservedly made vassal ; who, once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine ; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity ;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd, 140
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.

What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd.
Or could of inward slaves make outward free ?
Know therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth ;
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world ; 150
And of my kingdom there shall be no end :
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the Tempter, impudent, replied.

I see all offers made by me how slight
 Thou valuest, because offer'd, and reject'st:
 Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
 Or nothing more than still to contradict:
 On the other side know also thou, that I
 On what I offer set as high esteem, 160
 Nor what I part with mean to give for nought;
 All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
 The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give,
 (For, given to me, I give to whom I please,)
 No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
 On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
 And worship me as thy superiour lord,
 (Easily done,) and hold them all of me;
 For what can less so great a gift deserve?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain.
 I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less; 171
 Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
 The abominable terms, impious condition;
 But I endure the time, till which expir'd
 Thou hast permission on me. It is written,
 The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship
 The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;

And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurs'd ? now more accurs'd
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve, 180
And more blasphemous ; which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given ?
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd ;
Other donation none thou canst produce :
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme ? if given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the giver now
Repaid ! But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me, the Son of God ? 190
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God ?
Get thee behind me ; plain thou now appear'st
That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the Fiend, with fear abash'd, replied.
Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
Though sons of God both Angels are and Men,
If I, to try whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title have propos'd
What both from Men and Angels I receive, 200

Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth,
Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
God of this world invok'd, and world beneath ;
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me so fatal, me it most concerns ;
The trial hath indamag'd thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem :
Me nought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world ; I shall no more 210
Advise thee ; gain them as thou canst, or not.
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
Than to a worldly crown ; addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judg'd,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the temple ; there was found
Among the gravest Rabbies, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day. Be famous then 221
By wisdom ; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world

In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote ;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light ;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st ; 230
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet ?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes ?
Error by his own arms is best evinc'd.
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount
Westward, much nearer by southwest, behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil ;
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts 240
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess.
City or suburban, studious walks and shades ;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long ;

There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound
 Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
 To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
 His whispering stream: within the walls, then view
 The schools of ancient sages: his, who bred 251
 Great Alexander to subdue the world,
 Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:
 There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power
 Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
 By voice or hand; and various-measur'd verse,
 Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
 And his, who gave them breath, but higher sung,
 Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd,
 Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own. 260
 Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
 In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
 Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
 In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
 Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;
 High actions, and high passions best describing:
 Thence to the famous orators repair,
 Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
 Wielded at will that force democratic,

Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece, 270
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne :
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heaven descended to the low-rooft house
Of Socrates ; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd
Wisest of men ; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Sinnam'd Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe ; 280
These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight ;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied.
Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not ; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought : he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true ; 290
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.

The first and wisest of them all profess'd
 To know this only, that he nothing knew ;
 The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits ;
 A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense ;
 Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
 But virtue join'd with riches and long life ;
 In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease ;
 The Stoic last in philosophic pride, 300
 By him call'd virtue ; and his virtuous man,
 Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
 Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,
 As fearing God nor man, contemning all
 Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
 Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can.
 For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
 Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
 Alas ! what can they teach, and not mis-lead,
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more, 310
 And how the world began, and how man fell
 Degraded by himself, on grace depending ?
 Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
 And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
 All glory arrogate, to God give none ;

Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not; or, by delusion,
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets, 320
An empty cloud. However many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superiour,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep vers'd in books, and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore. 330
Or, if I would delight my private hours
With musick or with poem, where, so soon
As in our native language, can I find
That solace? All our law and story strew'd
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleas'd so well our victors' ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd;

Will imitated, while they loudest sing
 The vices of their Deities, and their own, 340
 In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
 Their Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
 Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
 As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
 Thin sown with ought of profit or delight.
 Will far be found unworthy to compare
 With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
 Where God is prais'd aright, and God-like men,
 The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints,
 (Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee,)
 Unless where moral virtue is express'd 351
 By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
 Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
 The top of eloquence, statists indeed,
 And lovers of their country, as may seem;
 But herein to our prophets far beneath,
 As men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of civil government,
 In their majestick unaffected style,
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome. 360
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,

What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God; but Satan, now
Quite at a loss, (for all his darts were spent,)
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied.

Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor ought
By me propos'd in life contemplative, 370

Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world? The wilderness
For thee is fittest place; I found thee there,
And thither will return thee; yet remember
What I foretel thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
Nicely or cautiously, my offer'd aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season, 380
When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.

Now contrary, if I read ought in Heaven,
Or Heaven write ought of fate, by what the star
Voluminous, or single characters,

In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
 Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate
 Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
 Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death ;
 A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
 Real or allegorick, I discern not, 390
 Nor when ; eternal sure, as without end,
 Without beginning ; for no date prefix'd
 Directs me in the starry rubrick set.

So saying he took (for still he knew his power
 Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness
 Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
 Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
 As day-light sunk, and brought in lowering Night,
 Her shadowy offspring, un-substantial both,
 Privation more of light and absent day. 400
 Our Saviour meek, and with untroubled mind
 After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
 Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
 Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
 Whose branching arms thick interwin'd might shield
 From dews and damps at night his shelter'd head ;
 But, shelter'd, slept in vain : for at his head

The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep. And either tropic now 409
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heaven; the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire
In ruin reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st 420
Unshaken! Nor yet stay'd the terror there,
Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round
Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some
shriek'd,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts while thou
Satst unappall'd in calm and sinless peace!
Thus pass'd the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth, with pilgrim steps in anice gray;
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,

And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd 430
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire,
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn;
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done, 440
The Prince of darkness, glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;
Yet with no new device, (they all were spent,)
Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desperate of better course to vent his rage,
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said 450
Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the wrack

As earth and sky would mingle ; but myself
Was distant ; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of Heaven,
Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone ;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light 460
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill :
This tempest at this desert most was bent ;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offer'd with my aid
To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way 470
Of gaining David's throne, no man knows when,
For both the when and how is no where told ?
Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt ;
For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means. Each act is rightliest done,

Not when it must, but when it may be best :
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
 What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
 Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
 Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold ; 480
 Whereof this ominous night, that clos'd thee round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies
 May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
 And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not ; other harm
 Those terrors, which thou speak'st of, did me none ;
 I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
 And threatening nigh ; what they can do as signs
 Betokening, or ill boding, I contemn 490
 As false portents, not sent from God, but thee ;
 Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
 Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I, accepting,
 At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
 Ambitious Spirit ! and wouldst be thought my God ;
 And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify
 Me to thy will ! desist, (thou art discern'd,
 And toil'st in vain,) nor me in vain molest.

To whom the Fiend, now sworn with rage replied,
Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born, 500
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt ;
Of the Messiah I had heard foretold
By all the Prophets ; of thy birth at length,
Announc'd by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of the angelick song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred ;
Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all 510
Flock to the Baptist, I, among the rest,
(Though not to be baptiz'd,) by voice from Heaven
Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God ; which bears no single sense,
The Son of God I also am, or was ;
And if I was, I am ; relation stands :
All men are Sons of God ; yet thee I thought 520
In some respect far higher so declar'd.

Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
 And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
 Where by all best conjectures, I collect
 Thou art to be my fatal enemy:
 Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
 To understand my adversary, who
 And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent;
 By parl or composition, truce or league,
 To win him, or win from him what I can: 530
 And opportunity I here have had
 To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
 Proof against all temptation, as a rock
 Of adamant, and, as a center, firm;
 To the utmost of mere man both wise and good.
 Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
 Have been before contemn'd, and may again.
 Therefore, to know what more thou art than Man,
 Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heaven,
 Another method I must now begin. 540

So saying he caught him up, and, without wing
 Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
 Over the wilderness and o'er the plain;
 Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,

The holy city, lifted high her towers,
 And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
 Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
 Of alabaster, topt with golden spires :
 There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
 The Son of God ; and added thus in scorn. 550

There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright
 Will ask thee skill ; I to thy Father's house
 Have brought thee, and highest plac'd : highest is best :
 Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
 Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God :
 For it is written, " He will give command
 " Concerning thee to his Angels, in their hands
 " They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
 " Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone."

To whom thus Jesus : Also it is written, 560
 " Tempt not the Lord thy God." He said, and stood :
 But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.
 As when Earth's son Antæus (to compare
 Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
 With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd, still rose,
 Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
 Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,

Throttled at length in the air, expired and fell ;
So, after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride, 570
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall :
And as that Theban monster, that propos'd
Her riddle, and him who solv'd it not devour'd,
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from th' Ismenian steep ;
So, struck with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
(Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,)
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God. 580
So Satan fell ; and straight a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air ;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine,
Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
And, from the fount of life, ambrosial drink, 590



Chap. 10.

and the angels, who stood
 by, made a great noise, and
 the voice of the Lord was heard, saying
 unto the angels, stand, and asperse
 the earth with the blood of the
 saints.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Printed and Sold by G. G. and J. B. Smith.

That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
 What hunger, if aught hunger, had impair'd,
 Or thirst; and, as he fed, angelick quires
 Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
 Over Temptation, and the Tempter proud.

True image of the Father; whether thron'd
 In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
 Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
 In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
 Wandering the wilderness; whatever place, 600
 Habit, or taste, or motion, still expressing
 The Son of God, with God-like force endued
 Against the attempter of thy Father's throne,
 And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
 Thou didst debeat, and down from Heaven cast
 With all his army, now thou hast aveng'd
 Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
 Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
 And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
 He never more henceforth will dare set foot 610
 In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
 or though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
 A fairer Paradise is founded now

For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Saviour, art come down to re-install
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal Serpent ! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds ; like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod down
Under his feet : for proof, ere this thou feel'st 621
Thy wound, (yet not thy last and deadliest wound,)
By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph : in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God : He, all unarm'd,
Shall chace thee, with the terror of his voice,
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy legions ; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine, 630
Lest he command them down into the deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.—
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan. On thy glorious work
Now enter ; and begin to save mankind.

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refresh'd,
Brought on his way with joy ; he, unobserv'd.
Home to his mother's house private return'd.

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THE END

SAMSON AGONISTES,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6.

Τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.

Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, &c. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM WHICH IS
CALLED TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently compos'd, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion: for so in physic things of melancholic hue and quality are us'd against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert* a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. XV. 33. and Paræus, commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book, as a tragedy, into acts distinguish'd each by a chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have labour'd not a little

* The verse here quoted is " Evil communications corrupt good manners."

little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, than before, of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable, to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinish'd. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is intitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mention'd to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd: and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle: in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much before-hand may be epistled; that chorus is here introduc'd after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modeling therefore

therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather follow'd, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks Monostrophic, or rather Apolelymenon, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epod, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the musick, then used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be call'd Allæostropha. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the stile and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such œconomy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequal'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

THE ARGUMENT.

Samson made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retir'd, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can: then by his old father Manoah, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaim'd by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a publick officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence: he at first refuses, dismissing the publick officer.

officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatnings to fetch him: The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance: in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.

MANOAH, the Father of Samson.

DALILA, his Wife.

HARAPHA of Gath.

Publick Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

The SCENE before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

SAMSON.

A Little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on ;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade :
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,
Where I, a prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught : but here I feel amends,
The breath of Heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born ; here leave me to respire.— 11
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works ; unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me ; hence with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek

This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone, 20
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an Angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burn'd,
As in a fiery column charioting
His god-like presence, and from some great act
Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race ?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd 30
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits ; if I must die
Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze ;
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this Heaven-gifted strength ? O glorious strength
Put to the labour of a beast, debas'd
Lower than bond-slave ! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver ;

Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him 40
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke :
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction ; what if all foretold
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself ?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it, 50
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong !
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom ? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command !
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace ! I must not quarrel with the will 60
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know :

Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries ;
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail ; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggery, or decrepit age !
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct, 70
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferiour to the vilest now become
Of man or worm ; the vilest here excel me ;
They creep, yet see ; I, dark in light, expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own ;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, 80
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
“ Let there be light, and light was over all ; ”
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree ?

The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life, 90
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part ; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confin'd,
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd ?
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look at will through every pore ?
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death, 100
And buried ; but, O yet more miserable !
Myself, my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Buried, yet not exempt,
By privilege of death and burial,
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs ;
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity

Among inhuman foes.

But who are these ? for with joint pace I hear 110

The tread of many feet steering this way ;

Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare

At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,

Their daily practice to afflict me more.

[*Enter*] CHORUS.

This, this is he ; softly a while,

Let us not break in upon him ;

O change beyond report, thought or belief !

See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,

With languish'd head unpropt,

As one past hope, abandon'd, 120

And by himself given over ;

In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds

O'er-worn and soil'd :

Or do my eyes misrepresent ? Can this be he,

That heroic, that renown'd,

Irresistible Samson ? whom unarm'd

No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could
withstand :

Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid ;

Ran on embattled armies clad in iron ;
And, weaponless himself, 130
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
Chaly'bean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
Adamantéan proof ;
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanc'd,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp ; old warriors turn'd
Their plated backs under his heel :
Or, groveling soil'd their crested helmets in the dust,
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day.
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders
bore
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so ;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.

Which shall I first bewail, 151
 Thy bondage or lost sight,
 Prison within prison
 Inseparably dark ?
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
 The dungeon of thyself; thy soul,
 (Which men enjoying sight oft without cause com-
 plain)
 Imprison'd now indeed,
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light 160
 To incorporate with gloomy night ;
 For inward light, alas !
 Puts forth no visual beam.
 O mirror of our fickle state,
 Since man on earth unparallel'd !
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wonderful glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
 For him I reckon not in high estate 170
 Whom long descent of birth,
 Or the sphere of fortune, raises ;

But

But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the earth,
Universally crown'd with highest praises.

SAMSON.

I hear the sound of words ; their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

CHORUS.

He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,
The glory late of Israel, now the grief ;
We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale, 181
To visit or bewail thee ; or, if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores ; apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to fester'd wounds.

SAMSON.

Your coming, Friends, revives me ; for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription, (of the most 190

I would be understood) in prosperous days
 They swarm, but in advérse withdraw their head,
 Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O Friends,
 How many evils have enclos'd me round ;
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
 Blindness ; for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
 How could I once look up, or heave the head,
 Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwreck'd
 My vessel trusted to me from above,
 Gloriously rigg'd ; and for a word, a tear, 200
 Fool ! have divulg'd the secret gift of God
 To a deceitful woman ? tell me, Friends,
 Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
 In every street ? do they not say, how well
 Are come upon him his deserts ? yet why ?
 Immeasurable strength they might behold
 In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean ;
 This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,
 These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.

CHORUS.

Tax not divine disposal ; wisest men 210
 Have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd ;
 And

And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
 Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides ;
 Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
 Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
 Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
 At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

SAMSON.

The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
 Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed 220
 The daughter of an infidel : they knew not
 That what I motion'd was of God ; I knew
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
 The marriage on ; that by occasion hence
 I might begin Israel's deliverance,
 The work to which I was divinely call'd.
 She proving false, the next I took to wife
 (O that I never had ! fond wish too late,)
 Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
 That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare. 230
 I thought it lawful from my former act,
 And the same end ; still watching to oppress

Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
 Who vanquish'd with a peal of words (O weakness!)
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

CHORUS.

In seeking just occasion to provoke
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
 Yet Israel still serves with all his sons. 240

SAMSON.

That fault I take not on me, but transfer
 On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
 Who seeing those great acts, which God had done
 Singly by me against their conquerors,
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd,
 Deliverance offer'd: I on the other side
 Used no ambition to commend my deeds,
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the
 doer;

But they persisted deaf, and would not seem 249
 To count them things worth notice, till at length
 Their lords the Philistines with gather'd powers

Enter'd

Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd ;
Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
To set upon them, what advantag'd best :
Mean while the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round ;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcis'd a welcome prey, 260
Bound with two cords ; but cords to me were threads
Touch'd with the flame : on their whole host I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choicest youth ; they only liv'd who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom they now serve :
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty, 270
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty ;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd

As their deliverer ? if he aught begin,
 How frequent to desert him, and at last
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds ?

CHORUS.

Thy words to my remembrance bring
 How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
 Their great deliverer contemn'd,
 The matchless Gideon, in pursuit 280
 Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings :
 And how ingrateful Ephraim
 Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
 Not worse than by his shield and spear,
 Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
 Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
 In that sore battle, when so many died
 Without reprieve adjudg'd to death,
 For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth

SAMSON.

Of such examples add me to the roll ; 290.
 Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
 But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

CHORUS.

Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to Men ;
Unless there be who think not God at all :
If any be, they walk obscure ;
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself. 299

Yet more there be, who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution ;
Till, by their own perplexities involv'd,
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt 310
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstruction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt ;

For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,
 Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
 To set his people free,
 Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
 Against his vow of strictest purity,
 To seek in marriage that fallacious bride, 320
 Unclean, unchaste.

Down, reason, then; at least vain reasonings, down;
 Though reason here aver,
 That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
 Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see here comes thy reverend Sire
 With careful step, locks white as down,
 Old Manoah: Advise
 Forthwith how thou oughtst to receive him.

SAMSON.

Ay me! another inward grief, awak'd 330
 With mention of that name, renews the assault.

MANOAH.

Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
 Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,

As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
 My son, now captive, hither hath inform'd
 Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
 Come lagging after ; say if he be here.

CHORUS.

As signal now in low dejected state,
 As erst in highest, behold him were he lies.

MANOAH.

O miserable change ; is this the man, 340

That invincible Samson, 'far renown'd,
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
 Equivalent to Angels walk'd their streets,
 None offering fight ; who single combatant
 Duel'd their armies rank'd in proud array,
 Himself an army, now unequal match
 To save himself against a coward arm'd
 At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust
 In mortal strength ! and oh what not in man
 Deceivable and vain ? Nay, what thing good 350
 Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane ?
 I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
 In wedlock a reproach ; I gain'd a son,

And

And such a son as all men hail'd me happy ;—
 Who would be now a father in my stead ?
 O wherefore did God grant me my request,
 And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd ?
 Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
 Our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand
 As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind ? 360
 For this did the Angel twice descend : for this
 Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant
 Select, and sacred, glorious for a while,
 The miracle of men ; then in an hour
 Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
 Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves ?
 Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
 He should not so overwhelm, and as a thrall 370
 Subject him to so foul indignities,
 Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

SAMSON.

Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father ;

Nothing

373. "Appoint not heavenly disposition,"—Arraign not—
 ummon not to answer.

Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
But justly; I myself have brought them on,
Sole author I, sole cause: if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd
The mystery of God given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380

This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
But warn'd by oft experience: did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her highth
Of nuptial love profess'd, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith, who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offer'd only, by the scent conceiv'd 390
Her spurious first-born, treason against me?
Thrice she assay'd with flattering prayers and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know;
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport

Her importunity, each time perceiving
 How openly, and with what impudence
 She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse
 Than undissembled hate) with what contempt 400
 She sought to make me traitor to myself ;
 Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
 With blandish'd parlies, feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
 To storm me over-watch'd, and wearied out,
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
 Who, with a grain of manhood well resolv'd,
 Might easily have shook off all her snares :
 But foul effeminacy held me yok'd 410
 Her bond-slave ; O indignity, O blot
 To honour and religion ! servile mind
 Rewarded well with servile punishment !
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
 These rags, this grinding is not yet so base
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
 That saw not how degenerately I serv'd.

MANOAH,

I cannot praise thy marriage choices, Son, 420
Rather approv'd them not ; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how they might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes,
I state not that ; this I am sure, our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph ; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee ; which to have kept
Tacit, was in thy power : true ; and thou bear'st 430
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault ;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza ; and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud
To Dagon, as their God who hath deliver'd
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God, 440
Besides whom is no God, compar'd with idols,

Di-glorified, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
 By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine ;
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
 Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

SAMSON.

Father, I do acknowledge and confess
 That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
 To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high 450
 Among the Heathen round ; to God have brought
 Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
 Of idolists, and atheists ; have brought scandal
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
 In feeble hearts, propense enough before
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols ;
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
 Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife 460
 With me hath end ; all the contest is now
 'Twixt God and Dagon ; Dagon hath presum'd,
 Me

Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
But will arise and his great name assert :
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me, 470
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

MANOAH.

With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
I as a prophecy receive ; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done !
Thou must not, in the mean while here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight, 480
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom : well they may by this

Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
 By pains and slaveries, worse than death inflicted
 On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

SAMSON.

Spare that proposal, Father; spare the trouble
 Of that solicitation; let me here,
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
 And expiate, if possible, my crime, 490
 Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
 How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
 Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
 All friend-ship, and avoided as a blab,
 The mark of fool set on his front?
 But I God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
 Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,
 Weakly at least, and shamefully: a sin
 That Gentiles in their parables condemn 500
 To their abyss and horrid pains confin'd.

MANOAH.

Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite,
 But act not in thy own affliction, Son:

Repent the sin ; but if the punishment
 Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids ;
 Or the execution leave to high disposal,
 And let another hand, not thine, exact
 Thy penal forfeit from thyself ; perhaps
 God will relent, and quit thee all his debt ;
 Who ever more approves and more accepts ; 510
 (Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)
 Him, who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
 Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due ;
 Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd
 For self-offence, more than for God offended.
 Reject not then what offer'd means ; who knows
 But God hath set before us, to return thee
 Home to thy country and his sacred house,
 Where thou mayst bring thy offerings, to avert
 His farther ire, with prayers and vows renew'd ? 520

SAMSON,

His pardon I implore ; but as for life,
 To what end should I seek it ? when in strength
 All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
 With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts

Of birth from Heaven foretold, and high exploits,
 Full of divine instinct, after some proof
 Of acts indeed heroick, far beyond
 The sons of Anak, famous now and blaz'd,
 Fearless of danger, like a petty God
 I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded 530
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
 Then swoll'n with pride into the snare I fell
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
 Soften'd with pleasure and voluptuous life ;
 At length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
 Of a deceitful concubine, who shor'd me
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
 Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
 Shaven, and disarm'd among mine enemies. 540

CHORUS.

Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,
 Thou couldst repress ; nor did the dancing ruby
 Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell,

(O)

531. "None daring my affront"—to treat or face me in hostile manner.

Or taste that cheers the heart of Gods and men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

SAMSON.

Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying 550
Thirst, and refresh'd ; nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

CHORUS.

O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

SAMSON.

But what avail'd this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing ?
What boots it at one gate to make defence, 560
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquish'd ? by which means,

Now blind, dishearten'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,
 To what can I be useful, wherein serve
 My nation, and the work from Heaven impos'd,
 But to sit idle on the houshold hearth,
 A burdenous drone ; to visitants a gaze,
 Or pitied object, these redundant locks
 Robustious to no purpose clustering down,
 Vain monument of strength ; till length of years
 And sedentary numbness craze my limbs 374
 To a contemptible old age obscure ?
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread ;
 Till vermin or the draff of servile food
 Consume me, and oft-invocated death
 Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

MANOAH.

What then then serve the Philistines with that gut
 Which was expressly given thee to annoy them ?
 Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
 Inefficacious, unemploy'd, with age outworn. 380
 But God, who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to assuage
 After the heat of battle, can as easy

Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
And I persuade me so; why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for nought,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

SAMSON.

All otherwise to me my thoughts portend, 590
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor the other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself,
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

MANOAH.

Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humours black, 600
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance

By ransom, or how else : mean while be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

SAMSON.

O that Torment should not be confin'd
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast, and reins ;
But must secret passage find 610
To the inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable 620
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors, arm'd with deadly stings,
Mingle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate,

Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure : 630
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once, and choice delight,
His destin'd from the womb,
Promis'd by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up, and thriv'd amain ;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the uncircumcis'd, our enemies . 640
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
Left me all helpless with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope :

Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless ;
 This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
 No long petition, speedy death. 650
 The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

CHORUS.

Many are the sayings of the wise,
 In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude :
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to man's frail life,
 Consolatories writ
 With studied argument, and much persuasion sought
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought :
 But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound 660
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint :
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man !
 That thou towards him with hatred so various,

Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest 671
The angelick orders, and inferiour creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wandering loose about
Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,
Heads without name no more remember'd,
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory, 680
And people's safety, which in part they effect :
Yet toward these thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their highth of noon,
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no
regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only doth degrade them, or remit
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
high,

Unseemly falls in human eye, 690
 Too grievous for the trespass or omission ;
 Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
 Of Heathen and profane, their carcasses
 To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd ;
 Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
 And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
 If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
 With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
 Painful diseases and deform'd,
 In crude old age : 700
 Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
 The punishment of dissolute days : in fine,
 Just, or unjust, alike seem miserable,
 For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
 The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
 What do I beg : how hast thou dealt already :
 Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
 His labours, for whom canst, to piteous end.—

But who is this, what thing of sea or land : 710
 Female of sex it seems,
 That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,

Comes this way sailing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
Court'd by all the winds that hold them play,
An amber scent of odorous perfume 720
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind ;
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,
And now at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila thy Wife.

SAMSON.

My Wife ! my Traitress, let her not come near me.

CHORUS.

Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fix'd,
About to have spoke, but now, with head declin'd,
Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps,
And words address'd seem into tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil : 730
But now again she makes address to speak.

DALILA.

With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson.
 Which to have merited, without excuse,
 I cannot but acknowledge ; yet, if tears
 May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
 In the perverse event than I foresaw)
 My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon
 No way assur'd. But conjugal affection
 Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt, 740
 Hath led me on desirous to behold
 Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
 If aught in my ability may serve
 To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
 Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
 Though late, yet in some part to recompence
 My rash, but more unfortunate, misdeed.

SAMSON.

Out, out Hyæna ! these are thy wonted arts,
 And arts of every woman false like thee,
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray, 750
 Then as repentant to submit, beseech,

And

And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,
 Confess, and promise wonders in her change ;
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try
 Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
 His virtue or weakness which way to assail :
 Then with more cautious and instructed skill
 Again transgresses, and again submits ;
 That wisest and best men, full oft beguil'd,
 With goodness principled not to reject 760
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
 Entangled with a pois'nous bosom snake,
 If not by quick destruction soon cut off
 As I by thee, to ages an example.

DALILA.

Yet hear me, Samson ; not that I endeavour
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,
 But that on the other side, if it be weigh'd
 By itself, with aggravations not surcharg'd,
 Or else with just allowance counterpois'd, 770
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find
 The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.

First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, impórtune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults :
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for nought,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety ? 780
To what I did thou show'd'st me first the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not :
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty :
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine ; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me, than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate, 790
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mind towards thee,
Caus'd what I did ? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou would'st leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore

How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest :
No better way I saw than by impórtuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety : thou wilt say,
Why then reveal'd ? I was assur'd by those 800
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody, and hold :
That made for me ; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed ;
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love. 810
These reasons in love's law have past for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps ;
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

SAMSON.

How cunningly the sorceress displays
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine ! 820
 That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
 By this appears : I gave, thou say'st, the example,
 I led the way ; bitter reproach, but true ;
 I to myself was false ere thou to me :
 Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
 Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou seest
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
 Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
 Confess it feign'd : Weakness is thy excuse,
 And I believe it : weakness to resist 830
 Philistian gold : If weakness may excuse,
 What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
 Icestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it ?
 All wickedness is weakness : that plea therefore
 With God or Man will gain thee no remission.
 But love constrains me thee : call it furious rage
 To satisfy thy lust : love seeks to have love :
 My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
 To raise in me inexplicable hate.

Knowing,

Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd? 840
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
 Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

DALILA.

Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
 Here what assaults I had, what snares besides,
 What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
 Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
 The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
 That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
 And princes of my country came in person, 851
 Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urg'd,
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty
 And of religion, press'd how just it was,
 How honourable, how glorious to entrap
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd
 Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
 Preaching how meritorious with the Gods
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious 860

Dishonourer

Dishonourer of Dagon : what had I
 To oppose against such powerful arguments ?
 Only my love of thee held long debate,
 And combated in silence all these reasons
 With hard contést : at length that grounded maxim,
 So rife and celebrated in the mouths
 Of wisest men, that to the public good
 Private respects must yield, with grave authority
 Took full possession of me, and prevail'd ;
 Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining. 870

SAMSON.

I thought where all thy circling wilds would end ;
 In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy !
 But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
 Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
 Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
 I, before all the daughters of my tribe
 And of my nation, chose thee from among
 My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
 Too well : unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
 Not out of levity, but over-power'd 880
 By thy request, who could deny thee nothing ;

Yet

Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
Did'st thou at first receive me for thy husband,
Then, as since then, thy country's foe profess'd?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection but my own,
Thou mine, not theirs: if aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations; 890
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee;
To please thy Gods thou didst it; Gods, unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, Gods cannot be;
Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd. 900
These false pretexts and varnish'd colours failing,
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear!

DALILA.

In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

SAMSON.

For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

DALILA.

I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson ;
Afford me place to show what recompence 910
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided ; only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain : though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
Where other senses want not their delights
At home in leisure and domestick ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance, to which
Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.

I to the Lords will intercede, not doubting 920
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
 With me, where my redoubled love and care
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
 May ever tend about thee to old age
 With all things grateful cheer'd, and so supplied,
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss

SAMSON.

No, no; of my condition take no care;
 It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
 Nor think me so unwary or accurs'd, 930
 To bring my feet again into the snare
 Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains,
 Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
 No more on me have power; their force is null'd;
 So much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
 Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st hate me
 Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me; 940

How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
 Deceivable, in most things as a child
 Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
 And last neglected? How would'st thou insult,
 When I must live uxorious to thy will
 In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,
 Bearing my words and doings to the Lords
 To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile?
 This jail I count the house of liberty 949
 To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

DALILA.

Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

SAMSON.

Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
 My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
 At distance I forgive thee; go with that;
 Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
 It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
 Among illustrious women, faithful wives!
 Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold
 Of matrimonial treason! so farewell.

DALILA.

I see thou art implacable, more deaf 960
 To prayers, than winds and seas; yet winds to seas
 Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore:
 Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
 Eternal tempest, never to be calm'd,
 Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
 For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
 Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
 Of infamy upon my name denounc'd?
 To mix with thy concernments I desist
 Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970
 Fame, if not double-fac'd, is double-mouth'd,
 And with contráry blast proclaims most deeds;
 On both his wings, one black, the other white,
 Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.
 My name perhaps among the circumcis'd
 In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
 To all posterity may stand defam'd,
 With malediction mention'd, and the blot
 Of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.
 But, in my country, where I most desire, 980

In Eron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
 I shall be nam'd among the famous-est
 Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
 Living and dead recorded, who, to save
 Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
 Above the faith of wedlock-bands; my tomb
 With odours visited and annual flowers;
 Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim
 Jael, who with inhospitable guile
 Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nam'd.
 Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy 991
 The public marks of honour and reward,
 Conferr'd upon me, for the piety
 Which to my country I was judg'd to have shown.
 At this whoever envies or repines,
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

CHORUS,

She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
 Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

SAMSON,

So let her go; God sent her to debase me,
 And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000

To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

CHORUS.

Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possess'd, nor can be easily
Repuls'd, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

SAMSON.

Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
Not wedlock-treachery endang'ring life.

CHORUS.

It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit, 1010
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit
That woman's love can win or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
(Which way soever men refer it)
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride

Had not so soon preferr'd
 Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compar'd, 1020
 Successor in thy bed,
 Nor both so loosly disallied
 Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
 Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
 Is it for that such outward ornament
 Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
 Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
 Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
 Or value what is best
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong? 1030
 Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
 Of constancy no root infix'd,
 That either they love nothing, or not long?
 Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
 Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,
 Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
 Intestine, far within defensive arms
 A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
 Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms 1040
 Draws him away, enslav'd

With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
 To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
 What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
 Imbark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm ?

Favour'd of Heaven, who finds
 One virtuous, rarely found,
 That in domestick good combines :
 Happy that house ! his way to peace is smooth :
 But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050
 And all temptation can remove,
 Most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
 Gave to the man despotick power
 Over his female in due awe,
 Nor from that right to part an hour,
 Smile she or lour :
 So shall he least confusion draw
 On his whole life, not sway'd
 By female usurpation, or dismay'd. 1060

But had we best retire ? I see a storm.

SAMSON.

Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

But this another kind of tempest brings.

SAMSON.

Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

CHORUS.

Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
 The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue
 Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
 The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
 Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.
 Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
 I less conjecture than when first I saw 1071
 The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
 His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

SAMSON.

Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

CHORUS.

His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

HARAPHA.

I come not, Samson, to condole thy change.

As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;
Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old 1080
That Kiriathaim held; thou know'st me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd,
Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report. 1090

SAMSON.

The way to know were not to see but taste.

HARAPHA.

Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art fam'd
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,

Or

Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown :
 So had the glory of prowess been recover'd
 To Palestine, won by a Philistine, 1099
 From the unforeskin'd race, of whom thou bear'st
 The highest name for valiant acts ; that honour
 Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

SAMSON.

Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do
 What then thou would'st ; thou seest it in thy hand.

HARAPHA.

To combat with a blind man I disdain,
 And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

SAMSON.

Such usage as your honourable lords
 Afford me, assassinated and betray'd,
 Who durst not with their whole united powers 1110
 In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
 Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
 Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
 Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold

Breaking her marriage-faith to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assign'd
Some narrow place enclos'd, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me ;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon, 1120
Vant-brace and greves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield,
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outeries on thy clatter'd iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

HARAPHA.

Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms,
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn, 1131
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from
Heaven

Feign'dst at thy birth, was given thee in thy hair,
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
 Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
 Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

SAMSON.

I know no spells, use no forbidden arts ;
 My trust is in the living God, who gave me 1140
 At my nativity this strength, diffus'd
 No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
 Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
 The pledge of my unviolated vow.
 For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy God,
 Go to his temple, invoke his aid
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him
 How highly it concerns his glory now
 To frustrate and dissolve these magick spells,
 Which I to be the power of Israel's God 1150
 Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
 Offering to combat thee his champion bold,
 With the utmost of his Godhead seconded :
 Then thou shalt see, or rather, to thy sorrow,
 Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

HARAFHA.

Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be ;
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and deliver'd up
Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them 1159
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
As good for nothing else ; no better service
With those thy boist'rous locks, no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

SAMSON.

All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve, and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant :
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,

By combat to decide whose God is God.
Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

HARAPHA.

Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A Murderer, a Revolter, and a Robber! 1180

SAMSON.

Tongue-doughty Giant, how dost thou prove me
these?

HARAPHA.

Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confess'd it, when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking, 1190
To others did no violence nor spoil.

SAMSON.

Among the daughters of the Philistines

I chose

I chose a wife, which argued me no foe ;
And in your city held my nuptial feast :
But your ill-meaning politician lords
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who, threatening cruel death, constrain'd the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd. 1200
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanc'd,
I us'd hostility, and took their spoil,
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords.
It was the force of conquest ; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts. 1210
I was no private, but a person rais'd
With strength sufficient and command from Heaven
To free my country ; if their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,

The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.

I was to do my part from Heaven assign'd,
 And had perform'd it, if my known offence
 Had not disabled me, not all your force:
 These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant, 1220
 Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
 Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
 As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

HARAPHA.

With thee! a man condemn'd, a slave enroll'd,
 Due by the law to capital punishment?
 To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

SAMSON.

Can'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
 To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
 Come nearer; part not hence so slight inform'd:
 But take good heed my hand survey not thee. 1230

HARAPHA.

O Baal-zebub! can my ears unus'd
 Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

SAMSON.

No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable ; bring up thy van,
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

HARAPHA.

This insolence other kind of answer fits.

SAMSON.

Go baffled coward ! lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down 1249
To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

HARAPHA.

By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee. [Exit.]

CHORUS.

His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

SAMSON.

I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
 Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
 All of gigantick size, Goliath chief.

CHORUS.

He will directly to the lords, I fear, 1250
 And with malicious counsel stir them up
 Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

SAMSON.

He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight
 Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
 Whether he durst accept the offer or not:
 And, that he durst not, plain enough appear'd.
 Much more affliction than already felt
 They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
 If they intend advantage of my labours, 1259
 The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
 With no small profit daily to my owners,
 But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
 My speediest friend, my death to rid me hence;
 The sword that he has given me the best.

Yet so it may fall out, because their end
 Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
 Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

CHORUS.

Oh how comely it is, and how reviving
 To the spirits of just men long oppress'd !
 When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270
 Puts invincible might
 To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
 The brute and boisterous force of violent men
 Hardy and industrious to support
 Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
 The righteous and all such as honour truth ;
 He all their ammunition
 And feats of war defeats,
 With plain heroick magnitude of mind
 And celestial vigour arm'd, 1280
 Their armories and magazines contemns,
 Renders them useless ; while
 With winged expedition,
 Swift as the lightning glance, he executes
 His errand on the wicked, who surpris'd

Lose their defence, distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all

1290

That tyranny or fortune can inflict.

Either of these is in thy lot,

Samson, with might endued

Above the sons of men ; but sight bereav'd

May chance to number thee with those

Whom patience finally must crown.

This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind

More than the working day thy hands.

And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,

1300

For I descry this way

Some other tending ; in his hand

A scepter or quaint staff he bears,

Comes on amain, speed in his look.

By his Habit I discern him now

A public Officer, and now at hand ;

His message will be short and voluble

OFFICER.

Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

CHORUS.

His manacles remark him, there he sits,

OFFICER.

Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say ; 1310
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games ;
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honour this great feast, and great assembly ;
Rise therefore with all speed, and come along,
Where I will see thee hearten'd, and fresh clad,
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.

SAMSON.

Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell them,
Our Law forbids at their religious rites 1320
My presence ; for that cause I cannot come.

OFFICER.

This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.

SAMSON.

SAMSON.

Have they not sword-players, and every sort
 Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
 Juglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics.
 But they must pick me out, with shackles tir'd,
 And over-labour'd at their public mill
 To make them sport with blind activity?
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
 On my refusal to distress me more, 1350
 Or make a game of my calamities?
 Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

OFFICER.

Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

SAMSON.

Myself? my conscience, and internal peace.
 Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?
 Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief 1359
 To show them feats, and play before their God,

The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

OFFICER.

My message was impos'd on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

SAMSON.

So take it with what speed thy message needs.

OFFICER.

I am sorry what this stoutness will produce. [*Exit.*]

SAMSON.

Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

CHORUS.

Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break:
He's gone, and who knows how he may report 1350
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

SAMSON.

Shall I abuse this consecrated gift

Of strength, again returning with my hair
 After my great transgression, so requite
 Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin
 By prostituting holy things to idols ;
 A Nazarite in place abominable
 Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon ?
 Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous, 1301
 What act more execrably unclean, profane ?

CHORUS.

Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines
 Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

SAMSON.

Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
 Honest and lawful to deserve my food
 Of those, who have me in their civil power.

CHORUS.

Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

SAMSON.

Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds,
 But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
 Not dragging ? the Philistian lords command. 1371

Commands

Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
 I do it freely, venturing to displease
 God for the fear of Man, and Man prefer,
 Set God behind: which in his jealousy
 Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
 Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,
 Present in temples at idolatrous rites
 For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

CHORUS.

How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.

SAMSON.

Be of good courage, I begin to feel 1381
 Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
 To something extraordinary my thoughts.
 I with this messenger will go along,
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
 Our Law, or stain my vov of Nazarite.
 If there be ought of presage in the mind,
 This day will be remarkable in my life
 By some great act, or of my days the last. 1389

CHORUS.

In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

OFFICER.

Samson, this second message from our lords
 To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
 Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
 And darst thou at our sending and command
 Dispute thy coming? come without delay;
 Or we shall find such engines to assail
 And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
 Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.

SAMSON.

I could be well content to try their art,
 Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
 Yet, knowing their advantages too many, 1401
 Because they shall not trail me through their streets
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
 Masters' commands come with a power resistless
 To such as owe them absolute subjection;
 And for a life who will not change his purpose?
 (So mutable are all the ways of men)
 Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
 Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

OFFICER.

I praise thy resolution : doff these links : 141
 By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
 To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

SAMSON.

Brethren farewell ; your company along
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
 To see me girt with friends ; and how the sight
 Of me, as of a common enemy,
 So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,
 I know not : lords are lordliest in their wine ;
 And the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd
 With zeal, if aught religion seem concern'd ; 1420
 No less the people, on their holy-days,
 Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable :
 Happen what may, of me expect to hear
 Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
 Our God, our Law, my Nation, or myself,
 The last of me or no I cannot warrant. [Exit.]

CHORUS.

Go, and the Holy One
 Of Israel be thy guide

To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
 Great among the Heathen round ; 1430
 Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand
 Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
 Rode up in flames after his message told
 Of thy conception, and be now a shield
 Of fire ; that Spirit that first rush'd on thee
 In the camp of Dan
 Be efficacious in thee now at need,
 For never was from Heaven imparted
 Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
 As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen. 1440
 But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
 With youthful steps ? much livelier than ere while
 He seems : supposing here to find his son,
 Or of him bringing to us some glad news ?

MANOAH.

Peace with you, Brethren ; my inducement hither
 Was not at present here to find my son,
 By order of the lords new parted hence
 To come and play before them at their feast.
 I heard all as I came, the city rings,

And

And numbers thither flock : I had no will, 1450
Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly.
But that, which mov'd my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

CHORUS.

That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee ; say, reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.

MANOAH.

I have attempted one by one the lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner. 1460
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite ;
That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests :
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and State
They easily would set to sale : a third
More generous far and civil, who confess'd
They had enough reveng'd ; having reduc'd
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,

The rest was magnanimity to remit, 1470
 If some convenient ransom were propos'd.
 What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

CHORUS.

Doubtless the people shouting to behold
 Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
 Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

MANOAH.

His ransom, if my whole inheritance
 May compass it, shall willingly be paid
 And number'd down: much rather I shall choose
 To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
 And he in that calamitous prison left. 1480
 No, I am fix'd not to part hence without him.
 For his redemption all my patrimony,
 If need be, I am ready to forego
 And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

CHORUS.

Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
 Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all:
 Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,

Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
 Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

MANOAH.

It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490
 And view him sitting in the house, ennobled
 With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,
 And on his shoulders waving down those locks
 That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd :
 And I persuade me, God had not permitted
 His strength again to grow up with his hair
 Garrison'd round about him like a camp
 Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
 To use him further yet in some great service,
 Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500
 Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
 And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
 God will restore him: ye-sight to his strength.

CHORUS.

Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain
 Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
 Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,
 In both which we, as next, participate.

MANOAH.

I know your friendly minds and—O what noise !
 Mercy of Heaven, what hideous noise was that !
 Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

CHORUS.

Noise call you it or universal groan,
 As if the whole inhabitation perish'd !
 Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
 Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

MANOAH.

Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise :
 Oh ! it continues, they have slain my son.

CHORUS.

Thy son is rather slaying them ; that outcry
 From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

MANOAH.

Some dismal accident it needs must be ;
 What shall we do, stay here or run and see ? 1520

CHORUS.

Best keep together here, lest running thither

We

We unawares run into danger's mouth,
This evil on the Philistines is fall'n ;
From whom could else a general cry be heard ?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here ;
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way ? 1530

MANOAH.

That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

CHORUS.

Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old ; what hinders now ?

MANOAH.

He can, I know, but doubt to think he will ;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

CHORUS.

Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner ;
For evil news rides post, while good news bates.

And

And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
 An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe. 1540

MESSENGER.

O whither shall I run, or which way fly
 The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
 Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold?
 For dire imagination still pursues me.
 But providence or instinct of nature seems,
 Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted,
 To have guided me aright, I know not how,
 To thee first, reverend Manoah, and to these
 My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
 As at some distance from the place of horreur, 1550
 So in the sad event too much concern'd.

MANOAH.

The accident was loud, and here before thee
 With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;
 No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

MESSENGER.

It would burst forth, but I recover breath
 And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

MANOAH.

'Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

MESSENGER.

Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

MANOAH.

Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city. 1561

MESSENGER.

Feed on that first; there may in grief be surfeit.

MANOAH.

Relate by whom.

MESSENGER.

By Samson.

MANOAH.

That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

MESSENGER.

Ah! Manoah, I refrain too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon;

Lest

Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
 Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

MANOAH.

Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

MESSENGER.

Take then the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

MANOAH.

The worst indeed, O all my hope's defeated 1571
 To free him hence ! but death, who sets all free
 Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
 What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
 Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
 Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost !
 Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
 How died he : death to life is crown or shame.
 All by him fell, thou say'st ; by whom fell he ? 1580
 What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound ?

MESSENGER.

Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

MANOAH.

MANOAH.

Wearied with slaughter then or how ? explain.

MESSENGER.

By his own hands.

MANOAH.

Self-violence ? what cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes ?

MESSENGER.

Inevitable cause
At once both to destroy, and be destroy'd ;
The edifice, where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

MANOAH.

O lastly over-strong against thyself ! 1590
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know ; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.

MESSENGER.

Occasions drew me early to this city ;
 And as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,
 The morning trumpets festival proclaim'd
 Through each high-street : little I had dispatch'd,
 When all abroad was rumour'd that this day 1600
 Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
 Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games ;
 I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
 Not to be absent at that spectacle.
 The building was a spacious theatre
 Half-round on two main pillars vaulted high,
 With seats where all the lords, and each degree
 Of sort, might sit in order to behold ;
 The other side was open, where the throng
 On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand ; 1610
 I among these aloof discreetly stood.
 The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
 Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
 When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
 Was Samson as a publick servant brought,
 In their state livery clad ; before him pipes

And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot, before him and behind
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout 1620
Rifted the air, clamouring their God with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place ; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assay'd,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
All with incredible, stupendous force ;
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission sake they led him
Between the pillars ; he his guide requested 1630
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
As over-tir'd to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support.
He, unsuspecting, led him ; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclin'd,
And eyes fast fix'd he stood, as one who pray'd,
Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd :
At last with head erect thus cried aloud,

" Hitherto, Lords, what your commands impos'd
 " I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying, 1641
 " Not without wonder or delight beheld :
 " Now of my own accord such other trial
 " I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater ;
 " As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
 With horrible convulsion to and fro 1649
 He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came and drew
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this but each Philistian city round,
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
 Samson, with these immix'd, inevitably
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself ;
 The vulgar only 'scap'd who stood without.

CHORUS.

O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious ! 1650
 Living



1840

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
 The work for which thou wast foretold
 To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slau self-kill'd,
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
 Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes, in number more
 Than all thy life hath slain before.

I SEMICHORUS.

While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
 Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine, 1670
 And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,
 Chaunting their idol, and preferring
 Before our living Dread who dwells
 In Silo, his bright sanctuary :
 Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
 Who hurt their minds,
 And urg'd them on with mad desire
 To call in haste for their destroyer ;
 They only set on sport and play
 Unweetingly impórtun'd 1680
 Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.

So fond are mortal men,
 Fall'n into wrath divine,
 As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
 And with blindness internal struck.

2 SEMICHORUS.

But he, though blind of sight,
 Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
 With inward eyes illuminated,
 His fiery virtue rous'd 1690
 From under ashes into sudden flame,
 And as an evening dragon came,
 Assailant on the perched roosts,
 And nests in order rang'd
 Of tame villatic fowl ; but as an eagle
 His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
 So virtue, given for lost,
 Depress'd, and overthrown, as seem'd,
 Like that self-begotten bird
 In the Arabian woods embost, 1700
 That no second knows nor third,
 And lay ere while a holocaust,

From

From out her ashy womb now teem'd,
 Revives, reflowerishes, then vigorous most
 When most unactive deem'd,
 And though her body die, her fame survives
 A secular bird ages of lives.

MANOAH.

Come, come ; no time for lamentation now,
 Nor much more cause ; Samson hath quit himself
 Like Samson, and heroickly hath finish'd 1710
 A life heroick, on his enemies
 Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
 And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
 Through all Philistian bounds, to Israel
 Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
 Find courage to lay hold on this occasion ;
 To himself and father's house eternal fame ;
 And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
 With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
 But favouring and assisting to the end. 1720
 Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise

Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soak'd in his enemies' blood ; and from the stream
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while,
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends, 1730
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy and funeral train
Home to his father's house : there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enroll'd
In copious legend, or sweet lyrick song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high : 1740
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

CHORUS.

All is best, though we oft doubt,
What the unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns, 1750
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously ; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent ;
His servants he, with new acquist
Of true experience, from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,
And calm of mind all passion spent.

A
M A S K

PRESENTED AT

LUDLOW-CASTLE, 1634;

BEFORE

THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

The Mask was presented in 1634, and consequently in the 26th year of our author's age. In the title page of the first edition printed in 1637, it is said that it was presented *on Michaelmas night*, and there was this motto,

*Eheu quid volui misero mihi! floribus austrum
Perditus—*

In this edition, and in that of Milton's poems in 1645, there was prefixed to the Mask the following dedication.

*To the Right Honourable JOHN Lord Viscount
Brackly 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 final dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the publick view; and now to offer it up in all rightful devotion to those fair hopes, and rare endowments

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 real expression

Your faithful and most

humble Servant,

H. LAWES.

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 BRACKLY.

Mr. THOMAS EGERTON his brother.

The Lady ALICE EGERTON.

C O M U S,

Λ

M A S K.

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 aëreal 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, 10
Amongst the enthron'd Gods on sainted seats,
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 20
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 30
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 off-spring, nurs'd in princely lore,
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 horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger ;
And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40
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
Crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscian mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds list'd,
On Circe's island fell : (Who knows not Circe 50
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 clustring 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 frolic of his full grown age,

Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60
At last betakes him to this ominous wood ;
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowr'd
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal 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, 70
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 80
I shoot from Heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do — But first I must put off

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 90
 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 glistening ; 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 100
 Of his chamber in the East.

Mean while welcome Joy, and Feast,
 Midnight Shout, and Revelry,
 Topsy 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. 110

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, 120
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 rites begin ;
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.—
Hail, Goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veil'd Cotytto ! to whom the secret flame
Of mid-night torches burns ; mysterious dame, 130
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 loophole peep, 140
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our conceal'd solemnity.—

Come,

Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

(The Measure.)

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
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, 150
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 spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentiments, 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, 160
And well plac'd words of glozing courtesy
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,

And

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.

(The Lady enters.)

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true, 170
 My best guide now : Methought it was the sound
 Of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
 Such as a 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 180
 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,

Step.

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 gray hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed, 189

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? 200

'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

And aery tongues, that syllable men's names,
 On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
 These thoughts may startle well, but not astound,
 The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended 211
 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. 220
 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.

S O N G.

SWEET Echo, sweetest Nymph, that liv'st unseen
 Within thy aery shell, 231
 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!
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
 And give rescinding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.

Enter COMUS.

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
 Brave 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, 250
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness, till it smil'd ! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades
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, 260
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 Silvan ; by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog 269
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

LADY.

Nay, gentle Shepherd, ill is lost that praise,
 That is address'd to unattending ears ;
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
 How to regain my sever'd company,
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

COMUS.

What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus ?

LADY.

Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth,

COMUS.

Could that divide you from near-ushering guides ?

LADY.

They left me weary on a grassy turf.

280

COMUS.

By falshood, or discourtesy, or why ?

LADY.

To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

COMUS.

COMUS.

And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady ?

LADY.

They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

COMUS.

Perhaps fore-stalling night prevented them.

LADY.

How easy my misfortune is to hit !

COMUS.

Imports their loss, beside the present need ?

LADY.

No less than if I should my Brothers lose.

COMUS.

Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom ?

LADY.

As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips. 220

COMUS.

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,
 Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots ;
 Their port was more than human, as they stood :
 I took it for a faëry vision
 Of some gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colours of the rainbow live, 300
 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.

LADY.

 Gentle Villager,
 What readiest way would bring me to that place ?

COMUS.

Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

LADY.

To find out that, good Shepherd, I suppose,
 In such a scant allowance of star-light,
 Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
 Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet. 310

COMUS.

COMUS.

I know each lane, and every alley green,
 Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
 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 thatcht pallat rouse; if otherwise,
 I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe 320
 Till further quest.

LADY.

Shepherd, I take thy word,
 And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
 And 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

Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportion'd strength.—Shepherd, lead on. 330

[*Exeunt.*]

The two Brothers.

ELDER BROTHER.

Unmuffle, ye faint Stars ; and thou, fair Moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benizon,
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 damn'd up
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 ; 340
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

SECOND BROTHER.

Or, if our eyes
Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their watted cotes,

Or

341. "Star of Arcady, or Tyrian Cynosure"—Greater or lesser Bear.

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 innumerable boughs.
 But O that hapless virgin, our lost Sister ! 350
 Where may she wander now, whither betake her
 From the chill dew, amongst 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 ?

ELDER BROTHER.

Peace, Brother ; be not over-exquisite
 To cast the fashion of uncertain evils : 360
 For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
 What need a man forestall his date of grief,
 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) 370
 Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
 And put them into mis-becoming 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 too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd. 380
 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.

SECOND BROTHER.

'Tis most true,

That

That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert 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, 390
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence ?
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 out-law's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400
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.

ELDER BROTHER.

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 410

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.

SECOND BROTHER.

What hidden strength,

Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that ?

ELDER BROTHER.

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 : 420

She, that has that, is clad in complete steel ;

And, like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen,

May trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,

Infamous

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 grotts and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblench'd majesty, 430
 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,
 That breaks his magic chains at Curfeu time,
 No goblin, or swart faery of the mine,
 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 ? 440
 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' th' 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, 450
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,
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, 460
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 leud and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrates, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.

Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp, 470
 Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
 Lingerin', and sitting by a new made grave,
 As loath to leave the body that it lov'd,
 And link'd itself by carnal sensuality
 To a degenerate and degraded state.

SECOND BROTHER.

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.

ELDER BROTHER.

List, list ; I hear
 Some far off halloo break the silent air. 481

SECOND BROTHER.

Methought so too ; what should it be ?

ELDER BROTHER.

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

SECOND BROTHER.

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

ELDER BROTHER.

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;
Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else. 491

SPIRIT.

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

SECOND BROTHER.

O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

ELDER BROTHER.

Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft delay'd
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale.
How can'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram

Slipt

Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
 Or straggling weather the pent flock forsook ?
 How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook ?

SPIRIT.

O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy, 501
 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 ?

ELDER BROTHER.

To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame,
 Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. 510

SPIRIT.

Ay me unhappy ! then my fears are true.

ELDER BROTHER.

What fears, good Thyrsis ? Pr'ythee briefly shew.

SPIRIT.

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, 520
 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, unmolding reason's mintage
 Charáct'er'd in the face ; this have I learnt 530
 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,
 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 540
Had ta'en their supper on the savory herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
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; 550
At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drousy flighted steeds,
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd Sleep;
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, 560
 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, 570
 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.

SECOND BROTHER.

O night and shades!

How

How are ye join'd with Hell in triple knot, 581
 Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
 Alone, and helpless ! Is this the confidence
 You gave me, Brother ?

ELDER BROTHER.

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,
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd ; 590
 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 600
 May

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

SPIRIT.

Alas ! good venturous Youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise ; 610
 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.

ELDER BROTHER.

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

SPIRIT.

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 620
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 ; 630
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

He call'd it Hæmony, and gave it me,
 And bad me keep it as of sovran use
 'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
 Or ghastly furies' apparition. 641

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 inchanter 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, 650
 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.

ELDER BROTHER.

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.

COMUS.

Nay, Lady, sit ; if I but wave this wand,
 Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster, 660
 And you a statue, or, as Daphne was,
 Root-bound that fled Apollo.

LADY.

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.

COMUS.

Why are you vext, 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. 671
And first, behold this cordial julep here,
That flames, and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm, and fragrant syrups 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,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent 680
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.

LADY.

'Twill not, false traitor !

I will not restore the truth and honesty, 691
 That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
 Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
 Thou toldst 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 liquorish baits, fit to insnare a brute? 700
 Were it a draft 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.

COMUS.

O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
 To those budge doctors of the Stoick fur,
 And fetch their precepts from the Cynick tub,
 Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence.

Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth, 710
 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 hutcht the all-worshipt ore, and precious gems
 To store her children with : If all the world 720
 Should in 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'd with
 plumes, 730
 The herds would over-multitude their lords,

The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought
diamonds

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 740

Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavory 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 750
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.

What need a vermeil-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.

LADY.

I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips
 In this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler
 Would think to charm my judgement, as mine eyes,
 Obtruding false rules prank'd in reason's garb.
 I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments, 760
 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 770
 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 incumber'd with her store ;

And

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 780
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,
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity,
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetorick, 790
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

Till all thy magick structures, rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

COMUS.

She fables not, I feel that I do fear 800
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 ;
I must not suffer this ; yet 'tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood : 810
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 snatcht 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, 820
 Some other means I have which may be us'd,
 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 Guendolen, 830
 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

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, 840
 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 liquors heals ;
 For which the shepherds at their festivals
 Carol her goodness loud in rustick lays, 849
 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 860

Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,

In twisted braids of lilies knitting

The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;

Listen for dear honour's sake,

Goddess of the silver lake,

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, 870

By hoary Nereus wrinkled look,

And the Carpathian wizard'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,

By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,

And the songs of Syrens sweet.

By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
 And fair Ligea's golden comb, 880
 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,
 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, 890
 Where grows the willow, and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick set with agat, 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



Engraved by

W. G. Smith

Sublime view

State of Nature

As they are not only called upon to attend

Gentle Swain, at thy request

900

I am here.

SPRIT.

Goddess dear,

We implore thy powerful hand

To undo the charmed band

Of true virgin here distress,

Through the force, and through the wile.

Of unblest enchanter vile.

SABRINA.

Shepherd, 'tis my office best

To help insnared chastity :

Brightest Lady, look on me ;

910

Thus I sprinkle on thy breast

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 920
 To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

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

SPIRIT.

Virgin, daughter of Locline
 Sprung of old Anchises' line,
 May thy brimmed waves for this
 Their full tribute never miss
 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 930
 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 myrrhe, and cinnamon.

Come, Lady, while Heaven lends us grace,
 Let us fly this cursed place,

Lest the sorcerer us entice 940
 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, 950
 All the swains that near 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 cheer ;
 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.*

S O N G.

SPIRIT.

Back, Shepherds, back, enough your play,
 'Till next sun-shine holiday ;
 Here be, without duck or nod, 960
 Other trippings to be trod
 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, 970
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
 And sent them here through hard assays
 With a crown of deathless praise,

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

The dances [being] ended, the Spirit epiloguizes.

SPIRIT.

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 :
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 ;
That there eternal Summer dwells,
And West-Winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys ring
Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow

990

Flowers

Flowers of more mingled hue
 Than her purpled 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,
 Waxing well of his deep wound 1000
 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, 1010
 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 ;
 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 1020
Higher than the sphery chime ;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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